



Senate of the Associated Students of the University of Nevada

82nd Session, 2014-2015

A RESOLUTION IN ADVISEMENT OF 15 TO FINISH

Resolution Number: 108

Authored By: 2014-2015 Student Government Assembly

Sponsored By: 2014-2015 Student Government Assembly

Whereas, the University of Nevada, Reno and Nevada System of Higher Education (hereafter, NSHE) has a vested interest in increasing 4 year graduation rates;

Whereas, the four-year college graduation rate at the University of Nevada, Reno is 22.2% in the 2008 cohort (Institutional Analysis).

Whereas, Federal Student Aid, an Office of the United States Department of Education, focuses on the requirement of “credits [credit hours, hereafter credits] completed by the end of each year” as opposed to credits per semester. Published on the Department of Education website under the section Staying Eligible, “You need to make satisfactory academic progress in order to continue receiving federal student aid [...] how quickly you need to be moving toward graduation (for instance, how many credits you should have successfully completed by the end of each year);” (<https://studentaid.ed.gov/eligibility/staying-eligible#satisfactory-academic-progress>);

Whereas, The Associated Students of the University of Nevada, ASUN, has an equal interest in increasing graduation rates as a measure of student success and further as a criterion of U.S. News & World Report’s Tier One University Ranking;

Whereas, on average, a Bachelor’s degree requires 120 credit hours, and a student needs 15 credit hours per fall and spring Semesters to obtain all the credit hours necessary to graduate in 8 Fall and Spring Semesters, 4 years;

Whereas, there are Bachelor's degrees offered at the University of Nevada, Reno that require more than 120 credit hours, automatically placing students on a graduation plan often requiring more than 4 years or summer or winter classes to stay on a 4 year graduation plan;

Whereas, it is acknowledged that obtaining a bachelor's degree in a four-year period is cheaper, overall, than a longer period of matriculation;

Whereas, higher education costs are subsidized by taxpayer revenue, obtaining a bachelor's degree in four years costs less to the taxpayer base as a whole;

Whereas, temporal restrictions, stable childcare, scheduled obligations, and other similar scheduling conflicts prevent students from taking 15 credits per Fall and/or Spring Semester;

Whereas, many students through on and off-campus employment, extra-curricular, and volunteering activities, may be not be able have the immediate fiscal means to achieve a bachelor's degree in four years;

Whereas, questions in the efficacy of the efforts to inform students all of such a drastic change that affects many monetary concerns have been raised after Senators have contacted constituents about the matter;

Whereas, Complete College America, the organization responsible for the nationwide "15 to Finish" initiative, provides little direct assistance to the University of Nevada, Reno; moreover, "15 to Finish" being a national policy means it was not organically developed to best suit the students at the University of Nevada, Reno;

Whereas, alternative methods to achieve 30 credit hours in an academic year have been not been as immediately apparent due to the branding of the initiative as "15 to Finish";

Whereas, there exists a possibility, through an unexpected quantity of "Request to Appeal 15 credit Semester Requirement" applications, that a delay in financial aid disbursement might occur for students who could not afford the delay. In addition, clarification into what circumstances may be exempt would allow students to better estimated the chance of their circumstances being approved as extenuating;

Whereas, the Office of Admission and Records and the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships already suffers delays from the quantity of requests submitted concerns exists into the ability of the Offices to process these forms in a timely manner;

Be it resolved that, the 82nd Session of the Senate of the Associated Students of University of Nevada, Reno stand opposed to the 15 to Finish Initiative as it is currently written; however; are in adamant support of the goals and aspirations of the Initiatives and are willing to continue to have further conversations with faculty and administrators to further address the concerns of the current initiatives;

Be it further resolved that, the 82nd Session of the Senate of the Associated Students of University of Nevada, Reno see the effort to inform students of alternative means of achieving thirty credit hours in an academic year ought to be tantamount to and immediately apparent as the efforts to inform students of achieving this goal with completing thirty credits through two semesters of fifteen credits each;

Be it further resolved that, the 82nd Session of the Senate of the Associated Students of University of Nevada, Reno believe a degree stands as a representation of the accrued knowledge received at this institution and should stand as a certificate of knowledge necessary to succeed in a field. The Senate does not believe that the “15 to Finish” initiative symbolically enforces this message;

Be it further resolved that, a copy of this resolution be sent to Dr. Shannon Ellis, Vice President of Student Services and Dr. Marc Johnson, University President.

Adopted in Senate on October 29, 2014

Attest:

Lexi Jacobson, Secretary of the Senate

Caden Fabbi, Speaker of the Senate