

BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER
Handbook Revision, Excess Credit Fee

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

At its September 2012, meeting, the Board received a presentation on the report of the ad hoc Committee on Access and Affordability, which was appointed by the Chancellor in 2011 in response to Nevada's rising tuition levels and limited financial aid resources. The charge of the Committee was to review the Board of Regents tuition, fee and student financial aid policies in the context of encouraging full time enrollment and degree completion. As discussed in the September presentation, the Committee's report included several recommendations, including the adoption of a policy to establish an excess credit fee. The discussion on this recommendation from the Report follows:

In the past decade a number of states have adopted policies that discourage excessive credit accumulation. North Carolina (1993), Utah (2003), Wisconsin (2004), Texas (2006), Arizona (2006) and Virginia (2006) all increase the cost to students after they have passed a specific credit threshold. In North Carolina, for example, state statute dictates that once a student earns 140 credits, they must pay an additional 50 percent of resident undergraduate tuition. Similarly, Federal Student Aid (Title IV) policy dictates that students no longer qualify for financial assistance after they have earned credits equal to 150 percent of what it would take to earn a degree [in their program of study]. In both cases, the philosophy seems to be to shift more of the cost from the taxpayer to the student in cases where students fail to appropriately progress toward their educational goals.

The Committee recommends NSHE consider [an excess credit] policy and set the credit limit at 150 percent of the published program length, in order to correspond with Title IV Federal Student Aid policy. While other credit limits may also be examined, alignment with Title IV policy gives students leeway to cover additional coursework that may be generated for legitimate reasons, such as placement in remedial courses, transfer, or change in major. An added benefit of alignment with Title IV policy in this area would be an increase in transparency for students as it becomes simpler for campuses to communicate a standard policy that covers both financial aid and tuition and fees.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend Title 4, Chapter 17 of the *Handbook* to add a new section 4 to require that:

- A 50 percent excess credit fee on the per-credit registration fee be charged to a student who has accrued attempted credits equal to 150 percent of the credits required for the student's program of study;
- Institutions to establish an appeals process through which certain types of credit may be excluded from the excess credit calculation;
- Institutions publicize the new fee policy to ensure that students are aware of its adoption and have advance notice if they are nearing the 150 percent threshold; and
- The policy is effective Fall 2014 to provide adequate time for modification to the student information system and notification to students of the new policy.

(See attached policy proposal.)

IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

This proposal is brought forward as a result of the work of the Access and Affordability Committee and its recommendations based on their review of Board of Regents tuition, fee and student financial aid policies in the context of encouraging degree completion.

BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- The policy is intended to discourage students from accruing excess credits and thereby encourage them to complete their degree in a timely manner.
- The policy aligns with existing Title IV Federal Student Aid requirements concerning Satisfactory Academic Progress, thus reinforcing existing protocols designed to encourage degree completion.
- While the provisions of this policy align with federal Title IV Federal Student Aid requirements that are only applicable to financial aid recipients, this policy applies to all students.
- The policy will shift more cost to the students in cases where students fail to appropriately progress toward their educational goals but continue to take courses.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- Strong concerns from institutional representatives from student affairs and financial aid have been expressed regarding the challenges and potential cost of implementation.
- The administrative cost of implementing the policy is unknown at this time, and may include the need to develop a modification to the student information system.
- There will be students under this policy who have met the 150 percent threshold for financial aid and who will also meet the 150 percent threshold for the excess credit fee, leaving those students in a situation of diminished financial aid support and having to pay an excess fee.

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

- Do not adopt the proposed excess credit fee; or
- Postpone adoption of the proposed excess credit fee until staff can visit at least one other state that has implemented such a policy.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- Amends Current Board Policy: Title # 4 Chapter # 17 *new* Section # 4
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- Other: _____
- Fiscal Impact: Yes X No _____

Explain: Administrative costs to implement the new policy through a modification to the student information system may be required but are unknown at this time.

