

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Carol Costell Corbin  
Associate Director for Transfer Credit and Degree Completion  
Chair, Transfer Advisory Committee

DATE: January 24, 2022

RE: Clarification of policy regarding retaking earned transfer credit

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New, incoming students as well as continuing undergraduate students seek to retake courses at Cortland for which they previously earned transfer credit. Typical reasons students retake transfer credit include:

- **Per advisement by their academic department.** Incoming first-year students may be advised to retake college credit for foundational courses in their major (e.g., Calculus I or Biological Sciences) that they earned in high school through Advanced Placement exams or dual-enrollment to better prepare them for the rigor of subsequent coursework.
- **For higher grades for graduate school pre-requisites.** While students can earn transfer credit from their previous college with a grade of C- (or a D with an associate degree), many students applying for competitive programs (e.g., Physical Therapy) choose to retake the course at Cortland to earn a higher grade to enhance their graduate application.
- **Length of time away from a subject.** Students who have had a break in their enrollment may choose to retake previously earned transfer credit if it has been years since they have studied the subject (i.e. foreign language) and need to advance through a sequence.

Advisement and Transition has developed processes to address these student requests<sup>1</sup> that have been in place since 2016. However, we do not have clearly defined policy around requests to retake transfer credit. Recent student situations prompted a review. In response, the Transfer Advisory Committee, comprised of the associate deans and representatives from Admissions, Advisement and Transition, Financial Aid, and Student Registration and Record Services, reviewed policy, processes, and discussed financial aid implications.

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<sup>1</sup> Request to Retake Transfer Credit form: <https://sunycortland.formstack.com/forms/retaketransfercredit>

We acknowledge the learning that students earn through coursework from their previous colleges or credit-bearing examinations. Yet we also acknowledge the validity of these student requests, and the benefits students may gain from retaking earned transfer credit. We are proposing policy that upholds the integrity of earned transfer credit while also allowing for flexibility for students.

**We are requesting Faculty Senate review and endorse two changes to the Undergraduate College Catalog in the Academic Policies section:** 1) edits to the Matriculation Guidelines section that addresses retaking courses; and 2) an addition of language to the Transfer Credit Policies and Evaluation section that would clearly outline policy.

Below is an explanation of the request, with the specific changes of catalog language on the following page.

### **Current Policy**

In the Academic Policies area of College Catalog, the “Matriculation Guidelines” section includes the policy around retaking Cortland courses at Cortland as well as the grade change policy related to retakes. Part of the policy indicates:

“The retaken course, which is defined by the same title, course prefix and course number, must be repeated at SUNY Cortland under the same grading system in order to be eligible for this policy. *Therefore, courses previously taken and earned as transfer credit are not eligible to be retaken.*” [my emphasis]

The current policy explicitly indicates that courses previously taken and earned as transfer credit are not eligible to be retaken, yet it is vague. Are transfer courses not eligible for the grade change policy? Or never eligible to be retaken in the first place?

Transfer Advisory Committee’s interpretation of the policy is that students may not expect to improve their GPA through the grade change policy by retaking coursework at another college – not that previously earned transfer credit may not be retaken at all. The language appears contradictory to our current practice, and we are requesting that the text be clarified.

### **Process and Financial Aid Implications**

A guiding factor in our discussion was student financial aid and how different aid sources fund retakes of coursework. For financial aid to be applied appropriately, earned transfer credit needs to be officially posted in Cortland’s systems and cannot simply be removed from students’ records in order to allow for Cortland registration. Students requesting to retake earned transfer credit will have the transfer course, with a grade of T, “excluded” (annotated with an E on the transcript), and the Cortland credit would be “included” (annotated with an I on the transcript). The earned Cortland grade would be calculated in the student’s grade point average. This process mirrors our current process of retakes of Cortland courses.

We believe the proposed policy and process to be equitable and transparent as well as flexible in meeting the variety of students’ academic needs and requests.

We look forward to the Senate’s review of the proposed changes. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

## 2021-2022 Undergraduate College Catalog

### Academic Policies > Transfer Credit Policies and Evaluation

#### New catalog language

(Suggested to be added after the “Time Toward Graduation for Transfer Students” section)

#### Retaking Transfer Courses

Students cannot earn credit for Cortland coursework when they have earned transfer credit deemed equivalent. However, students may request to retake courses at Cortland for which they have earned transfer credit. The equivalent transfer credit will be excluded (annotated with an E on the transcript) and the earned Cortland credit will be included (annotated with an I on the transcript). Once a student earns credit in the course at Cortland, they cannot request the transfer credit to be added back to their record. Students receiving financial aid are encouraged to check with the Financial Aid Office to discuss how retaking earned credit may impact their aid eligibility.

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#### Existing Policy:

### College Catalog > Academic Policies > Matriculation Guidelines

#### Retaking Courses

When a student retakes a Cortland course, all grades received will remain on the official transcript, but only the last grade received will be included in the quality and grade point average and hours toward graduation.

The grade excluded from the cumulative totals will be annotated with an E on the transcript. The grade included in the cumulative totals will be annotated with an I. The retaken course, which is defined by the same title, course prefix and course number, must be repeated at SUNY Cortland under the same grading system in order to be eligible for this policy. ~~Therefore, courses previously taken and earned as transfer credit are not eligible to be retaken.~~

To retake a course, a student must seek registration access from the academic department offering the course. A student may retake any course one time. Departments may restrict registration access for subsequent retakes of the same course. See department sections of the catalog for information on department-specific retake restrictions and/or requirements.

**Courses previously earned as transfer credit are eligible to be retaken upon request. Additional information can be found in the Transfer Credit and Evaluation section of the catalog.**

Students receiving financial aid are encouraged to check with the Financial Aid Office and with the Student Accounts Office to avoid losing an award, especially when retaking a previously passed course.