

FACULTY AGENDA ITEM NO 18-7

Date: October 17, 2017

Submitted by: Russ Smith, Associate Dean and Professor, School of Business
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SUBJECT: Restoring General Education Credit for Non-U.S. Associate Degrees

Description: Short overview of the proposal

We propose that the catalog language in the section on transfer credit, subsection “**Courses taken at institutions outside of the United States**” be amended to include associate degrees in the last sentence of the last paragraph of the section. In the 2017-18 catalog, the language is as follows:

“For students who have completed a baccalaureate degree with a similar duration as a domestic baccalaureate degree from an accredited international institution, courses satisfactorily completed in the Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics will be accepted towards credit in the appropriate general education distribution area.”

If approved, the amended language would read:

“For students who have completed a baccalaureate or associate degree with a similar duration as a domestic baccalaureate or associate degree from an accredited international institution, courses satisfactorily completed in the Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics will be accepted towards credit in the appropriate general education distribution area.” (*changes underlined here; changes will not be underlined in the catalog*)

This would restore a policy for these students that was in effect between the 2004-05 Washburn University Catalog and the 2013-14 Washburn University Catalog. Effective the 2014-15 catalog, students with domestic transfer credit have been covered by a system where general education status of a course in the institution of origin is transferred to Washburn with the course. The current policy is silent on general education credit for international transfer courses except for those within a four-year baccalaureate degree. This proposal would serve those students who have completed a two-year degree outside of the United States.

Background and Rationale:

The proposed change would restore a previous policy and catalog language with regard to the transfer of general education courses to students who have already earned and received an international (non-U.S.) associate degree. Specifically, from the 2004-05 Washburn University Catalog through the 2013-14 Washburn University Catalog, the proposed procedure applied to all students entering with associate degrees. Another policy applied to students with a four-year baccalaureate degree completed. A review of catalogs over the aforementioned period confirmed that general education area courses within completed associate degrees were handled as follows:

“Courses satisfactorily completed in the Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics as part of an A.A. or A.S. will be accepted towards credit in the appropriate general education distribution area.”

Although the language existed to facilitate the transfer of junior college students to Washburn, it also applied on the rare occasions when a student with an international (non-U.S) two-year degree presented themselves. Therefore, the intent of this proposal is to reinstate the policy that previously existed--now only for students with non-U.S. associate degrees since another process for credit recognition is in place for U.S. transfer credit.

Further Background--Implementation:

The proposed policy would be implemented within the Registrar's Office after the transfer classes have been posted on the Washburn transcript on the foundation of the transcript requirement currently in place for international students. That requirement includes evaluations by a third-party transcript evaluation service, as stated in the catalog:

"5. Official transcripts of completed secondary education and of any university-level course work evaluated by either Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE) or World Educational Services (WES).

Applicants must provide original transcripts which should have detailed addresses of the issuing schools for verification. If originals cannot be submitted, attested certified copies of transcripts must be sent to Washburn by the issuing school on the school's official envelope and stationary. All university-level foreign transcripts must be evaluated by ECE or WES. Application forms can be obtained by going online to www.ece.org or www.wes.org. A "course-by-course" report is required." (p. 52 of 2017-18 Washburn University Catalog)

Information the university receives from an ECE/WES evaluation includes whether or not the school is the equivalent of accredited, the level of the school, as well as the level of the degree. A "course-by-course" report will include the (translated) course name and will convert the grade and credit hours into the U.S. equivalent. The evaluation will distinguish between lower and upper-level courses. In summary, the evaluation process currently used is credible and has safeguards ensuring integrity.

Financial Implications:

If this proposal were implemented, each affected student would receive an average of twelve hours of general education credit. Although the university would lose revenue it otherwise would have received, a student would receive fair and reasonable treatment. Needless to say, the tuition revenue from even one additional international student for seven or eight semesters would cancel out any lost revenue. The result might be a happy student who feels welcome and whose past accomplishments are recognized. If this were the case, the happy student might recruit a friend or relative to come to Washburn.

Under the present system, an incoming international student has the option to petition the eligibility of his or her course work for general education credit. If a petition is successful, then the university once again loses revenue it would have otherwise received as well as experiencing additional non-zero cost in the form of university resources. While the review process involves no direct monetary cost, the non-

trivial cost to the university is represented by the value of the time spent in the process by the General Education Committee, the Academic Affairs Office, and the student's advisors.

Naturally, some of the students are choosing not to petition, either because they are not comfortable doing this (remember, these are international students), or because no one explained such an opportunity to them. In that case, the university would not lose the revenue a successful petition would imply. We do, however, believe that the benefits of being perceived as a student-friendly and transfer-friendly institution far outweigh the costs, as pointed out above.

Proposed Effective Date: If this is catalog-driven, the effective date would be the effective date of the next catalog. However, if approved, perhaps it could be administratively implemented effective at some earlier date to the benefit of any student currently petitioning or currently enrolled.

Request for Action: *Approval by AAC/.FAC/FS/ Gen Fac, etc*

Approved by: *AAC on November 13, 2017*

Faculty Senate on December 4, 2017

Attachments Yes **No NO**