

Minutes of the April 24 2023 Meeting of the Undergraduate Council of the University Senate

Minutes prepared by Hanna Nekvasil, Chair

In virtual attendance: Hanna Nekvasil, chair, Kevin McDonnell, Deborah Serling, Madeline Turan, Diane Bello, Christine Pitocco, Jennifer Dellaposta, Debbie Zelizer, Donna Capanzano, Kara Desanna

- Minutes of April 10 approved
- Hanna noted that UGC comments on revisions to the UGC charge and on the charge of a reformulated Senate subcommittee on *Enrollment Management & Retention* proposed by the Bylaws working group were sent to F. Jason Torre.

Meeting focus: Microcredentialing policy draft submitted to the UGC by Braden Hosch.

- We streamlined the document and discussed the draft. The comments and concerns are embedded.
- Hanna indicated that she would send this to Braden.

Draft modified 5/10/2023 by UGC.

Microcredentials [DRAFT] <https://www.suny.edu/microcredentials/microlist/>

Stony Brook University abides by the definition of a microcredential established by the State University of New York:

SUNY microcredentials verify, validate, and attest that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved. They are valid learning experiences with learning outcomes, assessments, and examples of student work. SUNY microcredentials are endorsed by the issuing institution, having been developed through established faculty governance processes and are designed to be meaningful and high quality. (<https://www.suny.edu/microcredentials/>)

SUNY's policy framework supports microcredentials that:

- provide opportunities for existing students to earn skills complementary to their major;
- provide professional development opportunities for current employees;
- provide pathways to (or back to) higher education for adult learners;
- support life-long learning;
- enhance support of business/industry, P-12 and community partners through creation of partner - or industry-specific microcredentials, and/or supplementing training programs with upskilling and professional development opportunities.
- motivate current students to persist*;

* A microcredential could be given to currently-enrolled matriculated students after the successful completion of a particularly challenging program milestone or to recognize completion of a certain set of

electives that help prepare them for residencies, advanced study, or the workforce. The micro-credential gives students tangible evidence of accomplishment.

Like undergraduate minors, microcredentials are not recognized as formal awards by the NY State Dept. of Education (NYSED) and approval from NYSED is not required. SUNY policy, however, requires that approved microcredentials are reported to SUNY, and that microcredentials are recorded on the student's transcript.

SBU Microcredential guidelines:

- Microcredentials must include a minimum of 6 credits of academic coursework.
Concern: This seems too low for any competency?
- Undergraduate microcredentials may not include more than 15 credits of academic coursework; graduate microcredentials may not include more than 11 credits of academic coursework.

Concerns:

- Inequity between credit load for microcredentials, is this a problem?
- Fifteen credits outside of a major may impede progress towards degree or access to TAP or access to research or internship opportunities.
- Courses included in microcredentials may be a part of a larger minor, certificate or degree program.

Concern: What complications could arise from transfer requests?

- Microcredentials may include the same academic coursework as a **concentration**, consistent with the limits above, and this will be on the transcript even as the concentration is not.

Comment: A concentration is not the same as a specialization and does not show on a transcript. A microcredential is a good way to get recognition for the concentration.

- Students may receive a microcredential designation in addition to a specialization.

Concern: If the microcredential involves a subset of the required courses for the specialization, the impact on the transcript is overshadowed by the specialization which does show on the transcript (e.g., listing an Associate's Degree and Bachelor's degree in the same department adds nothing). The UGC recommends that microcredential be listed ONLY on the transcript if the students did NOT satisfy the Specialization requirements.

- Non-credit microcredentials must contain an equivalent amount of work to credit-bearing microcredentials.

Concern: But credits hours can vary from 6 to 15 for undergraduates. So equivalent to what work load and how is this demonstrated?

- Microcredential programs **must?** not be limited to matriculated students. Microcredential programs may incorporate admission requirements to ensure students who enrolled are capable of successful performance.

Concerns:

- Who vets the background of the non-matriculated students who wish to go for a microcredential?
- Course availability issues?
- Students matriculated in degree or certificate programs may not delay conferral of their degrees to complete a microcredential

Concern: Who is monitoring this?

- A microcredential may be conferred before or after completion of a formal degree or certificate.

Comment: This probably means that after a degree is conferred a student may return to the department for a NEW microcredential using new courses that they take. This needs to be made clearer.

- Student enrollment in and completion of microcredential programs must be recorded in the University's official student information system. A student may earn a maximum of five undergraduate and five graduate microcredentials.

Concern: Is this while enrolled as a matriculated student for an undergraduate or graduate degree? In this case 5 is too many. But if this is over a lifetime, why limit it?

Consistent with SUNY's microcredential definition and policy, Stony Brook University requires microcredentials to be developed **by one or more (if interdisciplinary) academic departments**. Proposals for academic microcredentials (credit and non-credit) must be approved through established faculty curriculum development processes at the College/School or equivalent level. Proposals for microcredentials wholly within one program must be reviewed by the appropriate joint governance body (e.g., A&S Senate). Proposals for microcredentials crossing programs or schools must be forwarded to the Undergraduate Council and/or Graduate Council of the University Senate for review and approval. Following approval by the Undergraduate Council and/or Graduate Council, the Provost must review and approve the proposals for new microcredentials. Following approval by the Provost, the Provost's Office will notify the Stony Brook University Registrar; the Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness; other relevant Stony Brook University offices; SUNY; and any other entity as required.