

The faculty discussion regarding the College of Business's entrepreneurship micro-credential focused on reconciling an **innovative, non-credit program** with existing **University Policy 4260**, which mandates that micro-credentials must include one to four credit-bearing courses.

The proposal describes a "shark tank" style forum where undergraduate students learn basic entrepreneurial skills and pitch ideas to potential donors. While the program is free and utilizes volunteer instructors, the College of Business seeks to have it appear on **academic transcripts** and award a **digital badge** for legitimacy and credibility.

### **Scenario 1: Converting to a Credit-Bearing Credential (0.5 to 1.0 Credits)**

- **Positives:** This maintains consistency with policy and avoids diluting the value of existing credentials that have credit bearing courses. It could also make the credential **stackable**, allowing it to count toward a future degree.
- **Negatives:** A faculty senator raised a "**red flag**" concerning the credentials of off-campus business volunteers if they are technically teaching credit-bearing material. There was also concern that students might be forced to pay tuition for these credits, even if the workshop itself is free.

### **Scenario 2: Utilizing Zero-Credit Hour Courses**

Several faculty senators suggested using the "zero-credit" model currently used for science labs and directed research.

- **Positives:** This allows the activity to be recorded on a transcript without charging students tuition. One senator proposed creating **multiple zero-credit courses** (one for each workshop session) to satisfy the policy's requirement for "one to four courses".
- **Negatives:** It was noted that the university administration may resist a surge in zero-credit courses because they **do not generate revenue**. Additionally, a senator pointed out that zero-credit science labs are typically tied to a credit-bearing lecture, unlike this standalone program.

### **Scenario 3: Amending Policy 4260**

The Executive Committee discussed the possibility of simply removing the "credit-bearing" requirement from the university policy.

- **Positives:** This would provide a permanent home for non-credit, innovative programs that the university wants to sanction officially.
- **Negatives:** The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee expressed a strong desire to **adhere to current policy** to maintain academic rigor. There is a fear that allowing non-credit credentials could devalue existing credit-bearing ones.

### **Scenario 4: Rebranding the Program**

One option mentioned was to stop calling the program a "micro-credential" and find an alternative name.

- **Positives:** This bypasses the policy conflict entirely.
  - **Negatives:** The primary goal of the proposal is to secure the **legitimacy** and university-sanctioned status that comes with the specific "micro-credential" label on a transcript.
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## Key Discussion Themes

- **Instructor Qualifications:** Senators expressed concern that if the program becomes credit-bearing, the university must strictly vet off-campus volunteers from companies ensure they meet teaching standards.
- **Student Cost vs. Value:** The program is currently intended as a free benefit to the community and students to encourage "entrepreneurial thinking". Faculty want to ensure students aren't "enticed" into a free program only to be hit with unexpected credit costs later.
- **Innovation vs. Regulation:** While faculty senators want to encourage the "innovative thought" of the shark tank format, they emphasized that it must be done within the bounds of university policy and rigor.