

**Resolution on Updating SUNY Policy on
The Credit/Contact Hour Relationship
Submitted By The Undergraduate Academic Programs And Policies Committee
Spring 2008 Plenary**

PREAMBLE

The SUNY Academic Affairs policy *Document 1305* regarding the credit/contact hour relationship and the June 30, 1976 Memorandum to Presidents titled *Credit/Contact Hour Relationship* (Vol. 76, No. 8) upon which this SUNY policy was founded is now more than thirty years old. In that time there have been significant advancements in higher education related to various formats of study and evaluation.

Faculty, administrators, and program planners are concerned, in light of new pedagogical strategies like distance learning and online instruction, that they are meeting the goals and standards intended within the curricula in their various schools and departments as relates to the credit/contact hour and its implementation in these changing times. They likewise require clear and consistent guidance for determining how credit is to be awarded and for calculating time on task.

The SUNY Academic Affairs policy *Document 1305* regarding the credit/contact hour relationship and the June 30, 1976 Memorandum to Presidents titled *Credit/Contact Hour Relationship* (Vol. 76, No. 8) does not clearly acknowledge that

- Distance learning now awards credit to students for completing courses that do not require seat time or face-to-face contact hours.
- does not speak directly to distance learning or to online instruction
- does not recognize or cite New York State Department of Education (NYSED) regulations

The policy does not correlate to NYSED regulations in the following ways:

- Paragraph four of the Dearing memo or paragraph three under the Policy section of Document 1305 does not include mention of the supplementary two hours of outside preparation required for one credit earned as defined in both SUNY Policy and NYSED regulations. See TITLE 8 CHAPTER II REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER, §50.1 (o)
- Paragraph 5 under the heading of Experiential Learning in the Dearing memo defines the semester credit hour as to be awarded based on a 40-45 clock-hour week. This language should more consistently align itself with the definition in paragraph two of the Dearing memo and paragraph one of the Policy section in Document 1305. There are distinctions that require clarification in terms of minimum hours required depending on the definition of an hour as either a semester hour of 50 minutes duration and/or a clock hour of 60 minutes. The current definition implies a combination of both setting an award of credit to coincide with a minimum of 42.50 hours.
- There is no mention in SUNY policy in either the Dearing memo or Document 1305 regarding the direct responsibility for the awarding of credit by the institution as in

NYSED regulations. See TITLE 8 CHAPTER II REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER, §50.1 (n)

- There is no mention in SUNY policy in either the Dearing memo or Document 1305 regarding learning outcomes as required in NYSED regulations. See TITLE 8 CHAPTER II REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER, §52.2 (c) (5)
- There is no mention in SUNY policy in either the Dearing memo or Document 1305 regarding the consultation of faculty for the development and implementation of a policy such as this as required in NYSED regulations. See TITLE 8 CHAPTER II REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER, §52.2 (b)(3)

This resolution calls for there be an appropriate explication of law and policy that will be more accessible and transparent to faculty, administrators, and program planners.