



TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Dr. Chris Widdall  
Chair, Educational Policy Committee

DATE: May 15, 2017

RE: SUNY Cortland's Residency Requirement for Faculty Senate

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The Education Policy Committee (EPC) was asked to review SUNY Cortland's Residency Requirement during the 2015-2016 academic year. As required vetting was completed allowing the EPC committee to review feedback from several professional areas on the SUNY Cortland campus.

The proposal was to decrease the residency requirement to 30 credits from the current requirement of 45 credit hours, while keeping half the major, minor, or concentration courses in residency. The feedback received supported both sides of the proposal. As the EPC committee reviewed the feedback there were certain themes that were noted.

Addressing these items is pertinent to the proposal and democratic process.

Themes, presented in no particular order:

**1) How does the number of 30 credit hours align with other SUNY institutions?**

Committee developed a chart as we considered presenting this change to the SUNY Cortland community. The chart indicates that we would be aligning ourselves with other sister institutions. The move to 30 credit hours also supports the SUNY Transfer Mobility initiatives.

SUNY Brockport	You must complete a minimum of 30 credits at Brockport. No fewer than 15 credits in your major, and no less than half of any minor or certification program, must be completed here. If you have managed that, then you can finish up anywhere you wish, as long as you take the right courses from an accredited institution of higher learning.
Buffalo State	30 credit hours

SUNY Empire	Have residency based courses – no residence requirement.
SUNY Fredonia	45 credit hours in residency; course must be taught by a SUNY Fredonia faculty member
SUNY Geneseo	30 credit hours
SUNY New Platz	General - 30 credit hours in residence; of these 30 credits, the final 15 must be in residence.
SUNY Old Westbury	40 credit hours in residency; 48 credits for Accounting major 24 credit hours residency in courses in the major at the 3000, 4000 or 5000-level. 45 credits in residency in courses at the 3000, 4000, or 5000-level toward overall degree requirements;
SUNY Oneonta	45 s.h. in residence, 30 s.h. of the last 60 s.h. in residence
SUNY Oswego	30 credit hours
SUNY Plattsburgh	36 hours residency, Senior residency – last 30 of the 36 credits.
SUNY Potsdam	30 credit hours
SUNY Purchase	30 credit hours

**2) Need a better understanding of how this change would support underrepresented populations (non-traditional, first generation, international, etc), avoid excess credits and be in compliance with federal aid requirements?**

*International Students –*

The EPC's recommendation to change the College's residency requirement from 45 to 30 credits can catalyze the development of vibrant international partnerships and programs. These programs have the potential to do the following:

- increase the intercultural diversity of our campus, both in and out of the classroom
- build international student enrollments at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and
- generate out-of-state tuition revenue.

In recent years, prospective international and local university partners have approached SUNY Cortland about developing "pathway" degree programs, where their students would transfer in one to three years of coursework, to be applied to a SUNY Cortland degree after one year of study at the College. Because international students are often constrained by higher costs of

U.S.-based programs and difficulties being away from family and jobs for longer periods, a one-year option is seen by partners as being more feasible, while still giving students a substantial opportunity to benefit from SUNY Cortland's academic offerings and an immersive intercultural and English language experiences.

Several years ago, however, such discussions ceased due to SUNY Cortland's higher residency requirement, and prospective partners, such as TC3, opted to pursue partnerships with Cornell and RIT, and they have since transferred hundreds of students to those institutions, but only a handful to Cortland.

From the perspective of internationalizing the College, a decrease in the residency requirement would therefore foster the development of new international program models and the recruitment of more international students to our campus, while also strengthening collaborations with local SUNY campuses.

#### *Non-Traditional Students and Veterans –*

Non-traditional students and veterans are likely to be entering SUNY Cortland with multiple sources of credit. This policy would increase the number of credits they are able to transfer in (recognizing their prior academic experience). The decrease in credits to meet residency could also help these students earn a degree in more timely fashion. Earning half the credits in the major, minor or concentration would still be maintained.

#### *Financial Aid Requirements –*

Students of underrepresented populations often incur diminished access to financial aid or educational funding, in that they have maximized their resources and need to be proactive in not attending higher education institutions that will require extended residency requirements of course work not needed in their major. This supports SUNY Central's consideration of working toward a stronger transfer acceptance to allow completion of degrees without undue financial burdens.

#### *Title IX Perspective –*

Sometimes individuals who have experienced traumatic events require flexibility in meeting academic requirements in order to graduate. For example, if a SUNY Cortland student requested to take courses away from campus for a variety of reasons including managing PTSD resulting from sexual or intimate partner violence, or to seek a fresh start elsewhere, decreasing the number of credits that must be taken from SUNY Cortland to meet residency and increasing the number of transfer credits that could apply toward a degree works to that end of greater flexibility. (While SUNY Cortland offers online courses, not every required course is offered online, and other institutions may have an equivalent course that could assist the student in staying on time with graduation plans.)

Transfer students who experience sexual violence or intimate partner violence and who wish to complete Cortland course work off campus may disproportionately be affected by the longer residency requirement, particularly for those who may have already transferred in the maximum allowable transfer credits. Decreasing the residency requirement would allow for additional transfer credits taken elsewhere that meet major requirements to apply toward a degree.

From a transfer enrollment perspective, students who are seeking to transfer to a new school (due to traumatic experiences at their previous institution or otherwise) may be looking to see where they can maximize credits already earned. If a SUNY Cortland degree would require essentially three semesters, and other institutions just two semesters, it is not likely that SUNY Cortland would attract those students due to practical and financial considerations, major choice and other factors aside.

