

## Minutes of the November 21 Meeting of the Undergraduate Council of the University Senate

Minutes prepared by Hanna Nekvasil, Chair

In attendance Hanna Nekvasil, Erica Ayisa-Boahene, Kevin McDonnell, Deborah Zelizer, Deborah Serling, Madeline Turan, Donna Crapanzano, Kara Desanna, Diane Bello, Catherine Johnston, John Peter Gergen, Christine Pitocco

**Meeting was dedicated to a presentation on micro-credentialing to the UGC by Braden Hosch**, Vice president for Educational and Institutional Effectiveness.

- o **Braden presented a draft micro-credentialing policy for SBU.**

### Microcredentials [DRAFT]

Stony Brook University abides by the definition of a microcredential established by the State University of New York:

SUNY microcredentials verify, validate, and attest that specific skills and/or competencies have been achieved. They are valid learning experiences with learning outcomes, assessments, and examples of student work. SUNY microcredentials are endorsed by the issuing institution, having been developed through established faculty governance processes and are designed to be meaningful and high quality. (<https://www.suny.edu/microcredentials/>)

Like undergraduate minors, microcredentials are not recognized as formal awards by the NY State Dept. of Education (NYSED) and approval from NYSED is not required. SUNY policy, however, requires that approved microcredentials are reported to SUNY, and that microcredentials are recorded on the student's transcript.

Consistent with SUNY's microcredential definition and policy, Stony Brook University requires microcredentials to be developed through established faculty governance processes. All microcredentials, including academic non-credit microcredentials and co-curricular microcredentials, must involve faculty in the approval process. Proposals for academic microcredentials (credit and non-credit) must be approved through established faculty curriculum development processes at the College/School or equivalent level and forwarded to the Undergraduate Council and/or Graduate Council of the University Senate for review and approval. Proposals for co-curricular microcredentials (non-credit only) must include review and endorsement by a faculty group, such as an advisory committee, and then must be forwarded to the Undergraduate Council and/or Graduate Council of the University Senate for review and approval. Following approval by the Undergraduate Council and/or Graduate Council, the Provost must review and approve proposals for new microcredentials. Following approval by the Provost, the Provost's Office will notify the Stony Brook University Registrar; the Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness; other relevant Stony Brook University offices; and SUNY.

*[Note that links to the page will be needed in left navigation as well as from the Academic Program Proposals page]*

*Draft prepared by Braden Hosch at the request of Pat Malone, Dawn Medley, and Kara Desanna, May 18, 2022*

### TECHNICAL NOTES

**Commented [1]:** Student Life Committee?  
[https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/univ-senate/senate/\\_committees/student-life.php](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/univ-senate/senate/_committees/student-life.php)

**Commented [2]:** Grad Council would want to see microcredentials aimed at graduate students

PeopleSoft will require microcredentials to be attached to a career (Undergraduate, Graduate, Medical, Dental, Non-Credit).

SUNY requires:

- microcredentials to be approved by the campus to be reported to and approved by SUNY
  - Enrollments in microcredentials to be reported to SUNY via SIRIS six times a year
  - Completions of microcredentials to be reported to SUNY via SIRIS twice a year
- **Braden asked for confirmation that the UGC believes it appropriate to take on the recommended role reviewing and approving microcredential proposals involving undergraduate programs.**

**The ensuing discussion led to the consensus that any microcredential proposal involving crosscutting programs should be reviewed by the UGC.**

- **Braden asked if the UGC was willing to help in defining the following decision points**

How is a microcredential different from a minor? From a specialization? From a graduate certificate? Undergraduate minors have a defined credit range of at least 18 credits but no more than 24 credits. Undergraduate specializations do not have credit requirements. Should a microcredential have credit minima and maxima?

**The ensuing discussion led to the consensus that the UGC will assist in clarifying the decision points.**

2. Hanna Nekvasil provided an update regarding the General Education Advisory Committee, specifically the foundational inquiry framework that would guide the GEAC towards the information needed to evaluate the SBC.

#### GENERAL EDUCATION AT STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

A WORKING DOCUMENT PREPARED BY THE GENERAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### 1. Inquiry Stage

*The following are preliminary questions about the SBC volunteered by members of the UGC and modified by the GEAC with the directive of simply envisioning what they would like to know about the SBC. These questions will assist with the following aspects of the charge of the GEAC:*

- Consider the purpose and scope of Stony Brook's general education curriculum in terms of societal relevance and educational impact on students.
- Explore and understand how well students mastered the articulated objectives of Stony Brook's general education curriculum. Make recommendations to the Assessment Council about parameters for the assessment of general education learning outcomes.
- Consider the impact of the SBC on student progress and departmental load, including the sufficiency of available courses in each area of general education

- Consider available data and make recommendations regarding assessment of the satisfaction of students and faculty with the general education curriculum.
- Validate that Stony Brook's general education program meets requirements of regulatory entities, including accreditors, the NY State Dept. of Education, and the State University of New York.

