

TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

November 17, 2009

10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Dixon University

2986 North Second Street

Harrisburg, PA 17110-1201

Introduction/Welcome

The meeting began at 10 AM with Julie Rutledge welcoming attendees at the five locations – Duncan Hall 120 at Dixon University in Harrisburg and via satellite from California University of PA, IUP, East Stroudsburg and Duncan Hall 304 (also at Dixon University).

Dr. Kate Shaw, Deputy Secretary of the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education at the PA Department of Education, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Her last day at the Department is Friday, November 20. Kate thanked everyone for their hard work and dedication that allowed them to go beyond the minimum 30 credits that required by Act 114 of 2006 and credited the extraordinary good will by every institution, PASSHE and the PA Commission for Community Colleges for their success.

Kate recognized the ambitious scope of the new transfer legislation (Act 50) and said that success is dependent upon deep faculty involvement in the process. With their help, she said we will create affordable pathways to baccalaureate degrees in ways that have never done before.

Kate announced Sandy Edmunds, Director of the Office of Access Initiatives at PDE, has been appointed the new Deputy Secretary of OPHE and would officially assume the position on Dec. 1.

Review of Transfer Legislation

Sandy reviewed the purpose of Act 114, the legislation that created the statewide transfer system in 2006, and provided the following updates:

- PDE Established the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee
- System allows up to 30 credits of foundation courses to transfer to between 32 colleges & universities in Pennsylvania and count toward graduation in most degree programs
- An interactive website (www.PAcollegetransfer.com) provide transfer information and access to more than 204,000 course equivalencies to students and advisors

Julie reviewed the new transfer provisions included in Act 50 and passed as part of the state fiscal code on Oct. 9, 2009. The new transfer legislation has two purposes:

1. to expand system participation by the state-related institutions, and
2. to allow Pennsylvania students to apply entire associate degrees toward the graduation requirements of bachelor degree programs at public institutions

Expanded Participation of State-related Institutions

Lincoln University is the only state-related university currently participating as a full member of TAOC. Under Act 50, Temple, Pitt and Penn State will expand their participation by identifying at least 30 credits that transfer to their institutions from each of the participating institutions. PDE will work with the three institutions individually to complete the work by the legislative deadline of June 2010.

Developing Statewide Program-to-Program Articulation Agreements

The second purpose of the transfer legislation is to have the public institutions develop statewide program-to-program agreements that allow for the full transfer of Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees into parallel bachelor degree programs. The legislation includes all AA/AS and offered by the participating institutions. It also guarantees students with an AA/AS degree can transfer into to a four-year institution at junior level with at least 60 credits. In order for the agreements to be developed and be effective, program modifications may be required by both 2- and 4-year institutions. Program-to-program articulation agreements in the field of education, including childhood education, will be a priority.

