BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NEBRASKA STATE COLLEGES ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION\ACADEMIC AND PERSONNEL

ACTION:

Approve Two New Business Administration Options in Health Care Business and Certified Management Accountant (CMA) and an Exemption of Number of Credits Allowed for CMA Option for Peru State College

Per Policy 4200, which requires all new academic programs to be submitted to the Board for approval, Peru State requests approval of two new undergraduate options for its existing Business Administration degree program. These include the Healthcare Business option and the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) option. Note the CMA option also requires the Board of Trustees' approval for an exemption of the number of credits allowed for a comprehensive major, which is fifty seven (57). The CMA Option requires sixty three (63), based upon the twelve (12) competencies required for licensure.

The System Office and Peru State College recommend approval of the New Business Options in Health Care Business and CMA for Peru State College.

ATTACHMENTS:

- PSC Healthcare Business Option (PDF)
- PSC CMA Business Option (PDF)

Updated: 6/1/2022 12:23 PM

Peru State College

Proposal to Add Healthcare Business Option Business Administration Major

1. Descriptive Information

- A. Name of Institution: Peru State College
- B. Name of Program: Business Administration
- C. <u>Degrees/credentials to be awarded graduates of the program:</u>

Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – Healthcare Business option

D. Other programs offered in this field by the institution:

Options: Accounting, Computer Management Information Systems, Management, Marketing, Human Resources and Risk Management, Public Administration, Business Finance

Minors: Accounting, Computer Management Information Systems, Management, Marketing, Human Resources and Risk Management, Organizational Leadership and Management, and Organizational Leadership and Global Issues, Public Administration, Business Finance

- E. CIP code: 52.0201 Business Administration and Management, General
- F. Administrative units for the program: School of Professional Studies
- G. Proposed delivery site(s) and type(s) of delivery, if applicable: Online
- H. Proposed date (term/year) the program will be initiated: Fall 2022

I. Description of Program:

The Business Administration—Healthcare Business option is designed to provide a strong business core and healthcare focused courses. The focused healthcare courses provide the student with skills that develop the ability to navigate the unique challenges of healthcare organizations including hospital, outpatient, and ancillary services.

Program outcomes include:

- 1. Communicate effectively within the healthcare business environment
- 2. Demonstrate professional, ethical and legal standards appropriate to healthcare business.
- 3. Apply financial tools to analyze data and make sound budget decisions.
- 4. Apply ethical and efficient management tools and problem solving skills to make sound decisions.

The Healthcare Business option uses the same core as the existing Business Administration options. The requirements for the new option are outlined below.

Busines	s Admi	nistration Core Requirements (33 credits)	Credits
BUS	214	Introduction to Business Quantitative Methods	3
BUS	231	Principles of Financial Accounting	3
BUS	232	Principles of Managerial Accounting	3
BUS	251	Legal Environment and Contract Law	3
BUS	328	Principles of Marketing	3
BUS	335	Production Operations Management	3
BUS	339	Business Finance	3
BUS	373	Organizational Behavior	3
BUS	480	International Business	3
BUS	495	Business Policy	3
CMIS	300	Information Systems Management	3
Health	care Bu	siness Option (21 credits)	Credits
BUS	233	Medical Terminology for Healthcare Business*	3
BUS	253	Integrated Body Systems for Reimbursement*	3
BUS	330	Healthcare Delivery Systems*	3
BUS	333	Healthcare Management*	3
BUS	343	Medical Sociology and Ethics*	3
BUS	423	Healthcare Law, Policy and Compliance*	3
BUS	433	Healthcare Classifications and Reimbursement*	3
			TOTAL 54 Credits

^{*} Denotes new course

Healthcare Business Administration Option Course Descriptions

BUS 233 Medical Terminology for Healthcare Business (3 credits)

This course introduces students to medical terminology, using the building blocks of word methodologies. This will include the root words, prefixes, suffixes and connectors to enable students to communicate, document and analyze terminology used in billing, reimbursement and documentation of patient records.

