

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**LIAISON ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRANSFER STUDENTS REPORT**

**Action Requested:** Receive the report.

**Executive Summary:** As a result of legislation in 2008, HF 2609 (Attachment A) directed the Department of Education to convene a liaison advisory committee on transfer students to study articulation and transferability issues, measures, and agreements. The advisory committee must submit a progress report to the General Assembly by January 15, 2009; the report must include a history of articulation between the community colleges and Regent universities, the number of statewide and institution-to-institution articulation agreements in place currently, and the advisory committee's recommendations.

The progress report was a collaborative effort between the Iowa Department of Education and the Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS). It has been reviewed by the Community College Presidents Group on Seamless Transfer, the Regents Committee on Educational Relations (RCER), the community college presidents association, and the Council of Provosts.

The final report from the Liaison Committee on Transfer Students is included in Attachment B. It will be submitted to the General Assembly by January 15, 2009.

**Background:**

LACTS was formed in 1972 as an advisory group of representatives from Iowa community colleges and Regent universities to help make the student transition among Iowa public institutions of higher education as smooth and seamless as possible and to provide a conduit for articulation issues or concerns with statewide impact.

During the past 40 years, these efforts have contributed to or supported the following:

- ◆ Approximately 7,000 students transfer credit annually from Iowa community colleges to the Regent universities. This number includes 3,189 transfer students as well as new freshmen with college credit from an Iowa community college and Regent university students who took credit in at least one of those terms from an Iowa community college.
- ◆ Eight statewide agreements, which serve as the foundation for the transfer of credit in Iowa, were developed between Iowa community college and the Regent universities.
- ◆ There are 1,016 individual Community College/Regent University articulation agreements. A complete listing of these agreements can be found at <http://www.transferiniowa.org/agreements.php>.
- ◆ The Bachelor of Liberal Studies and the Bachelor of Applied Science degrees were developed to support the transfer of community college students to the Regent universities.
- ◆ Community college students participate in the Regent University/Iowa Community College partnership programs – Iowa State University's and University of Northern Iowa's Admissions Partnership Programs and University of Iowa's 2 Plus 2 program.

- ◇ The articulation website, TransferInIowa.org, was created so that community college students and transfer advisors can access the three institutional articulation systems – Iowa State University’s TRANSIT, University of Northern Iowa’s TRANSFER PLAN-IT, and University of Iowa’s I-CHART.

The attached LACTS report includes four recommendations that support the continuation of voluntary articulation activities that lead to transparency, collaboration, and seamless transfer.

1. LACTS shall strive to improve seamless transfer through existing statewide articulation efforts and new initiatives which meet students’ needs.
  - a. Develop best practices and promote transparent processes for communicating how transfer students resolve articulation issues including identifying and publicizing a transfer and articulation contact at each Iowa community college and Regent university;
  - b. Facilitate additional opportunities for individual institutions to pursue program articulation agreements for Iowa community college career and technical education programs with Regent university programs of study; and
  - c. Develop and promote a process for expanding regular academic discipline, faculty-to-faculty meetings between Iowa Regent university and community college faculties. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss course content, the scope and sequencing of courses, and to identify specific information students should know about the transfer process which results in a seamless transfer into a specific program of study.
2. LACTS shall discuss and promote new opportunities for Regent university and community college faculties to review existing articulation agreements, such as the statewide Associate of Science articulation agreement, and support the development of new articulation agreements.
3. LACTS shall continue to sponsor in partnership with the community colleges of Iowa, the Iowa Department of Education, and the Regent universities an annual meeting whose purpose is to: a) discuss articulation issues; b) review and reaffirm existing articulation agreements; and c) review and approve proposed new agreements.
4. LACTS shall provide regular updates on the articulation efforts between Iowa Regent universities and community colleges including publishing the articulation agreements reflected in *The Public Connection*.

