

Senate Council Ad Hoc Committee on Non-Credit Bearing Education Inside and Outside of Colleges Summary of 03-28-2023 Report to Senate Council

I. Committee Charge

A. Background

The broad **academic** mission of the University includes **educational** activities that are ‘**credit-bearing**’ (i.e., for the purposes of this report, ‘tracked by a Senate-approved prefix/course number’) or that are ‘**non-credit bearing**’ (mostly delegated by the Senate to local supervision).

Within the present academic year, the attention of the Senate has been drawn to non-credit bearing activities that lead to a non-transcribed credential with the same name as a credential currently shown on UK transcripts (e.g., “Badge” or “Certificate”). The Senate Rules should bring more clarity to the pedagogical and governance relationship between credit bearing and non-credit bearing educational activities, especially those that culminate in a named credential.

B. Charge

The Senate Council Chair charged to the *ad hoc* committee (Oct. 21, 2022):

“The Senate Council has appointed this subcommittee to make recommendations related to the appropriate or suitable governance structures for educational activities that do not bear a course prefix or senate course number. The committee’s charge involves activities that occur either inside or outside colleges. This charge includes all educational activities whether or not they lead to a non-transcript credential. Examples of the latter include badges, certificates, micro-credential[s], continual education credential[s].”

II. Committee Methods

The committee then gathered information in the following ways:

1. Survey information on University web sites.
2. Survey to Academic Associate Deans, VPR, Provost, VPSS
3. Individual targeted phone discussions/calls/emails by committee members

The information received was assessed in context of the Senate’s current definition of a non-credit bearing course (SR 3.1.1.3, ‘Badge Rule’):

“a unit of educational content with paced delivery to enrolled learners, that includes required interactions with the supervising credentialed instructor during a fixed period of time, which culminates in the instructor’s assessment of the learner’s attainment of specific learning outcomes.”

III. Information Obtained by Committee

The committee identified a number of educational activities in a wide variety of disciplines, inside and outside of colleges, meeting the definition of ‘non-credit bearing course.’ Some of these coursework activities culminated in UK issuing a credential of various names, some of which names were ‘Certificate’ or ‘Badge,’ (i.e., the same name as current credit bearing credentials that appear on the UK transcript). Some of these non-credit bearing credentials are under the quality control of external accrediting bodies or governmental agencies, that are engaging faculty inside of colleges.

IV. Committee Recommendations

1. Individual non-credit bearing courses should continue to be delegated to the pedagogical supervision of the college faculties (per current SR 3.2.3.3.1)
2. When these non-credit bearing courses culminate in conferral of a credential that meets the definition promulgated by SACSCOC as an “educational program,” including those with the same name as a currently transcribed UK credential (certificate, badge, honor, or as determined by the Senate Council office), these non-credit bearing credentials must be approved through the same Senate procedures as is currently used for non-credit bearing badges (SR 3.1.3).
3. The process for determination of these non-credit bearing credentials is shown in the attached flow chart.

Does a non-credit bearing educational activity meet the definition of a 'course' and 'credential' for Senate Rule purposes?

Step 1 Does the activity have all Senate-required pedagogical attributes?

Yes



No



Activity does not meet definition of 'course' for Senate oversight purposes

Step 2 Is the activity a 'short, single event' (e.g. afternoon), or is directed to external community service learning or employee development?

No



Yes



Activity does not meet definition of 'course' for Senate oversight purposes

Step 3 Is the activity externally regulated by an accrediting body or govt. agency?

No



Yes



Activity does not require Senate action; is delegated by Senate to college faculty ([SR 3.2.3.3.1](#))

Step 4 Do the one or more non-credit bearing courses lead to a credential that meets the definition promulgated by SACSCOC as an "educational program" (e.g. badge, certificate, honor, or if determined by the Senate Council office)

Yes



No



Activity as a program does not require processing to Senate

Individual course oversight is delegated by Senate to college faculty ([SR 3.2.3.3.1](#))

Credential must be submitted into Senate approval process

Senate Council Ad Hoc Committee on Non-Credit Bearing Education Inside and Outside of Colleges

REPORT TO THE SENATE COUNCIL 03/28/23

Members:

Leslie Vincent (CoChair) – College of Business and Economics

Davy Jones (CoChair) College of Medicine

Sandra Bastin – College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Jason Keinsley – Libraries

Andrew Laws – President, Student Government Association

I. Committee Charge

A. Background

The broad **academic** mission of the University includes **educational** activities that are ‘**credit-bearing**’ (i.e., for the purposes of this report, ‘tracked by a Senate-approved prefix/course number’) or that are ‘**non-credit bearing**’ (mostly delegated by the Senate to local supervision).