BUS 253 Integrated Human Body Systems for Reimbursement (3 credits)

This course provides a basic overview of the human body systems and their functions. Along with medical terminology this course serves as a foundation for the healthcare manager to recognize the integration of proper documentation, coding, and billing of patient records to ensure appropriate reimbursement to the organization. Prerequisite BUS 233.

BUS 330 Healthcare Delivery Systems (3 credits)

This course provides an overview of American healthcare delivery systems and some foreign health care systems for comparison. It includes the study of the current state of healthcare services and its evolution. Included in the overview of systems are insurance, healthcare organizations, health professionals, health policies, and healthcare financing topics. Current socioeconomic issues impacting health care delivery and services will be discussed.

BUS 333 Healthcare Management (3 credits)

This course provides students with the understanding of managing health care departments. Topics such as, leadership skills, human resource for healthcare professionals, budgets, decision making, change management, communication and cultural diversity will be discussed.

BUS 343 / SOC 343 Medical Sociology and Ethics (3 credits)

This course explores the branch of sociology dealing with the analysis of medical organizations and how social and cultural factors affect them. Through medical sociology, the condition of the patients and the education of individuals regarding various socio-cultural factors, lifestyle and social identities that may increase their vulnerability to diseases.

BUS 423 Healthcare Law, Policy and Compliance (3 credits)

This course covers the legal aspect of healthcare and regulatory requirements. The security of data and patient information will be reviewed including risks and privacy. External trends and regulations that affect healthcare systems will be discussed. Prerequisite BUS 251.

BUS 433 Healthcare Classification and Reimbursement (3 credits)

This course provides information regarding the different classification systems and their relationship with the healthcare reimbursement process. Components of the revenue cycle process will be explored and evaluated, along with how organizations manage and comply with reimbursement methodologies and regulatory requirements. Prerequisite BUS 339.

2. Centrality to Role and Mission

The College's mission states, "Peru State College provides students of all backgrounds access to engaging educational experiences to strengthen and enrich communities, Nebraska and the world." This program contributes to the mission of the College by providing our students an engaging educational experience while giving them additional opportunities after graduation. With its online availability, people already working in southeast Nebraska communities will have access to further their education, which will allow them to stay in their communities while completing the degree program.

PSC anticipates that many incumbent workers in the healthcare industry will enroll in this program in order to obtain a four-year degree to advance their careers or expand their healthcare career options. The program provides another option for the Business Administration major, so it is consistent with other programs at the College. The program supports the state's increasing need for healthcare workers, so it is consistent not only with the College's mission, but with the NSCS mission and CCPE State Plan as well.

3. Evidence of Need and Demand

Need for the program:

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Medical and Health Services Managers earned a median salary of \$101,340 in 2021. A bachelor's degree is required for entry-level positions. The occupation is seeing 32% growth between 2020-2030, which is much faster than average. On May 23, 2022, there were 128 job openings in Nebraska according to the Nebraska Department of Labor in this category. For those openings, there were only 82 candidates who had active resumes in the workforce system.

According to the BLS, "Medical and health services managers plan, direct, and coordinate the business activities of healthcare providers." They recruit, train, and supervise staff members of health care offices; develop and manage budgets; keep and organize records for the facility; and communicate with members of the medical staff.

Examples of jobs in this field include:

- Clinic Data Analyst
- Billing and Information Systems Manager
- Patient Access Representative
- Hospital or Nursing Home Administrator
- Healthcare Operations Manager
- Clinic Manager
- Practice Administrator
- Health Information Manager

Demand for the Program:

Based on projections from an external consultant, we project 25 new online students for this program in the first year, with total students in the program at 51 in the second year, 83 in the third year, 80 in the fourth year and 75 in the fifth year. Students will be able to begin the program at any of the five (5) eight-week online sessions, which provides a rolling admission cycle.

4. Adequacy of Resources

Faculty and Staff Resources:

Core courses required for this program are already being offered, and there is capacity to accommodate more students in many of those courses. The program may initially require overloads for some current faculty, course development fees, and the hiring of adjuncts who are experienced healthcare industry professionals. Courses may be taught as part of regular faculty load, depending on enrollments in other courses. A full-time faculty member is expected to be needed within two years if the anticipated enrollment increases as a result of this program growth. Current faculty have qualifications to teach these courses and the College will be able to hire qualified adjuncts, as needed, due to online modality of courses.

