

Appendix 4

Summary of Issues Discussed by AcAB and Curriculum Committee regarding Zero-Credit Course (ZCC) Policy Recommendation

from 2012-13 AcAB and Curriculum Committee Minutes
compiled by Will Polik, 9/14/13

Motivation:

- Records of student activities for major requirements (e.g., seminars) or accreditation requirements (e.g. performances)
- Can sanction lack of performance in a required activity
- Records faculty work with students outside of credit-bearing classes (e.g., research)
- Records student participation in learning experiences on transcript
- Motivations will vary by Department
- No tuition cost to students for ZCC activities

Precedent:

- Current ZCC's include Physics seminar (1987), Engineering seminar (1998), Music ensembles (2007), Kinesiology weightlifting & conditioning (2011)
- ZCC's have evolved on an individual basis without administrative planning
- Additional requests are being made (Dance, Theatre, NAS division), so a uniform policy should be developed

ZCC's on Academic Transcripts:

- Must abide by academic regulations (e.g., course creation, add/drops)
- Must have academic integrity (defined expectations, accountability for student performance)

Financial implications:

- For the most part, students are not currently paying for the activities that are being considered for zero-credit courses, e.g., dance performances, research
- 85% of students who do undergraduate research for credit are taking 16 or fewer credits, while students who have 16 or more credits typically do research not-for-credit. The lost revenue is estimated at less than \$8,000/year college-wide for allowing research to be a zero-credit course (Prof. Polik, email to the Curriculum Committee, 3/17/13)

Alternatives:

- Increasing the number of credits students can take without additional tuition charges from 16 to 18 would cost about \$600,000/year (Provost Ray's estimate, AcAB, 10/16/12)
- Faculty activities are reported on Service-to-Hope forms, but there is no mechanism for counting this information as part of a faculty member's workload
- Half-credit courses, complicated and would not work if students took more than one ZCC simultaneously

Possible concerns:

- Increased student time burden – ZCC' would be for activities that students are already doing
- Financial implications (“giving away a valuable product for free”) – Students are generally not paying for these activities now

Open questions:

- What are the practices of other colleges?
- Zero-credit course proliferation
- Academic nature/rigor of zero-credit courses
- Counting toward faculty teaching workload
- Can a ZCC be required for a major or graduation?
- Can Departments define their own minimum and maximum student efforts for ZCC's?
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