

Benchmarking Audit and Non-Credit Courses Faculty Senate Committee Recommendations

Charge: To benchmark AZ CC and Peer Institutions on policies on auditing and non-credit course opportunities that will be submitted to Faculty Senate and to the Chancellor's Cabinet for review.

Working Group: Senators Susan Heinrich, Guadalupe Cruickshank, Patricia Figueroa, and Rick Rosen; Staff members - Kate Schmidt and Michael Tulino.

Additional Support: Office of Planning and Institutional Research, Bob Teso and Nicola Richmond. [This report is attached to supplement this summary.]

Task Delineation: Two separate issues: 1) **Audit/No Grade** policies for traditional credit courses (courses governed by the college's curriculum process and certification requirements), and 2) **Non-Credit Courses** traditionally offered through Community Campus that are primarily special interest and/or professional development.

1) Audit/No Grade Policy: Of the 22 Arizona and peer college's catalog statements, Pima's was among the most limited in providing information, policies, and procedures. Pima's current statements are as follows:

- Students can audit most credit class with the instructor's permission. Auditing a class means that you enroll, pay for, attend and do work for the class but do not receive credit or a grade. Audit registration must be conducted in person at any campus or district admissions office between the first day of class and the drop/refund date of the class. After registering for an audit course, any and all changes to the student's schedule must be made in person (p32, Enrolling in Classes, 2008-2009 Catalog).
- AU - Audit: To audit a class means to enroll in and to attend a class without working for or expecting to receive credit. The symbol for audit, AU, appears on the class enrollment list by the student's name. Students auditing a class must register by the end of the official refund period and must receive the written permission of the instructor. Courses audited after fall 2003 will not appear on your transcript (p33, Grading Policies, 2008-2009 Catalog)
- Tuition (per class) - Audit Classes (non-refundable) is \$49.50 per course for resident and non-resident students (p36, Tuition and Fees, 2008-2009 Catalog).
- Noncredit courses, audited courses, failed courses, or courses from which the student withdraws do not count toward continuous enrollment (p55, Student's Catalog of Record, 2008-2009 Catalog).

The committee's recommendations and rationale on Course Audits are summarized below after comparing Pima policy with statements from the other colleges:

Recommended Policy Points

Rationale

Dates and Timeline Related

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students may enroll between the <u>first day of class and last day of the drop/add refund date of the class</u>• Students enrolled for an audit | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No change. Decisions on whether a class has sufficient enrollment would be made as they are now.• Benefits the student and the college if the student decides to go for the standard grade by the deadline for determining course census. |
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<p>may change their status to standard grading up to the 45th day or last day to withdrawal from the course, which ever occurs first.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students may NOT change their status to Audit from standard grades after the drop/add period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making a change after drop/add to "audit" may have caused other "standard grade" students to be denied a seat in a full course.
<p>Permissions & Eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructor permission and that of the dept. chair or representative.• Preference given to "for credit students" for enrollment• Not all courses should be presumed to be eligible for audit status.• Must meet all course prerequisites including appropriate test scores prior to enrolling with "audit status."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adjunct faculty may not be aware of dept or campus enrollment goals.• For various reasons (popularity, accelerated pace, certification and/or occupational considerations, delivery mode, etc) some courses may not be appropriate for audit.• Recommend departments and/or CDACs discuss auditing policies by prefix or course.• Students must be prepared for the level of work to participate in general course activities
<p>Expectations of Students/Instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students are expected to follow course attendance policies and to participate in general course activities• Instructors are not required to grade course assignments, projects, and/or exams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student attendance and preparedness may affect course activities.• Credit students shall be the instructors' first priority and instructors should be encouraged to discuss this with students when permission is granted to audit
<p>Tuition and Fees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full in-state tuition for the course• All "regular fees" and special course fees• A non-refundable "Audit" fee of $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1 credit per course taken• Students may retake an audited course for credit and pay all applicable tuition and fees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current practice is to charge 1 credit regardless of course credits. Language courses make up the majority of audits and lose approximately 3 credits plus 4 credits of state matching fund per course.• Students currently could use the auditing policy to take courses they could subsequently test out of. The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) could allow a student to audit four semesters of language for approximately \$200 plus a \$105 fee to gain 16

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credits (a loss of \approx \$500 of tuition plus 16 credits toward FTSE for state funding).

- Fitness courses are the second largest category, are 1-credit and only lose the state matching funds. If future proposals would allow for standard courses to be taken non-credit and/or as part of an employee wellness program, additional fees may be necessary and are charged at Maricopa schools.
- The majority of AZ CC's charge a fee of \$25 - \$35/course.
- Stating the fee as a percentage of tuition, all future changes would be automatic and proportional when tuition increases. Ideally, the audit fee would go to the dept/campus to fund supplies to support the courses.

Grade Codes/Marks

- Show AU symbol on transcripts of all audited courses.
- Pima was the only one of 22 CC's that had a policy of not showing some grade code for audits on transcripts (as of Fall 2003).
- Instructors/universities may want to know how many times a course was attempted before it was completed, especially if prior learning is a college consideration
- Should allow for easier tracking on grade reports in various disciplines that may shape future policy decisions or revisions by specific programs or prefixes.

Financial Aid/Veteran's Benefits

- Financial aid is rarely granted for audits and will be at the discretion of the granting institution
- Little expectation of this being possible, but we are not familiar enough with financial aid requirements to recommend otherwise with certainty.

2) Non-Credit Courses: At least three colleges, AZ Western, Tarrant, and Hillsborough, appear to have a Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory/No Credit (S/U/N) option in addition to the AU policy. We were unable to differentiate between those grade marks and the AU marks during this time period.

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The Community Campus, under Kathleen Marks (Advanced Program Manager Community Education) and Terry Sawma (VP of Instruction), is working to improve and standardize the offering of Non-Credit and continuing education courses by reviewing policies on curriculum, fee structure, instructor compensation, marketing, and screening for appropriate staff qualifications. Ms. Marks and Dr. Sawma have completed benchmarking on Community Education programs at other institutions.

Our committee would recommend this Community Campus department seek advice from faculty, particularly in areas where there have been high numbers of audit students and/or special interest offerings in order to align and structure curriculum when appropriate. This might facilitate greater sharing of resources, such as instructors, space, facilities, equipment, and materials. The non-credit programs could also be an avenue for offering professional development and additional licensure and/or certification in some areas, and the collaboration between the Community Campus and existing departments/CDACs may be beneficial to both.

If the proposed increase to the audit tuition and fee structure is adopted, auditing full-length courses, effectively taking them as a non-credit option, would still be an economical avenue for students to participate in quality educational experiences, ranging from less than \$1 to \$4 per contact hour for instruction by a certified instructor. This is far less than the typical contact hour for most non-credit courses. However, non-credit courses might include shorter sessions and alternative formats in the same or similar topics, as well as expanding topics and programs to determine and respond to the wants and needs of the community.

Final Comments: Additionally, the college may want to develop a structured "Senior Option" to encourage participation in both regular and non-credit courses by this group. During the benchmarking process, we found that Mohave offers courses to seniors for \$10/credit hour, Macomb offers a 10% discount on all college services including tuition and fees, and Florida has a statewide fee waiver program for residents 60 and over to enroll the first day of class for an audit on a space available basis. We did not have sufficient data to estimate the financial impact of one of these options at Pima, nor could we project whether these policies would continue with many states and colleges facing budget cuts in the current economic climate.

Finally, developing a cohesive marketing plan for all programs, credit, non-credit, and audit to target audiences will allow the College to gauge community needs and interests and program accordingly.