

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee

Meeting Notes

December 2, 2010

10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Dixon University, Harrisburg, PA

Remote Locations: CCBC, IUP, MontCo, Conference Call Line

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 A.M.

Updates/Announcements

Review of Framework courses

- Subcommittee will review courses Jan-Mar 2011.
- Institutions may submit courses until Jan. 31, 2011.

PA TRAC Website

- New webpage explains participation by state-related universities
- PA TRAC Webinar will be offered twice a week Jan-Feb 2011. TAOC members should notify their faculty, advisors and other related personnel. Anyone may participate. Registration available via PA TRAC homepage.

Status of Pilot PAC Agreements

- Psychology – revised and posted on PA TRAC
- PK-4 – final revisions in process; will post to PA TRAC when complete
- Math – Approved unanimously by TAOC on November 22. PDE will post to PA TRAC.

Process for Implementing Statewide Articulation Agreements

Proposal: After an Agreement is approved by TAOC, PDE will distribute the final Agreement to TAOC and post it on PA TRAC. An institution determined by TAOC to have a degree program in the articulated field of study will then

1. review its program against the approved Articulation requirements
2. modify its program to meet the requirements (if necessary) and
3. self-verify to TAOC when the institution 1) has a program that meets Agreement criteria and 2) is prepared to honor the Agreement.

Issues/Concerns/Suggestions

- Why does the matrix have to be approved? “Approved” only means that the TAOC member is saying the institution completed and submitted and that their institution meets the standards. Would be more like “validating” instead of approving”.
- PDE would be responsible for maintaining on PA TRAC a list of institutions prepared to honor the agreements.
- PDE would serve as a repository for articulation materials and verification documents from the institutions.
- PDE is not an approving body.

Resolution: Institutions will self-verify to TAOC when they are prepared to honor an agreement. Neither TAOC nor PDE will be responsible for “approving” an institution’s program.

Program-to-Program Articulation Matrix:

Proposal: The Articulation Matrix would be the assessment tool institutions used to determine when the institution was ready to honor the articulation agreement. Competency requirements would be placed in the matrix to help institutions identify where competencies fall within an existing program and where gaps may exist.

- Similar tool used in curriculum mapping process
- Would be submitted by the Associate degree institutions only
- Would be used to show where required competencies fit into the associate degree program
- Institutions would submit it to PDE by the institution’s TAOC member

- PDE would serve only as a repository for the matrices. PDE would not be responsible for approving the matrices.

Issues/Concerns/Suggestions

- The matrix seems like an extra step that is not needed. May be more work than needed. Allow institutions to decide how to assess their programs.
- The matrix should be completed by both two- and four-year institutions.
- The matrix could help four-year institutions figure out how to transfer courses from the two-year institutions.
- Since matrix would include competencies required in the first 60-credits of the bachelor degree, it could help with curriculum alignment between the 2- and 4-year institutions.
- If TAOC agrees to tool, make PACs responsibility to complete and submit with the agreement.
- Matrix would be a good exercise for PACs to see what they are requiring.
- Should the 4-year institutions be required to show how they plan to fit the associate degree into the bachelor degree program w/o loss of academic progress?
- Matrix complicates the process. Institutions build trust through the PAC process. Need to continue to show mutual trust and respect by allowing institutions to determine when they are ready to honor the agreements.
- Have TAOC members sign and submit an Institutional Statement to signal when the institution is ready.
- PACs could use build the matrix as they go through the PAC process. Would be a good visual representation of their work.
- The matrix is for institutional use only and would not be public and not used by others as a comparison. This is only a tool for institutions to review their programs.
- Can you expect to have colleges and universities use the matrix? This might have value in other ways. It may not have value right now but if institutions check off without them being delivered, may have value or meaning down the road.

Resolution

- All institutions will self-identify to TAOC when they are prepared to honor the Articulation Agreement.
- PDE will work with the respective PACs to create a matrix for each of the pilot agreements and test the matrix as part of the pilot model process.
- TAOC will develop an institutional statement that all institutions will use to let TAOC know when they are ready to honor the agreement.
- After seeing what the matrices would look like for all of the agreements, TAOC will vote as to who should use it or even if it should be used.

Effective Dates of Statewide Agreements

Proposal: Agreements developed and approved by TAOC prior to June 30, 2011 must be implemented no later than Fall 2012. Agreements developed and approved by TAOC between July 1 – December 31, 2011, must be implemented no later than Fall 2013.

Discussion: None

Resolution:

- TAOC agreed to the effective dates.
- Fall 2013 is absolute deadline for implementing all statewide agreements.

Remaining Articulation Fields of Study

Proposal: There are two possible strategies for completing the remaining articulation agreements:

Option #1 – Develop an agreement for each of the remaining 36 fields of study, including 4-8/secondary/special education, etc.

Option #2 – Cluster like fields and create agreements that cover multiple majors.

