

November 15-16, 2007

ITEM 137-107-R1107

**Approval of Policy to Identify Equivalent Courses**

**THAT:**

The Board of Regents of Higher Education approves a policy under which undergraduate courses offered within the Montana University System shall undergo a faculty review process to identify which courses are equivalent. Equivalent courses shall be assigned common numbers and titles to facilitate the transfer of such courses among units of the system.

**EXPLANATION:**

The transfer of credits has been an issue of concern and confusion for Montana students, parents, policymakers and legislators for years. The Legislature, the Governor's Office and the Board of Regents are concerned with this issue. The Board of Regents has identified transferability of credits as one of its highest priorities, and Governor Schweitzer and the 2007 Montana Legislature supported the Board of Regents by appropriating \$1.5 million to support the MUS transferability initiative. This policy significantly supplements the policies adopted by the Board in 2005 to streamline the transfer of equivalent courses among campuses.

By assigning the same course number and title to equivalent courses, this process will help students to readily determine what courses are guaranteed to be accepted at receiving institutions as if the courses had been taken there. The transfer of those courses within the system will be automatic. The system described in the recommended policy will subject MUS courses to a faculty review process to determine their suitability for assignment of a common course number and title. This system will neither force the re-numbering of courses which are dissimilar to other system courses, diminish the ability of campuses to continue to develop their own courses to meet the needs of their programs and students, nor prevent the transfer of courses that do not share a common number.

Faculty consultation and direction is essential to this process. Discipline-based faculty councils have been formed and will continue the work at the system level on course equivalencies, work which is already well underway at individual campuses throughout the system. The commissioner of higher education, in consultation with

faculty councils and campus administrators, shall implement this process of common course numbering.

By identifying course equivalencies and assigning common numbers to those courses, this policy solves a major portion of the large and complex issue of system-wide transferability. The transfer of non-equivalent courses for degree-related purposes remains to be addressed at the system level.

**ATTACHMENT:**

Policy 301.5.5: Equivalent Course Identification & Numbering