



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

February 17, 2023

Credit Update

Background

The Board's Strategic Plan includes an initiative to transition the Utah System of Higher Education's (USHE) eight technical colleges and Salt Lake Technical College from clock-hours to semester credits. Once complete, all 16 higher education institutions will use the same currency.

The transition will address rules currently imposed on clock-hour institutions by the U.S. Department of Education. These rules restrict the delivery of instruction in a hybrid or distance education format, requiring that students complete all coursework in a synchronous-or live format. While the rules only apply to financial aid eligible students, faculty members are unable to enforce different course delivery and attendance standards for different populations of students.

Restrictive instructional delivery formats and inflexible attendance requirements present a barrier to student access and completion, two priorities defined in the Board's Strategic Plan. Transitioning to credit will remove the restrictions to enable institutions to deliver instruction in the best format using the most flexible scheduling method possible.

The Council on Occupational Education (COE) accredits Utah's technical colleges. COE has an application process and grants approval for an institution to transition from clock-hours to semester credits. COE requires Board approval of each program, an application, and a fee.

Implementation of credit will take place program-by-program and student-by-student during a two-year period, with a teach-out option in the clock-hour format. This means current students will remain in the clock-hour program and new students will enroll in the credit-granting program. Tuition and fees will be approved for both credit and non-credit during the teach-out period.

While clock-hour to credit requests have been presented to the Board, some institutions will need to update the applications with program changes. Any changes will be presented to the Board and then to the COE Clock-Hour to Credit applications.

Applications to COE for Southwest, Davis and Dixie have been processed. Southwest has tuition and fee approval and is leading out on the implementation. As soon as tuition and fees are approved for Davis and

Dixie, these institutions can begin implementation. The remaining institutions will request approval of tuition and fees in March. The Office of the Commissioner will submit applications to COE and subject to approval, institutions will begin implementation on July 1, 2023.

While we have applications that have been submitted for Uintah Basin Technical College, they host an accreditation reaffirmation visit in February. A moratorium is placed on institutional changes six months before a site visit, and substantive changes including the transition to credit cannot be made until the accreditation is fully reaffirmed.

Salt Lake Technical College is developing an implementation plan to begin the transition to credit on July 1, 2023.

Technical education offered at Snow College and Utah State University already grant semester credits, so no changes are required.

To support the technical education institutions in their implementation of credit and to ensure those responsible for this work receive complete and consistent information, the Office of the Commissioner developed a Credit Implementation Guide. This centralized resource provides extensive guidance in every aspect of implementation.

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item; no action required.