

## **DRAFT PROPOSAL**

### **CAI/LAMP Merger**

The Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) at its June 2010 meeting directed the Commissioner of Higher Education to implement a merger of the Curriculum Alignment Initiative (CAI) and the Learning Assessment in Missouri Postsecondary Education (LAMP) initiatives into a single postsecondary advisory group. The purpose of the merger is to address both alignment of competencies and alignment of assessments across educational sectors and to continue emphasizing the importance of assessment at all Missouri higher education institutions.

#### **Background**

The Curriculum Alignment Initiative (CAI) was established to fulfill one of the mandates in Senate Bill 389 (SB389), and currently embodied in the Higher Education Student Funding Act (HESFA): to identify entry- and exit- level competencies that will serve to outline standards for success in collegiate-level coursework. Entry-level competencies establish a proposed threshold for student access to collegiate-level coursework across disciplines as a means to facilitate the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. Exit-level competencies were established to further facilitate transfer of general education courses between Missouri institutions of higher education. The CAI Steering Committee (CAS) has facilitated the development of, and the CBHE has approved, entry-level competencies in six academic areas, 16 exit-level competencies for specific college-level general education courses, and optimal entry-level competencies for two engineering courses.

The LAMP Advisory Council was created in 2008 to consider statewide issues surrounding learning assessment in Missouri and to make policy recommendations to the Commissioner of Higher Education. The LAMP Advisory Council has served as a forum for dialogue, research, and policy recommendations regarding comprehensive student learning assessment in higher education at key transition points, from high school to college, completion of general education courses, and in the academic major. LAMP's focus has been driven by student learning indicators in the state's public agenda for higher education, *Imperatives for Change: Building a Higher Education System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (IFC), and the course competency work developed through the CAI.

The announcement in July 2009 of the federal “Race to the Top” grant program had a significant effect on both CAI and LAMP. In September 2009, Missouri and 47 other states committed to adopt the standards for mathematics and English language arts contained in the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI), which are similar to the CAI competencies. Additionally, Missouri is one of 32 states that are part of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, which is applying for federal funds to develop formative and summative assessments in both mathematics and English language arts that are aligned with the national core standards.

The purpose of both the CAI and the Common Core State Standards is to ensure that when students graduate from high school, they are ready for college. The work of the CAI has been instrumental in narrowing the knowledge gap regarding what is expected upon graduation from high school and what is necessary to be successful upon entry into a college or university. The initial work of LAMP has provided important context for moving forward on a statewide assessment agenda for Missouri. The LAMP Council has reaffirmed its commitment to continue collaboration with the K-12 education sector and with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to assess competence-based learning outcomes across the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. The Council also has committed to continue to work on aligning the assessment of CAI entry-level competencies with DESE end-of-course learning outcomes, and the further alignment of those assessments with the emerging Common Core State Standards.

The work of both the CAI and LAMP has evolved to a point where a new mechanism is needed to provide higher education with a strong voice in defining college-readiness and to implement the findings and strategies for the most effective alignment of curricula and the development of appropriate assessment tools. A permanent entity, similar to the CBHE’s Committee on Transfer and Articulation (COTA), is needed to continue the necessary collaboration between all sectors and regimes for measuring college and career readiness.

In this context, the Academic Affairs staff recommends that the Commissioner establish a permanent council to advise and make recommendations to the CBHE on matters related to the curriculum and assessment of postsecondary education in Missouri.

### **CAI/LAMP Merger in Context of CAO Consultation**

In May, Academic Affairs staff consulted with a group of Chief Academic Officers regarding strategic priorities for the MDHE. Part of that discussion related specifically to CAI and LAMP.

The CAOs and MDHE agreed that it was best to focus short-term work for curriculum alignment only on the five areas that were explicitly mandated by SB389 until the Common Core Standards are finalized. All agreed that college readiness was an important area to be addressed. However, other alignment issues are more pressing. MDHE should continue to involve CAI participants in conversations with DESE about college-readiness.