Physical Facilities:

The program will be offered online, so there is no need for physical facilities upgrades or improvements.

<u>Instructional Equipment and Informational Resources:</u>

No additional instructional equipment is needed. Library has sufficient resources.

Budget Projections for the first five years of program:

As the attached spreadsheets reflect, PSC expects adding one FTE of instruction (adjunct instruction) for the first two years of the program, with an addition of a second FTE of instruction for the third year and beyond. The cost of this additional FTE, along with general operating funds to support the program, result in an overall expense of \$321,131 across the first five (5) years of the program. PSC anticipates a gross revenue of \$763,340 across the first (5) years of the program, resulting in a net revenue of \$442,209 for the first five (5) years of implementation

5. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

Similar programs in Nebraska include:

- University of Nebraska Omaha Healthcare Administration option as part of its
 Multidisciplinary Studies program. The option requires only 30 credits, which can include
 many courses that are not business or healthcare-related.
- Nebraska Methodist and Clarkson College BS in Healthcare Management that is similar to the one proposed.
- Creighton Health Administration and Policy major. It is broader and does not contain as many business classes as this proposal.
- Bellevue University Healthcare Management program that lacks the core business courses.
- Park University, Concorde Career College in Kansas City, Mercy College of Health Sciences and Ottawa University have similar programs in surrounding states.

The proposed program offers several advantages:

- As compared with private institutions, a degree from Peru State is much more affordable.
- The program has a solid business core that provides many more options and career choices in various areas of healthcare and business.
- The program will be available online, to serve incumbent workers who cannot attend class on campus.

The number of advertised positions in the state cited previously and the lack of qualified applicants for those positions justifies adding another program in the state to meet those needs.

6. Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education

Adding a Healthcare Business option at Peru State College is consistent with the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education's Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education and helps the state advance three major goals: meeting the educational needs of students, meeting the needs of the state, and meeting the needs through exemplary institutions.

This program meets the educational needs of students by providing instruction in a growing area of interest for students. The online delivery of the program will accommodate students who are place-bound. Students will likely have an Associate's degree and work experience and this program will help them to advance in their healthcare careers.

The program also helps to meet the needs of the state by creating a knowledgeable, trained and skilled workforce in healthcare. As evidenced by the high demand for positions in this field, this program will prepare students to fill these positions, serving in critical workforce areas and preparing the state to meet the needs to support the healthcare industry.

Finally, the addition of the Healthcare Business option will help Peru State College fulfill its role in an exemplary manner. The inclusion of the option within Business Administration, provides a unique program that is not readily available at the state's public institutions. Given that the option can be created with few additional new resources, it is an efficient way to provide additional access to students served by the College's mission.

TABLE 1: PROJECTED EXPENSES - NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

	FY 19-20 Year 1		FY 20-21 Year 2		FY 21-22 Year 3		FY 22-23 Year 4		FY 23-24 Year 5			
											Total	
Personnel	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
Faculty ¹	.5	12,000	1.0	24,000	1.0	\$89,000	1.0	\$91,225	1.0	\$93,506	4.5	309,731
Professional ²												
Graduate assistants												
Support staff												
Subtotal		12,000		24,000		89,000		91,225		93,506	4.5	309,731
Operating												
General Operating ³		8,400		0		1,000		1,000		1,000		
Equipment ⁴												
New or renovated space ⁵												
Library/ Information Resources ⁶												
Other ⁷												
Subtotal		8,400				1,000		1,000		1,000		11,400
Total Expenses		20,400		24,000		90,000		92,225		94,506		\$321,131

Expenses Defined:

- ¹Year 1: Instruction Four adjunct sections of courses, including benefits. Adjuncts will support the flexibility for full-time faculty to participate in teaching new courses in this program. Adjunct instructional costs are \$1000 per credit.
- ¹Year 2: Instruction Eight adjunct sections of courses, including benefits. Adjuncts will support the flexibility for full-time faculty to participate in teaching new courses in this program. Adjunct instructional costs are \$1000 per credit.
- ¹Year 3-5: Instruction Full-time faculty costs are estimated at \$65,000 plus benefits and then increased by 2.5% each year.

