PROGRESS REPORT
ON
ARTICULATION AND TRANSFER
FOR
ARIZONA PUBLIC
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

2005

Submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee

By
The Arizona Board of Regents
and
The Arizona Community Colleges

Progress Report on Arizona Public Postsecondary Education, 2005

Highlights

♦ The Course Applicability System (CAS) website currently experiences peak usage of nearly 400,000 hits per week, with weekly usage averaging around 175,000 hits per week. This is compared to an average 140,000 "hits" per week at this time last year, and approximately 120,000 "hits" per week at this time two years ago.

♦ Appoximately 4000 community college students completed the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC), which satisfies the lower division general education requirements at the universities. This represents a *100 percent* increase over 2002.

♦ This fall, the Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee co-sponsored a conference with the Postsecondary Articulation/Transfer Task Force of the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education that focused on transferability between regionally and nationally accredited institutions. This conference was an effort to be proactive to the changes in the Higher Education Act at the federal level. The conference was well received and well attended.

♦ The first quarterly on-line ATASS newsletter was published in the spring. The newsletter was sent to all Articulation Task Force members as well as all academic administrators. The goal of the newsletter is to improve communication across ATFs and to all academic administrators.

♦ In response to advisor and student requests, a website was developed to display information about the transfer of Associate of Applied Sciences degrees from the community colleges to the universities.

♦ Training sessions for faculty members that chair Articulation Task Forces (ATFs) successfully continued this year. Meeting operations and reporting accuracy by the Task Forces have greatly improved based on information faculty acquire at the training sessions.

♦ All public institutions are current in their data submissions to the Arizona State System for Information on Student Transfer (ASSIST), the comprehensive statewide database designed to support efforts to refine the transfer process as well as support the improvement of institutional effectiveness. The ASSIST database is used for community college federal reporting requirements, including Carl Perkins III and Student Right to Know reporting. It has also been utilized this year for grant related research and institutional reporting requirements.

♦ In the last academic year, not one student issue has been raised to the Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee – issues have been successfully addressed at the institutional level by the Transfer Student Ombudspersons.

BACKGROUND

In 1996, the Arizona Legislature directed the state's public community colleges and universities to cooperate in articulating course transfers and academic programs, and to collaborate in identifying and meeting the postsecondary education needs of Arizona citizens. In response to this legislative direction, the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) and the State Board of Directors for Community Colleges of Arizona (SBDCCA) enhanced existing collaborative efforts and implemented services and procedures. When the SBDCCA was disestablished by the state legislature in 2003, the community college responsibilities were assumed by the district governing boards. The oversight of the Joint Conference Committee (JCC) consisting of members of both the public universities and community college districts has ensured cooperation and collaboration. As required, regular progress reports have been submitted to the legislature, 1996-2002 from ABOR and SBDCCA and since 2003, from ABOR and the community colleges.

- Since 1996, the report outlined progress in implementing a new statewide transfer model. The model was designed by the statewide Transfer Articulation Task Force (TATF) and is now being guided by the JCC with the aid of the Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee (APASC), a group of community college and university academic officers. The TATF designated the JCC and APASC as the groups responsible for overseeing and implementing the new transfer model.

- Since 1998, the report to the Legislature has addressed a collaborative process to identify and meet statewide postsecondary needs. The process was developed by the statewide Higher Education Study Committee (HESC), and is being continued by the JCC.

The progress report that follows addresses both postsecondary needs and articulation. It is submitted to the legislature in response to state statute. The text of the statute is shown below.

ARS 15-1824. Transfer Articulation; annual report.

The community colleges and universities shall cooperate in operating a statewide articulation and transfer system, including the process for transfer of lower division general education credits, general elective credits and curriculum requirements for approved majors to facilitate the transfer of community college students to Arizona public universities without a loss of credit toward a baccalaureate degree and that the post secondary education needs of students statewide are met without unnecessary duplication of programs.

B. The Arizona board of regents and the community colleges shall submit an annual report of their progress on both articulation and meeting statewide postsecondary education needs to the joint legislative budget committee on or before December 15 and shall provide a copy of this report to the secretary of state and the director of the Arizona state library, archives and public records.

Through the Joint Conference Committee, representatives from the Arizona Board of Regents and the Arizona community colleges receive periodic reports on articulation and joint postsecondary needs.

ARTICULATING POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND COURSES

Overview

Collaborative leadership provided by the Arizona Board of Regents and Arizona community colleges has enabled the successful implementation of the Transfer Model. The Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee has been tasked with oversight of the implementation and evaluation of the model. Regular reports were made to the Joint Conference Committee.