Issues/Concerns/Suggestions

- Union negotiations and the passage of a new state budget in July could affect work getting done and limit the resources needed to complete the work in a timely manner.
- According to the CIP codes reviewed by PDE, at least 36 fields of study, including 4-8/secondary/special education, still need to be developed. If each of the PACs are handled the same way the pilot PAC were, there is no way all of the agreements will be developed by the end of 2011, the legislative deadline.
- We could do half of the agreements in the first six months and the other half the second part of the year OR we could start all of the PACs at the beginning of the year.
- If we start in January and give the PACs a year to complete the work, TAOC could stagger their start dates in the spring, allowing the more complex PACs to begin first and allowing TAOC and PDE to spread out resources.
- By breaking the fields into “Academic Clusters” we could get more done with fewer resources and possibly in a shorter time frame.
- How is TAOC going to maintain 36 articulation agreements year after year?
- Are we adding another layer of complexity for transfer students by developing an agreement for every major?
- Resources vary among institutions. Some of the smaller colleges do not have the personnel needed to serve on 36 PACs at one time.
- Could begin with the majors that have the most transfer student enrollment so as to benefit the most students.
- At what point does TAOC stop aligning degree programs and developing these agreements?
- TAOC may want to rethink the criteria by which aligned programs are identified and prioritized for articulation.
- In principle, the cluster approach makes sense. Students often do not specialize in field of study until they transfer.
- Cluster approach may be work for some fields of study but not all.
- How will TAOC determine the groups of majors, given each institution has its own definition of humanities, social sciences, etc.?
- Grouping like fields would be similar to TAOC’s process for determining the 6 Framework categories and developing standards for each category.
- How do we approach liberal studies programs that currently serve as the pathway to such majors as foreign language, history, religious studies, etc.? Whatever the colleges are doing now works for these majors. How can TAOC do something similar?

Resolution:

- Refer issue to the TAOC Steering Committee for consideration. The Steering Committee will then recommend to TAOC a process and timeline for meeting the legislative requirements.
- TAOC will wait to form additional PACs until the Steering Committee makes its recommendation and TAOC decides a process/timeline.

Process/Timeline Proposals

Proposal: PDE proposed two timelines for developing and implanting the new agreements:

Proposal I:

- December '10 – January '11 – Sectors appoint ALL PACs
- January '11 – February '11 – PACs begin with staggered start dates
- May-June '11 – Four months from start date agreements are due to PDE for TAOC approval; additional time granted if needed
- December 31, 2011 – All agreement approved

Proposal II:

- December '10 – January '11 – Sectors appoint ALL PACs
- ROUND 1
 - January '11 – February '11 – 16 PACs begin
 - May '11 – Agreements submitted for approval; additional time granted if needed
- ROUND 2
 - August – September '11 – Final 16 PACs begin
 - November 11, 2011 – Agreements submitted for approval
- December 31, 2011 – All agreements approved.

Issues/Concerns/Suggestions

- Neither model is designed for completing 36 agreements.
- Need Steering Committee to consider options and make recommendations first.

Resolution:

- Timeline referred to Steering Committee.

Unresolved “Rules” of Statewide Articulation

Proposed Statement: “The statewide program to program articulation agreement ensures that students who complete and AA or AS degree from a participating institution will have their coursework and credits transfer into a parallel baccalaureate program with full junior standing and without the need for a course-by-course evaluation.”

Issues/Concerns/Suggestions

- Replace “transfer of coursework” with “transfer of grades”.

Resolution: Referred to the Steering Committee for recommendation to full TAOC.

Proposed Statement: “This agreement does not guarantee admission to a particular college or university nor does it guarantee admission into a particular major at a participating college or university. A list of participating colleges and universities can be found at www.PAcollegetransfer.com.”

Issues/Concerns/Suggestions

- Statement seems negative.

Resolution: Referred to the Steering Committee for recommendation to full TAOC.

Proposed Statement: “The transfer of coursework with a grade less than a C (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) in the Associate Degree will be consistent with the policies of native students at the participating college or university.”

Issues/Concerns/Suggestions

- Recommend more general statement about requirements of grades.
- Certain majors require a grade of C or better for native students.
- Evaluation of transcript must be consistent with native student policy.

Resolution: Referred to the Steering Committee for recommendation to full TAOC.

Proposal: “The Associate Degree Institution will note on the student’s transcript that the associate degree earned qualifies for transfer under the Agreement.”

Issues/Concerns/Suggestions

- There are best practices in other states that students have something on their transcript which lets them know they qualify.
- “Qualifies” is a term that implies admission. Might want to consider saying the student is “eligible”.
- When the CC go back to make notations on the transcripts, is their student information system capable of doing this? Is it possible?
- Marking transcripts could be expensive for an institution if it needs to reprogram its student information system to do this.
- Could actually just use a rubber stamp to mark the transcripts.
- What would the transcript say? Every college calls their degrees something different.
- Marking the transcript could actually help encourage more students to transfer since they would see on their transcript that they qualify for statewide articulation.
- How would this be reinforced at the institutions?
- This could get confusing, especially for a student who “stops out” or doesn’t graduate an associate degree that meets all of the required competencies.

Resolution: Referred to the Steering Committee for recommendation to full TAOC.

Next Steps:

- Schedule a Steering Committee meeting to discuss outstanding issues from this meeting.
- TAOC will vote by email concerning the Steering Committees recommendations.
- Institutions should submit courses to Subcommittees for review.
- TAOC members should notify their campuses of the upcoming PA TRAC webinar.

Meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.