 ³Year 1: General Operating Course development stipend of \$400 per credit to full-time faculty for seven (7) new/revised courses.
- ³Year 3-5: General Operating Operating budget for new faculty (professional development, memberships, copies, phone and other office expenses).

TABLE 2: REVENUE SOURCES FOR PROJECTED EXPENSES - NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

	FY23 Year 1	FY24 Year 2	FY25 Year 3	FY26 Year 4	FY27 Year 5	Total
Reallocation of Existing Funds ¹						
Required New Public Funds ²						
1. State Funds						
Tuition and Fees ³	\$73,464	\$178,413	\$290,358	\$279,864	\$262,372	\$1,084,471
Students in Program	21	51	83	80	75	
Other Funding ⁴						
Total revenue for new program	\$73,464	\$178,413	\$290,358	\$279,864	\$262,372	\$1,084,471

³ Assumptions for revenue generation are based upon students new to the College who would not have attended Peru State if the option did not exist:

- 18 credits taken per year @ \$299/credit (\$5382 per student), less payment to Archer, multiplied by the total number of students in the program
- Students identified in Years 2-5 include both new students and those retained in the program who are continuing coursework. Retention rates used: Fall to Spring (90%), Fall to Summer (70%), Fall to Fall(80%). These are based on typical retention rates for those terms for online students.
- Students may enter program at each start date (Fall Term I, Fall Term II, Spring Term I, Spring Term II, Summer)
- The average number of credits takes into account the varying credit loads for students, depending on when they begin each fiscal year

Peru State College

Proposal to Add Certified Management Accountant (CMA) Option Business Administration Major

1. Descriptive Information

- A. Name of Institution: Peru State College
- B. Name of Program: Business Administration
- C. <u>Degrees/credentials to be awarded graduates of the program</u>:

Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – Accounting: CMA Option

D. Other programs offered in this field by the institution:

Options: Accounting, Computer Management Information Systems, Management, Marketing, Human Resources and Risk Management, Public Administration, Business Finance

Minors: Accounting, Computer Management Information Systems, Management, Marketing, Human Resources and Risk Management, Organizational Leadership and Management, and Organizational Leadership and Global Issues, Public Administration, Business Finance

- E. CIP code: 52.0201 Business Administration and Management, General
- F. Administrative units for the program: School of Professional Studies
- G. Proposed delivery site(s) and type(s) of delivery, if applicable: Online and campus
- H. Proposed date (term/year) the program will be initiated: Fall 2022
- I. Description of Program:

The Accounting option prepares students for high-demand careers in financial reporting and management. Initial coursework is designed to prepare students for entry level accounting positions in government and private industry.

The CMA (Certified Management Accountant) is the advanced professional certification specifically designed to measure the accounting and financial management skills that drive business performance. To receive the certification, accountants must pass a two-part exam that includes twelve (12) competencies. The courses listed below address those competencies and prepare students to take the exam.

The Accounting: CMA option uses the same core as the existing Business Administration options and all of the Accounting required courses. The requirements for the new option are outlined below, including the three additional courses (in italics), one of which is new. Students can still complete the Accounting option without taking the additional courses.

Busines	s Admi	nistration Core Requirements (33 credits)		Credits
BUS	214	Introduction to Business Quantitative Methods		3
BUS	231	Principles of Financial Accounting		3
BUS	232	Principles of Managerial Accounting		3
BUS	251	Legal Environment and Contract Law		3
BUS	328	Principles of Marketing		3
BUS	335	Production Operations Management		3
BUS	339	Business Finance		3
BUS	373	Organizational Behavior		3
BUS	480	International Business		3
BUS	495	Business Policy		3
CMIS	300	Information Systems Management		3
Accoun	ting: Cl	MA Option (30 credits)		Credits
BUS	337	Intermediate Accounting I		3
BUS	338	Intermediate Accounting II		3
BUS	342	Accounting Information Systems Analysis & Design		3
BUS	371	Cost/Managerial Accounting		3
BUS	419	Federal Income Taxes- Individual		3
BUS	450	Advanced Accounting		3
BUS	451	Governmental & Not-for-Profit Accounting		3
BUS	470	Auditing		3
BUS	337	Intermediate Accounting I		3
BUS	353	Organizational Ethics		3
BUS	372	Advanced Cost/Managerial Accounting		3
BUS	425	Accounting Analytics*		3
			TOTAL 6	3 Credits

