

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 28, 2017
To: University Graduate Curriculum Committee
University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
From: James Sage, Associate Provost
RE: Proposal to create a new "Institutional Certificate"

After close consultation with Patrick Clarke, Mark Atkinson, and John Allred, as well as feedback and support from Provost Brad Cook and the Dean's Council, I am proposing the following conditions to guide the development of Institutional Certificates at Southern Utah University.

Authority: Regent policy R401 allows for the creation of "Institutional Certificates" that are not subject to approval by the State Board of Regents. Specifically, R401 states: "NOTE: Institutional Certificates of Proficiency less than one year in length (less than 30 semester hours, or 900 clock hours) ending in a certificate issued under the authority of the institution do not require approval by the Regents" (R401, R401-3 Definitions, 3.12 Academic Awards, p. 3). Likewise, recent changes to NWCCU's Substantive Change Policy allows an institution to create programs of study (their generic term) of less than one year in length without NWCCU approval. Together, this allows SUU to create Institutional Certificates without seeking off-campus approval.

Rationale: The overall rationale for creating Institutional Certificates is to allow individual Colleges and Schools to offer a credential of some kind in response to changing needs, emerging partnerships, and innovative new ideas. Offering these Institutional Certificates may also support recruitment efforts and help individual Colleges and Schools to advance their strategic priorities. The development of these new Institutional Certificates does not impact (one way or another) existing (or future) Certificates of Proficiency or Certificates of Completion. Stand-alone Institutional Certificates are not eligible for federal financial aid. However, if students complete courses in pursuit of a qualified degree program (where federal aid may be used), at least some of those courses can be used as part of an Institutional Certificate.

Approval: With this in mind, I am proposing that the Dean is responsible for either granting approval of such certificates or creating the process by which approval will be granted within his/her College or School. As such, approval of each individual Institutional Certificate will not be required outside of the College or School (i.e., approval is not required by the UGCC or UGCC). Instead, on a regular basis (perhaps annually or semi-annually), a comprehensive update regarding Institutional Certificates shall be submitted to the Associate Provost and will be an information item for the UGCC and UGCC. More details about this reporting process will be provided at a future date and in coordination with the Deans.

Certificate Types: In order to avoid triggering federal reporting requirements (such as Gainful Employment), I recommend that SUU's Institutional Certificates should not be referred to as Certificates of *Proficiency*. Likewise, because SUU's Institutional Certificates are not eligible for federal financial aid, I recommend that we should not refer to SUU's Institutional Certificates as Certificates of *Completion*. Instead, SUU's Institutional Certificates should be advertised and promoted as an "*Institutional Certificate in << insert subject matter >>*". I think it is best to avoid using the terms "Completion" or "Proficiency" altogether because these convey something very specific to both a state-wide audience and to a national audience.

Moreover, SUU's Institutional Certificates can be either *non-credit* or *for-credit*. If credit is awarded, courses can be from the undergraduate level (including sub-1000 level courses), the graduate level, or at the 5000 level. Coursework related to SUU's Institutional Certificates will be documented on a "continuing education" transcript and upon completion of the Institutional Certificate, this continuing education transcript will include the name of the specific Institutional Certificate the student has earned.

Upon completion of the requirements to earn the Institutional Certificate, notification will be sent to the Registrar's Office (with complete information – specific details will be developed to support this reporting process). Individual Colleges or Schools can issue a print-version of an Institutional Certificate to the participant with the signature of the Dean and/or the program director. Examples of print-versions can be made available to serve as a template.

General guidelines: For-credit Institutional Certificates should require somewhere between 12 and 18 credits (these are merely rough guidelines; as an upper limit Institutional Certificates cannot exceed 29 credit hours). Non-credit Institutional Certificates should require investment of time and effort by the participant appropriate to the subject matter (no more than 900 clock hours). For either non-credit or for-credit Institutional Certificates, the use of an outside agency's curriculum (training program, etc.) is acceptable as long as the Dean has reviewed the curriculum and has approved it. Written documentation of this approval is expected (a brief memo outlining the Institutional Certificate can be included in the annual or semi-annual update submitted to the Associate Provost).

Catalog: Finally, an entry will be added to SUU's online Catalog explaining these parameters. Individual Institutional Certificates will not be listed in the Catalog. Instead, information about specific Institutional Certificates will reside on webpages maintained by each College or School and will include all pertinent information related to the Institutional Certificate.