

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

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*Chair of the Assembly and the Academic Council
Faculty Representative to the Board of Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200*

July 8, 2011

CHAIRS OF THE DIVISIONS OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

Re: Articulation of courses with California Community Colleges

Dear Division Chairs:

As you may know, the Academic Senates of California's three public higher education segments come together in the Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates to provide faculty leadership in academic coordination among the segments. I ask your assistance in transmitting the enclosed letter to department chairs in your division.

This letter to UC and CSU department chairs and its counterpart addressed to CCC Senate presidents, curriculum chairs, and articulation officers are intended to improve shared understanding of the kind of documentation required to support articulation of Community College courses for transfer to UC. It reminds department chairs that the official description of a course in a Community College is the Course Outline of Record, and that it is this document that supports articulation, not an individual faculty member's syllabus for a particular offering of a course. At the same time, the letter encourages departments to work with Articulation Officers to inform their Community College counterparts when the information contained in a Course Outline of Record is insufficient to support articulation and to request additional detail when needed.

The three Senate chairs hope that this joint letter will reduce barriers to transfer by improving communication between faculty at the four- year and two-year and thereby ensuring that students understand clearly how to prepare academically for a successful transfer to UC or CSU. Thank you for your help in distributing this letter and its enclosure.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Simmons

Encl (1)

Cc: Provost Lawrence Pitts
Interim Admissions Director Pamela Burnett
BOARS Chair Bill Jacob



INTERSEGMENTAL COMMITTEE OF ACADEMIC SENATES

June 21, 2011

To CSU/UC department chairs and faculty involved with community college articulation:

This memo will address considerations for determining placement for CCC transfer students based on the CCC courses they have completed.

For many CSU and UC campuses, articulation agreements already exist that delineate course equivalencies or placement eligibility at CSU/UC for students who have completed particular courses at a particular CCC. These articulation agreements are based on the Course Outline of Record (COR), the official document that describes the course and applies to every offering of that course by any instructor.

On occasion, however, a student requests placement based on having completed a course for which there is no articulation agreement in place. Of course the fundamental question is whether the student's background prepares him or her for success in the advanced course. We typically determine this by examining information about the CCC course(s) the student has taken. The preferred source for this information is the CCC COR. Determinations made on the basis of a course outline can be long-lasting and should not require re-examination for every subsequent student who has taken the same course.

If the COR does not provide enough information to determine that the student is likely to succeed in the advanced course, CSU/UC faculty sometimes request the syllabus for the specific offering of the course that the student completed. This is much less effective, since the syllabus applies only to a single offering of a course; determinations made on the basis of a syllabus would not apply to other offerings of the same course.

Thus, we encourage CSU/UC faculty to make articulation and placement determinations based on CORs rather than individual syllabi, and to communicate with CCCs about the nature and depth of information those outlines should contain. In particular, as the CCCs progress with the uniform course numbering (C-ID) project, we encourage CSU and UC faculty to collaborate with the CCCs as they develop C-ID descriptors for courses in their fields; the C-ID descriptors are designed to include comprehensive course information, such as methods of evaluation, course content and course objectives. (See www.c-id.net)

More generally, we note that there are strong reasons to be flexible in awarding CSU/UC placement based on CCC courses. The criterion should not be course equivalence per se, but rather whether the CCC course(s) prepare the transfer student to succeed in the advanced course(s) at CSU/UC. Flexibility in these determinations helps students achieve their educational goals in a timely way. In addition, the Legislature has a strong interest in streamlining the transfer process and has already enacted legislation intended to facilitate this. Especially for UC, which is insulated from direct legislative control by the Regents, a perceived intransigence may result in a move for more direct legislative control.

Respectfully,

Jane Patton
 ICAS Chair
 President, Academic Senate for
 California Community Colleges

Daniel Simmons
 Chair, Academic Senate UC

James Postma
 Chair, Academic Senate CSU



INTERSEGMENTAL COMMITTEE OF ACADEMIC SENATES

June 21, 2011

To CCC senate presidents, curriculum chairs, and articulation officers:

This memo will address articulation of CCC courses with CSU and UC and the nature of information that can help CSU/UC faculty make these determinations.

CSU/UC faculty need enough information about a CCC course to determine whether a student who has completed that course will succeed if placed into a more advanced course at CSU/UC. Making this determination often requires information about the size and nature of the assignments, or more broadly, details about the CCC course's objectives.

Occasionally CSU/UC faculty request course syllabi rather than the generally applicable course outline of record. While these requests are not ideal, since syllabus information applies only to a single offering of a course, they reflect a desire for greater detail than was available on the course outline and a willingness on the part of the CSU/UC faculty to make an individual determination for a single student.

As the C-ID project progresses, with course descriptions that include more detailed course objectives, we hope that these objectives will be stated in enough detail to enable the CSU/UC faculty to make a judgment about the student's likely success. They should follow the usual best practices in writing objectives, with concrete actions rather than the more general "understand" or "know" and with information about the typical nature and size of the major assignments.

The current budget climate presents challenges to promoting clearer communication between the CCCs and CSU/UC, and we expect that efforts currently underway to communicate the content of CCC courses will improve the educational experience of transfer students.

Respectfully,



Jane Patton
ICAS Chair
President, Academic Senate for
California Community Colleges



Daniel Simmons
Chair, Academic Senate UC



James Postma
Chair, Academic Senate CSU