



**DALE KOOYENGA**  
WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

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September 25, 2019

**TO:** Members of the Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children & Families  
**FR:** Senator Dale Kooyenga  
**RE:** Support for Senate Bill 205

The federal Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy guidelines state that students enrolled in a four-year undergraduate program requiring 120 credit hours to graduate are allowed to receive aid for up to six years or 180 credits. A student must meet SAP requirements in order to continue receiving federal student aid. This allows for measurement and enforcement of standards in order to ensure recipients are progressing toward graduation.

However, the 180 credit limitation under SAP can have immediate impacts on transfer students, second degree students, and veterans due to the credits they've previously accumulated. For instance, the UW System and technical colleges are required to accept the transfer of Joint Service Transcript and Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) credits.

Unfortunately, the requirement of the UW System and technical colleges to accept these credits can adversely impact "high credit" veterans, such as those in technical tracks involving intelligence or nuclear training. If the student veteran reaches the credit limit, the student faces financial aid related appeals and rigid academic planning until graduation. This reduces their academic flexibility when it comes to course selection or decision making.

SB 205 would allow the student veteran, along with their academic advisor, to decide whether or not to accept the awarding of credit for any course included in the official joint services transcript or Community College of the Air Force transcript. This gives the student and university flexibility to accept the credits, allowing high credit veterans to avoid the bureaucratic cliff existing under current law.

Thank you and I respectfully ask for your support of Senate Bill 205.



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# TONY KURTZ

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 50<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## 2019 Senate Bill 205

September 25, 2019

Relating to: transferring academic credits from military transcripts to University of Wisconsin System schools and technical colleges.

### Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families

Thank you, Chairman Kooyenga for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 205 (SB 205) today and thank you to members of the committee for taking my written testimony on this bill today as well.

This bill would allow for a student veteran who is enrolled in a University of Wisconsin System school or a technical college to object to transfer of academic credit from that individual's military transcript to the school of attendance, thus giving the individual more flexibility and autonomy over his/her educational experience.

In the 2017 Biennial Budget bill, a provision was inserted that would require the UW System schools and technical colleges award academic credit, upon application, for any course that was a part of military training or service experience if the course meets the standards of the American Council on Education. The provision was supposed to have included that the veteran consents to the award of the credit.

As it turns out, the consent of the veteran was not included and SB 205 is now being put forward to correct that oversight and allows the student veteran to object to any transfer credit being awarded. In the cases of student veterans who have had advanced technical training, many credits are being awarded that put the student veteran in a category of "Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)." Once nearing the SAP, the individual will have to participate in more rigid academic planning and financial aid related appeals until graduation. This awarding of the transfer credit is meant to help these student veterans obtain their educational goals. These additional obstacles can make it frustrating to do so. It is my hope that SB 205 be considered to correct this oversight and give the student veteran more autonomy over their educational planning.



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September 25, 2019

TO: Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families

FROM: Ray Cross, UW System President

RE: Senate Bill 205 Testimony - For Information Only

Thank you, Chairman Kooyenga and committee members, for holding this public hearing on SB 205, and thank you to Representative Kurtz and Senator Kooyenga for authoring this bill to support students who transfer credits from military transcripts to UW institutions.

We estimate that there are about 141 active duty service members and about 4,774 veterans who currently attend UW System institutions. We owe it to these students who are serving or who served our state and country to provide access to a quality education and to provide the necessary support to help them succeed. It is common for these students to enter our institutions with credits from the joint services transcript or Community College of the Air Force transcript and to transfer these credits.

Under current law, UW institutions must accept all credits, which may or may not help a student toward their degree completion. Sometimes students with a large amount of credits will be negatively impacted if their total number of credits exceed thresholds for financial aid. SB 205 gives students the option to object to having credits awarded for any course on the official joint services transcript or the Community College of the Air Force transcript. This will fix what was an unintended consequence of current law so students will not inadvertently be impacted by credit thresholds for financial aid.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide additional information on SB 205, and as a veteran myself, I appreciate any efforts to support those who are serving or who served in our armed forces and attend our institutions to pursue their education.