POLICY PROPOSAL
TITLE 4, CHAPTER 17, *new* SECTION 4
Excess Credit Assessment

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

Section 4. Excess Credit Fee (Effective Fall 2014)

- 1. A 50 percent excess credit fee on the per-credit registration fee shall be charged to a student who has accrued attempted credits equal to 150 percent of the credits required for the student's program of study. The excess credit fee shall be imposed on registration fees charged in the current semester and in subsequent semesters, including summer terms, where a student's cumulative credit hour total exceeds 150 percent of the credits required for the student's program of study.***
- 2. Credits from a previously earned degrees or certificates shall be excluded from the 150 percent credit calculation.***
- 3. Institutions shall establish an appeals process and may exclude from the 150 percent calculation the following:***
 - a. Credits earned through examinations for determining credit for prior learning as authorized in Title 4, Chapter 14;***
 - b. Credits attempted while enrolled as a high school student if those credits do not meet the degree requirements for the student's program of study;***
 - c. Credits attempted at an institution outside NSHE if those credits do not meet the degree requirements for the student's program of study;***
 - d. Credits attempted for remedial courses;***
 - e. Dissertation credits; and***
 - f. Other credits determined by the institution as inappropriate for the 150 percent credit calculation.***
- 4. Community service and non-credit bearing continuing education courses are not subject to the provisions of this section. Credits for post-baccalaureate and post-masters certification courses are also not subject to the provisions of this section.***
- 5. The revenue generated from the excess credit fee shall supplement student advising and counseling services, including salary and wages, operating, and equipment expenses.***
- 6. Institutions shall publicize the excess credit fee policy set forth in this section in such a manner to ensure that students have adequate notification of the fee. Institutions shall establish a procedure for notifying students who are approaching the 150 percent credit threshold.***

RENUMBER SECTIONS 4 THROUGH 24 AS SECTIONS 5 THROUGH 25.

		Credits Attempted			
		60-90	91-105	106-120	Over 120
Associate's Degrees	2008-09	62.8%	17.2%	9.4%	10.7%
	2009-10	62.0%	18.1%	9.9%	10.0%
	2010-11	62.1%	16.3%	10.9%	10.7%

		120-180	181-210	211-240	Over 240
		Bachelor's Degrees	2008-09	90.6%	7.1%
2009-10	91.5%		6.3%	1.7%	0.5%
2010-11	89.5%		7.2%	2.5%	0.8%

		60-90	91-105	106-120	Over 120	
		Associate's Degrees	CSN	2008-09	61.3%	17.5%
2009-10	56.6%			20.9%	11.1%	11.4%
2010-11	60.1%			15.4%	11.7%	12.8%
GBC	2008-09		70.1%	15.9%	5.7%	8.3%
	2009-10		71.3%	13.2%	5.7%	9.8%
	2010-11		68.3%	16.9%	7.0%	7.7%
TMCC	2008-09		61.5%	17.3%	8.8%	12.4%
	2009-10		61.6%	17.7%	10.8%	9.9%
	2010-11		59.6%	19.2%	11.3%	9.9%
WNC	2008-09		67.5%	16.3%	8.5%	7.7%
	2009-10		76.2%	11.6%	6.4%	5.8%
	2010-11		73.6%	12.3%	8.6%	5.5%

		120-180	181-210	211-240	Over 240	
		Bachelor's Degrees	Comm-unity Colleges	2008-09	83.7%	14.0%
2009-10	89.4%			8.5%	0.0%	2.1%
2010-11	80.7%			12.3%	7.0%	0.0%
NSC	2008-09		84.7%	9.2%	4.1%	2.0%
	2009-10		84.3%	9.6%	6.1%	0.0%
	2010-11		89.1%	7.2%	2.2%	1.4%
UNLV	2008-09		90.5%	6.7%	2.1%	0.7%
	2009-10		90.7%	6.5%	2.0%	0.8%
	2010-11		88.6%	7.2%	2.9%	1.3%
UNR	2008-09		91.3%	7.2%	1.1%	0.4%
	2009-10		92.9%	5.8%	1.1%	0.2%
	2010-11		90.8%	7.0%	1.9%	0.3%

There is variation in the credits required for associate's and bachelor's degrees by program so the excess credits threshold may exceed 90 for an associate's and 180 for a bachelor's.

Students who had earned a degree within the same career but at a level equal to or higher than that being reported were excluded (e.g. a student who earned a associate's degree but had earned another associate's or bachelor's degree either prior to or during the reporting year would have been removed).

Attempted credits include all credits (remedial excluded) attempted at NSHE institutions through the term during which the student earned a degree. Out-of-state credits transferred in are not included.