

# DRAFT FOCUSED RECOGNITION REPORT

## COLLEGE OF DUPAGE

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ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD

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FOR  
COLLEGE OF DUPAGE

**Introduction**

On April 23, 2015, a special site visit was conducted at the College of DuPage for a focused recognition evaluation concerning academic standards and credit hour certifications involving the Suburban Law Enforcement Academy offered at the College of DuPage.

Recognition is a statutory term describing the status of a district which meets instructional, administrative, financial, facility, and equipment standards as established by the Illinois Community College Board. All community colleges must be officially recognized to be eligible to receive state funding. Based on a five-year cycle, recognition evaluations are conducted to assure that colleges are in compliance with selected standards. If at any time during the current recognition cycle, a question comes up about a college practice, the Illinois Community College Board has the authority to perform a focused recognition on any college procedures that may be out of compliance with State statute or ICCB Administrative Rules.

**Focused Issue**

The Suburban Law Enforcement Academy (SLEA) was established by the DuPage County Chiefs of Police Association in 1994 to fulfill required training needs of local police departments. The twelve week program is offered three to four times each year at the Homeland Security Educational Center on the campus of College of DuPage. SLEA meets the curriculum requirements and is accredited by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB).

Public colleges receive state funding from the Illinois Community College Board via a formula based on credit hours generated by students in courses that are assigned to six different funding categories. In order for a course to qualify for funding, it must be approved by the Illinois Community College Board. Approval includes the review of mission and applicability, curriculum, academic control, determination of credit hours, and review of the course objectives, course syllabus, and method of evaluating student performance. College of DuPage has more than 2,000 active courses approved to be offered and submitted for State funding.

SLEA is a 460 hour, 12 week training program that combines lecture by regional and national experts with experiential learning. At the beginning of each academy, the SLEA students are concurrently enrolled in College of DuPage credit courses. At the end of the academy, each student had been awarded and the college had been generating thirteen hours of academic credit in criminal justice, health science, and physical education courses as part of the ILETSB curriculum. The students were awarded credit in: CRIMJ 1110 (3 credit hours); CRIMJ 1120 (3 credit hours); CRIMJ 1152 (3 credit hours); HLTHS 1150 (1 credit hour); PHYS 1101 (1 credit hour); PHYS 1751 (1 credit hour); and PHYS 1831 (1 credit hour).

Recently, COD made the decision to award 21 credit hours to the students at the end of the academy. COD stated that the increase in credit hours was in line with other police academy training programs in the state. SLEA students are concurrently enrolled in the original six courses and now three additional courses: CRIMJ 1153 (3 credit hours); CRIMJ 2150 (3 credit hours); and CRIMJ 2230 (3 credit hours).

The ICCB has focused this report on two issues: the awarding of credits to students and the generation of credit hours for state funding.

#### Awarding of Credits:

One consideration by the ICCB was whether or not these courses fell under the award of credit for prior learning through prior learning assessment (PLA). Currently, the ICCB does not have administrative rules that address PLA nor is the issue of PLA addressed in the Illinois Public Community College Act. Absent the authority by statute or rule, the ICCB can't require specific methodology for the awarding of these credits. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has policy on prior learning credit: *CRRT.B.10.020.*, and ICCB has seen this as a local, institutional decision. The Board is currently exploring appropriate regulatory options. Until laws or rules are passed by the General Assembly, the ICCB expects all colleges to ensure that all prior learning credits awarded meet the academic rigor requirements for the credit courses for which they are being articulated. Thus, if the SLEA academy were viewed as prior learning (admittedly not very "prior"), the college can assign credits to the students completing the academy by meeting HLC policy.

However, through conversations with COD staff, it is clear that they do not see the awarding of these credits as prior learning. Rather, they see the courses as directly equivalent to the various criminal justice, health science and physical education courses. *ICCB Administrative Rule 1501.302 2) A) and B)* require institutions to maintain academic control of their curriculum. The design, conduct, and evaluation of the units of instruction taken by the SLEA students are not under the direct and continuous control of the college. Instead, the curriculum was implemented by an outside organization (ILETSB) and is not subject to the direct oversight or evaluation of COD Academic Leadership and Faculty. Furthermore, there were no Criminal Justice faculty members involved in the teaching of the courses. Instead, the courses were taught by instructors designated by the ILETSB. These instructors may have met COD adjunct faculty requirements, but they were not subject to evaluation and direct supervision by COD.

It should also be noted that the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requires an institution to seek commission approval for transfer of substantial academic or operational control of the affiliated institution to a third-party entity. In this situation, COD could be determined to be rendering academic control/decision-making (*CRRT.B.10.020*) of the courses in question to the ILETSB.

#### Generating Credit Hours for State Funding:

A midterm certification is a requirement for a course to generate credit hours for funding *ICCB Administrative Rule 1501.507(c)(1)* states that "Students shall be certified by their instructors as being in attendance at midterm by including a certification statement on the midterm class roster, signed and dated by the instructor". The midterm certifications for the courses that the SLEA students were enrolled in were not signed by an instructor. The COD Program Administrator signs the midterms for the courses in which SLEA students will receive credit.

*ICCB Administrative Rule 1501.507(b)(10)* limits credit hours to a maximum of one or equivalent per week. The academy is exceeding this limitation.

**Compliance Recommendation: In order to be in compliance with *Administrative Rule 1501.507 c) 1*, all SLEA course sections should be eliminated from the FY2015 and FY2016 SU forms and the reports should be resubmitted to the ICCB. The college must work with the ICCB staff to determine the amount the college should reimburse the ICCB for fiscal years 2012-2014 for the SLEA courses that were funded through base operating grants.**

**Compliance Recommendation: In order to be in compliance with *Administrative Rule 1501.302 (2)*, the college must clearly delineate whether the courses in question fall under the category of prior learning or must move to gain "direct and continuous" academic control of the courses in question through the incorporation of SLEA into the regular academic planning and oversight process consistent with other programs on campus.**