



INDIANA COMMISSION *for*  
HIGHER EDUCATION

May 11, 2020

Dr. Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President  
The Higher Learning Commission  
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Dear Dr. Gellman-Danley,

In 2016, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education petitioned on behalf of 22 Indiana public and private colleges and universities for a five-year extension related to their compliance with faculty qualifications for dual credit instructors as described in Assumed Practice B.2. The Higher Learning Commission granted an extension until September 1, 2022. Since then, Indiana has made great strides in ensuring our dual credit instructors meet these guidelines. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted our efforts. Today, I write to request the deadline be extended until at least September 1, 2023.

Since the HLC granted the extension, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the Indiana Department of Education and Indiana's higher education institutions have taken significant steps to ensure our dual credit instructors meet the qualifications outlined in Assume Practice B.2. Over the last four years, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education has invested nearly \$10 million in STEM dual credit teacher credentialing. The Indiana Department of Education has awarded nearly \$1 million to increase the number of qualified dual credit instructors, and the Indiana University Foundation has invested a significant amount of funding for this purpose as well. In addition, the Commission may also soon be able to access philanthropic funds to augment these efforts. These and numerous other initiatives have increased the number of fully qualified dual credit instructors, but our goal of qualifying all instructions has not yet been realized.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges for dual credit instructors working to finish the required master's degree with 18 credit hours in their content areas. Consistent with changes on campus, our dual credit instructors have shifted their available energies to the demands of suddenly providing all instruction online, while still ensuring rigor. Adding to that stress, some instructors have lost family income, and unfortunately, some will deal with the virus themselves or will need to provide care to family members who become ill. Compounding these dire circumstances is the uncertainty of how long the pandemic will last, with postsecondary institutions and school systems making contingency plans for the entire upcoming academic year. All of these factors will undoubtedly contribute to a disruption of teacher plans for completing the necessary coursework to become fully qualified, which leads to the request for pushing the September 2022 deadline back at least one year.

It is important to note an extension would not negatively impact students participating in dual credit programs. The quality of Indiana's dual credit instruction and outcomes have never been in question. Prior to the clarification around Assumed Practice B.2, HLC's *Dual Credit in U.S. Higher Education: A Study of State Policy and Quality Assurance Practices* recognized Indiana for its instructor eligibility (#7 in the nation on "Instructor Eligibility Configurations," Display 11) and quality (#2 on "Quality Provision Configurations," Display 12).



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Further, Indiana continually tracks outcomes of students who complete dual credit courses from our public institutions: students who earn dual credit perform significantly better than students who do not on many key indicators, including college-going rate, freshman GPA, credit hours completed, and college graduation rates. In addition, Indiana has a robust infrastructure for communicating on a regular basis with dual credit coordinators and relevant state leaders.

This pandemic has created uncharted challenges for everyone. Indiana's dual credit instructors are not immune to the impact. This extension would ensure students continue to have access to quality dual credit opportunities, despite the hardships brought on by COVID-19.

If you or your staff have any questions about our request, please address them to Dr. Ken Sauer, the Commission's Senior Associate Commissioner and Chief Academic Officer.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Teresa Lubbers  
Commissioner