Articulation works in Iowa. The Regent universities and LACTS will continue to keep transfer student success at the forefront of discussions and efforts to provide as seamless a transfer as possible. Continuous improvements will be made by strengthening existing statewide articulation efforts and developing new agreements and initiatives which meet students’ needs for Iowa’s changing educational, cultural, and economic environment.

HOUSE FILE 2679

**Section 11. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – LIAISON ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRANSFER STUDENTS.**

The department of education shall convene a liaison advisory committee on transfer students to study articulation and transferability issues, measures, and agreements. The advisory committee shall be comprised of three persons representing the community colleges and a representative from each of the institutions of higher learning governed by the state board of regents. The department shall provide staffing assistance to the committee. The advisory committee shall submit a progress report to the general assembly by January 15, 2009. The progress report shall include a history of articulation between the community colleges and regents universities, the number of statewide institution-to-institution articulation agreements in place currently, and the advisory committee's recommendations.

# **Articulation and Transfer between Public Institutions of Higher Education in Iowa**

Progress Report to the General Assembly

Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS)

January 15, 2009

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**A progress report on articulation in Iowa as directed in House Amendment 8683 to the Education Appropriation Bill.**

**Executive Summary**

The attached report details the extensive articulation and transfer efforts between public institutions of higher education in Iowa that support the successful transfer of students each year from Iowa community colleges to degree programs at Regent universities. Simply stated—articulation works in Iowa.

Successful transfer has been accomplished as a result of ongoing and evolving transfer articulation discussions and efforts that began soon after the creation of Iowa community colleges in 1966. The Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS) was formed in 1972. LACTS, an advisory group of representatives from Iowa community colleges and Regent universities, exists to help make the student transition among Iowa public institutions of higher education as smooth and seamless as possible and serves as a conduit for articulation issues or concerns with statewide impact.

During the past 40 years, these efforts have led to the following:

- Approximately 7,000 students transferring credit annually from Iowa community colleges to the Regent universities. Included in the 7,000 are students who transfer from an Iowa community college to a Regent university, new freshmen at a Regent university entering with credit earned from an Iowa community college, and Regent university students who earn credit from an Iowa community college while enrolled in a degree program at a Regent university.
- Eight statewide agreements forged between Iowa Regent universities and community colleges, which serve as the foundation for the transfer of credit in Iowa
- 1,016 individual community college/Regent university articulation agreements. A complete listing of these agreements can be found at: <http://www.transferiniowa.org/agreements.php>
- The Bachelor of Liberal Studies and the Bachelor of Applied Science degrees
- Community college students participating in the Regent university/Iowa community college partnership programs—Iowa State University's and University of Northern Iowa's Admissions Partnership Programs and University of Iowa's 2 Plus 2 program.
- TransferInIowa.org, from which students and advisors can access the three institutional articulation systems—Iowa State University's (ISU) TRANSIT, University of Northern Iowa's (UNI) TRANSFER PLAN-IT, and University of Iowa's (SUI) I-CHART

The attached report makes four recommendations that support the continuation of voluntary articulation activities that lead to transparency, collaboration, and seamless transfer.

1. LACTS shall strive to improve seamless transfer through existing statewide articulation efforts and new initiatives which meet students' needs.
  - a. Develop best practices and promote transparent processes for communicating how transfer students resolve articulation issues including identifying and publicizing a transfer and articulation contact at each Iowa community college and Regent university;

- b. Facilitate additional opportunities for individual institutions to pursue program articulation agreements for Iowa community college career and technical education programs with Regent university programs of study; and
  - c. Develop and promote a process for expanding regular academic discipline, faculty-to-faculty meetings between Iowa Regent university and community college faculties. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss course content, the scope and sequencing of courses, and to identify specific information students should know about the transfer process which results in a seamless transfer into a specific program of study.
2. LACTS shall discuss and promote new opportunities for Regent university and community college faculties to review existing articulation agreements, such as the statewide Associate of Science articulation agreement, and support the development of new articulation agreements.
  3. LACTS shall continue to sponsor in partnership with the community colleges of Iowa, the Iowa Department of Education, and the Regent universities an annual meeting whose purpose is to: a) discuss articulation issues; b) review and reaffirm existing articulation agreements; and c) review and approve proposed new agreements.
  4. LACTS shall provide regular updates on the articulation efforts between Iowa Regent universities and community colleges including publishing the articulation agreements reflected in *The Public Connection*.

