Contact: Diana Gonzalez

FINAL REPORT ON THE ARTICULATION WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

Action Requested: (1) Consider approval of the report to the Iowa General Assembly regarding the development of the articulation website. (2) Direct the Board Office to submit the final report to the General Assembly by July 1, 2008.

Executive Summary:

As a result of legislation in 2007, Senate File 601 directed the Board of Regents "in cooperation with the department of education and the community colleges to develop, maintain, and promote a user-friendly credit transfer and articulation internet website that allows Iowans to know at the time of enrollment in a community college course whether the credit will be accepted by the state university of the student's choice, the category in which the university will apply the credit, and to which degree program or programs the university will apply the credit. The website must be operational no later than July 1, 2008."

To accomplish this objective, the Board created the Articulation Website Team in Summer 2007. The Team, led by Dr. Diana Gonzalez, included representatives from the three Regent universities, Iowa community colleges, Iowa Department of Education, and Board Office (Attachment A).

The Team developed guiding principles which described the components necessary to accomplish the objectives required in SF 601 (Attachment B). Each Regent university re-prioritized and re-allocated its resources, especially in the Information Technology area, so as to dedicate the resources necessary to accomplish the development of the website within the prescribed timeframe. The Team met regularly between August 2007 and June 2008. In addition to participating at Team meetings, each Regent university team member was responsible for working with appropriate institutional staff members to develop an institutional articulation system.

The articulation website, called TransferInIowa.org, has been completed and will go live on July 1, 2008. This website provides three articulation systems with the same functionality – **I CHART** (University of Iowa); **TRANSIT** (Iowa State University); and **TRANSFER PLAN-IT** (University of Northern Iowa) – which allow students to choose multiple majors at each Regent university to see (1) whether the credit is transferable; (2) to what category the credit will apply; and (3) to what program the credit will apply. The TransferInIowa.org articulation website was constructed and is being supported on the Iowa State University server.

Background:

What is articulation? Articulation is a process of coordinating transfer practices among post-secondary sectors to produce a smooth transition for students from one sector to another. Articulation can occur in the following ways: (1) on an individual basis or (2) through articulation agreements which can be course-to-course or program-to-program. College transfer involves two types of students – those who plan and those who do not plan. The TransferInIowa.org articulation website will be a powerful tool for students who plan, especially if they also consult with a transfer advisor at their community college and Regent university.

<u>Iowa articulation history</u>. Iowa has a long history of *voluntary* articulation between the Regent universities and Iowa community colleges dating back to the late 1960s. The Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS), formed in 1972, has been instrumental in the development of eight statewide agreements, including the associate of arts articulation agreement, associate of science articulation agreement, common grading symbols and definitions agreement, and career-technical credit agreement.[1] Program-to-program articulation between the Regent universities and Iowa community colleges has been an on-going effort through the creation of 2+2 programs and admissions partnerships.

In 2005, the Board of Regents created the 2+2 Council to enhance discussions between the Regent universities and Iowa community colleges regarding articulation. The work of the Council contributed to the creation of a Bachelor of Applied Studies Program at the University of Iowa. This program is available for community college students who have completed an associate of applied science degree and who desire to complete a bachelor's degree but cannot engage in traditional on-campus study. The Council also created a gateway website to link advising and articulation information among the Regent universities and Iowa community colleges. This website, created and maintained by the University of Iowa, was the precursor to the current TransferInIowa.org website.

<u>Constituent feedback for website development</u>. Constituents include currently enrolled and prospective Iowa community college students who plan to transfer to a Regent university, Iowa community college transfer advisors, Regent university academic and administrative units, and Iowa community college administrators. Constituent feedback, obtained through surveys, focus groups, and administrative feedback, has significantly guided the development of the articulation website.

◇   The Team obtained 1,254 responses from students at 10 Iowa community colleges and 64 responses from transfer advisors at 11 Iowa community colleges.

◇   The responses indicated that:

➡   Seventy-one percent of the students prefer a web-based system to learn how their credits will transfer to a Regent university.

➡   Ninety-three percent of the students envision using a web-based system at least once before transferring.

➡   Students want a web-based system that is easy to access; simple to use; informative; regularly updated; available to all; and able to display results for all courses.

➡   There is a need to market the articulation website at the community colleges – 55% of the advisors indicated that students were not aware of transfer resources; 72% of the students indicated they were not aware of transfer resources.

➡   Students want the word "transfer" in the name of the articulation website.

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[1]   Details about the statewide agreements can be found in *The Public Connection* at http://www2.state.ia.us/regents/HigherEd/LACTS%20I.06.pdf.

➡ Students want the articulation website link available from their community college homepage or personal webpage.

➡ Students want the articulation website to offer an optional login to retain individual course information.

➡ Students want the articulation website to include information about the associate of arts articulations.

◈ A presentation about the TransferInIowa.org articulation website was made to the Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS) at its annual meeting in April 2008. Meeting participants expressed favorable reactions and support for the website. Feedback from the meeting participants has been useful in planning marketing and communication strategies.