#### A. BACKGROUND of SBC

- **What is the overarching goal of general education at SBU?**

<https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/decandebc>

The University expects every graduate to have a liberal arts foundation and exposure to many different fields and disciplines including the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences

- **How does this goal compare to other SUNY University Centers and peer institutions?**

- **Why did the University develop the Stony Brook Curriculum (SBC)?**

<https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/decandebc>

"The DEC general education system has been in effect since 1991. Given that much has changed in the world since the implementation of DEC, the University's faculty wanted to evaluate the current general education requirements and develop a curriculum best suited to today's 21st century student. After more than five years of research, discussion, and planning, the University unveiled the Stony Brook Curriculum (SBC). The SBC includes some of the elements of DEC, but *encourages a more interdisciplinary teaching approach and focuses on learning outcomes*. The SBC includes several new course offerings that are also available to students following the DEC, and has some new requirements in areas such as understanding technology, critical and ethical reasoning, and speaking before an audience. The SBC also offers an optional experiential learning opportunity, encouraging students to participate in an internship, study abroad, research, or other applicable activity."

- **When was the rollout of the SBC?**

Fall 2014

- **What are the objectives of the SBC curriculum?**

[https://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/bulletin/current/policiesandregulations/degree\\_requirements/stonybrookcurriculum.php](https://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/bulletin/current/policiesandregulations/degree_requirements/stonybrookcurriculum.php)

The Stony Brook Curriculum includes both breadth and depth of study (provided by both the SBC learning objectives and the major requirements), as well as ensuring skills necessary for life-long learning. The SBC learning objectives are described in detail in a [designated section](#) of this Bulletin and are organized into **four categories**:

- Demonstrate Versatility
- Explore Interconnectedness
- Pursue Deeper Understanding
- Prepare for Life-Long Learning

The course section in this Bulletin includes information specifying the SBC learning objectives that each course satisfies, if any. Courses may simultaneously satisfy multiple graduation requirements, including but not limited to the SBC, the major, the minor and others.

**DEMONSTRATE VERSATILITY** by showing proficiency in each of eleven **fundamental learning objectives**:

- [Explore and Understand the Fine and Performing Arts \(ARTS\)](#)
- [Engage Global Issues \(GLO\)](#)
- [Address Problems using Critical Analysis and the Methods of the Humanities \(HUM\)](#)
- [Communicate in a Human Language Other than English \(LANG\)](#) (see [Note 1](#))
- [Master Quantitative Problem Solving \(QPS\)](#)
- [Understand, Observe, and Analyze Human Behavior and the Structure and Functioning of Society \(SBS\)](#)
- [Study the Natural World \(SNW\)](#)
- [Understand Technology \(TECH\)](#)
- [Understand the Political, Economic, Social, and Cultural History of the United States \(USA\)](#)
- [Write Effectively in English \(WRT\)](#)

Note 1: CEAS majors, the Athletic Training major, the Respiratory Care major, and the Clinical Laboratory Sciences major are exempt from the LANG learning objective. Students enrolled in the major in Social Work are exempt from the LANG learning objective, but are required to enroll in and pass with a letter grade of C or higher the first semester of an elementary foreign language course numbered 111, or satisfy through alternate methods (see [Communicate in a Human Language Other than English--LANG](#)).

**EXPLORE INTERCONNECTEDNESS** by completing a course that [examines significant relationships between Science or Technology and the Arts, Humanities, or Social Sciences \(STAS\)](#).

**PURSUE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING** by completing advanced studies in *three of four* distinct areas of knowledge. A "+" sign in the abbreviations for these learning objectives signifies that most courses in this category will be relatively advanced courses at the 200- to 400-level. These learning objectives are:

- [Experiential Learning \(EXP+\)](#)
- [Humanities and Fine Arts \(HFA+\)](#)
- [Social and Behavioral Sciences \(SBS+\)](#)
- [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics \(STEM+\)](#)

**PREPARE FOR LIFE-LONG LEARNING** by taking (in most cases) courses which may also satisfy other SBC, major or other degree requirements.

- [Practice and Respect Critical and Ethical Reasoning \(CER\)](#)
- [Respect Diversity and Foster Inclusiveness \(DIV\)](#) (see [Note 2](#) below)
- [Evaluate and Synthesize Researched Information \(ESI\)](#)
- [Speak Effectively before an Audience \(SPK\)](#)
- [Write Effectively within One's Discipline \(WRTD\)](#)

- **Who designed the learning objectives for each category?** Was this wholly SBU internal committee driven or based on or "best practices" standards from the outside?
- **How were the 4 categories selected?**

- **What was the body that decided new fundamental learning objectives of each category and their implementation?**
- **For a proposed course, what body decided which category and fundamental learning objective it fell into?**
- **How did these requirements compare to SUNY Gen Ed requirements? If they differed, what was the justification for this difference?**
- **When was Respect for Diversity and Foster Inclusiveness (DIV) added to the SBC (Janet Galiczewski, SON)**
- **How is it decided if some majors or schools can opt out of a SBC category such as the “LANG”? Isn’t this a NYS general ED requirement. (Janet Galiczewski, SON)**
- **Why was it decided that GenEd should include “deeper” understanding? (Alexis)**
- **Did we have benchmarks on how many GenEd credits would be too many and how many would be too few? (Alexis)**

