

Standards for Approval of Credit Toward Column Movement
On the UFO Salary Schedule
Jim Wright, 2005

New language in the UFO contract allows non-graduate-level units approved for column movement on the UFO salary schedule. I think the intent of the new language is a good attempt to recognize professional development activities that take place outside of a formal graduate program. But, since I am the one who is asked to make specific interpretation of this new and fairly general language, I want you to know where I am coming from.

The UFO contract column movement set up in the past implied (through the “Masters + 30, 45, 60,” “Bachelors + 60, 75, 90,” and Doctorate progression) that faculty course work should be of a higher level of academic rigor when considered for credit toward column movement. Further, according to the UFO contract, initial placement on the salary schedule is based on “upper division and graduate level courses taken beyond the earned bachelors degree in the faculty members primary discipline and in subjects relevant to the faculty members position.” It would seem to me that further movement on the salary schedule should adhere to the same level of academic standards as initial placement. Actually, the prior UFO contract language indicated that courses for column movement should be “upper division or graduate level courses only at an accredited institution.”

I am concerned about the use of undergraduate, especially lower-division credits for column movement. I am uneasy about the possibility of watering down our standards for faculty development. However, I could see circumstances where lower-division courses or other learning experiences could apply if they were part of a planned program leading to significant capacity building on the part of the faculty member, with a direct relationship to increasing student success. For instance, if a faculty member had a goal of becoming fluent in ASL, and was committed to completing a series of courses to do so, I could support that for column movement.

I believe there is an ongoing obligation for faculty to maintain professional currency (such as attending professional conferences and reading professional journals) and improve instructional methods (such as learning how to use PowerPoint) that is separate and apart from increasing one’s level of knowledge in one’s discipline or expanding one’s teaching expertise in other disciplines (such as an English instructor earning a graduate-level certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language).

I will be using the following approach when it comes to approving baccalaureate and CEU credit for column movement. I do not want to approve these types of credits in a one-at-a-time shotgun manner. I believe that the integrity of the salary schedule calls for a more substantive strategy. Therefore, baccalaureate credits and CEUs will be approved if they are part of an overall professional development plan put together by the faculty member. This professional development plan would form the parameters for the courses and workshops to be taken in an organized and rational manner, over a period of time. The major goals of these plans should be the development of additional content knowledge, curriculum relevance, and instructional capacity. Ultimately, the goal of this work should be increased relevance student success.

At this point, it is my plan to work individually with faculty to develop these plans on an individual basis. Perhaps a template will emerge. Also, I would welcome the leadership and involvement of either the UFO and/or the Faculty Senate in crafting a general template for faculty development plans. Given the new language being proposed, I would use the following standards to approve credit toward column movement the courses taken by faculty should:

1. Consist of substantially new learning
2. Contribute directly to improving student success in a faculty member’s primary teaching discipline or developing minimum qualifications in a new discipline
3. Be of adequate academic rigor to hold up to peer review scrutiny
4. Be of sufficient academic rigor to meet standards of such professional organizations in the field of community college education, such as the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC): “FACCC is committed to maintaining the highest professional standards and qualifications for faculty in the California Community Colleges.”