

To: Shared Governance Council

From: Dr. John B. Cook, President

Action: **Approval - Revision of Student/Incomplete Policy (Operational)**

Date: April 10, 2023

Next Steps: To be shared with STCC Board of Trustee on April 24th 2023

In accordance with the formal enabling vote by the STCC Board of Trustees (June 27, 2022) regarding shared governance, including clarification of a process by which “high-level” recommendations regarding institutional policy and operations are reviewed, the Shared Governance Council (SGC) has reached consensus regarding a revision to the policy on awarding a student an “I,” otherwise known as a grade of Incomplete. Given the codification of responsibilities by the Board of Trustees for the STCC President, combined with framing by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) regarding governance, the formalization of this operational policy is approved. No action is needed by Trustees, and implementation will occur at the conclusion of Spring Semester 2023.

The approved revision to the Incomplete policy, including a formalized protocol (“Incomplete Grade Form”), will now state that “students who have satisfactorily completed 70% of course requirements per the syllabus are considered in good standing, and are eligible for a temporary grade of (I/ Incomplete).”

Background:

Within the Student Handbook, “Grading Policies” are included under Academic Information. Currently, the policy on issuing a grade of Incomplete (I) “indicates that a major requirement of the course has not been completed.” Further described is how a grade of “I” is temporary, and “reserved for special circumstances when a student, otherwise in good standing... is unable to satisfy all course requirements by the end of the semester.” The current policy also states that an Incomplete will change to an “F” four weeks after the beginning of the next regular academic semester. A leading question as part of the review was around consistency for when and how Incomplete grades were issued at STCC. Also at issue was the lack of an established protocol (e.g., tool-form-instrument) by which a given student and faculty member had the means to formally define expectations and establish deadlines. Under consideration was the need to provide faculty with a mechanism to ensure consistent application, and for students to formally request an Incomplete, and otherwise ensure they have a reference and direction if a faculty member was no longer at the college (e.g., they retired).

In an effort to revise the policy, including establishing the threshold by which “special circumstances” could be considered by a given faculty member, a recommendation was generated and submitted to the Shared Governance Council (SGC) by Dr. Geraldine de Berly, Vice President of Academic Affairs. From initial submission (11.16.2022), SGC representatives

were provided with approximately five months to vet the recommendation, including review of data, with their respective governance bodies. Final discussion occurred at the 4.7.2023 SGC meeting (see SGC minutes).

As part of the approved policy, a protocol is also formally approved which includes the required use of an “Incomplete Grade Form.” This student initiated form, once completed by the course instructor, is submitted to the STCC Registrar. The form will include assignment and assessment specifics, including completion dates. Student support resources/links will be included as part of the Incomplete Grade Form instruction page; faculty are encouraged to discuss implementation with their respective Dean.