

**Ad Hoc Committee on Graduate Certificates  
Report to the Graduate Council  
May 9, 2012**

**Issues of concern to be discussed with Graduate Council:**

After being reviewed and approved through the PCC process, graduate certificates are assigned a code by the Office of the Registrar. This allows students to be admitted to the certificate programs, and allows those certificates to be included in the student's transcript and to appear on the student's diploma. It also allows us to track enrollment in certificate programs. The Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs maintains a complete list of approved graduate certificates.

Students enroll in certificate programs in one of two ways. In some cases, graduate students admitted through the normal competitive admissions process and enrolled in masters and doctoral programs earn a certificate on their way to their masters or doctoral degree. In other cases, students are admitted directly into graduate certificate programs, often through a less rigorous admission process, and are not also seeking a masters or doctoral degree.

- A. Some academic programs "co-mingle" these students in courses, raising concerns: 1) a bi-modal student body can produce pedagogical difficulties; 2) students expecting to find peers in their classes instead find students with very different qualifications and goals, 3) students may be paying different tuitions for the same class, because "entrepreneurial" certificates are permitted to charge higher tuition.

**Should policy be implemented to address concerns related to the co-mingling of certificate students and masters/doctoral students?**

- B. Some academic programs use the Advanced Special Student status as a mechanism for admitting students to certificates. This practice raises several issues: the ASS status was not intended for this purpose, and it offers lower admission standards; the practice requires students who complete the certificate courses to subsequently transfer their ASS credits to a certificate, causing potential confusion and risk; and the practice undermines our ability to track enrollment in certificate programs.

**Should a new admissions category and process be created for students admitted only into certificate programs, one more rigorous than that for ASS but perhaps less complex than that for masters/doctoral students?**

**"Advanced Special Student" should be replaced with a more appropriate name. What might that be?**

- C. Many programs offer non-degree professional training and development, generally to cohorts, that neither earns academic credit nor generates a UM transcript. Participants are not admitted students and are not charged tuition as such (a fee is charged and often covered by the participants' employer). Because participants want some tangible

evidence of having completed the training, programs often offer a locally designed and generated “certificate” to meet that need.

These can appear to be official UM certificates, and are sometimes displayed in the workplace and/or reported on resumes as UM awards.

**Should a policy be drafted to limit use of the term “certificate” to PCC approved programs that earn academic credit?**

**Should the Graduate School develop a credential that will be designated for non-degree professional training and development programs?**