^{*} Denotes new course

NOTE: This proposed academic program exceeds the maximum credits allowed in Board Policy 4140 for a comprehensive major, due to the need to provide instruction in all of the twelve (12) competencies of the CMA exam. Therefore, approval of this program also includes approval for an exemption of the Comprehensive Major limit of 57 credits, to allow the program to require 63 credits for the major.

The twelve (12) competencies include:

- External Financial Reporting Decisions
- Planning, Budgeting, and Forecasting
- Performance Management
- Cost Management
- Internal Controls
- Technology and Analytics

- Financial Statement Analysis
- Corporate Finance
- Decision Analysis
- Risk Management
- Investment Decisions
- Professional Ethics

Specifically, the BUS 353 Organizational Ethics course addresses the Professional Ethics competency, the BUS 425 Accounting Analytics addresses the Technology and Analytics competency, and the BUS 372 Advanced Cost/Managerial Accounting addresses several competencies.

Accounting: CMA Option Courses (includes the following three additional courses)

BUS 353 Organizational Ethics

This course applies ethical concepts and principles to moral issues in business: corporate responsibility, discrimination, advertising, competition, whistle-blowing, trade-secrets, multinationals, environment, workers' rights, government regulation, investment, bribes, product liability, and consumerism.

BUS 372 Advanced Cost/Managerial Accounting

This course covers standard costing, variable costing, relevant costing, designing a master budget, inventory control and production, capital budgeting, and designing a cost system for measuring organizational performance.

BUS 425 Accounting Analytics (new course)

Students will develop the knowledge and skills related to the techniques and technologies used to analyze data with an emphasis on financial and non-financial data as it is linked to assessing financial performance, forecasting, decision making, and recommendations.

2. Centrality to Role and Mission

The College's mission states, "Peru State College provides students of all backgrounds access to engaging educational experiences to strengthen and enrich communities, Nebraska and the world." This program contributes to the mission of the College by providing our students an engaging educational experience while giving them additional opportunities after graduation. The College has offered an Accounting program for many years. This new option adds three courses to fully prepare students to take the CMA exam upon completion of the program. With its online availability, people already working in southeast Nebraska communities will have access to further their education, which will allow them to stay in their communities while completing the degree program.

3. Evidence of Need and Demand

Need for the program:

With the addition of the Accounting Analytics course, the Peru State curriculum now prepares students for the CMA exam. By combining all the courses necessary and identifying them for students, it will assist the students in knowing this opportunity exists and will help them choose an

educational path that will maximize their opportunities in the workforce. There are more than 100,000 accounting and finance professionals around the world with the certification and 5,000 are granted each year. According to the organization that provides the certification, The Association of Accountants and Financial Professionals in Business, having the certification increases the pay of its holders and provides career advancement.

Demand for the Program:

On May 27, 2022, there were 752 openings for Accountants and Auditors in the state of Nebraska, according to the Department of Labor website. According to O*Net Online, the CMA certification is in demand. The CMA certification is often listed as a requirement or preference for Accountant positions. Peru State had 83 accounting majors this past spring, many of whom may be interested in this program. Additionally, the program will likely attract new students who wish to receive training to prepare for the CMA certification. The College typically enrolls 10-15 new CPA students each year and has an average total enrollment of 50 students. It is expected that a slightly smaller number would pursue this program, with 5-10 new starts and approximately 27 when fully enrolled.

4. Adequacy of Resources

Faculty and Staff Resources:

All but one of the courses are already offered. The new course will be a taught by faculty with the CMA licensure, as part of load or overload or by adjunct replacement, depending on enrollments. The new course will also be taken by students preparing for the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam.

Physical Facilities:

There is no need for physical facilities upgrades or improvements to teach the new course.