Current Senate Rules on Credit Bearing Courses

The courses with a Senate-approved prefix/number range in numerical ‘credit-hours’ from 0.0 to (currently) 15.0. Examples of these courses and the **students/learners** include

XXX 200	3.0	(sophomore level; permanently recorded on transcript)	SR 3.2.2.1
XXX 600	5.0	(upper graduate level; permanently recorded on transcript)	SR 3.2.2.1
CDS 824	6.0	(professional dental program; permanently recorded on transcript)	Registrar Class Sch.
XXX 748	0.0	(tracks master’s students; permanently recorded on transcript)	SR 3.2.2.3.4
MC 800	0.0	(medical residents/fellows; transcript is temporary, exists that semester)	SR 3.2.2.3.13.1
PD 099	0.0	(postdoctoral scholars; transcript is temporary, exists that semester)	SR 3.2.2.3.13.1

Current Senate Rules on Non-Credit Bearing Courses

While the range of credit-bearing activities overseen by the Senate is generally well recognized, the range and status of the non-credit bearing activities is presently less appreciated. The University Senate Rules do provide policies for some non-credit bearing educational activities. For example:

Non-credit bearing courses – supervision by local faculty body:

“If a proposed course will not be recorded on UK transcripts and cannot be used toward a Senate-approved certificate or degree, then final approval of the course is conducted pursuant to the Rules of the College of the originating educational unit and does not require approval above the level of the College. The College Rules may further delegate responsibility to department or program faculties (GR VII.E.1-6). If the originating educational unit is not administratively housed in a college, then the department chair or director shall forward the proposal to the appropriate Academic Council.” (SR 3.2.3.3.1)

Non-credit bearing courses – definition (in non-credit bearing Badge credential context)

“For the purposes of this Senate policy, ‘course’ refers to a unit of educational content with paced delivery to enrolled learners, that includes required interactions with the supervising credentialed instructor during a fixed period of time, which culminates in the instructor’s assessment of the learner’s attainment of specific learning outcomes.” (SR 3.1.1.3)

Non-credit bearing programs – education relating to research

“ ‘Other educational units’ include those that are engaged in multidisciplinary research or interdisciplinary instruction, whether or not such programs lead to a degree or are ones in which work done by students is awarded academic credit. Examples include non-credit bearing multidisciplinary research programs conducted at centers or institutes...” (SR 3.3.3)

[Note: the Senate votes on the non-credit bearing educational content of proposed new multidisciplinary research centers, see example Senate Minutes [04/23/18](#)]

Non-credit bearing activities – education relating to community outreach:

“This is a focus on the application and provision of institutional resources for community use. Outreach can be formal or informal educational approaches to deliver university (research-based) information to the people and communities.” (SR 3.2.2.3.2.1.3)

There has been increasing attention to education happening outside of colleges, in both credit bearing and non-credit bearing contexts. The Senate acted in 2022 to bring credit-bearing courses homed outside of a college (e.g., UK 101) more clearly under the content-supervision of a ‘department faculty equivalent’ faculty body, and individual student cases under the jurisdiction of a ‘dean equivalent.’ (SR 1.4.1.1; SR 6.4.2.2). Within the present academic year, the attention of the Senate has been drawn to non-credit bearing activities homed outside of colleges, that lead to a non-transcripted credential with the same name as a currently transcripted credit bearing credential (e.g., “certificate”). **It has become more apparent that the Senate Rules should bring more clarity to the pedagogical and governance relationship between credit bearing and non-credit bearing educational activities.**

B. Charge

In the context of the above-summarized background, the Senate Council established an *ad hoc* committee to survey and develop appropriate recommendations on non-credit bearing educational activities occurring inside and outside of colleges. Specifically, the *ad hoc* committee was charged as follows:

Senate Council Chair to *ad hoc* committee (Oct. 21, 2022):

“The Senate Council has appointed this subcommittee to make recommendations related to the appropriate or suitable governance structures for educational activities that do not bear a course prefix or senate course number. The committee’s charge involves activities that occur either inside or outside colleges. This charge includes all educational activities whether or not they lead to a non-transcript credential. Examples of the latter include badges, certificates, micro credential[s], continual education credential[s].”