Features of the articulation website.

◈ All courses offered by and included in the current catalog of each Iowa community college are included in each university articulation system.

◈ Course changes will be regularly monitored through the Community College Common Course Numbering System; each university articulation system will be regularly updated using this mechanism.

◈ After inputting their Iowa community college courses (completed, in-process, or prospective), students will be able to select as many majors at their Regent university of choice as they wish. This will allow students to look at how their courses may apply to different majors. Official articulation is completed after admission to a Regent university.

◈ Students will be able to print their course audit. While this information is unofficial, it will be a useful document for the purpose of consulting with community college and Regent university transfer advisors.

Marketing efforts. The Articulation Website Team appointed a Marketing/Communication Team to develop a plan to inform all constituencies of the resources available through the TransferInIowa.org articulation website. These efforts include the following:

◈ A YouTube video was produced by Brenna Nelson, a graduate student at Iowa State University, as a preview for the articulation website. It can be seen at www.transferiniowa.org until July 1, 2008, when the articulation website becomes available electronically.

◈ Full-color posters will be sent to all Iowa community colleges (Attachment C). A slightly different version will be sent to all Iowa high schools.

◈ Full-color postcard-like handouts will be sent to all Iowa community colleges (Attachment D).

◈ Using community college mechanisms, a "Coming Soon" e-mail will be sent on May 30, 2008 and a "Now Available" e-mail will be sent on July 1, 2008 to communicate with Iowa community college students about the new articulation website.

◇ Links to TransferInIowa.org will be created on the following websites - Board of Regents, Regent universities, Iowa community colleges, and the Iowa Department of Education. The TransferInIowa.org articulation website will also be accessible through major search engines, such as Google.

◇ A Power Point Presentation to explain the TransferInIowa.org articulation website will be available to all Iowa community colleges through Telenet in September 2008.

Costs. There are two types of costs associated with the articulation website – developmental costs and on-going, maintenance costs.

◇ Developmental costs were approximately $300,000.

◇ On-going, maintenance costs of the articulation website are projected to be approximately $60,000 per year.

Next steps. In order to meet the legislation requirements and to ensure that the TransferInIowa.org articulation website is made known to Iowa community college students and transfer advisors, the following steps will be taken:

◇ The final report will be submitted to the General Assembly by July 1, 2008.

◇ Marketing efforts, including e-mails, posters, postcards, and links to community college websites will be implemented.

◇ An Articulation Website Team will develop a plan to evaluate the articulation website.

◇ Ongoing maintenance of the articulation website will include regular updating of Iowa community college courses.

◇ Presentations will be made to the House Education Committee, State Board of Education, Iowa community college administrators, and other appropriate audiences.

ARTICULATION WEBSITE TEAM

◈ Dr. Lyvier Aschenbrenner – Department Chair, Housing and Counseling Services, Indian Hills Community College

◈ Mr. Michael Barron – Assistant Provost and Director of Admissions, University of Iowa

◈ Ms. Laura Doering[2] – Senior Associate Registrar and Director of Transfer Relations, Iowa State University

◈ Mr. Michael Gau – Dean, Arts and Sciences, Northeast Iowa Community College

◈ Dr. Diana Gonzalez – Policy and Operations Officer, Board Office

◈ Ms. Kathy Jones – Assistant Vice-President for Enrollment Services and Registrar, Iowa State University

◈ Dr. Beverly Kopper – Associate Provost, University of Northern Iowa

◈ Ms. Debra Miller[1] – Associate Director of Admissions, University of Iowa

◈ Mr. Philip Patton – Registrar and Interim Director of Admissions, University of Northern Iowa

◈ Ms. Robin Sandberg[1] – Communication Coordinator, Admissions, University of Northern Iowa

◈ Dr. Roger Utman – Chief, Bureau of Community College and Career and Technical Education, Iowa Department of Education

◈ Dr. Laurie Wolf[1] – Executive Dean, Student Services, Des Moines Area Community College

◈ Dr. Karen Zunkel – Director of Undergraduate Programs, Office of the Provost, Iowa State University

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[2] Also served on the Marketing/Communication Team. Other M/C Team members included Mr. Marc Harding, ISU Director of Admissions, and Ms. Sara Langenberg, SUI Admissions Web Editor, who assumed the role of Team leader in March 2008, upon the departure of Ms. Sandberg who accepted a position at another institution.

SF 601   STATE BOARD OF REGENTS - ARTICULATION WEBSITE.

Sec. 55   The general assembly finds that as college costs increase, Iowa's community college students need access to resources that allow the students to make informed, cost-effective decisions regarding their postsecondary education plans. It is the intent of the general assembly to provide for a seamless transition for students transferring from Iowa's community colleges to Iowa's state universities. Therefore, the state board of regents shall, in cooperation with the department of education and the community colleges, develop, maintain, and promote a user-friendly credit transfer and articulation internet website that allows Iowans to know at the time of enrollment in a community college course whether the credit will be accepted by the state university of the student's choice, the category in which the university will apply the credit, and to which degree program or programs the university will apply the credit. The board and the community colleges shall continuously strive to improve upon the coordinating efforts between the state universities and the community colleges to map and articulate community college courses for college credit with the degree programs offered at the state universities. The website shall be operational not later than July 1, 2008.