In summary, articulation works in Iowa. LACTS will continue to work to keep transfer student success at the forefront of discussions and efforts to provide as seamless a transfer as possible. Continuous improvement will be made through strengthening existing statewide articulation efforts and forging new agreements and initiatives which meet students' needs for Iowa's changing educational, cultural, and economic environment.

### Introduction

College transfer and articulation involve the movement of students among colleges and universities. Transfer refers to the process by which a student's college-level credit hours earned at one college/university are received, evaluated and applied toward a degree at another institution. *The College Admissions Officer's Guide*, a publication of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, provides a definition of articulation by Con and Hardy (1978):

- As a **process**, it is a coordination of policies and practices among sectors of the educational system to produce a smooth flow of students from one sector to another.
- As an **attitude**, it is exemplified by the willingness of educators in all sectors to work together to transcend the individual and institutional self-interest that impedes the maximum development of the student.
- As a **goal**, it is the creation of an educational system without artificial divisions, so that the whole educational period becomes one unbroken flow, which varies in speed for each individual, and which eliminates loss of credit, delays and unnecessary duplication of effort. (Con, W.H., and J. Hardy. 1978. School university network: Toward a model of articulation. *North Carolina Association Quarterly*.)

Transfer and articulation are critical because: 1) students often move from one institution to another; and 2) students often take courses at institutions different from their primary institution, e.g. taking a course from a community college while attending a Regent university. Because of the important transfer function of Iowa community colleges, most attention is focused on the transfer of students from community colleges to public universities.

During academic year 2007-2008 (includes fall 2007, spring 2008 and summer 2008), approximately 7,000 students transferred credit earned from Iowa community colleges to degree programs at Regent Universities. This number includes 3,189 transfer students as well as new freshmen with college credit from an Iowa community college and Regent university students who earned credit in at least one of those terms from an Iowa community college.

From time to time some students do experience issues/problems in articulating their courses or programs between and among these schools, but these experiences are in the minority. Such issues can be avoided by careful planning and advising. When issues/problems occur, each community college and Regent university has a process in place for students and institutions to pursue resolution. Early planning plays a key role in whether the transfer process goes smoothly or if problems are encountered along the way. Those students who have the most successful transfer experience work closely with an academic advisor, know their intended major, and identify their intended transfer institution. Having this information allows for careful planning early in students' academic careers, and courses can be selected that will not only transfer, but also apply toward their intended majors. Planned transfers are facilitated by carefully negotiated statewide, program-to-program, and course-to-course articulation agreements between Iowa public higher education institutions and enable students to start an academic program at one college or university with the knowledge that they will continue their program and obtain a degree at another institution.

However, a variety of factors create circumstances under which students must move from one institution to another without prior planning (e.g. employment, geographic relocation,

mismatches between students and institutions). Additionally, students may independently plan to transfer from one institution to another without having complete knowledge of the credit-acceptance policies of the institution to which they intend to transfer. Completing a bachelor's degree in four years is more difficult for those students who have not selected a discipline, have not yet chosen their transfer institution, or are unsure if they want to continue their studies beyond the community college. However, efforts are made to provide as much information as possible throughout the transfer process to assist students in making good decisions. A variety of entities work closely together to make the transfer process as smooth as possible including college advisors and admissions personnel, the Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS), the Regents Committee on Educational Relations (RCER), and the Iowa Arts and Science Administrators (IASA).

### **Overview of Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students**

The Liaison Advisory Committee on Transfer Students (LACTS), first organized in 1972, exists to help make the student transition among Iowa public institutions of higher education as smooth and seamless as possible. Soon after the creation of Iowa community colleges in 1966, discussion of transfer and articulation issues began with the Regent universities. LACTS was first organized in 1972 and confirmed as an on-going advisory committee in 1973. The first issue LACTS addressed was consistency in transcript and grading symbol issues. The group, however, quickly became involved with all types of transfer-related topics.