II. Committee Methods

The committee began by drafting working academic definitions that could be used to organize information to be gathered. These working definitions included:

Definition of ‘course’ – The definition above that was incorporated by the Senate into the Badge credential rule (SR 3.1.1.3)

Definition of ‘program’ – Coordinated educational content containing more than one course.

Definition of ‘credential’ – We did not define this at the outset, opting to first obtain more information

Definition of what is not included in the above –for the purpose of information gathering, we informed the persons surveyed that the above definitions did not include university activities to train UK

employees in performance of their UK duties (e.g., do not include IACUC training). Also, we did not include singular activities such as ‘lunch seminar’ or ‘afternoon workshop.’

The committee then gathered information in the following ways:

1. Survey information posted on University web sites. Web sites of the colleges, Provost Area, VPR Area, and Student Success area were examined for information about activities that would fit within the above working definitions. In some cases, follow-up phone calls secured further details.
2. Survey to Academic Associate Deans, VPR, Provost, Student Success (attach letter, Appendix A)
3. Individual targeted phone discussions/calls/emails by committee members

III. Information Obtained by Committee

A. Educational Activities Meeting Working Definition of Non-Credit Bearing Courses and Programs

A.1 Non-Credit Bearing Courses and Programs Homed Inside of Colleges

An example of a non-credit bearing course approved by local college faculty pursuant to the Senate delegation mechanism (SR 3.2.3.3.1) is the “Advanced Chemistry” course “designed to prepare incoming and current students for college level chemistry.” Additional college-overseen non-credit bearing courses include (examples, not all inclusive):

A&S	Advanced Chemistry (open to external community; incoming/current students)
A&S	ESL (non-credit bearing for international UK students)
B&E	Wall Street Scholars co-curricular courses (UK B&E students)
COM	MD student research experience adjacent to degree; recognized at graduation
Libraries	History Allies: Helping Protect Your Past (external community outreach)

A.2 Non-credit Bearing Courses and Programs Homed Outside of Colleges

There are an increasing number of non-credit bearing educational offerings homed outside of colleges, such as:

VPR	UK Innovate (graduate students and postdoctoral scholars)
VPSS	Service Learning and Civic Engagement Activities (UK students)
VPSS	iGrad (educ component); UK Invests (financial component); any UK student
Provost/CCTS	‘Intro to Clinical Research’; prereq for stipended research exper.; UK health students

B. Educational Activities Either Exempted or Not Meeting Working Definition of Non-Credit Bearing Courses and Programs

The committee observed a range of noncredit bearing courses and programs, homed inside or outside of colleges. It became apparent to the committee that several types of these courses/program are ‘well in regulatory hand’ or reasonably presumed to be, or not of sufficient educational mass to warrant Senate regulatory oversight. Hence, the Senate could consider that to the extent these educational activities may warrant attention by the Senate, the Senate Rules may delegate that monitoring to local college (or further delegated) faculties (see recommendations).

Specifically, these educational activities the committee identifies as appropriate for continuing their regulation at the ‘local’ college level include

B.1 Non-Credit Bearing Educational Activities Regulated by External Agencies/Accreditation Bodies

For this purpose of illustration, a prototype of this kind of educational activity could be the **medical residency/fellow programs** (Colleges of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy). The enrolled persons are considered by the University for some purposes as ‘trainee/student’ and other purposes as ‘employee’ (AR 5.4.V; SR 1.3.3.2.2). These educational programs are significantly regulated by external accreditation with a specified supervisory architecture (in disciplinary parlance, by a “Graduate Medical Education” (GME) framework). The charge to the University Senate from the Board of Trustees in GR IV.C.1 prescribes that the Senate promulgates any necessary Senate Rules to reflect these external accrediting requirements. Hence, the Senate Rules are structured to provide both (i) deferral of programmatic content oversight to the local college faculty/GME mechanisms (ii) ‘light constitutive Senate touch,’ such as that the learners are ‘head count tracked’ by a Senate numbered course (MC 800, 0.0 credit hours) for purpose of reporting learner numbers to the Council on Post-Secondary Education (SR 3.2.2.3.13.1).

