

# **COTA Meeting Minutes December 2005**

## **Committee on Transfer and Articulation Missouri Department of Higher Education December 13, 2005 Conference Call**

*Approved January 17, 2006*

**Participants:** Evelyn Jorgenson, James Scanlon, Jeanie Crain, Stephen Lehmkuhle, Arlen Dykstra

**MDHE Staff:** Robert Stein, Leroy Wade, Jeremy Kintzel

**Guests:** Brian Stewart, Rusty Fishel, Peggy McKittrick, Matthew Cohen, Craig Powell

Chair Evelyn Jorgenson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on December 13, 2005 .

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Jeremy Kintzel distributed revised minutes of the November 15, 2005 conference call reflecting comments from Dr. Jeanie Crain. A motion was made by Dr. Stephen Lehmkuhle and seconded by Dr. James Scanlon to approve the revised minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Update on CBHE Meeting**

Dr. Robert Stein reported on discussion at the December 8, 2005 CBHE meeting. The CBHE was supportive of the proposed web resource, the reintroduction of the statewide transfer conference, and acknowledged the lingering issue of proprietary credit transfer. Dr. Stein stated that the CBHE had charged COTA to review the CBHE recommended high school core curriculum in recognition of new graduation requirements established by the State Board of Education for implementation in 2010 and make any recommendations for changes to the core curriculum requirements by the June 2006 CBHE meeting.

COTA members discussed the current disconnect between CBHE core curriculum and SBE graduation requirements. It was acknowledged that the SBE requirements would likely serve as a defined minimum, but that further detail could be provided including:

- differing entrance guidelines for two-year and four-year admission
- course requirements, especially for electives
- entrance competencies/placement standards
- consideration of core curriculum in admissions process
- correlation to student retention and performance

Dr. Lehmkuhle reinforced the value of the CBHE core curriculum as a guideline to high school curriculum which was indicative/supportive of college success, rather than as a defined admission standard. Dr. Stein and Dr. Scanlon discussed current variance in adherence to selectivity standards by four-year institutions, but reinforced that the CBHE core curriculum had altered the profile of incoming freshmen. Dr. Lehmkuhle recommended:

- COTA request that institutions submit names of CAOs and admissions staff willing to work on this issue
- a subcommittee be identified to include all sectors and different types of admissions selectivity standards
- the subcommittee should be charged to review the CBHE high school core curriculum as well as construct a formal process for monitoring its impact on collegiate performance

No final action was taken by COTA regarding a process for re-evaluating the CBHE core curriculum.

### **Course Applicability System/ConnectEDU**

COTA held conference calls with:

- co-founders Mr. Rusty Fishel and Ms. Peggy McKittrick of Academy One, licensed vendors of the Course Applicability System
- President Craig Powell and Vice President Matthew Cohen of ConnectEDU

Academy One distributes and supports products based on the Course Applicability System (CAS) developed by Miami (OH) University. Course Atlas publishes course descriptions online to all subscribing institutions. Course Equivalency Manager (CEM) will be available in June 2006 and will allow students and institutional staff to:

- request degree audits
- test credit transfer scenarios against all other participating institutions
- search for equivalent courses
- manage, monitor, and update equivalencies online

CEM will require pre-negotiated and pre-loaded course equivalencies, though Academy One is working with CAS to simplify these processes. The system is largely geared to adoption by participating institutions, but consortium-driven implementation is possible, and broader implementations are being negotiated in Indiana and Kentucky. Academy One would host and maintain necessary networks and data, as well as provide training and technical support to the institutions. Mr. Fishel stated that common course numbering systems would simplify articulation, but that Academy One products would increase visibility to out-of-state students and staff. Dr. Scanlon offered to pursue contacts in Ohio to understand their experiences with CAS.

Mr. Powell and Mr. Cohen discussed ConnectEDU, which is intended to project information on courses, admissions, financial aid, and transfer/articulation down to the freshman or sophomore year of high school. ConnectEDU is intended to provide relevant information through a web-based "dashboard" to students, parents, counselors, and college/university staff. The system is designed to facilitate existing articulation agreements, as well as automate transcripts, admissions, and other forms. A current pilot in Missouri involves Ozarks Technical Community College, the Metropolitan Community Colleges, St. Louis Community College, and St. Charles Community College. The system is "modular", and ConnectEDU often encourages tiered implementation. Public institutions are currently the primary clients, and Michigan, Missouri, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island are the leading markets. Dr. Lehmkuhle questioned the extent to which all participating institutions might be defining competency-based equivalencies. Dr. Stein stated that the MDHE had attempted to publish course equivalencies in the past, but the response was limited.

