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Assembly of the Academic Senate, Academic Council
University of California
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August 31, 2004

George Blumenthal, 04-05 Academic Council Chair
University of California, Academic Senate

Dear George:

I've attached a current "Draft Proposal to Streamline the Course Major-Articulation Process between UC Campuses and the California Community Colleges". This is a modification of one presented to Council and its committees about 15 months ago, and incorporates many suggestions made after committee and campus discussions. I know you agree that articulation and transfer issues loom large in the minds of many students, parents and legislators. In order to make the transfer process as simple as possible within the boundaries of academic excellence, I feel the UC faculty should be very proactive in this regard. I believe that optimizing intersegmental articulation is an important piece of improving transfer among the segments of California higher education.

I understand something of the complexities of trying to get more uniform articulation among the UC campuses. Departments in the various disciplines at the campuses do not always agree on what is required for study in a major. Despite these differences, I suspect there are a number of areas of at least partial agreement. Perhaps it is on these areas of agreement that we can define commonalities and at least greater uniformity of articulation than we now have, without trying to achieve unanimity in what is required for articulating lower-division courses and course patterns for progression to upper-division major study. It may be, for instance, that some current articulation agreements are working well and should be grandfathered in place for the present. I feel confident that there are many more areas of no or poor articulation that should give ample opportunity for useful change.

If the Academic Senate can reach agreement on this document, ultimately the Undergraduate Deans and Department Chairs will need to implement the plan along with the campus articulation officers. Thus much work will be required before this can be brought into existence. But I think the draft is an important step on that road.

Please let me know if can be of further help in this endeavor.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Larry".

Lawrence Pitts, Chair
03-04 Academic Council

**A Draft Proposal to Streamline the Course Major Articulation Process between UC
Campuses and California Community Colleges
(August 30, 2004)**

The University of California (UC) has worked hard to improve the transfer of students between UC and California Community Colleges (CCC). One cornerstone of this effort is the development of “articulation agreements” to show how a course or groups of courses at a CCC may be transferred for credit to a UC or California State University (CSU) campus. General education articulation agreements show how certain courses satisfy GE requirements at the UC/CSU campuses. Similarly, major-preparation articulation agreements delineate how community college courses will satisfy the lower division course requirements for UC academic majors.

UC faculty are responsible for the review and approval of articulation agreements between UC campuses and CCCs. In each discipline, they review community college course outlines and supplementary material to determine if a course offered at a community college is comparable enough to a particular UC course that it can be accepted for credit. Depending on the type of articulation agreement, credit can be granted as general elective credit (Transfer Course Agreement or TCA), general education curriculum credit (Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum or IGETC), or campus-specific credit (campus general education credit or major-preparation credit). Of these, the annual TCA and IGETC agreements are developed systemwide by UCOP staff working under faculty supervision and in the case of IGETC also in conjunction with CSU faculty and staff. UC has long-established TCA and IGETC agreements with all of the CCCs.

Developing campus-level articulation agreements between institutions is a mammoth undertaking. Given the 108 CCCs, 8 (soon to be 9) undergraduate UC campuses and approximately 650 distinct undergraduate majors offered in the UC system, about 70,000 separate major-preparation articulation agreements are needed for UC to be fully articulated with the CCCs. Creating and keeping track of these agreements between and among campuses is costly, yet vital, to the transfer process. Transfer students and counselors at the community colleges rely on the agreements to provide students with the appropriate roadmap in their preparation for the BA degree to which the student plans to transfer. Unfortunately, major-preparation agreements between many UC campuses and many CCCs do not exist. Without major-preparation agreements, potential transfer students will know if the course they are taking is generally transferable by consulting the TCA, but they will not know if the department at a particular UC campus will accept the course as lower division preparation for the major.

To distribute articulation agreements statewide to students, counselors and others, the University has contributed significant resources to ASSIST¹, an intersegmental, web-based, transfer planning system. ASSIST is the State’s official repository of all official articulation between California Community Colleges and UC and CSU campuses. Any student can log onto ASSIST for free and determine how the courses they complete at a community college will transfer to a CSU or UC campus, assuming that a major-preparation articulation agreement has been established.

¹ *Articulation System Stimulating Interinstitutional Student Transfer*

Although ASSIST has been in place for over a decade and has effectively categorized articulation agreements among the three segments, the inefficient process for generating agreements between UC campuses and individual community colleges has changed little since the 1960s. All UC campuses essentially conduct a review of every community college course every few years to determine how such courses may be used to satisfy campus-specific major or campus-specific GE requirements. This process is conducted in practically the same way, in parallel fashion, at all of the undergraduate UC campuses.

The course approval process conducted on each UC campus appropriately gives the faculty oversight of courses that are proposed for transfer into their curriculum. It assures that the faculty members who design courses and curricula can protect the integrity of the curriculum at each UC campus. In this way, program faculty should be confident that transferring students are adequately prepared to succeed in their chosen major at a particular UC campus.

It seems likely, though, that the course review and approval process across the campuses can be streamlined to provide faster and more efficient development of articulation agreements, particularly where consensus exists among a number of UC campuses. UC Academic Senate leaders and Student Academic Services staff at UCOP have been discussing ways to simplify the course approval process, while protecting the faculty's prerogative to approve or deny community college courses for credit toward an undergraduate major at their own campus.

The following draft proposal has been developed to try to improve the articulation process for major-preparation courses taught at the California Community Colleges:

When four or more UC campuses agree to accept a particular course (articulation agreement) from a given California Community College as preparation for a specific major, the course will be deemed as articulated for all UC campuses unless one or more campuses develops a different, campus-specific agreement within a 120-day review period. Similarly, if four or more UC campuses review and articulate a set of courses as adequate for lower-division major-preparation for a UC upper-division major discipline, that set of courses will be deemed as articulated with all the UC campuses, with a similar 120-day opt-out period by one or more UC campuses. A 90-day review period also will be available each year for individual campuses to review their acceptance of previous systemwide major-preparation articulation agreements. Nothing in this process would affect the current treatment of courses articulated with the UC system as part of a TCA or IGETC agreement.

Under the proposal, faculty from each campus could choose to rely on the expertise of one another for the articulation of lower-division major-preparation courses offered at California Community Colleges. Campuses will be notified that the course is about to be designated acceptable at all UC campuses for a particular major, and with the 120-day review period² there would be sufficient time to design and develop an alternative agreement should such an

² The Student Academic Services Office at UCOP, in consultation with the Academic Senate, will develop the processes and procedures for the 120-day initial notification review period and for the annual 90-day review period. The 120-day review period begins when notification of the systemwide major-articulation agreement is received by the appropriate department. Other specifics, including how the articulation process will respond to changes in the course/major content and the consequences of a campus not complying with the major-preparation articulation agreements will also be developed. Once these processes and procedures have been drafted, they will be reviewed by the appropriate Academic Senate bodies and Administrators.

alternative appear to be more appropriate at a given campus. Though systemwide major-articulation agreements may be difficult to achieve or simply inappropriate in some instances given that majors and their requirements vary from campus to campus, such systemwide articulation agreements should be established and agreed to whenever possible. Through these efforts both the UCs and the CCCs will be better equipped to work together towards the shared goal of adequately preparing students for the upper-division major programs they wish to enter.