



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

30 7th ST. E., SUITE 350
ST. PAUL, MN 55101-7804

Ph: 651.201.1800
Fax: 651.297.5550
www.mnscu.edu

DATE: November 16, 2015

TO: Chief Academic Officers
Chief Student Affairs Officers

FROM: Ron Anderson, Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs


SUBJECT: Concurrent Enrollment

I am sending this note to update you on our collective response and plans moving forward to address concurrent enrollment and the Higher Learning Commission's recent clarification of the Assumed Practices on faculty qualifications and [updated guidelines](#), as well as recent actions of the HLC Board of Trustees announced last Thursday. I also have attached a message that you can share with your K12 partners as you continue to work with them to maintain your concurrent enrollment program and meet the HLC's guidelines.

As a system, we are committed to supporting and growing concurrent enrollment opportunities for all Minnesota students. Concurrent enrollment provides rigorous college courses for students, offers an affordable pathway to a college degree through tuition-free college credits, and provides an opportunity to accelerate attainment of the college degree by simultaneously earning credit for both the high school diploma and college degree.

With the expectation that all MnSCU colleges and universities with concurrent enrollment programs will implement the HLC's standards for minimum faculty qualifications, we are developing a course of action that will assist you in working with your K-12 partners to meet the requirements. We are committed to supporting our institutions to continue operating your concurrent enrollment programs with minimal interruption as we move through the coming years. We want to assure you that we will work collaboratively with you so that concurrent enrollment programs will not be put in jeopardy.

In light of our commitment to concurrent enrollment, I would like to emphasize the following points:

1. The Higher Learning Commission had previously communicated that in most cases, colleges and universities will not be evaluated against the revised minimum faculty qualifications until their next comprehensive evaluation or assurance review. If HLC determines then, or at any time after September 1, 2017, that an institution is not in conformity with faculty qualification expectations, HLC will

work with that institution to ensure that the requirement is met within an approximate two-year time frame after the deficiency is noted, provided that the institution has been acting in good faith up to that point to meet this requirement.

On November 5, 2015, the HLC Board of Trustees made the decision to allow institutions with concurrent enrollment programs to apply for an extension of this deadline if the institution believes its concurrent enrollment program is not able to be in compliance by September 1, 2017. Based on the circumstances presented in the application, extensions will be granted up to September 2022. Any extension granted will apply only to an institution's concurrent enrollment program: all other programs at an institution receiving such an extension must be in compliance by the September 2017 deadline. The HLC has also communicated that a state higher education entity may apply for the extension on behalf of accredited institutions under its jurisdiction. When further information on the extension application process becomes available, the ASA division will consult with Leadership Council about pursuing a system-wide extension.

2. Over the next few months, Human Resources and Academic and Student Affairs will be working with all campuses to complete a credentialing audit of all faculty including those currently teaching concurrent enrollment courses. The intent of this audit is to establish the scope and areas of credentialing need. This information will then be used to inform our development of credentialing options across the state. More information will be forthcoming on this process in the coming weeks, and I would greatly appreciate your participation and assistance in completing the audit.
3. Academic and Student Affairs has already begun discussions with our universities about developing opportunities for discipline-specific graduate-level coursework delivered in ways that are sensitive to the needs of adults and working professionals (e.g., blended/hybrid, online, cohort models, weekends) and that are accessible statewide. MnSCU universities will work with their faculty members to explore additional avenues that may include credit for prior learning, master's programs in education that include discipline-specific graduate-level coursework, and other creative solutions. We will also work to identify options for Career Technical Education concurrent enrollment instructors to meet faculty requirements specific to their industry field.
4. In addition to creating pathways to meet faculty qualifications, Academic and Student Affairs will work with the Leadership Council and campuses to look more closely at how tested experience (as defined in the HLC's October 1, 2015 guidelines) can be appropriately and consistently applied. On the basis of those

discussions we will develop system policies and procedures outlining the criteria and process for determining faculty qualifications on the basis of tested experience.

5. We will be collaborating with the Minnesota Department of Education, the Governor's office, and our state legislature to identify resources needed to support concurrent enrollment instructors and concurrent enrollment programs.

In addition to responding to the Higher Learning Commission's recent clarification of faculty qualifications, I also would like to inform you about the Leadership Council's engagement in addressing quality and consistency of concurrent enrollment programs across our system. We have recognized that concurrent enrollment practices have varied widely across our institutions as partnerships have developed locally over time. In some instances this variation has caused regional or state-wide competition and "partner shopping." To address the issues, two administrative work groups were formed to develop consistent approaches in the areas of credentialing and pricing. Over the next few months, the Leadership Council will continue to refine these recommendations, with the intent that MnSCU campuses will implement these consistent practices system-wide to better deliver and scale our high-quality programming with our secondary partners.

Most importantly, we want to assure you and our secondary partners that we value concurrent enrollment programs and are committed to continuing these partnerships. We will work collaboratively to deliver the highest quality concurrent enrollment programs statewide.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.