The six-member committee has two parent groups—the Iowa Association of Community College Presidents (IACCP) and the Regents Committee on Educational Relations (RCER). Three community college representatives are appointed by and report to the IACCP and Regent universities' representatives are appointed by and report to the RCER. The Department of Education provides staffing assistance to the committee. IACCP is composed of Iowa's 15 community college presidents. RCER is composed of 12 Regent university representatives, one community college president, one Department of Education representative, and a Board of Regents staff representative. RCER reports to the Council of Provosts for the Regent universities.

LACTS is an advisory group with no official policymaking authority; however, it has provided leadership in addressing articulation and transfer issues and the group's recommendations are often implemented. Throughout its history, the LACTS committee has welcomed and encouraged individuals and institutions to bring articulation issues or concerns to their attention.

LACTS meets several times a year and hosts an annual statewide articulation meeting each spring at which time all written articulation agreements are reviewed and other articulation issues are discussed. Representatives of the Iowa community college Arts and Sciences Administrators (IASA), the Iowa community college Chief Student Services Administrators, the Iowa Regent universities Deans of Liberal Arts and Directors of Admissions, and the Iowa Department of Education staff participate.

With a long history of voluntary articulation efforts between public institutions of higher education, Iowa has long been a national leader in articulation and transfer credit policy development. LACTS has been instrumental in fostering positive relationships between Iowa community colleges and Regent universities and plays a key role in providing statewide leadership on transfer and articulation issues. Over the past 36 years, the committee has been

influential in the development of several areas of agreement between the Iowa community colleges and Regent universities.

The Statewide agreements and their initial year of adoption are as follows:

- Associate of Arts (AA) Articulation Agreement (1981)
  - Students transferring with an Associate of Arts degree to a Regent university will have met all freshman and sophomore level general education requirements for the college of liberal arts or other participating colleges within the Regent Universities.
- Associate of Science (AS) Articulation Agreement (2008)
  - Students satisfying a set of academic requirements, with a concentration in math and science, will be enrolled at junior level status in the college of liberal arts or other participating colleges within the Regent universities.
- Career-Technical Credit Agreement (1975)
  - The Regent universities' College of Liberal Arts and other participating colleges within the Regent universities will accept up to 16 semester hours of career and technical credit that the sending Iowa community college accepts toward the Associate of Arts or Associate of Science Degrees.
- Common Grading Symbols and Definitions Agreement (1973)
  - The Regent universities will recognize without alteration, the common grading symbols as reported by the Iowa community colleges.
- Credit by Examination Agreement (1980)
  - This agreement pertains to the College-Level Examination Program, Advanced Placement Program of The College Board, and Institutional Examinations. Each credit by examination has a specific set of criteria by which the colleges and universities apply the credit.
- Electronics/Electronics-Based Technology Agreement (1996)
  - Graduates of Iowa community college Electronics/Electronics-Based Technology programs who are accepted at an Iowa Regent university will be granted credit as specified in this agreement. It is understood that the credit accepted for transfer under this agreement will be in addition to transferable and graded arts and sciences credit earned at the respective community college.
- Military Credit Agreement (1996)
  - Credit for military courses will be granted according to the guidelines in the American Council on Education's *Guide to Credit for Educational Experiences in the Armed Forces* when that recommendation is for lower and/or upper division baccalaureate degrees. The receiving institution will determine applicability of transfer credit to specific degree programs.
- International Student Academic Credential Evaluation Agreement (1979)
  - The Regent universities will, upon request of an Iowa community college and in accordance with their own policies and procedures, evaluate academic credentials of international students attending Iowa community colleges who subsequently plan to transfer to one of the Regent universities.