During this year, there has been continuous improvement and on-going refinement of the many components of the model. Significant efforts have been made to ensure that accurate and timely information is available to the various task forces, committees and students regarding policies and processes. The implementation of the model has been facilitated through the efforts of the staff and the appropriate use of technology.

Strategic Plan Developed

In January 2004 at its annual retreat, APASC created its first strategic plan. A mission, goals and objectives were developed which will provide focus for the committee and provide the criteria for evaluating its work. Four subcommittees were established to implement the strategic plan. These are Evaluation, Communication, Technology and Budget Subcommittees. Please refer to Appendix 3 for a summary of the plan.

Joint Conference Committee (JCC) *Developing Recommendations for Increased Collaboration*

Over the past few months the members of the JCC have been seeking ways to collaboratively address issues of affordable access to the baccalaureate degree. Between July 1 and October 1, the JCC held six special meeting outside of the regular annual meeting schedule (3-4 meetings from October through May) to develop a set of recommendations which could be supported and implemented collaboratively by the community colleges and universities. These recommendations are still under development and review, but are expected to be announced formally in early 2006. The recommendations, as drafted, include increasing the transfer credits from community college programs which are applicable to certain university degrees, expanding institutional partnerships and developing alternative funding mechanisms.

The Arizona Transfer Model and the Arizona Transfer Articulation Support Systems (ATASS)

Curriculum and Policy

A. **Continued Process for Planning and Implementing Change:** Curriculum is dynamic and the process of review, change and evaluation is on-going for every institution. What is significant is that the model is flexible enough to accommodate the needs of the individual institutions without negative impact on any of the statewide components. The Arizona Transfer Model has set an example for other states that are looking to improve the transfer of students from community colleges to universities. Discussions of the need to align processes and services beyond the curriculum are now emerging. This year, in response to advisor and student requests, a website was developed to display information about the transfer of Associate of Applied Sciences degrees from the community colleges to the universities.

C. **Training for Articulation Task Force Chairs**: Training for all Articulation Task Force (ATF) Chairs was continued this year. In contrast to recent years, during which ATF Chair training was provided, ATF Chair Training was managed at the institutional level this year. This reflects the strength at participating schools in local expertise about ATF processes and goals, and the strong institutional commitment to support of the ATFs.

D. **Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC)**: Approximately 4000 students have completed the Arizona General Education curriculum this year, double the numbers completed in 2002.

Completion of the AGEC grants the community college student admission to any of Arizona's public universities. A recent study by Pima Community College shows that students that complete the AGEC and transfer to the university have a 65 percent completion rate in a baccalaureate program.

E. **Evaluation of the Transfer Model**: The Arizona Transfer Model and the ATASS systems have been in full implementation for six years. The Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee, the body that oversees the policy components of the transfer model, began a multi-tiered evaluation process for the model this summer. A self-study by a committee of university and community college representatives found that either the requirements of the model, as detailed in the initial TATF report in 1996 have either been implemented or a process is in place to address them. The next initiative is for an external review. An RFP for an external evaluator was released in early November seeking an expert consultant who can assess the effectiveness of the transfer model. The report, which is anticipated for late April, is expected to assess how will the model has been implemented, how effective it is in assisting students and staff, as well as include recommendations for improving the Arizona's our transfer system.

F. **Promotion of Transfer Model**: This fall, the Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee co-sponsored a conference with the Postsecondary Articulation/Transfer Task Force of the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education that focused on transferability between regionally and nationally accredited institutions. This conference was an effort to be proactive to the changes in the Higher Education Act at the federal level. The conference was well received and well attended. The first quarterly on-line ATASS newsletter was published in the spring. The newsletter was sent to all Articulation Task Force members as well as all academic administrators. The goal of the newsletter is to improve communication across ATFs and to all academic administrators.

Support Systems

A. Consistent with the 1996 Transfer Articulation Task Force (TATF) recommendations, the following components of a statewide approach to management are in place to support the Arizona Transfer Articulation Support System (ATASS).

1. Organization Structure**:** The Business Continuity Plan, created in 2003 and adopted by each participating institution assures that procedures and resources are now in place on each campus to ensure continuity of CAS and ATASS services to the community in the event of an interruption at the central state server site, or at one or more of the participating colleges and universities.

2. Staffing**:** Five positions are funded jointly by the legislature, the community colleges and the universities to support statewide efforts.