A second example of tight external (e.g., federal) regulation of non-credit bearing education are activities delivered by **federally funded extension programs**, such as the Cooperative Extension Service that is primarily homed in the College of Agriculture, Food and the Environment (CAFÉ). In these courses/programs, the educational content is created/delivered by or under the ultimate supervision of faculty and the learners are typically citizens/communities throughout the state of Kentucky. Similarly, postdoctoral programs (postdoctoral scholars/fellows) that are, for example, funded by NIH are federally regulated to require a plan for the mentored training. At this time, the Senate considers that these kinds of activities are being appropriately locally supervised by the college/educational unit faculty in interaction with the federal regulatory bodies (SR 3.2.3.3.1; AR 5.1; US 04/11/2005).

Examples of **state regulation** of non-credit bearing course content are some offerings in the College of Education that are used toward teacher credentialing. At this time, the Senate considers that these activities are being appropriately locally supervised by the College of Education faculty in interaction with the state regulatory body (SR 3.2.3.3.1).

Another example are certain accredited **continuing education courses/programs** either delivered by UK faculty or with local coordination by UK faculty. These activities may culminate in a “certificate” (e.g., Pharmacy “CE Activity” leading to a “Teaching Certificate for Pharmacists”; available to post-PharmD learners in the residency program). At this time, the Senate Rules consider accredited continuing education courses as a kind of non-credit bearing course that is delegated to the supervision of the local college faculty (or further area of delegation) (SR 3.2.3.3.1).

B.2 Professional Service/Employee Development

The committee became aware of a large number of educational activities in which the **UK faculty employee is the learner**. The University also provides various activities in faculty professional development (e.g., workshop series to mentor junior faculty toward promotion/tenure), or to train faculty in compliance issues (e.g., IACUC), or to train faculty in teaching methods (e.g., CELT). For the purposes of the committee charge, the committee felt it was not the intent of the Senate to include these kinds of activities within the meaning of ‘non-credit bearing educational activities under academic Senate oversight.’

B.3 Short-term Educational Activities

There are many non-credit bearing educational activities in the University that are **short term**. These include lunch bag topical discussions that edify participating students/learners. Or faculty may deliver education in more structured webinars or ‘afternoon workshops’ in any of the areas of instruction, research and service. These are all a very important part of the educational contributions of faculty to University missions. For the purpose of the present report, the committee felt it best not to include these educational activities in the operational definition of ‘non-credit bearing course.’

C. Non-Credit Bearing Credentials

For those activities meeting the committee’s working definition of non-credit bearing courses & programs, the cmte identified a number of non-credit bearing educational activities leading to various ‘credentials’ of various meanings and names. Examples include:

C.1 Content of the Credential

In some cases the activity leading to the credential was described as a single ‘course’ (e.g., Engineering “Lean Certificate Course”), while in other cases the activity was described as several courses (e.g. “UK Innovate”)

C.2 Name of the Credential

Names for these non-credit bearing credentials included

- Badge (VPSS - Service Learning and Civic Engagement Activities; UK Invests/iGrad)
- Certificate (Engineering – True Lean)
- Microcredential (VPR - UK Innovate)

C.3 Meaning of the Credential

Generally, the meaning of the various credentials the committee identified was one of those below.