These examples raised relative to Title IX are not likely to represent large numbers of cases, but the difference the decreased residency requirement will make for those small number of individuals will be SIGNIFICANT.

**3) Concern the lowering the number of 30 credit hours will diminish the “Cortland Experience” possible causing a decrease in faculty/student connection.**

The committee understands this concern, however the population that would be truly affected by this change could actually increase the potential for more students gaining the “Cortland Experience” in a very fulling manner. The admissions office fully supports this endeavor also as they work to target SUNY Cortland as a school that supports enrollment of underrepresented populations.

**4) Scholarships or Academic Awards might be affected.**

The population of students that would need to use or be able to use the 30 credit hours residency requirement in general will be more considered about other financial burdens and other educational ventures that are not directly related to these two areas. Such as – International students are consider the opportunity to spend a year at our institution far more meaningful than gaining access to scholarships or accolades.

**5) Concern of False Advertisement and Catalog wording that would confuse students.**

To this point, the committee reviewed the wording and suggests this change to the College handbook and catalog be made:

## College Catalog

### Bachelor's Degree Requirements

#### Residency Requirement

**One half of the credits for the major, minor and/or concentration must be completed at SUNY Cortland. In addition, SUNY Cortland students must complete at least 30 45 credit hours for the degree must be completed at SUNY Cortland to meet the College's residency requirement. In addition, one half of the credits for the major, minor and/or concentration must be completed at SUNY Cortland.** Special requirements may be designated by each School of the College.

#### Academic Policies

##### Transfer Credit Limits and Residency Requirement

SUNY Cortland grants the maximum number of transfer credits possible. The following guidelines and policies apply to transfer credit evaluation:

Under State University of New York policy, credit will be granted for published examinations from the following test series, provided that the specified minimum Cortland performance levels are met and that the examinations are in areas that normally receive transfer credit at Cortland. SUNY Cortland will accept a maximum of 30 credit hours earned through such sources as Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program, Cambridge International A and AS Level exams or College Proficiency and/or the International Baccalaureate. This maximum applies to all of these courses combined, not individually.

Cortland students are not eligible to receive credit by equivalency examinations when they are enrolled in or have completed a higher-level course within the same discipline.

Students may receive up to 64 credit hours of transfer credit from two-year colleges. This maximum credit-hour total includes any 100- or 200-level courses, Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program, ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interviews, Cambridge International A and AS level exams, College Proficiency or International Baccalaureate credits. Transfer students **with credit** from four-year colleges or universities may receive additional credit hours toward degree requirements at Cortland. The maximum number of credit hours accepted **is 90. ranges from 75-81 depending on the number required for graduation in the chosen program.**

A minimum of **30 45**-credit hours of course work as well as half of the major, minor and/or concentration must be completed in residency at Cortland to earn a Cortland bachelor's degree. Any school of the College may designate special requirements that may not be taken elsewhere.

## College Handbook

### 410.10 Academic Credit From Other Colleges

#### B. Credit From Other Colleges

**One half of the credits for the major, minor and/or concentration must be completed at SUNY Cortland. In addition,** SUNY Cortland students must complete at least 30 45 credit hours for the degree at SUNY Cortland to meet the College's residency requirement. **In addition, one half the credit hours for the major, minor and/or concentration must be completed at SUNY Cortland.**

Students matriculated at the College can receive credit for course work taken at other colleges if they receive prior approval from the appropriate associate dean. Cortland transfer students may receive up to 64 credit hours of transfer credit from two-year colleges. This maximum credit hour total includes any 100- or 200- level courses, Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program, College Proficiency or International Baccalaureate credits.

Only course work satisfactorily completed at regionally accredited collegiate institutions will be accepted. Usually credit is allowed only for those courses in which a grade of C- or better has been earned. However, credit may be granted for D grades if the student has received an associate of arts (A.A.), associate of science (A.S.) or any bachelor's degree at the time of first admission to SUNY Cortland. Transfer students **with credit** from four-year colleges or universities may receive additional credit hours toward degree requirements at Cortland. The maximum number of credit hours accepted **is 90.** ~~ranges from 75-81, depending on the number required for graduation in the chosen program.~~

Grades of Pass (P) and Satisfactory S awarded at another institution may be accepted at the discretion of the associate dean of the school of the student's major at the initial point of matriculation. The associate dean will have the opportunity to:

- decline to accept the course,
- waive a requirement on the basis of a Pass (P) and Satisfactory (S) grade without granting course credit,
- allow the course to count as its equivalent at Cortland in the case of activity/participation courses,
- award credit under the General Elective (GEN) or Liberal Arts (LAS) labels.

All credit hours accepted for transfer must have been earned at institutions granted regional accreditation by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), e.g., the Middle States Association, Southern Association, North Central Association, New England Association, Northwest Association, or Western Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges.

While credit hours are transferable, grades earned at other colleges are not calculated in the Cortland grade point average. Grade point averages that qualify students for honors and recognition at Commencement are based exclusively on course work at Cortland.

Students entering SUNY Cortland with an A.A. or A.S. will, in most instances, be able to complete requirements for a bachelor's degree with an additional 60-64 credit hours of course work. Students pursuing professional degree programs, such as those leading to teacher certification, may need additional courses to fulfill requirements over and above the minimum needed to earn a Cortland bachelor's degree. Requirements for the bachelor's degree are listed in the Degree Requirements section of the College catalog.

Any school of the College may designate special requirements that may not be taken elsewhere.