1. **Goals & Guiding Principles for Statewide Program-to-Program Articulation** – TAOC reviewed and discussed goals and guiding principles for their work. Committee comments are as follows:
 - Legislation does not indicate the minimum number of credits a student must complete at the 4-year institution after transferring nor does the legislation mandate that students finish a baccalaureate degree with exactly 120 credits. A majority of the bachelor's degrees at the PASSHE universities require 120 credits; some exceptions exist in such fields as science and education, which may require as many as 126 credits.
 - Expectation of the program-to-program agreements is that students should be able to transfer and complete their bachelor degree within approximately 2 years of full-time enrollment, if they transfer with an AA/AS degree.
 - TAOC will need to be mindful of PDE policies concerning degree requirements as well as accreditation and licensure standards as they develop agreements. For example, PDE has a policy that requires 4-year institutions to have at least 20 credits of general education courses in an associate degree and at least 40 credits of general education courses in a bachelor's degree program. Community colleges are not covered by this policy.
 - "Junior standing" is defined as transferring with a minimum of 60 college-level credits being applied toward graduation requirements at four-year institutions. In some cases, "junior standing" implies a student transfers with the same registration rights as native students, the same accessibility to financial aid, housing, etc. However, that is a policy decision that will continue to be made by the receiving institution and is not part of the new transfer provisions.
 - Community colleges have degree programs that are designed for transfer but not classified as an AA or AS. This issue needs to be addressed quickly since many institutions have Associate of Applied Science (ASS) programs, particularly in Early Childhood Education, that include an increasing number of students who want to transfer.
 - Statewide articulation agreements may affect an institution's existing articulation agreements since existing programs may require modifications due to the alignment of program competencies and learning outcomes.
 - AA/AS degree should transfer as a block and not require a course by course transfer evaluation by the receiving institution, meaning the number of program modifications required by institutions should be minimal. The goal isn't to make each program identical. Institutions should have the latitude and flexibility to create programs that meet their students' needs and provide faculty with the autonomy to decide how to teach. TAOC is responsible for providing a structure that allows for that flexibility while still meeting the competencies and learning outcomes required of a junior transfer.
 - Course competencies and learning outcomes are associated with courses that make up the program. If current courses do not contain the required competencies, then institutions will need to make modifications such as adding the competencies to existing courses or creating new courses.
 - Some PASSHE universities have AACSB accreditation which dictates such requirements as general education credits and minimum grade point average for transfer. According to the legislation, program modifications may be necessary to accommodate such issues.
 - Not all institutions have program accreditation and may have more flexibility in planning their degree programs. One way to meet the needs of both types of institutions could be to create two academic pathways for students – one that leads to transfer at an accredited institution and another that leads to transfer at a non-accredited institution.
 - After the PAC agrees on program competencies and learning outcomes and programs are modified accordingly, transfer counselors and advisors will be asked to translate the information into a format

that is easy for students to interpret. The outcome will be transfer agreements/guides that are posted on PA TRAC.

- The Eastern and Western Pennsylvania Transfer Advisory Councils offered to share their expertise in transfer and articulation and work with TAOC throughout the process. Members may be able to identify problems relatively early as opposed to at the end of the process, when it may be difficult to make changes.
2. **Timeline for Implementation** – According to Act 50, TAOC has until Dec. 31, 2011, to implement the statewide program-to-program articulation initiative. Julie said the timeline will be reviewed regularly and adjusted as needed to complete the work accurately. Implementation will be divided into two phases spanning the next two years. Phase I will begin immediately and include identifying field of study areas by CIP code, the launch of two pilot projects and the formation of a faculty workgroup for Early Childhood Education. Phase II will begin July 2010. See the attached handouts for more detail.
 3. **Identifying Field of Study Areas** – Programs will be identified and clustered by field of study areas according to the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. Using CIP codes will allow us to get to the right level of specificity to identify the programs at each institution and to determine where parallel baccalaureate degree programs exist. See the revised handout. Julie recommended members review their degree programs and make sure that CIP codes and degree types are appropriately assigned.
 4. **Pilot Areas**
Phase I will begin with the identification of two pilot projects in different field of study areas. The purpose of the pilot groups is two-fold:
 1. to identify barriers encountered by the project and make recommendations for future faculty committees as they develop competency-based articulation agreements in their respective areas
 2. to achieve early successes

TAOC recommended the following criteria for selecting the pilot areas:

- The AA/AS degree was already closely aligned to a parallel bachelor degree
- The bachelor degree did not require more than 120 credits for completion
- Program-to-program articulation agreements already existed among the participating institutions
- The major was not subject to complicated accreditation requirements

The pilot projects are intended to be a learning tool that is used to guide the system and process of future articulation work. TAOC recommended a second pilot project that includes more complex issues, such as accreditation, prerequisite courses, or an associate degree that leads to multiple bachelor degrees. Suggested areas included mathematics, psychology, business administration or a sub-discipline of business.

5. **Early Childhood Education Program Articulation Committee** – A Program Articulation Committee (PAC) will be formed by February 2010 to address the articulation needs of Early Childhood Education (ECE). The ECE PAC will not be a pilot, though there is an expectation that due to the prior work of the OCDEL pilot groups, a program-to-program agreement allowing an ECE student with an associate degree to transfer into a P-K bachelor degree program can be developed in less than one year.
6. **Program Articulation Committees (See revised handout)** – PACs consisting of 2- and 4-year faculty will be formed as standing committees charged with developing articulation agreements for specific field of study areas. The articulation committees will develop agreements based on the competencies and learning outcomes required of a student transferring at the junior level with at least 60-credits. Agreements will allow students to transfer from the AA/AS into a specific parallel major or a group of majors at the junior level.