Instructional Equipment and Informational Resources:

No additional instructional equipment is needed. Library has sufficient resources.

Budget Projections for the first five years of program:

As the attached spreadsheets reflect, PSC expects adding one section of adjunct instruction to replace full-time faculty teaching the one new course once per year. The cost of this additional section results in an overall expense of \$15,000 across the first five years of the program. PSC anticipates a gross revenue of \$370,301 across the first five years of the program, resulting in a net revenue of \$355,301 for the first five years of implementation

5. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

It is difficult to tell which schools provide equivalent training. There do not appear too many that specifically identify a CMA track. Even if other institutions provide these courses, it is advantageous for Peru State students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for the CMA exam, should they wish to pursue it.

6. Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education

Adding the Accounting: CMA option at Peru State College is consistent with the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education's Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education and helps the state advance three major goals: meeting the educational needs of students, meeting the needs of the state, and meeting the needs through exemplary institutions.

This program meets the educational needs of students by providing instruction in to prepare them for the CMA exam, which can provide additional career opportunities and earnings.

The program also helps to meet the needs of the state by enhancing the skills and knowledge of graduates in the accounting field. The number of vacancies indicates this is a high-demand field and the added certification of the CMA will only help advance the state's workforce in critical accounting competencies.

Finally, the addition of the Accounting: CMA option will help Peru State College fulfill its role in an exemplary manner. The inclusion of the option within Business Administration, provides a unique program that is not readily available at the state's public institutions. Given that the option can be created with few additional new resources, it is an efficient way to provide additional access to students served by the College's mission.

TABLE 1: PROJECTED EXPENSES - NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

	FY 19-20 Year 1		FY 20-21 Year 2		FY 21-22 Year 3		FY 22-23 Year 4		FY 23-24 Year 5			
-											Total	
Personnel	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost								
Faculty ¹	.125	3,000	.125	3,000	.125	3,000	.125	3,000	.125	3,000	.625	15,000
Professional ²												
Graduate assistants												
Support staff												
Subtotal		3,000		3,000		3,000		3,000		3,000	.625	15,000
Operating												
General Operating ³		0		0		0		0		0		
Equipment ⁴												
New or renovated												
space ⁵												
Library/Information												
Resources ⁶												
Other ⁷												
Subtotal		0		0		0		0		0		0
Total Expenses		3,000		3,000		3,000		3,000		3,000		15,000

Expenses Defined:

[•] ¹Year 1-5: Instruction – Assumes hiring one adjunct section to replace full-time faculty member teaching the one new course in the program.

³Year 1-5: General Operating – No additional operating costs are necessary. Existing professional development budgets can be used for faculty training and development.

TABLE 2: REVENUE SOURCES FOR PROJECTED EXPENSES - NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total	
Reallocation of Existing Funds ¹							
Required New Public Funds ²				_			
1. State Funds							
Tuition and Fees ³	\$30,193	\$49,586	\$77,878	\$99,173	\$113,471	\$370,301	
Students in Program	7	12	19	24	27		
Other Funding ⁴							
Total revenue for new program	\$30,193	\$49,586	\$77,878	\$99,173	\$113,471	\$370,301	

³ PSC assumes there will be many who add the option and are or would be regular Accounting majors. Assumptions for revenue generation are based upon students new to the College who would not have attended Peru State if the option did not exist, based on half of the current CPA students:

- Would include both campus and online students. Based on the CPA breakdown, 33% would be campus and 67% would be online.
- 18 credits taken per year @ \$299/credit (\$5382 per student), less payment to Archer, multiplied by the total number of students in the program for online students. 30 credits per year @\$180 per credit multiplied by the total number of students in the program for campus students.
- Students identified in Years 2-5 include both new students and those retained in the program who are continuing coursework. Retention rates used: First year to second (58.5%), First to Third (46%), First to Fourth (41%). These are based on typical retention rates for those terms for all students.
- Students may enter program at each start date (Fall Term I, Fall Term II, Spring Term I, Spring Term II, Summer).
- The average number of credits takes into account the varying credit loads for students, depending on when they begin each fiscal year.