CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

**ACADEMIC SENATE**

**ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE**

**REPORT TO**

**THE ACADEMIC SENATE**

**AP-004-256**

**Academic Credit Certificate Programs Update**

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| **Academic Programs Committee** | **Date: 10/22/2025** |
| **Executive Committee**<br>**Received and Forwarded** | **Date: 10/29/2025** |
| **Academic Senate** | **Date: 11/05/2025**<br>**First Reading** |

BACKGROUND:

The university's current certificate policy is outdated and no longer serves the needs of our students or the institution. Certificates, as currently defined, are too large for most state-side students to complete within their programs of study and are difficult to cover with financial aid. While the current policy allows for academic certificates to be offered in self-support, these have not proven viable: working professionals are generally not interested in multi-course, academic credit-bearing certificates; no financial aid is available for such offerings; and international students cannot enroll in them. In practice, there is no audience for certificates under the current model.

*Current Program Demand and Viability Stats*
- State-side example: German Certificate – 2 students enrolled.
- Self-support programs (CPGE): Six proposed, only two approved (both with zero enrollment).
- Lack of enrollment suggests low demand due to financial aid and visa restrictions.

The proposed updates are intended to realign certificates with CPP's mission and student needs. Certificates will be structured on a smaller scale so that most students can complete them with financial aid support. Faculty will be encouraged to build certificates from existing course offerings, which both support course enrollment and allow students to deepen or develop new skills in focused areas of study. The policy also promotes the creation of interdisciplinary certificates, encouraging collaboration across departments and colleges to better prepare students for emerging career opportunities and workforce needs.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Deans and Associate Deans
Department Chairs
Office of Academic Programs.

DISCUSSION:

**Overview of Academic Certificate Policy Proposed Changes**

| Section | *Old* | **New** |
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| **Policy Reference** | *"Executive Order 806, http://www.calstate.edu/EO/EO-806.pdf"* | "The CSU Certificates and Certificate Programs Policy (https://calstate.policystat.com/policy/15032342/latest)" |
| **Scope of Programs** | *Programs "most often provided through extended education."* | Certificate programs __*may*__ **only** be offered to **state-side matriculated students**. |
| **Program Categories** | ***Fundamental*** *(HS diploma/GED entry, 16–45 units, GPA 2.0)* | **Undergraduate** (9–12 units, 6 upper division, GPA 2.0)<br>**Graduate** (6–9 units, mostly 5000+, GPA 3.0) |

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| | ***Advanced*** *(Bachelor's entry, 12–45 units, GPA 2.5)* | |
| **Admissions** | *Fundamental: HS diploma, GED, or proficiency exam. Advanced: Bachelor's degree + 2.5 GPA in last 45 qtr units. Conditional admission not allowed.* | Undergraduate: At least 6 units must be distinct from major; no grad units allowed. Graduate: Only unconditionally admitted graduate students; max 3 units at 4000-level. |
| **Financial Aid** | *Aid-eligible if 45+ units, 1 year long, and prepares for gainful employment.* | **Certificates <u>may not</u> be eligible for financial aid; departments must consult Academic Programs.** |
| **Units Required** | *Fundamental: 16–45 units, 16-unit core. Advanced: 12–45 units, 12-unit core.* | Undergraduate: 9–12 units (min. 6 upper division). Graduate: 6–9 units (majority 5000+). |
| **Course Repeats & GPA** | *Repeat once (max 8 units fundamental; max 4 advanced). Grade forgiveness possible. Min GPA: 2.0 (fundamental), 2.5 (advanced).* | No repeats policy stated. All attempts count toward GPA. Min GPA: 2.0 (undergrad), 3.0 (grad). |
| **Program Completion** | *Could not complete certificate requirements after degree conferral; strict repeat/overlap restrictions.* | Completion verified by program director; certificate noted on transcript. |
| **Proposal Requirements** | *Detailed list of up to 30 items (faculty, facilities, technology, library, etc.).* | Streamlined 7 sections: Basic Info, Justification, Curriculum, Assessment Plan, Other Needs, Additional Resources, Budget Projection. |

**Summary Discussion:**

CPP will recognize two primary categories of certificate programs, consistent with CSU policy:

1. Non-Credit (Professional Development) Certificates – Do not carry academic credit and are offered through the College of Professional and Global Education (CPGE).
- Administered by CPGE, which will continue to offer and manage these programs.
- Open to the public and may include professional development or continuing education opportunities.
- Not eligible for academic credit or federal financial aid.
- CPGE welcomes faculty collaboration in developing and offering new non-credit certificates.
- Policy updates are not required for professional certificates, as they already align with CSU and systemwide practices.

2. Academic Credit Certificates – Carry academic credit and are offered on the state side. These certificates are focus of this referral.

*Purpose and Structure:*
- Offered only to matriculated state-side students.
- Designed to be small in unit count (typically 9–12 units for undergraduates, 6–9 units for graduates) to fit within degree plans and remain aid-eligible.
- Intended to help students gain focused skills or knowledge that enhance their careers or personal development.

*Coursework Requirements:*
- At least 6 units must be distinct from the student's degree program.
  - Undergraduate: 9–12 total units (3–6 units may double count).
  - Graduate: 6–9 total units (0–3 units may double count).
- Courses cannot be repeated for the certificate (though they may be repeated for the major if needed).

*Interdisciplinary Programs:*
- Certificates may be developed by departments or interdisciplinary programs.
- Example: Faculty of Engineering, Business, and Agriculture collaborating on a joint certificate.
- A faculty coordinator must be assigned to each program; compensation is outside policy scope.

*Financial Aid Considerations:*
- Federal aid is available only to degree-seeking students, but a small certificate may fit within financial aid unit limits.
- CPP's curriculum guide will include guidance from the Financial Aid Office.
- Standalone (non-degree) credit certificates could qualify for aid only under strict federal rules (July 2024):
    - Minimum of 16 units.
    - Admission standards are equivalent to degree programs.
    - Must lead to gainful employment in a recognized occupation.
    - Must show higher earnings for completers.
- CPP will not pursue standalone academic credit certificates due to high barriers and low demand.
-Ref:
https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/R/PDF/R43159/R43159.20.pdf

*Existing Certificates and Transition:*
- Existing certificates must align with new definitions.

- Example: The German Certificate (5 courses) must either add a course to become a minor or remove one to fit the certificate unit range.
- There will not be a blanket grandfather clause; each existing program must be reviewed.

*Program Eligibility and Student Access:*

- Only matriculated students may enroll in academic credit certificates.
- Certificates cannot be completed through an Open University.
- Students on ADT pathways (60-unit max) cannot complete certificates without exceeding degree limits.

RECOMMENDATION:

CPP's policy distinguishes academic credit certificates (state-side, small-unit, matriculated students) from non-credit professional certificates (CPGE, self-support). Existing academic certificates must align with new policy. Standalone academic credit certificates will not be pursued at this time due to strict financial aid regulations and low demand.  The approach ensures compliance and clarity while supporting meaningful student learning opportunities. The Academic Programs Committee supports the proposed updates to the policy.