**B. OVERALL SUCCESS OF SATISFACTION WITH SBC**

- **Do graduates feel that through SBC courses they got “a liberal arts foundation and exposure to many different fields and disciplines including the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences”?**
- **Do graduates feel that the SBC courses they took**
  - taught them to be intellectually versatile
  - taught them to understand interconnectedness
  - taught them how to pursue deeper understanding
  - prepared them for life-long learning
- **How about students 5 years post-graduation?**
- **Do the students feel that SBC has prepared them for being informed citizens?**
- **What do former students wish they had better preparation in? What measures are currently in place to collect assessment data from students, faculty, and other key stakeholders? (Brenda)**
- **What aspect of the SBC presented the greatest impediment towards completion of the SBC requirements?**
- **What aspect of the SBC did they find most important?**
- **How do current students (in the middle of their degree) feel about the SBC courses they have taken so far? (Brenda)**

**C. DETAILS ON IMPLEMENTATION, AVAILABILITY, IMPACT, AND EFFECTIVENESS**

- **When do students entering as freshmen take the SBC courses? Histogram of SBC load vs U status would help.**
  - Is there a different distribution of U status and SBC course load depending upon college, or upon major category (e.g, natural sciences vs. HUM)?

- **How many SBC courses do students take to satisfy the SBC learning objectives?**
  - How many SBC learning objectives are satisfied purely by required courses for the major? How does this average differ by college, by major category?
  - How many courses used to satisfy the SBC requirements are taken outside of the subject code for the major? (The purpose is to see exposure to other disciplines)
  - How many courses used to satisfy the SBC requirements are taken within the subject code of the major but NOT required for the major?
  - How do the number of SBC courses (both with and without the three-letter code of the major), that is, courses *not* required for the major but taken to satisfy the SBC requirements, compare to the number of courses required under the DEC requirements?
  
- **How is consistency maintained among departments in Prepare for Life-long Learning (for example WRTD)?** Should there be specific guidelines?
- **How many SBC courses are interdisciplinary?** This is after all a primary reason for transitioning from the DEC to the SBC (see above)
- **Are there access bottlenecks for certain categories?**
  - Do students feel that they have choices or is selection mainly by schedule/availability?
  - Do students whose majors do not offer courses in Life-long Learning find it difficult to find these courses?
  
- **Are there a sufficient number and distribution of multiply-certified courses offered so that CEAS students, especially those in BE programs, can graduate in 4 years without undue hardship (e.g., financial hardship incurred by needing to take summer courses?)**
- **How do the Honors College general education objectives map onto the SBC objectives?**
- **When students take multiple multiple-category SBCs and therefore have fewer overall credits do they run into TAP eligibility problems?**
- **Is the SUNY transfer path for courses satisfying SBCs well-articulated? \**
- **How have non-major SBC courses impacted faculty teaching load? How evenly is this spread out across disciplines?**
- **Direct assessment of outcomes for attainment of the objectives of each category.** What would the timeframe/process look like? What has been done and what should be done?
  - To what extent have students mastered the learning outcomes for each SBC course? How can mastery be distinguished from preexisting knowledge in order to assess the effectiveness of the course?
  - In what areas do students exhibit particular strengths and areas for improvement? How can this be used to improve the course?

- Could measures of student proficiency be rank ordered to show this across SBC areas? Rank ordered within the objectives of each area? (Braden)
- How does proficiency in each SBC objective differ by major? Presumably STEM majors (even early in their programs) are all proficient in Mastering Quantitative Problem Solving (QPS), but what about humanities majors? Social sciences? (Braden)

D. THE FUTURE OF GEN ED AT SBU

- **Is the overarching goal still relevant?**
- **What is the evidence-based process for periodically reviewing and revising learning objectives? (Brenda)**
  - How often should learning objectives be reviewed/revised? Are the SBC fundamental learning objectives still relevant for the students 8 years after inception? e.g., Should the SBC courses do a more thorough job of addressing pressing questions of gender, the environment, [racial reckoning](#), and disinformation?
  - What stakeholders should be involved in the review and implementation?
  - What data should be collected to drive decisions? How long do we need to collect this data (in the same way with the same objectives) before we are comfortable using it to approach potential revisions?
- **Should there be a re-certification of SBC courses at some point in time after their initial approval?**
- **How do the SBC categories and fundamental learning objectives map onto the new SUNY Gen Ed requirements?**
  - How will Stony Brook address SUNY's expectation that its GE requirements should be completed in the first 60 credits? (Kara). How will this impact students' ability to advance in their major?
  - How will Stony Brook adapt its existing SLOs with SUNY's incoming SLOs?
    - Multiple categories allow courses to be certified without fulfilling all listed SLOs (e.g. a course must fulfill 4 of 6 SLOs to be certified in the HUM category, a course must fulfill 3 of 4 SLOs to be certified in the SNW category)
- **The design, implementation and assessment of Gen Ed objectives involves costs. Is there a mechanism through which we can ensure that those costs are considered alongside with the benefits of any existing or proposed policy? (Alexis)**