- Attestation of **attendance** at an educational delivery (‘completion of the activity’)
- Attestation of **participation** in an educational activity (‘completion of the activity’)
- Attestation of an attained **competence**
 - Example Lean Certificate Course (includes required homework assignments)

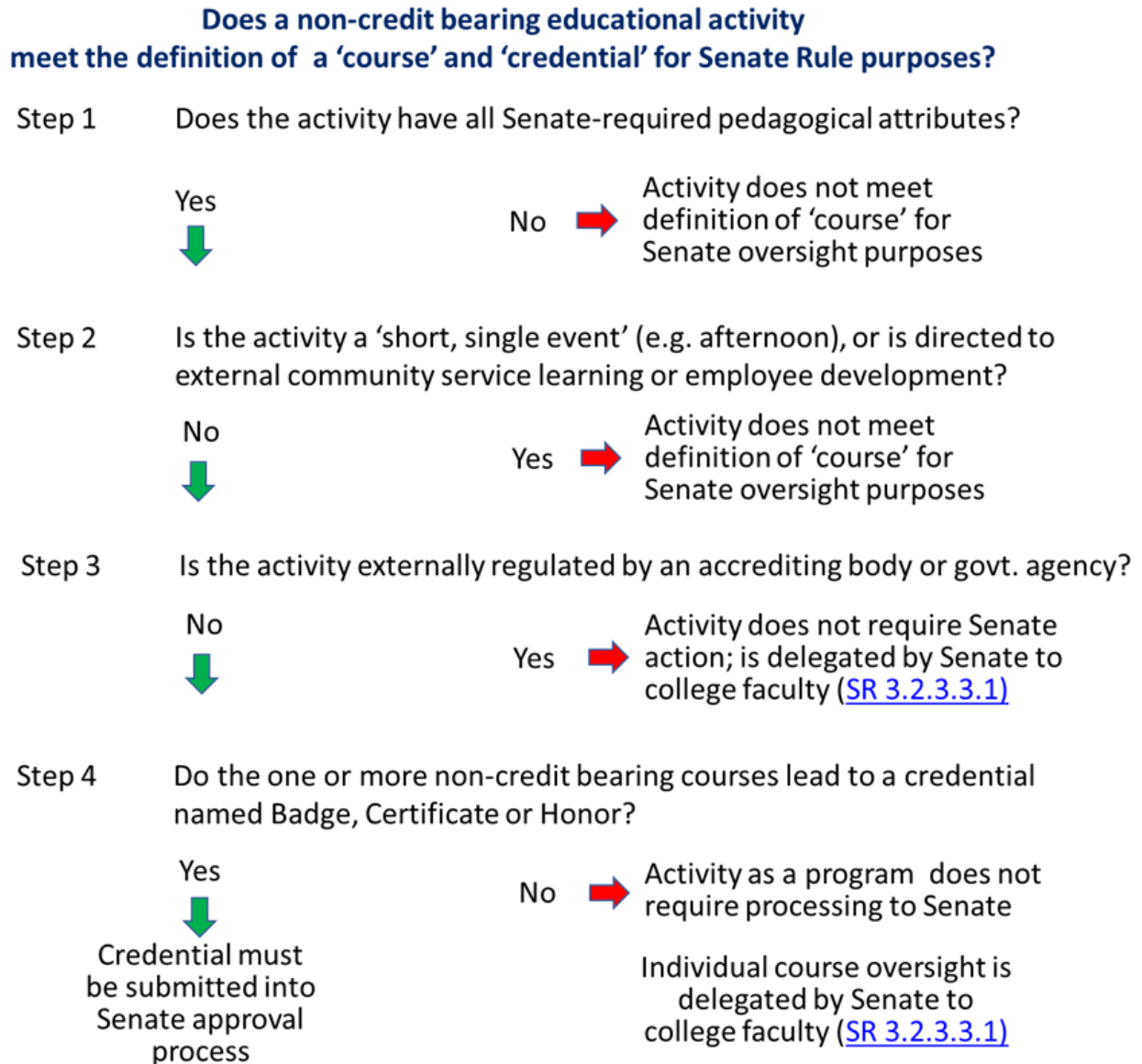
We note that for a number of these activities leading to a credential, it remains to be ascertained which ‘meaning’ above actually applies for the given credential. For example, if the credential is intended to attest that the participant has attained a competency, it was unclear to the committee how that competency is assessed and by who.

IV. Information Not Yet Obtained

There may be areas of the University that were not surveyed that but which may have non-credit bearing educational activities that warrant more understanding. Examples include the hospital side of UK Health Care, Athletics, and other areas overseen by various Vice Presidents.

V. Recommendations

The committee makes the following recommendations to the Senate Council for a process that we first illustrate diagrammatically below, after which we provide the definitional details of courses and program credentials.