Once the PAC agrees upon the competencies, institutions will submit their current programs for review by their peers against those competencies. The purpose of the review is to identify where the gaps exist and modifications may be needed. Once the programs are aligned with the competencies and learning outcomes, the institutions can develop specific program-to-program agreements (or advising guides).

PDE will provide the PACs with goals, guidelines, assumptions, etc. before beginning their work. PACs will receive training on the development of articulation agreements and the competency-based transfer model. Both training and the guiding documents will be based on best practices, recommendations from TAOC and the outcome of the pilot projects.

PACs will be given a list of milestones and asked to develop a timeline for achieving those goals within one year. This will provide faculty the flexibility to determine how the work gets accomplished. PDE will collect interim reports to track each committee's progress and offer assistance as needed.

PDE will identify the electronic tools and resources to help manage the workflow of TAOC and the PACs. TAOC utilized several Internet-based tools when Act 114 of 2006 first established the transfer system. Similar tools will be employed to facilitate the work required of this initiative as well.

PACs will be led by co-chairs elected by the PAC: one chair from a 2-year institution and one chair from a 4-year institution. A TAOC member or CAO will not be a member of the PACs. PAC chairs will attend all TAOC meetings as ex officio members and will be responsible for communicating TAOC issues with their respective committee members.

7. Competency-Based Transfer

PDE proposed the PACs use a competency-based transfer model to develop the articulation agreements. Competency-based transfer is described as the knowledge, skills and abilities students should possess in order to enter the 4-year institution at the junior level in a particular academic field of study. Currently many institutions have program-to-program agreements based on program competencies and not course descriptions, however, such data has not been collected by PDE. Such agreements are more likely to occur between institutions with career and professional programs such as allied health and technical majors. PACs are encouraged to build upon these existing agreements.

Bachelor degree programs at the PASSHE institutions do not have curriculum alignment or shared competencies. Institutions are beginning to discuss such changes.

8. Potential Barriers

TAOC identified the following as potential barriers:

- Shared governance systems that include a faculty union may prohibit an institution's ability to expedite curriculum changes
- The relationship between the legislation and institutional policy
- The culture and existing policy at institutions may not currently accommodate the changes required by the legislation and/or do so in the timeframe required.
- Inclusion of AAS and other types of associate degrees not classified as AA or AS degrees but designed for transfer.
- Availability of faculty to participate on PACs, travel to meetings and/or work over the summer due to academic obligations and limited financial resources
- General studies or liberal arts degree programs at the community colleges are designed to give students flexibility with transferring but might not have an easily identifiable "parallel" baccalaureate degree program.
- General education requirements vary in credit number and philosophy among the participating institutions.
- Competencies and learning outcomes for specific majors may be integrated into the program's general education requirements.

TAOC Representation

In an effort to show the highest level of commitment possible to this work, Julie requested that the Chief Academic Officers or Provosts from the participating institutions attend every meeting and send a designee only as a stop-gap. If a designee does attend, it is with the understanding that he/she is granted the same decision-making authority as the CAO.

PDE agreed to schedule monthly TAOC meetings for the first half of 2010 as soon as possible, alternating between Tuesday and Thursday mornings to accommodate different schedules. PDE will also attempt to coordinate meetings with CAO events already scheduled in Harrisburg and offer remote meeting locations so representatives can attend via videoconference if necessary. Julie will email TAOC members with the proposed dates, collect the feedback and schedule the meetings accordingly.

For the purpose of continuity, each institution may invite one additional person to attend TAOC meetings.

Updates

- 2009-10 Catalog Course Extracts due January 15, 2010
- Curriculum Standards Subcommittees will begin reviewing new courses for Transfer Credit Framework as of January 1, 2010.
- 2008-09 Transfer Data Collected will be collected via PIMS from the CCs & PASSHE Universities in May 2010 and from the State-Related & Opt-In institutions in August 2010.

Action Items

- Schedule monthly TAOC meetings for January-June 2010 by December 15, 2009
- Identify two pilot field of study areas by January 2010 TAOC meeting
- Identify a workflow process and electronic tools for PACs by February 2010 TAOC

Meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.