LAMP representatives agreed to work with DESE in this national assessment effort. It is particularly important that LAMP work to shift the focus from credit hours/seat time to competencies in assessment of learning. While time and resources for this are limited, it is important that LAMP not miss the opportunity to identify at least constructive suggestions for the future of assessment in Missouri. It was agreed that the findings of LAMP up to this point should be turned over to the Missouri Assessment Consortium (MAC) to continue the work as long as CAOs from all sectors are represented on MAC. MAC already has identified basic principles for assessment. LAMP can aid in the provision of external validation of these principles. The MAC's "Guiding Principles of Assessment" provide additional discussion of several of the issues listed above. See <http://dhe.mo.gov/macprinciples.shtml>

Additionally, the work of the CCA should account for the following:

1. Recommendations of CCA should be consistent with the assessment efforts required to comply with accreditation criteria for institutions as established by the Higher Learning Commission.
2. Recommendations of CCA should be consistent with the assessment efforts required for accreditation of professional programs such as engineering (ABET), business (AACSB), medicine (LCME), law (ABA), etc. Existing assessment practices should be utilized to minimize the amount of additional effort required to meet the goals of assessment.
3. Recommendations of CCA should connect with and support the efforts required for compliance with the Voluntary System of Accountability.
4. Recommendations for assessment methods should be based on best practices recognized nation-wide.
5. Assessment should be tied to instruction and particular to each program. It should be recognized that effective assessment can be conducted using a variety of methods; thus, a

one-size-fits-all approach is not desirable.

In the view of Academic Affairs staff, the proposed merger of the CAI and LAMP (as outlined below) into the Committee on Curriculum and Assessment (CCA) can proceed by using the agreed-upon priorities noted above as starting point for its work.

### **Charge and Responsibilities of the Committee on Curriculum and Assessment (CCA)**

The MDHE should establish a Committee on Curriculum and Assessment (CCA) with responsibility to oversee the implementation of the guidelines as set forth in this policy statement.

The Committee on Curriculum and Assessment will be composed of twelve members, one of which shall serve as chairperson of the committee. Membership shall consist of three representatives from public two-year colleges (selected by Missouri Community College Association), at least one of which must be a faculty member; three representatives from the public four-year colleges and universities (selected by the Council of Public Higher Education), one of which must be from the University of Missouri and at least one of which must be a faculty member; one representative from the proprietary sector (selected by the commissioner of higher education); one representative from independent colleges and universities (selected by the Independent Colleges and Universities of Missouri); one representative from the Missouri Association of Faculty Senates (selected by MAFS); one representative from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (selected by DESE); one member from the K-12 sector at large (selected by the commissioner of higher education and recommended by the commissioner of education); and one member from the Missouri School Boards' Association (selected by MSBA). In addition, the Commissioner of Higher Education, or a designated representative, will sit as an *ex-officio* non-voting member of the committee.

The chairperson must convene the committee at least once a year, and as often as is necessary to perform its functions. The chairperson is responsible for establishing subcommittees to develop the rules and procedures for meetings and to guide the work of the committee.

The CCA will advise the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Coordinating Board on Higher Education on matters relating to the curriculum and assessment of postsecondary education in Missouri. The primary purpose of the CCA is to implement and oversee the mandates in SB389 related to curriculum alignment and assessment. The CCA is encouraged to

seek the counsel of faculty and other institutional representatives in the performance of its functions, in particular the Missouri Assessment Consortium (MAC) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

### **Next Steps**

The CAI Steering Committee (CAS) and the LAMP Advisory Council (LAMP) will be disbanded. The responsibilities and work of both CAS and LAMP will be assumed by the Committee on Curriculum and Assessment (CCA). The members of the CAS and the LAMP co-chairs will form a transition team while the CCA is being established. The CAS/LAMP transition team will:

- Continue the work on reviewing and approving global and cross-cultural competencies.
- Implement a plan to disseminate the competencies already approved by the CBHE.
- Engage the Missouri Assessment Consortium (MAC) in identifying priorities for the CCA.

Because there will be a need to revisit the entry- and exit-level competencies in the future, the existing CAI discipline-specific workgroups will continue to function under the direction of the CCA.