

BOARD OF REGENTS  
BRIEFING PAPER  
*Handbook Revision, Gateway Course Completion*

**BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:**

At its January 20, 2012 meeting, the Board of Regents adopted strategic directions that the System and its institutions use as a road map for meeting the Board's various objectives and initiatives that include Complete College America goals and improvements in remedial education. On April 18, 2014, the Academic and Student Affairs Department of System Administration hosted a Complete College America summit that focused on gateway course success in mathematics in the context of remediation. The summit included presentations from CCA, including subject matter experts in mathematics from post-secondary institutions from across the country. In addition, the summit highlighted the gateway mathematics strategies piloted at UNR under the leadership of the Core Mathematics Director. Each NSHE institution sent a team of academic administrators and mathematics faculty to participate in the summit. The teams reviewed and discussed institutional data regarding student success in gateway courses at their respective institutions. This data included the percentage of students who completed the gateway mathematics courses in the first year of enrollment and the impact of gateway course completion on the graduation rate for these students. The data demonstrates that students who complete the gateway course in mathematics in the first year of enrollment are significantly more likely to graduate.

At the conclusion of the summit, institutional teams identified steps forward to improve gateway course completion, as well as policy changes to facilitate these improvements. Following are the recommendations from the summit for revision to Board policy to promote student completion of gateway courses:

1. **Continuous Enrollment** - Existing Board policy sets forth provisions governing placement into and delivery of remediation and requires that degree-seeking students complete the appropriate entry-level English and mathematics course work within the first 30 college-level credits unless otherwise authorized by the institution (*Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 1*). Amend existing Board policy to recognize that these students should also be continuously enrolled in the appropriate mathematics and English courses until the institutional core curriculum mathematics and English requirements are completed. This is a policy that is currently in practice and recommended by UNR.
2. **Preparation of Non-Associate Degree Students for University Transfer and Admissions** – Existing Board policy sets forth the conditions under which non-associate degree students may be admitted to a university (*Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 15*). Under this policy, an applicant who does not have an associate's degree and who did not satisfy university admission requirements upon graduation from high school must complete the equivalent of 24 semester credits in baccalaureate level courses with an overall grade point average of at least 2.50 at a community college or other accredited institution. Amend existing Board policy to include an additional criterion demonstrating the student is prepared for university admission. Specifically, provide that the student must also place into college-level English and mathematics courses or have completed college-level English and mathematics prior to transfer to qualify for university admission.
3. **Temporary Faculty Members** – Existing Board policy sets forth the provisions governing letters of appointment and benefits for temporary faculty members (*Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 45*). In practice, temporary part-time faculty are limited to 75 percent FTE (full-time equivalent) per semester. (This limit only applies to temporary part-time faculty, not permanent part-time faculty.) However, under limited circumstances institutions are authorizing temporary part-time faculty members to teach a credit load beyond 75 percent FTE (e.g., 15 credits at the community colleges and 12 credits at the universities). This practice is not recommended as those faculty have a work load that meets or exceeds that of permanent full-time instructors, but do not have the same benefits. To ensure that these and other faculty are not overburdened for the long-term and that institutions are able to meet teaching demands, amend Board policy to specify that temporary part-time faculty are limited to 75 percent of a full-time equivalent per semester unless an exception is granted by the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs. The proposed policy revision specifies limited circumstances under which an

institution may seek approval for a temporary part-time faculty member to exceed 75 percent FTE, including 1.) the implementation of a pilot program (e.g., gateway success pilots); 2.) an emergency situation such as an increase in student registration for a course where the institution is unable to hire additional qualified temporary part-time faculty; or 3.) assignments within STEM and health sciences disciplines for courses with labs. Such exceptions shall not exceed one year in duration except for emergency cases.

**SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:**

Amend Board policy as recommended above to support student success in gateway courses. See attached policy proposals.

**IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):**

These policies were recommended by campus representatives at the April 18, 2014, NSHE Gateway Course Summit.

**BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

- Advocating continuous enrollment for students until their mathematics and English requirements are completed reinforces the Board's requirement for completion of these requirements within the first 30 credits and provides direction to students and advisors.
- Requiring that students without an associate's degree who did not satisfy university admission requirements after high school must place into or have completed college-level English and mathematics course for admission to a university ensures they are truly prepared for and are on the path to earn a degree at the university without spending additional time in remedial coursework.
- Limiting part-time faculty to 75 percent of a full-time equivalent, unless an exception is granted, encourages institutions to adequately evaluate and plan for instructional needs and protects faculty from overly burdensome course loads. Prepared, adequate, quality faculty are key to student success, particularly in gateway courses.

**POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

None have been brought forward.

**ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:**

Retain existing policy governing remediation, university admissions, and letters of appointment and benefits for temporary faculty members.

**COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:**

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_
- Amends Current Board Policy: *Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 1; Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 15; and Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 45*
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Fiscal Impact: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  \_\_\_\_\_
- Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 16, SECTION 1**  
**Remedial Policy – Continuous Enrollment**

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**Section 1. NSHE Remedial Policy**

The remedial policies of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) are intended to ensure a foundation of knowledge and competencies that will assist students in successfully pursuing and attaining an academic degree. Students are strongly encouraged to prepare for the rigors of higher education prior to entering the NSHE.

1. Pursuant to federal regulations, institutions may make ability-to-benefit determinations using federally approved tests and passing scores to receive federal student aid. The NSHE reserves the right to cancel the admission or registration of any individual whose attendance at a university or college, in the opinion of the appropriate administrative officer and the President, would not be mutually beneficial, as determined by the ability-to-benefit test, to that individual and the university or college.
2. Placement testing should take place prior to matriculation. Effective Fall 2013, students who complete placement testing and course registration by a deadline set by the institution prior to the beginning of each semester will be guaranteed enrollment to the appropriate English and mathematics course in their first semester of enrollment. Additionally, English and mathematics testing must take place no more than two years prior to matriculation.
3. All degree-seeking students must complete the appropriate entry-level English and mathematics course work within the first 30 college-level credits unless otherwise authorized by the institution. *In addition, all degree-seeking students should be continuously enrolled in the appropriate mathematics and English courses until the institutional core curriculum mathematics and English requirements are completed.*
4. A student's English and mathematics placement test scores will serve as the foundation for decisions about the appropriate first college-level course. However, in addition to these scores, institutions may rely on other factors such as high school courses and grade point average, demonstrable competencies, and work experience to predict student success and recommend placement.
  - a. English Placement. The following scores will serve as benchmarks for placement into a college-level English course. Other appropriate placement tools may be used for English placement including reading tests, departmental diagnostic tests or other proprietary tests if supported by institutional research.

<u>Test Score</u>	<u>Minimum Score</u>
ACT English	18
SAT Critical Reading	440
Compass Writing Skills	69
Accuplacer Sentence Skills	80-86

- b. Mathematics Placement. The following scores will serve as benchmarks for placement into a college-level mathematics course. Other appropriate placement tools may be used for mathematics placement including reading tests, departmental diagnostic tests or other proprietary tests if supported by institutional research.

<b>Test Score</b>	<b>Minimum Score</b>
ACT Math	22
SAT Math	500
Compass Mathematics	65
Accuplacer College Level Math	50-63

5. Remedial education at NSHE institutions shall utilize instructional methods and course designs that are most effective in assisting students in successfully completing an entry-level college course in English and mathematics.
6. Institutions should support enrollment in the appropriate college-level entry course immediately upon completion of remedial work.
7. Requirements for college readiness and college-level course enrollment shall be publicized by each institution to the appropriate Nevada school districts.

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, SECTION 15**  
NSHE Transfer and Admissions - Qualifications for University Admission

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**Section 15. NSHE Transfer and Admissions [~~(Effective Fall 2013)~~]**

Transfer students to the State College and universities may be admitted under the following alternatives:

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4. Non-Associate Degree Admissions

- a. Approved baccalaureate level courses shall be transferable to another NSHE institution at a minimum as general elective credit.
- b. Community college students should be strongly encouraged to complete their lower-division programs and an associate degree before transfer, but qualified students may apply for transfer at their own discretion.
- c. An applicant who does not satisfy university admission requirements upon graduation from high school must complete the equivalent of 24 semester credits in baccalaureate level courses with an overall grade point average of at least 2.50 at a community college or other accredited institution ***and must place into college-level English and mathematics courses or have completed college-level English and mathematics prior to transfer*** to qualify for university admission.
- d. An applicant who does not satisfy State College admission requirements upon graduation from high school must complete the equivalent of 12 semester credits in baccalaureate level courses with an overall grade point average of at least 2.00 at a community college or other accredited institution to qualify for State College admission.
- e. A course with a “D-” grade or better will be accepted for transfer provided the institution specific overall grade point average established in subsections c. and d. above is maintained. Transfer courses with a “D-” grade or better will count towards a bachelor’s degree in the same manner as “D-” grades or better obtained by students enrolled in the lower-division at a State College or university. Credits from courses transferred with a “D-” grade or better count towards credit earned for a baccalaureate; however, it is at the discretion of the department or college offering the major as to whether courses with “D-” grades in the major satisfy requirements in the major field.

