Date: August 23, 1985
From: Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Programs, Policy and Planning
Subject: University Guidelines on Developmental/Remedial Courses

To: Presidents, State University of New York

Purpose:

This memorandum is intended (a) to clarify the University position on the offering of credit for developmental/remedial courses, (b) to encourage campuses to devote appropriate attention to matters pertaining to the granting of collegiate credit, (c) to assure reasonable compliance with academic standards established by accrediting bodies, and (d) to demonstrate the commitment of the State University of New York to quality in its academic endeavors and to access for the educationally disadvantaged. It is intended neither to limit nor restrict the offering of developmental or remedial courses by any campus, nor to curtail the admission of students who need such educational service.

Background:

The need for developmental/remedial courses at SUNY campuses has increased in the last decade as college access has been provided to a broader and sometimes educationally underprepared population. The issue of how much, if any, of such course work should be granted credit toward a degree has been discussed extensively within the University for at least the last eight years. Recently, the State Education Department has brought the issue more directly into focus as a result of program reviews and has identified courses which its consultants have judged not to be "college level" and thus not eligible for credit. Discussions with various internal constituencies in the University have led to the conclusion that the State University should develop guidelines on the issue. On June 1, 1984, a memorandum to the Presidents of the State University of New York was sent by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Programs, Policy and Planning. That memorandum included draft guidelines on developmental and remedial courses. This draft was developed after substantial consultation with the Council of Academic Vice Presidents and the Deans of the Two-Year Colleges. Also involved were the University Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education and the Community College Faculty Council. During the year following this June 1 memorandum, a number of discussions have taken place regarding remedial and developmental education and issues concerning the awarding of credit. While not all matters of disagreement have been resolved, the campuses concur that the
Guidelines placing explicit responsibility with the institutions for the review of course credit have been useful. Minor modifications of the draft have been made, and the following are now presented as SUNY guidelines:

Guidelines:

1. Courses designated remedial/developmental shall not be awarded academic credit and thus cannot be applied as credit toward a college degree.

2. The designation of remedial/developmental courses shall rest with the faculty of each campus, since all courses offered on a campus are reviewed and approved by the faculty through defined campus governance mechanisms in which the expertise of the faculty is the determining influence. The faculty may judge an individual course as either "below college level" and hence remedial/developmental in all curricula, or they may consider the course selectively remedial/developmental for particular programs.

3. Remedial/developmental courses shall be identified as such and the conditions under which they may be required shall be clearly stated in the college catalog, within reasonable publication schedules, and their listing shall be reviewed periodically.

Additional Considerations:

Campuses should keep in mind the following additional considerations:

1. Curricula, degree, and course requirements should be determined independently of the issue of remediation, and should become the basis for determination as to whether remediation is necessary.

2. The availability and requirements of remedial/developmental courses should be designed to assist students to obtain a degree, and it is educationally appropriate, as determined by the faculty, to require remediation/developmental work from students as they progress toward a degree. Normally such courses should be available to students at the early stages of their college programs.

3. Implementation of these guidelines is not intended to prevent the inclusion of non-credit elements in a course. For example, a course awarding specific credit hours may include as a required element of enrollment in that course, one or more hours of remedial/developmental non-credit work, if the instructor believes that such non-credit element is essential for some or all of the students. For campuses to receive imputed credits for non-credit remedial/developmental components, the campus must explicitly identify these components as requirements in catalogs and other relevant publications of the campus.
4. For State-operated colleges, budget support is engendered by non-credit courses which are required of students, or by non-credit remedial/developmental courses which are designed to serve the needs of special students (E.O.P./S.E.E.K.) or other risk admission students. Imputed equivalent credits are generated by these courses and thus budgetary support earned similar to credit courses offered by a campus. For community colleges, imputed equivalent credits, and thus FTE's generated by all non-credit remedial/developmental courses, are treated as are other courses and are eligible for state support.

5. Non-credit remedial/developmental courses designated by the faculty as required generate imputed credits which can be counted for financial aid to enrolled students through various State programs.

6. These guidelines are effective beginning on September 1, 1985.

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This memorandum addressed to:

Presidents, State-operated Campuses
Presidents, Community Colleges
Deans, Statutory Colleges

Copies for information sent to:

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