

RECOMMENDATION TO FACULTY SENATE

FROM

CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

It is recommended that the University discontinue the practice of classifying credit in courses offered off-campus as extension credit. It is to be understood that this will have the effect of removing the present 25% limitation on undergraduate credit that can be earned off-campus through the Division of Continuing Education.

A PROPOSAL TO REMOVE THE TERM "EXTENSION"
FROM ALL UNDERGRADUATE CREDIT OFFERED OFF-CAMPUS

I. Background

In the last several years there has been a drastic change in attitudes in this country and abroad about the earning of college credit off-campus and the awarding of degrees to students who do not attend traditional campus classes. Witness the development of the British Open University in the last few years. The British Government has spent over \$100,000,000 in the development of a program for the British public who could benefit from a college education, but who could not take the time from jobs or families to enroll as students on university campuses. With the help of radio, television, small seminar groups, and the development of new curricula materials, an extensive off-campus degree program has been developed throughout Britain with thousands of citizens enrolled. It is possible that we will see the beginning of the North American Open University in the next two years.

A new development in this country that is spreading rapidly is the "external degree" concept. An external degree is one that students may earn without enrolling in traditional college classes or in residence on a campus. Much of the academic work is earned through independent study, but with occasional conferences with a faculty member or members from the campus. Work is usually offered in large blocks in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences rather than in segmented three semester or five quarter hour courses. Syracuse University and the University of Oklahoma are two institutions that have led in the development of the external degree. Statewide programs for external degrees have already been developed or are in various stages of development in California, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and

several other states. Well-known institutions throughout the country have already developed or are developing external degree programs on their own. There are several North Carolina institutions that are contemplating the initiation of an external degree program also.

Along with these developments there has been a trend toward allowing more and more credit off-campus in traditional course work. Consistent with this change in attitude toward traditional classwork in an off-campus setting, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools adopted a new Standard dealing with continuing education and extension work in its December, 1971, meeting. Standard IX, Special Activities, covers such aspects as extension classes, foreign travel and study, correspondence and home study, centers, conferences, institutes, short courses, and television and radio. In the previous Standard IX that had been in effect for several years prior to the adoption of the new standard, the statement pertaining to extension said that courses taken by extension must be so identified on transcripts or student records and further that credit by extension could not exceed one-third of the total hours required for a degree. Where correspondence was concerned, such credit had to be so identified and could not exceed one-fourth of the total hours required for the degree. There were stipulations in the old standard pertaining to other types of credit as well. In the development of the new Standard IX, the Southern Association has taken cognizance of the development of external degree programs, removes the requirement that extension courses be identified on student records, and removes all limitations on credit by extension, correspondence, or other means. This represents a complete change from requirements in the old Standard IX.

II. Limitations on Off-Campus Credit at Other Institutions

A survey was made recently of twenty institutions to determine their policies pertaining to limitations on off-campus or extension credit. These institutions were selected at random from institutions that are (1) members of the National University Extension Association, and (2) institutions that have large and well-known continuing education programs.

Replies were received from all twenty institutions to which questionnaires were sent. Following is a general summary of their replies:

No limit on credit earned off-campus	five institutions
Three year limit on credit earned off-campus	five institutions
Two year limit on credit earned off-campus	four institutions
One year limit on credit earned off-campus	six institutions

One of the five institutions that allows three years of credit indicated that it soon expected to have no limitations on credit. One of the four institutions with a two year limitation indicated the same. Four of the six institutions with a one year limitation indicated that they too expected upward revisions in the amount of credit that would be allowed off-campus.

In the region of the Southern Association it was determined that a few institutions in the region such as Florida State and Virginia already had very liberal policies concerning off-campus credit. Others are planning to initiate such policies soon. Among these is the University of Georgia

System which has a system-wide committee that soon expects to make a recommendation that all restrictions on off-campus credit be removed. An institution in this state, North Carolina State, has a similar proposal under consideration. As has been previously indicated, most of the institutions that were more restrictive indicated that they soon expected or hoped to make changes.

Following is a list of the institutions surveyed and the number of hours of undergraduate credit that can be earned in extension or off-campus:

Ball State University	45 q.h.
Central Michigan University	109 s.h.
East Tennessee State University	50 q.h.
Florida State University	No limit by 9 depts. now; all depts. soon.
Michigan State University	140 q.h.
Northern Illinois University	One-half of credit toward degree
Penn State University	84 s.h.
Rutgers University	No limit.
University of Florida	Varies by college; some no limit.
University of Georgia	One-fourth of credit for degree.
University of Illinois	60 s.h.
University of Kentucky	32 s.h.
University of Nebraska	One-half of credit for degree.
University of South Carolina	30 s.h.
University of South Florida	No limit.
University of Southern Mississippi	144 q.h.
University of Tennessee	One-half of credit for degree.

University of Virginia	66 to 90 s.h.
University of West Florida	No limit.
University of Wisconsin - Eau Clair	One-fourth of credit for degree.