3. Program Articulation**:** The ATFs have reviewed and, in some cases modified, the decisions regarding pathways, common courses and other degree requirements. APASC continues to encourage the ATFs to expand their discussions to include joint curriculum planning. Arizona's community colleges have begun to provide data about AGEC courses and requirements to a statewide AGEC database, housed in CAS, using the CAS technical infrastructure to create and maintain it. This statewide AGEC database will support a number of additional resources, including transfer articulation tables for AGEC course articulation among the community colleges, as well as the development of a new advising tool. The new advising tool is a "blended planning guide' which will combine data from community colleges about AGEC courses and requirements, with statewide data about appropriate transfer pathway options, and baccalaureate degree data from the universities into a single resource for students and advisors.

4. <u>ATF Responsibilities</u>**:** The Articulation Facilitator is responsible for monitoring the activities and decisions of the 38 Articulation Task Forces. During this last year, much work has been done to provide consistent information to the ATFs for training and on-going updates. Each fall, training sessions are conducted to prepare ATF chairs for their meeting responsibilities. A web-based electronic system, the ATF Chatlines, Contacts and Meeting Manager, supports the timely and consistent reporting from the ATF meetings.

5. <u>Accountability</u>**:** APASC has continued an annual evaluation to ensure participation in the discipline-specific Articulation Task Forces and other committees. It has not been necessary to have follow-up contacts with the Chief Academic Officers this year.

6. <u>Advising and Transfer Student Ombudspersons</u>**:** One of the priorities for APASC has been to provide timely, accurate and effective advising for transfer students. The Advising ATF has made significant progress, providing information for students at the campus and statewide level. Each community college and university catalog and websites include the relevant transfer policies and procedures. The Advising ATF held its annual statewide conference in October 2004. The statewide staff presented on the transfer system policy updates as well as on changes to the electronic tools that are a part of the system. The process developed by the TSOs is now supported by an online application, the TSO Chatlines, that will improve ease and efficiency of information sharing among TSOs about transfer issues, and will facilitate reporting of issues and their resolutions.

B. **Computer-Based Systems:** The Arizona Transfer Articulation Support Systems (ATASS) budget appropriation has provided the resources necessary for on-going maintenance and development of the Course Applicability System (CAS) and the Arizona State System for Information on Student Transfer (ASSIST).

1. <u>Course Applicability System (CAS)</u>: The original scope of the CAS project is fully implemented. There have been upgrades in all of the software programs that support CAS. The universities have also converted paper transfer guides to interactive on-line guides available through CAS. The Course Applicability System (CAS) website currently experiences peak usage of nearly 400,000 hits per week, with weekly usage averaging approximately 175,000 hits per week. This is compared to an average 120,000 "hits" per week at this time two years ago, and 60,000 "hits" per week three years ago.

   This year, upgrades were made to the systems that provide for electronic processing of ATF materials as well an electronic system for communication among ATF members prior and following ATF meetings. This new enhancement has increased ATF communication and thus far expedited the reporting process for ATF chairs.

2. <u>Arizona State System for Information on Student Transfer (ASSIST)</u>: The ASSIST database has been populated for all institutions to now include data for at least five years for each institution. The submission of data on a regular on-going basis is expected henceforth. It is anticipated that some measures related to student success and the effectiveness of the transfer model could be available during the coming year. This information would be based on a cohort of students who began at the community college in Fall 1999 and whose progress would be tracked toward the completion of a baccalaureate degree within four years. ASSIST continues to be utilized by all community college districts to meet their Carl Perkins III reporting requirements for the federal government. ASSIST is also used to process Student Right to Know information. Community colleges and universities are now beginning to add course level data into ASSIST which will enhance the reporting capabilities of the system for all institutions. An electronic newsletter for ASSIST users has been developed and implemented this year.

Challenges: Problems have also been encountered with the data in ASSIST during the past year, which resulted in under-reporting the students who had completed the multiple academic options available through the transfer model. These technical and business processes have been addressed and verification of the accuracy of data is now being done. Having accurate data is critical in determining whether the transfer model is significant in improving student success and transfer without loss of credit.

3. Resources: The state, the universities and community colleges jointly fund the technical and online support services.   Initially, the state funded 60 percent of the budget and the universities and community colleges contributed the remaining 40 percent. As the system has increased in size and complexity, additional resources have been needed, which the institutions have provided. The universities and community colleges now fund more than 60 percent of the transfer system's total budget and the state allocation is about 37 percent.

JOINTLY IDENTIFYING AND MEETING THE STATE'S
POSTSECONDARY NEEDS

During 2003, the Arizona public community colleges and universities have acted jointly to meet the postsecondary needs of Arizona citizens.   Through the oversight of the Joint Conference Committee and the activities of APASC, there are on-going opportunities for the community colleges and the universities to work together to plan and develop academic programs and articulation agreements. No program needs have been identified that are not already met by the universities and community colleges.

