

Academic Positioning

Alternative Credentials Implementation Charge

AP VISION

To embrace our responsibility to future generations of students, faculty, and staff by strategically enhancing academic affairs to position UNI, our graduates, and employees to thrive into the future.

ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIALS PATHWAY OBJECTIVES

Alternative and micro-credentials encourage lifelong learning and open pathways for students with a diverse set of backgrounds, needs, and career goals. The Alternative Credentials Focused Working Group completed their work with a [Final Report](#) which included several recommendations, such as increasing and diversifying alternative credential options and creating a framework to support the design and implementation of that expansion. The implementation task force should take into consideration the recommendations of the Alternative Credentials Focused Working Group when establishing and documenting the framework and processes to support faculty in designing and implementing alternative credit-bearing credential, including minors, certificates, and “sub-certificate” offerings.

To achieve the goals outlined below, the Academic Positioning Steering Committee is charging a rapid action task force with the final steps in implementation of the credentialing plans.

Objectives

1. Establish and document within the UNI Course Catalog “rules of the road” for minors, certificates, and and other forms of credit-bearing recognition (e.g. “sub-certificates”, badges, transcript notations, etc.) that will allow for consistent development, reporting, and record-keeping.
 - a. Define credit hour length, types, and definitions of programs shorter than a major.
 - i. Note: Defining minors along with certificates and “sub-certificates” will help define the unique purpose of each program. [UCC created recommendations for minors and certificates](#). That report should inform the task force on this work.
 - b. Define the approval process for credit bearing “sub-certificate” programs. This includes when UCC/GCCC approval is needed.
2. Identify an existing Academic Affairs unit to provide leadership in achieving the goals. In recommending a supporting office, the following must be considered:

- a. A focus on innovation around the demand for alternative credentials whether that be stand alone or stackable degrees.
 - b. An ability to support faculty throughout the process of conceptualizing a program, identifying demand, curriculum development and offering modality.
 - c. Resource availability and sustainability. Budgetary constraints limit our ability to launch a new office or significantly expand an existing office.
 - d. Built-in assurance that UNI's offerings maintain high quality and faculty are given the support needed to enter into these new designs.
3. Work with appropriate groups to construct a basic umbrella website that can be used by current and prospective students to find alternative credential offerings.

Timeline

The rapid action task force is intended to be an intensive and short-lived committee. The team will complete their work by the end of the fall 2023 semester. The committee can work through the three goals sequentially, or simultaneously with a subcommittee structure.

Membership

The AP Steering committee has identified a rapid implementation task force with the following representation:

- Patrick and/or Deedee - Ex Officio Chair
- Nicole Lehman (Registrar's Office)
- Heather Asmus (Undergraduate Studies)
- Stephanie Huffman (O&DE and Graduate College)
- Trisha Becker (O&DE)
- Tim Bakula (Financial Aid)
- Amy Nielson (Academic Affairs)
- Jonathon Chenowith (CETL)
- Bryce Kanago (Academic Affairs Affairs)