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 3, SECTION 45**  
**Letters of Appointment and Benefits for Temporary Faculty Members**  
Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**Section 45. Letters of Appointment and Benefits for Temporary Faculty Members**

1. Definitions

- a. Temporary Part-time Faculty. A temporary part-time faculty member is an employee of an institution or unit within the NSHE who:
  - i. Is issued a "letter of appointment" and is employed for a period of not more than *sixty (60)* [~~ninety (90)~~] consecutive days; or
  - ii. Is issued a "letter of appointment" and is employed less than half-time for a period of more than *sixty (60)* [~~ninety (90)~~] consecutive calendar days, but less than twelve months; or
  - iii. Is issued a "letter of appointment with benefits" and is employed half-time or more for a period of more than *sixty (60)* [~~ninety (90)~~] consecutive calendar days, but less than twelve months.
- b. Temporary Full-time Faculty. A temporary full-time faculty member is an employee of an institution or unit within the NSHE who is issued a temporary full-time contract for a period of up to a year.
- c. Half-time Faculty Assignments. A half time or more assignment for temporary faculty is:
  - i. For teaching faculty at a community college, an assignment equivalent to ten (10) credit hours or more for the semester.
  - ii. For teaching faculty at a state college, an assignment equivalent to nine (9) credit hours or more for the semester.
  - iii. For teaching faculty at a University, an assignment equivalent to eight (8) credit hours or more for the semester.
  - iv. For non-teaching faculty and teaching faculty teaching non-credit courses, an assignment equivalent to twenty (20) hours or more per week.
  - v. *Temporary part-time faculty are limited to 75 percent of full-time equivalent per semester, unless an exception is granted by the vice chancellor for academic affairs. An exception may be granted for good cause, which may include but is not limited to: 1. the implementation of a pilot program requiring a temporary workload above 75 percent of full-time equivalent; 2. an emergency, such as an unanticipated increase in student registration for courses where the institution is unable to hire additional qualified temporary part-time faculty; or 3. assignments within the STEM and health*

*sciences disciplines for courses with labs. Such exceptions shall not exceed one year in duration except for emergency cases.*

## 2. Benefits of the Temporary Faculty Member

- a. Letter of Appointment. A temporary part-time faculty member employed on a “letter of appointment” is entitled to the following benefits:
  - i. Grant-in-aid as outlined in the Board of Regents' *Handbook* (Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 13), and
  - ii. NSHE voluntary tax-sheltered annuity plan.
- b. Letter of Appointment with Benefits. A temporary part-time faculty member employed on a “letter of appointment with benefits” is entitled to the following benefits:<sup>1</sup>
  - i. Grant-in-aid as outlined in the Board of Regents' *Handbook* (Title 4, Chapter 3 [~~18~~, Section 6]);
  - ii. NSHE voluntary tax-sheltered annuity plan; and
  - iii. State of Nevada health insurance program under *Nevada Revised Statutes* 287.045. Eligibility for state health insurance is subject to a waiting period.
- c. Temporary Full-time Faculty. A temporary full-time faculty member ***shall be issued a temporary contract and*** [~~under contract~~] is entitled to the following benefits:
  - i. All benefits provided to full-time faculty, except consideration for tenure and notice of non-reappointment.

## 3. Temporary Faculty Member Employed by More Than One Institution

- a. A temporary part-time faculty member who is employed concurrently at more than one institution and whose combined assignment is less than half time shall receive letters of appointment from each institution.
- b. If the combined assignment is half time or more, the temporary part-time faculty member shall receive letters of appointment with benefits from each institution.
- c. The institutions employing such temporary part-time faculty members shall share benefit costs in an amount proportionate to the amount of time assigned at the institution as reflected in the percent of salary paid by each institution.

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<sup>1</sup> Except as provided herein a temporary part-time faculty member on a “letter of appointment with benefits” is not entitled to participate in the state or NSHE retirement programs. A temporary part-time faculty member on a “letter of appointment with benefits,” who is employed for six consecutive months and who has previously been a Public Employees' Retirement System member, is entitled to Public Employees Retirement System participation, in accordance with [~~NRS~~] *Nevada Revised Statutes* 286.297(9) and 286.802(2). In such circumstances, the part-time faculty member employed on a letter of appointment with benefits must be employed at a minimum .51% FTE.

- d. *Temporary part-time faculty employed by more than one institution are limited to 75 percent of full-time equivalent per semester, unless an exception is granted by the vice chancellor for academic affairs. An exception may be granted for good cause, which may include but is not limited to: 1. the implementation of a pilot program requiring a temporary workload above 75 percent of full-time equivalent; 2. an emergency, such as an unanticipated increase in student registration for courses where the institutional is unable to hire additional qualified temporary part-time faculty; or 3. assignments within the STEM and health sciences disciplines for courses with labs. Such exceptions shall not exceed one year in duration except for emergency cases.*

[d] e. When the combined assignment is full-time, it shall be the responsibility of the institutions to enter into a temporary contract with the faculty member.

#### 4. Miscellaneous

- a. Subsection 45(1) is not intended to define or in any way dictate the workload assignment for full-time faculty members employed under contract within the NSHE. The intent is limited to defining workload assignments for temporary faculty members, solely for the specific purpose of determining employment benefits.
- b. Temporary faculty shall not be encouraged to sign written waivers of benefits. A written waiver of benefits will only be allowed if requested by the employee for good cause. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, the loss of other benefits already being received by the employee from another source (e.g., retirement benefits from another employer).