SUMMARY

The New Transfer Model represents a successful effort of collaboration among the public universities and community colleges. Due to the dynamic nature of curriculum, the process is on-going. The evaluation of the model affirms that there is a shared opinion among the Chief Executive Officers and the Chief Academic Officers that the Model has addressed many of the transfer issues identified by the Transfer Articulation Task Force in the original report.   The collaborative partnership motivates the committees and task forces to consider continuous improvements to the components, and the anticipated increase in student enrollments will require such efforts. Based on these successes and the future needs, continued support of the Arizona Legislature and consideration of the annual budget is requested.

APPENDICES
   1. Chart of Arizona State-Wide Higher Education Collaborative Relationships
   2. Joint Conference Committee (JCC)
   3. Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee (APASC) Strategic Plan Summary 2004-2007

APPENDIX 1

ARIZONA STATE-WIDE HIGHER EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Arizona Board of Regents	Arizona Community Colleges

Joint Conference Committee (JCC)

Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee (APASC)
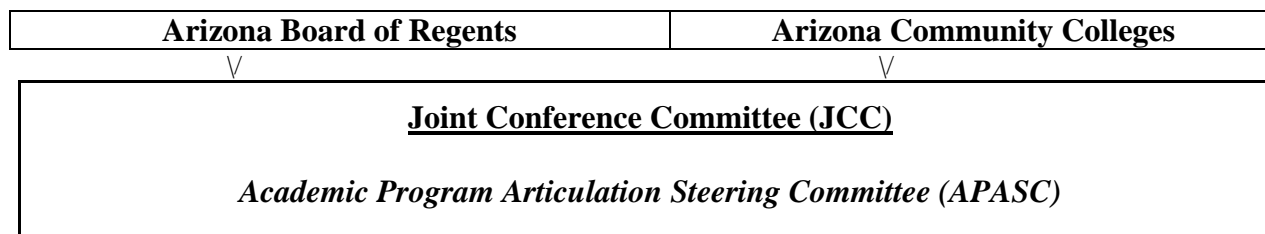
Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee (APASC)
(Community College and University Chief Academic Officers or designees)

Arizona Transfer Articulation Support System (ATASS)

- Articulation Facilitator
- Course Applicability System (CAS)
- Arizona State System for Information on Student Transfer (ASSIST)
- Technical Analysts for CAS and Data Warehouse

Arizona Transfer Articulation Committee (ATAC)
- Community College Curriculum Coordinators
- University Curriculum Coordinators

Articulation Task Forces (ATFs)
- Discipline-Specific ATFs
- General Education ATF
- Academic Advising ATF and Transfer Students Ombudspersons (TSOs)

The **Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR)** is the governing board for the state public universities and is directed in legislative statue to address transfer articulation with the Arizona community colleges. The **Joint Conference Committee (JCC)** consists of members from the ABOR and universities and the community colleges. The JCC oversees the work of the Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee (APASC), the Arizona Transfer Articulation Committee (ATAC), the statewide Articulation Task Forces, and the Articulation Facilitator and other ATASS personnel.

The **Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee (APASC)** consists of community college and university chief academic officers. APASC oversees the work of ATASS, the ATAC Committee, and the Articulation Task Forces.

The Arizona Transfer Articulation Support System (ATASS) consists of the Articulation Facilitator, the Course Applicability System (CAS), the Arizona State System for Information on Student Transfer (ASSIST), and Technical Analysts for CAS and ASSIST. Resources for ATASS are provided jointly by the Arizona Legislature, the public community colleges, and the public universities.

The **Arizona Transfer Articulation Committee (ATAC)** manages the operational procedures of transfer articulation between and among Arizona's public post-secondary institutions. ATAC meets to resolve issues related to course equivalencies and to recommend transfer policy changes to APASC.

ARTICULATION TASK FORCE STRUCTURE

♦ **Discipline-Specific Articulation Task Forces (ATFs):** There are 38 discipline-specific ATFs consisting of community college and university faculty. Each community college or university that offers courses in a given area is eligible for ATF membership. ATFs meet at least once per year to discuss and recommend how community college courses transfer to the universities.

Administration of Justice Studies, Agriculture, Allied Health, Anthropology, Art, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Communication, Computer, Early Childhood Education, Economics, Education, Engineering, English, Exercise Science-Health and Physical Education-Recreation-and Wellness, Family and Consumer Sciences, Geography, Geology, History, Hospitality, Humanities, Interior Design, Journalism and Media Arts, Languages, Mathematics, Music, Nursing, Philosophy, Physics-Physical Science-and Astronomy, Political Science, Psychology, Religious Studies, Social Work, Sociology, Technology, Theatre Arts.