ARTICULATION WEBSITE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Allow students the opportunity to choose multiple majors at the Regent university to see (1) which credits are transferable, (2) to which category credit will apply, and (3) to which program credit will apply.

- Build on what is already available at the www.transferiniowa.org gateway website created by the 2+2 Council in 2005.

- Present information about degree programs.

- Integrate the needs and questions of community college students.

- Meet the deadline of July 1, 2008.

- Obtain user input as the website is being developed. Obtain feedback through personal contact with students, advisors, administrators, and others to make key decisions.

- Develop an ongoing maintenance plan regarding the articulation website. Specify the resources needed to maintain the articulation website.

- Develop a marketing plan that identifies strategies to communicate the articulation website to Iowa community college students and transfer advisors.

- Ensure that information on the articulation website is commensurate with the information provided to entering first-year students at the Regent universities.

- Provide functionality that allows students to "window shop."

- Use outside resources as appropriate and available.

- Recognize that students must take responsibility for their educational objectives.

- Ensure that the final product looks professional – the image is important.

- Design the articulation website for the "average" situation of the majority of transfer students.

- Include an educational component about the value of the articulation website as a resource tool.

- Encourage community college students to discuss transfer plans with community college and Regent university advisors early and often.

- Document efforts of staff time and other resources used to develop the articulation website.

- Ensure that appropriate institutional staff members are involved during the development of the articulation website. Expand the team as needed.

- Limit the focus of the articulation website to students who transfer from Iowa community colleges to the Regent universities.

- Engage all Iowa community colleges in conversation during the development of the articulation website.

- Understand that the information contained in the articulation website presupposes that the student will be accepted at the Regent university of choice.

- Stress the importance of acknowledging that the articulation website is a joint project between the Regent universities and Iowa community colleges.

- Understand that there are different programmatic issues at the community colleges, e.g., career-technical programs vs. college-parallel programs.

- Involve existing groups, such as LACTS, Regents Committee on Educational Relations (RCER), community college presidents, and community college chief academic officers, as appropriate and necessary.

- Use one articulation website umbrella. Each Regent university will develop separate articulation website tools, in accordance with functionality requirements.

- Use qualitative and quantitative assessments to inform decisions.

- Obtain feedback from presidents, chief academic officers, and student services professionals from team members' institutions to ensure "one voice."

- Conduct field tests/focus groups with Iowa community college students.

- Create a planning tool that interfaces and supports, not replaces, academic advising.

- Make the articulation website available to the public – all Iowans.

- Use common definitions and labels when possible.

- Identify disclaimers and advisory comments for the articulation website.

- Provide articulation information for all Iowa community college courses, including career-technical and remedial/developmental courses.

- Display course input/output for the student.

- Save the information during the student's active session.

- Include the current catalog of each Regent university and Iowa community college in the system.

- Allow the student to print and date the final output which will include a disclaimer that the information provided is not official.

- Provide contact information to the student for follow-up.

- Provide easy accessibility to the articulation website on major search engines.

- Include transfer planning tools, such as a checklist and deadlines for transfer planning, on the articulation website.

POSTER FOR IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

POSTCARD INFORMATION FOR IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

TRANSFERINIOWA.ORG

PLANNING TO TRANSFER?

Learn how your Iowa community college credit will apply toward a degree at:

- **Iowa State University**
- **The University of Iowa**
- **University of Northern Iowa**

Visit **www.TransferInIowa.org** today!

Plan your future with this one-stop resource dedicated to helping you make a seamless transfer.

This web site is brought to you by Iowa's public universities and community colleges.

BOARD OF REGENTS
STATE OF IOWA

TRANSFER STUDENT CHECKLIST

Here are some helpful tips if you plan to transfer from an Iowa community college to an Iowa Regent university:

- Research which university is best for you. Explore programs for transfer students.

- Discuss your transfer plans with your community college adviser, and before registering for classes, visit TransferInIowa.org to see how your courses will apply toward the major you want.

About a year before you plan to transfer:
- Schedule campus visits at your universities of choice.

- Apply to your top-choice universities.

- Ask your community college to forward your official transcripts in support of each application.

- Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) after January 1 of the year you plan to transfer, even if you don't think you will qualify for aid. You may need the FAFSA to be considered for certain grants and scholarships.

- Review tuition and payment plans along with scholarship and financial aid deadlines.

After being admitted, investigate housing options at or near the university.

After accepting an offer of admission:
- Schedule orientation at the university. Bring your most current, unofficial transcript; most can be printed online.

- Upon completion of your final class, ask your community college to send an official transcript to the university, including all grades and degrees.