A. Courses

A.1 Definition of Non-Credit Bearing Courses

The committee recommends that the narrative definition of 'courses' adopted by the Senate in Dec. 2022 for non-credit bearing courses in a Badge credential context be adopted by the Senate for all non-credit bearing contexts supervised directly by the Senate or supervised locally by college through delegation by the Senate.

A.2 Operationalization of Definition of Courses

We recommend that, as an aid to units/areas, the narrative definition previously adopted by the Senate for Badge context (below)

“a unit of educational content with paced delivery to enrolled learners, that includes required interactions with the supervising credentialed instructor during a fixed period of time, which culminates in the instructor’s assessment of the learner’s attainment of specific learning outcomes.”

be operationalized into a check-list of required features, so that through four steps (below) a determination can be quickly made units/areas as to whether an activity is encompassed by the Senate polices for active Senate oversight.

Step 1: Does the activity have the Senate-required pedagogical attributes for a non-credit bearing course?

For example, a possible operationalization into a check-list of the above definition could be:

Checklist of required features for ‘non-credit bearing course’ to be subject to Senate academic oversight.
Contact Senate Council office if there are questions about whether or not the educational activities meets the standards.

- has educational content
- has paced delivery
- is delivered to learners
- learners are enrolled in the activity
- interactions with an Instructor are required
- the Instructor has the necessary credentials
- occurs during a fixed period of time
- has specific learning outcomes, requirements, or the equivalents

Step 2: Is the activity externally regulated, or for community learners or for internal ‘employee training,’?

If all of the above features are met, but *any one* of the features below apply, then the activity is not subject to the Senate procedures on non-credit bearing education.

- afternoon workshop, ‘lunch and learn,’ special speaker webinar or similar activity
- professional development/employee training to be better faculty or staff employees
- the learners are not participating in a capacity as a UK student (e.g., it is a community outreach activity)

Step 3: Is the activity regulated by an external accrediting body or governmental agency?

If the content of the course (i) does not appear on the student’s official transcript and (2) cannot be used toward any credit-bearing degree or certificate (current SR 3.2.3.3.1*) and (3) is controlled/overseen by an accreditation agency or a federal, state, or local government agency, then the Senate delegates oversight to the local college faculty (or equivalent Senate-approved faculty body), that has responsibility for interacting with an external accreditation body and/or government agency.

*Note: SR 3.2.3.3.1 will be updated to “... cannot be used toward any credit-bearing degree, certificate, badge, honor, or as determined by the Senate Council office’

B. Programs

Step 4: Do the one or more non-credit bearing courses culminate in conferral of a credential that meets the definition promulgated by SACSCOC as an “educational program,” including those with the same name as a currently transcribed UK credential (certificate, badge, honor, or as determined by the Senate Council office)?

If the answer to is “yes,” then the program is subject to Senate oversight procedures. (For the procedures, see below).

If the answer to Step 4 is “no,” then the activity, even if locally portrayed as a ‘program,’ does not require submission to the Senate for approval.

If the non-credit bearing activity is composed of courses meeting the definition of non-credit bearing courses, but does not lead to a non-credit bearing credential named certificate, badge, or honor, then Senate’s Rules for oversight only apply at the level of individual courses (SR 3.2.3.3.1; see above subsection I.A relating to individual course policies).

Note: If activities that did not meet the standards in Steps 1, 2 and 3 and does not culminate in a credential that meets the definition promulgated by SACSCOC as an “educational program,” including those with the same name as a currently transcribed UK credential (certificate, badge, honor, or as determined by the Senate Council office), then those credentials are not subject to Senate oversight

B.1 Definition of Non-Credit Bearing Programs for the Purpose of Senate Oversight

The committee recommends the Senate Council adopt the following definition for the purpose of non-credit bearing education *that is subject to procedures of Senate programmatic-level oversight*:

A non-credit bearing program is an educational activity composed of one or more non-credit bearing courses that leads to a non-credit bearing credential.