III. Proposal for East Carolina University

It is proposed that the University discontinue the practice of classifying courses offered off-campus as extension credit (credit at the Cherry Point and Camp Lejeune Centers is already classified the same as campus credit). In essence, this makes all credit the same whether it is earned on-campus or off-campus. At present there is no statement in the catalogue that requires credit earned off-campus to be so designated. Nevertheless, it is the practice at the University to designate off-campus credit as "extension" and to limit such credit to 25% of that required for a degree. The statement on page 87 of the current University bulletin states:

Of the total hours required for graduation, a combination of 25% correspondence and extension will be allowed with a maximum of 15% of that done by correspondence.

In effect, the adoption of such a proposal would remove the 25% restriction on extension as far as course work from this institution is concerned.

The question immediately arises "Does this proposal then permit a student to earn a degree off-campus without ever enrolling on the Greenville campus?" The answer to this question is "No" for two reasons. First, there remains the requirement on page 94 of the University bulletin which states "Any student who receives a degree from East Carolina University must have done as much as one scholastic

year's work as a resident student on the Greenville campus." Second, and to be more realistic, it is not even possible to offer in many instances upper level courses off-campus. At the two resident centers that have been in operation for years, it is difficult now for a student to earn as many as 95 quarter hours. In the evening program on-campus which has been in operation for several years there are no restrictions as to credit; however, it is also very difficult for a student to earn as many as 95 quarter hours. In the evening program on-campus which has been in operation for several years there are no restrictions as to credit; however, it is also very difficult for a student to obtain more than two years of work. The basic reason for this is the lack of students in sizable enough numbers to offer upper-level courses plus the difficulty in securing competent faculty and teaching resources for such courses.

Admission requirements for the program would be adapted to correspond to the present evening college and off-campus center programs. In effect, these programs require a student to meet either the regular admission requirements or for adult students to enroll in thirty-five hours on a probationary status. If the student does acceptable work on the thirty-five hours, then he may qualify for admission if he meets all other admission requirements.

Studies of students who have qualified for admission to campus through this method from the centers and the evening program indicate that once they are enrolled on campus they do as well as or better than regular campus students.

IV. Students Who Will Benefit By the Proposed Change in Policy

Students who will benefit most by this policy change will be adults who are tied to their home communities. Some of these ties are economic and some are due to family obligations. More specifically, students who are classified as poor or in the lower economic echelon will benefit greatly by the change. Quite a few of these are black. In the professions, it will benefit students who are working in programs in nursing, early childhood education and family development, and criminal justice.

For example, the Division of Continuing Education and the School of Home Economics have cooperated for the last several years in a program for Head Start teachers and aides in several localities in eastern North Carolina. Most of these teachers have had no professional training and have had no hopes for reaching any higher educational objective or level. With the help of a federal grant and the initiation of a program for the Head Start teachers, many of these students have accumulated forty-five to forty-eight quarter hours of work. Many of those who are qualified to continue wish to do so, but to take time off for the three years of additional academic work is not within their reach. Increasing the amount that they would be allowed to take off-campus would bring them within closer range of the goal of a degree. The closer they are able to come to this objective the more likely they will be able to make arrangements to enroll on-campus. The same is true for many nurses enrolled in the program that the Division is offering in cooperation with the School of Nursing. The same is also true for N. C. Department of Corrections students who are enrolled in the criminal justice program at Central Prison in Raleigh. It is a much advertised fact today that there is a critical need for qualified and educated people in the correctional system.

In addition, there are students at the several technical institutes where East Carolina University is offering the first year of college level work who would benefit. Many of these students who are qualified and would like to continue college work are finding it impossible to do so because they cannot take as many as three years off to complete the degree. By moving them a little closer to their objective, it would enhance the possibility of their being able eventually to enroll on campus to complete the degree.

During the 1971-72 academic year the Division of Continuing Education expects to have between 14,000 and 15,000 registrations. This number of registrations reflects close to 10,000 different individuals. Of this number, there are approximately 1,200 individuals currently enrolled in undergraduate programs offered by the Division of Continuing Education. This includes students at the two resident centers. Of the 1,200 students, close to 500 will have a full year of academic work completed by the end of this academic year. Therefore, removal of the 25% limitation would immediately help these people. This does not include students who have been previously enrolled but who have had to discontinue their work because of the limitation. This would probably account for another 750 to 1,000 students. Therefore, a change in the policy and removal of the 25% limitation could help almost immediately 1,500 students who would be able to move closer to their educational objective.

A question likely to arise is the one that "If more credit is allowed off-campus, will this not decrease the number of students coming to campus at a time when more campus students are needed?" The reply to this is that very few if any of these students would have enrolled on this or any other

campus had not a convenient and needed program been made available to them. By extending the amount of credit that a student will be allowed to take off-campus, it more nearly guarantees that he will decide to come to this campus to complete his degree. As it stands now, some of the students who have completed one-fourth of their credit toward a degree are now looking toward other institutions to which they can commute or institutions which will bring programs to them. While the following should not be a primary consideration for making a change in the policy, the change should also help to deter the transition of area technical institutes into community colleges. In fact, a change in the policy will likely result in an actual increase in the number of students who decide to come to this campus. As has been said before, most of the students who will benefit are ones who would not have been able to go to any college had it not been for off-campus programs.

In conclusion, the adoption of a recommendation to delete the term "extension" credit and the consequential effect of removing off-campus credit restrictions will benefit the University and many people in Eastern North Carolina who greatly wish to continue their education.