

**To:** Shared Governance Council

**From:** Dr. John B. Cook, President

**Action:** **Approval of Operational Policy (Student/Maximum Credit Load)**

**Date:** March 20, 2023

**Next Steps:** To be shared with STCC Board of Trustee on March 27<sup>th</sup> 2023

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In accordance with the formal enabling vote by the STCC Board of Trustees (June 27, 2022) regarding shared governance, including clarification of a process by which “high-level” recommendations regarding institutional policy and operations are reviewed, the Shared Governance Council (SGC) has reached consensus regarding the maximum number of credits an STCC student can take in a given semester “Student/Maximum Credit Load.” Given the codification of responsibilities by the Board of Trustees for the STCC President, combined with framing by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) regarding governance, the formalization of this operational policy is approved. No action is needed by Trustees, and implementation will occur at the conclusion of Spring Semester 2023.

**Background:**

Up to this point, STCC lacked a defined cap on the number of credits a student could take in a given semester. To remedy, a recommendation was generated and submitted to the Shared Governance Council (SGC) by Dr. Geraldine de Berly, Vice President of Academic Affairs. From initial submission (9.28.2022), SGC representatives were provided with approximately five months to vet the recommendation with their respective governance bodies, with final discussion at the 2.22.2023 SGC meeting (see SGC minutes).

Description of the process that generated the recommendation to the SGC entailed work by administrators from across the divisions of Academic and Students Affairs; context described the addition in 2020 of “flex terms,” which are 7-week scheduled courses within a given semester that enable both a compressed class schedule, but also the ability to accumulate more credits. Also discussed given the lack of formal policy, was the relevant impact on financial aid (e.g. “Satisfactory Academic Progress”), and data indicated a very small number of student credit loads exceed 18 total credits. For purposes of financial aid, “full time” status is 12 or more credits, while 6-credits per semester is the minimum needed for “part-time” students to access federal support for qualifying individuals. **The approved policy, complete with a protocol that includes formalized acknowledgements from the student, administrators, as well as a coach/advisor, now clarifies:**

<b>Fall/Spring Semesters:</b>	<b>21 credit limit</b>
<b>“Flex” Term:</b>	<b>12 credit limit</b>
<b>Summer Semester:</b>	<b>18 credit limit</b>
<b>Winter Session:</b>	<b>9 credit limit</b>