B.2 Operationalization of Definition of Non-Credit Bearing Credentials

The committee recommends that at this time Senate oversight of non-credit bearing credentials is required only when it culminates in a credential that meets the definition promulgated by SACSCOC as an “educational program,” including those with the same name as a currently transcribed UK credential (e.g. certificate, badge, honor, or as determined by the Senate Council office).

C. Responsible Oversight of Non-Credit Bearing Courses and Program Credentials

C.1 Responsible Oversight of Non-Credit Bearing Courses

The committee recommends that the Senate continue with its present Senate Rule SR 3.2.3.3.1, quoted above, that delegates Senate oversight of pedagogically qualifying non-credit bearing courses (but that are not shown on a transcript and cannot be used toward a credit-bearing credential) to the local college faculty.

The committee recommends that non-credit bearing courses not be classified as ‘undergraduate,’ ‘graduate’ or ‘professional,’ although prerequisites for enrollment may refer to these. For the purpose of Senate policies of oversight, the Senate-level policies/actions will handle these activities as being in the single category of ‘non-credit bearing education.’

C2 Responsible Oversight of Non-Credit Bearing Programs and Credentials

The committee recommends that the Senate operationalize its oversight of non-credit bearing certificates, badges and honors in the following way.

The educational program leading to a non-credit bearing badge, certificate or honor will be processed by the Senate in the same manner currently prescribed (in SR 3.1.3) for non-credit bearing badges.

VI. Additional Considerations

The committee encountered aspects relating to non-credit bearing education but which were apparently outside of the committee's charge. The committee draws the attention of the Senate Council to these aspects for further contemplation as the Senate Council may find appropriate.

- What should be policies on 'cheating' or plagiarism, and penalties, in non-credit bearing courses? Who is the appropriate officer to dispense penalties for violating those policies ... the Dean (or Dean equivalent)? The Provost as the Chief Academic Officer? The Dean of Students (VPSS area)?
- Should findings of infraction of cheating/plagiarism policies for non-credit bearing courses a part of the 'permanent academic record' of the student that is maintained by the Registrar?
- What ought the role be for the Academic Ombud (whose jurisdiction controlled by Senate Rules)?
- How does University solicitation for students to participate in non-credit bearing courses (leading to 'credentials') relate to consequences for 'student load'?
- How does non-credit bearing education relate to "advising"? What University entity ought to make "advising policy" concerning non-credit bearing education? If responsibility for a non-credit bearing program has been delegated by the Senate to the local college faculty, does responsibility for associated advising follow that delegation also down to the college?
- How do principles of "shared governance" relate to decision-making about resourcing and content of non-credit bearing education? What is the role of students in college-level and University-level decisions and how is that role best effectuated?

Letter Sent to Associate Deans Soliciting Non-Credit Bearing Course/Program Information

From: Vincent, Leslie H. <lvinc2@uky.edu>
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2023 1:36 PM
To: Vincent, Leslie H. <lvinc2@uky.edu>
Subject: Senate Committee - Non-Credit Bearing Educational Programs

Good afternoon,

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you on Tuesday at the Associate Dean's Meeting. As I mentioned, Senate Council created a subcommittee to examine all non-crediting bearing educational activities occurring at UK. As part of that work on the committee, I am reaching out to you to ask for help in understanding what non-credit bearing educational activities occur within your college. In this sense, our committee is seeking to learn more about activities within your college where 'a credentialed educator is teaching knowledge to receiving learners.'

Would you be able to provide information on the following non-credit bearing educational activities that are offered by your college (i.e., not a Senate approved course or program)? These non-credit bearing activities could include:

- An individual non-credit bearing course, or
- Several non-credit bearing courses comprising a program, or
- A credential conferred for the non-credit bearing activity (e.g., badge, certificate)

Additionally, the students/learners could be already enrolled UK students or members of the community. This would not include any internal training sessions for UK employees as it relates to their employed position or single event activities (e.g., lunch and learn, guest seminars, or training event).

Our committee would like to receive this information by January 31, so we have time to compile the information and report back to Senate Council. If you prefer to schedule a time to meet and discuss the programs, please let me know and I would be happy to meet in person or on Zoom. Additionally, if it is easier to direct our committee to a website to learn more about these courses/programs/credentials for your college, we would welcome that information as well.

I really appreciate your time and efforts to help University Senate.

Best,

Leslie