

# Academic Integrity in Courses Offered in Shortened Time Frames

Fall 2006

Resolution Number:  09.01

Contact:  [Mark Wade Lieu](http://www.asccc.org/directory/mark-wade-lieu)

Assigned to:  [Curriculum Committee](http://www.asccc.org/directory/curriculum-committee)

Topic:  Curriculum

Status:  Completed

Whereas, With the move of many colleges to compressed calendars and study abroad programs and due to enrollment pressures, a number of colleges are scheduling three-, four-, and even five-unit courses in shortened time frames of fewer than six weeks; and

Whereas, There are pedagogical considerations that need to be reviewed by both the faculty within the disciplines of courses proposed under such time fames as well as the curriculum committees of colleges using such compressed calendars;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommend that when a course of three or more semester or equivalent quarter units is to be offered in a time frame of fewer than six weeks, the local curriculum committee, as part of the curriculum approval process, engage the discipline faculty in a separate review of the course for the following: academic integrity and rigor, the method for meeting Carnegie units, the ability for students to complete and for faculty to evaluate assignments, including those done outside of class, and the appropriateness of the method of delivery, to determine whether the course should be offered in a specific shortened time frame. MSC Disposition: Local Senates, Curriculum Chairs, CIOs

Summary:

Recommend that when a course of three or more semester or equivalent quarter units is to be offered in a time frame of fewer than six weeks, the local curriculum committee, as part of the curriculum approval process, engage the discipline faculty in a separate review of the course for the following: academic integrity and rigor, the method for meeting Carnegie units, the ability for students to complete and for faculty to evaluate assignments, including those done outside of class, and the appropriateness of the method of delivery, to determine whether the course should be offered in a specific shortened time frame.

Recommendation:

The next Curriculum Committee should create this guide as a high priority and create a solution with SACC.

Status Report:

The committee discussed this issue, which has been the subject of a variety of resolutions. The committee concluded that it should address the issue one more time via a Rostrum article, which was written by committee member Zerryl Becker and which appeared in the April 2010 Rostrum.



# Maintaining the Academic Integrity of Short Term Courses

April 2010

Zerryl Becker, College of the Desert, Curriculum Committee Member

Is it really possible to effectively teach a three-unit writing course in four weeks? A business law course in a weekend? Reading in a six-week summer session?

With community colleges under pressure to be more efficient, more innovative, and more responsive to the needs of diverse student populations, semesters have been shortened from 18 to 16 weeks, summer sessions are offered in eight, six and four-week formats, and four-week winter intersessions are becoming common.

There is no question that these short term options provide great opportunity for students and for the college. But are they being used wisely? Is academic integrity being maintained? Curriculum is definitely a faculty responsibility. Assignment and scheduling are usually the right of the District. But when scheduling begins to impact curriculum, it is imperative that faculty be involved. Title 5 §55002.5 establishes the minimum expected time for one unit of credit as 48 semester hours.

The Program and Course Approval Handbook, 3rd Edition, defines these as two of the standards local curriculum committees should use in approving degree applicable courses:

Units, based on a relationship specified by the governing board in compliance with Title 5 §55002.5, which requires that a minimum of 48 hours of lecture, laboratory, out-of-class assignments or other types of study for one unit of credit. For each hour of lecture, the course should require two hours of study and/or laboratory and/or assigned activity. (CCC, 2009, p. 29)

Intensity and rigor, as evidenced by the outline of course topics, the course objectives, assignments, assessments, and reading materials identified in the course outline of record. Achieving the objectives of degree-applicable credit courses must require students to study independently outside of class time. There is an expectation that students will spend two hours outside of class for each one hour of lecture. (CCC, 2009, p. 30)

At a minimum, tight, compressed scheduling patterns must consider these curricular rules and good practices. It is not appropriate to offer courses in a compressed time frame that, by its design, would not permit the student to complete the amount of out-of-class homework required to meet the hours-to-units relationship mandated by Title 5.

For a one-unit lecture class offered in four weeks, this would require twelve hours of commitment each week from students—four hours for lecture and eight hours for homework. A three-unit class would require 36 hours of commitment each week from each student—a full time job. Add in considerations of time for instructors to provide adequate feedback and pedagogical questions of learning and this clearly becomes an issue for faculty.

In various resolutions, the Academic Senate has urged community college faculty and administration to investigate the effect of compressed calendars on such factors as student retention, course completion, student success in lecture and lab courses, pedagogy, budget, curriculum change processes, class conflicts, the scheduling of instructional and non-instructional faculty, instructional support services, number of flex days, and student access to child care.

The Academic Senate urges curriculum committees to accept responsibility for compressed formats as a Title 5 mandate, to be diligent in making decisions regarding compressed formats, to refrain from offering any courses of three or more semester units in any alternative delivery time frames other than full-term except with the consent of the tenured discipline faculty and the curriculum committee, and—in consultation with discipline faculty—to review short-term courses for academic integrity and rigor, the method for meeting Carnegie units, the appropriateness of the method of delivery, and the class size.

**References**

California Community Colleges (CCC). (2009). Program and course approval handbook. Sacramento, CA. Author. Retrieved March 14, 2010, from <http://www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/PCAH3_Mar2009_v3.pdf>

The articles published in the Rostrum do not necessarily represent the adopted positions of the academic senate. For adopted positions and recommendations, please browse this website.