### **Discussion of Proposals Regarding Proprietary Institutions**

Dr. Stein reiterated the following proposals lodged by COTA at its October 31, 2005 meeting and accepted by the CBHE at its December 8, 2005 meeting:

- COTA should encourage proprietary institutions to work with other institutions of higher education in Missouri to develop articulation agreements to facilitate the transfer of credit within the state.
- COTA should encourage proprietary institutions to seek regional accreditation as a means of facilitating transfer credit in the state of Missouri.

Dr. Stein said that COTA is on record that credit transfer is a local decision, but that there should be a rationale for those decisions apart from the lack of regional accreditation. Mr. Brian Stewart, president of Bryan College in Springfield, spoke in favor of the rigorous standards of certain national accreditors. Dr. Stein said that ACICS and ACCSCT were two well-known national accreditors that would capture most proprietary schools likely to be interested in articulation with other colleges and universities. Mr. Stewart stated that regional accreditation was labor-intensive and costly, and might be unrealistic for smaller proprietary institutions. Mr. Stewart said that lack of program flexibility required during the initial five-year regional accreditation cycle was unrealistic for many proprietary institutions, although beyond the initial cycle, regional accreditation might be more flexible than national accreditation. Mr. Stewart also said that in Kansas, should candidacy status not result in regional accreditation, that associate's degrees offered under that status would be considered retroactively illegal. Dr. Crain suggested that Bryan College explore the Academic Quality Improvement Program, under which the Higher Learning Commission provides an alternative pathway to accreditation.

Mr. Stewart said articulation agreements were more realistic, and were in place with Columbia College and the University of Phoenix. Bryan College has explored articulation with other public and independent institutions, but response has been limited. Dr. Stein proposed that pilot articulation agreements be developed involving some proprietary institutions with nearby public and/or independent institutions. Dr. Scanlon said that Missouri Western State University had worked in the past to integrate students from nearby proprietary institutions, most notably Vatterott College. Mr. Stewart expressed interest in pursuing an articulation agreement with a public institution.

Dr. Jorgenson stated that community colleges were hesitant to accept nationally accredited credit because they didn't want receiving institutions to re-open degrees. Dr. Scanlon described a probationary model which granted students nationally accredited transfer credit following successful completion of a predetermined amount of credit at the receiving institution. COTA members said that proprietary schools could offer the 42-hour block of general education credit, but that public and independent institutions did sometimes accept AAS degrees which might include only 18 hours of general education credit.

### **Articulation of Teacher Education Programs**

Dr. Stein said that COTA had expressed interest in the collaborative development of an articulated Associate of Arts in Teaching degree via an email to Chief Academic Officers on December 6, 2005. The AAT would be developed for voluntary adoption by

receiving four-year institutions. The CBHE, COPHE, and the Presidents and Chancellors Council of MCCA have all expressed an interest in the approach. Missouri Western State University, Central Missouri State University, and North Central Missouri College have all expressed conditional support either to COTA or to the MDHE. Dr. Crain emphasized that the development of the degree should be a cross-sector joint initiative.

COTA discussed whether the development of the degree should focus on courses or competencies. Dr. Jorgenson stated that mid-preparation benchmarks developed by MACTE had not been adopted by all four-year institutions, due to lingering disagreements over the courses and levels in which they belonged. Core courses would have competencies embedded, which would end in passage of the C-BASE, but would preserve instructional flexibility for two-year institutions. Dr. Stein stated that some differences in minimal C-BASE scores required for program admission would still exist among four-year institutions. Dr. Lehmkuhle said that there were also differences among four-year institutions regarding when the C-BASE was taken by native students, and that consistent rules should be enforced.

Dr. Jorgenson said that community colleges believed that some common course structures would be necessary to avoid disagreements with or between four-year institutions. Dr. Crain said that the voluntary articulation of the AAT would mean that not all four-year institutions would (or needed to) agree with the courses or competencies included. Dr. Jorgenson said that groundwork was necessary among two-year institutions before the four-year institutions were brought to the table. Dr. Stein emphasized follow-up with MACTE. Dr. Lehmkuhle and Dr. Jorgenson volunteered tentatively to attend the February 2006 MACTE conference to discuss the AAT.

### **Transfer and Articulation Conference**

Rita Gulstad has been nominated by ICUM to serve on the Transfer and Articulation Conference Coordinating Committee (TA-CCC). Dr. Lehmkuhle suggested that Barbara Dixon or Kandis Smith be contacted to serve as COPHE representative.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held via conference call on January 17, 2006 beginning at 2:00 p.m. Members discussed whether action needed to be taken to improve full participation, i.e. emphasizing RSVPs or the involvement of alternates.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.