♦ **Academic Advising Articulation Task Force (AATF):** The AATF focuses on advising issues affecting community colleges and universities; its membership includes faculty and academic advisors. The Advising ATF provides support for Transfer Student Ombudspersons who help students with transfer transitions at each community college and university.

♦ **General Education Articulation Task Force (GEATF):** The GEATF is responsible for designing and monitoring the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC): a block of courses that transfer from the community colleges to the universities to satisfy general education requirements. The GEATF membership includes faculty and academic administrators.

The Joint Conference Committee (JCC)

- The JCC was established in 1981 by the Arizona Board of Regents and the State Board of Directors for Community Colleges of Arizona to provide oversight of agreements between the community colleges and universities that enhance the access of students throughout the state to four-year degree programs. With the disestablishment of the SBDCCA in 2003, the JCC is now composed of members of the Arizona Board of Regents, a university president, two community college presidents and two governing board members.

- In addition to other JCC duties, the committee oversees implementation of the recommendations included in the 1996 Report of the Transfer Articulation Task Force (TATF) and the 1998 Report of the Higher Education Study Committee (HESC). The JCC resolves disagreements which may arise in implementing recommendations. The JCC is assisted in its oversight tasks by the Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee (APASC). The JCC meets no less than twice each year.

- The list below identifies the members of the Joint Conference Committee (JCC) for the year 2005-06

Community College Representatives	Arizona Board of Regents
Jan Guy, Co-chair Trustee, Cochise CC District	Ernest Calderon (Co-Chair) Regent
Dr. Brenda Even Trustee, Pima CC District	Christina Palacios Regent
Dr. Terry Calaway, President, Central Arizona College	Benjamin Graff Student Regent
Dr. Larry Christiansen President, Mesa Community College	Dr. John Haeger President, NAU

APPENDIX 3

Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee (APASC)
Strategic Plan Summary 2004-2007

(See complete APASC Strategic Plan following this summary)

MISSION
Provide leadership to create and sustain statewide processes and relationships among higher education institutions in Arizona to facilitate students' completion of degrees.

SCOPE OF SERVICES
The APASC scope of services supports the mission statement of APASC and the priorities as set by APASC.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal #1 - Foster the effectiveness of the ATF system.
Objectives
- Develop a structure for transfer from AAS to BAS degree programs.
- Encourage each ATF to address the impact content specialization has on transferability.
- Remind institutions to examine and discuss transfer issues as they plan new specializations, degrees and interdisciplinary.
- Develop vehicle for cross institution/cross ATF discussion and review and discussion of curriculum.
- Continual assessment of the structure and effectiveness of the ATFs.
- Support communication within and among the ATFs.
- Increase support provided by ATAC, ATF chairs and ATF members for facilitation and communication.

Goal #2 - Secure financial stability for ATASS.
Objectives
- Define APASC financial responsibilities.
- Identify financial model appropriate to support needs.
- Identify budgetary obligations to support strategic plan.
- Investigate feasibility of including private institutions to transfer model.
- Examine feasibility of licensing Arizona developed transfer support systems.
- Work with institutional representatives to enhance advocacy with legislators to generate greater state investment.
- Seek other external funding sources for ATASS.

Goal #3 - Improve the effectiveness of the transfer model.
Objectives
- Assess the effectiveness of the transfer model.
- Agree to measures appropriate for assessing and monitoring the impact of the model as a whole and in its constituent parts.
- Establish baseline data on transfer.
- Ensure each public post-secondary institution provides data for ASSIST.
- Establish guidelines/framework for standardized reporting.
- Develop a reporting structure.

- Develop feedback mechanisms.
- Examine components of the transfer model.

Goal #4 - Develop communication plan to promote accomplishments.
Objectives
- Develop strategies for different audiences or constituencies.
- Ensure students are aware of and using the full capabilities of the ATASS systems.
- Develop strategies for different purposes: describing, marketing, reporting achievements, persuading, etc.

Issue #5 - Create comprehensive staffing plan.
Objectives
- Examine current organizational structure and make recommendations for sustainability.
- Establish flexible roles and responsibilities.
- Provide for professional development opportunities.

Goal #6 - Establish priorities for on-going development, maintenance, and utilization of technology to support APASC goals.
Objectives
- Use technologies to facilitate communication in order to decrease need for travel and institutional expense.
- Develop a technology refresh plan to sustain a current environment and plan for future needs.
- Maintain system integrity and efficiency with current technologies.
- Maintain AzCAS Business Continuity Plan.
- Coordinate technology support with emerging business plans.