*(Full descriptions may be found in The Public Connection, Vol. I at [www.transferiniowa.org/pdf/lacts\\_1.pdf](http://www.transferiniowa.org/pdf/lacts_1.pdf).)*

Each of the agreements are reviewed annually; five of the eight agreements have undergone one or more revisions since they were implemented (e.g. the College-Level Examination

Program agreement was expanded to include Advance Placement Program and institutional examinations).

Iowa's success in facilitating smooth transfer has occurred through the cooperative effort, communication, and mutual trust among faculty and staff in the Iowa community colleges and Regent universities. From the early development of the community college system in the late 1960s to the present, voluntary articulation has provided a successful vehicle for the smooth transfer of students from one Iowa public institution to another. The cooperative environment serves as the foundation for voluntary articulation across the state. Without cooperation and a shared purpose, smooth articulation would not exist.

Within Iowa's voluntary articulation environment, LACTS is one of several entities working to facilitate the seamless transfer of students. The Iowa community college Arts and Science Administrators (ICCASA) meet several times annually providing a forum for discussion about current articulation issues. Transfer relations representatives from the Regent universities also attend. The meetings have led to committee review and additional statewide agreements or modification to existing agreements. ICCASA also established the Annual Articulation Conference which provides opportunities for Iowa community college and Regent university faculties to discuss and review curricula, teaching methodologies, intended course outcomes, and assessment techniques. Content experts are provided the opportunity to network and strengthen relationships between two- and four-year counterparts. Recent conferences focused on the disciplines of computer science, mathematics, history, elementary education, diversity requirements, chemistry, art, biology, and foreign languages. In the fall of 2008, the conference focused on Accounting.

Other entities actively involved with providing direction and expertise on articulation and transfer issues include college admissions officers and the Iowa Association of Chief Student Services Administrators. Because of the importance of planning, advisors and admissions personnel play an essential role, helping to guide students through the transfer process. These personnel work closely together to make the process as seamless as possible.

Improving articulation and transfer is a complex task. Research has shown that the quality of interaction among the various educational sectors is critical to the process. Faculty must support and be involved with the development of articulation agreements because different institutions may have different academic policies, curricula, and levels of expected rigor. Iowa higher education institutions have worked closely to align coursework and to refine articulation agreements. With a variety of resources available to both students and staff and a large number of articulation agreements, it is evident that voluntary articulation in the state of Iowa not only exists, but is flourishing. Students who take advantage of the resources and expertise available find the transfer from Iowa community colleges to Regent universities seamless.

### **Articulation Agreements**

Articulation agreements have been developed between Iowa community colleges and Regent universities to assist students in the transfer process. An articulation agreement can generally be defined as "a written agreement between two institutions regarding the acceptance of transfer credit from one school and how it will be used to meet degree requirements at another school." Within that definition, institutions articulate in a variety of ways, such as:

- The acceptance of a full two-year degree in meeting some or all of the general education requirements at a four-year institution, e.g. the statewide AA articulation agreement.
- Program-to-Program Articulation: The acceptance of courses taken in a specific two-year degree program at a community college toward meeting course requirements for a bachelor's degree in the same or closely related program at the four-year institution. Examples include: Turf and Greenhouse Management Diploma/AA option to Horticulture (ISU); RN to BSN (SUI); Health Care Administration Applied Science degree to Gerontology (UNI).
- Course Equivalencies: The acceptance of courses taken at a community college as meeting the degree requirements at a Regent university. These equivalencies are available to students and Iowa community college advisors on the web and in printed form.
- The articulation of a course or group of courses identified at the community college as career and technical being accepted in a four-year bachelor's program to meet degree requirements. Examples include Fashion Merchandising courses to Apparel Merchandising, Design and Production (ISU); Radiation Technology courses to Radiation Sciences (SUI) Carver College of Medicine); and Robotics Automation Technology courses to Technology Management (UNI).

In addition to articulation agreements, two other forms of guidance are helpful in the transfer process:

- Transfer Plans: Typically, a printed outline of courses that students can enroll in at the community college that will transfer into a specific bachelor's degree program at the designated Regent university. Some of these are available online for easy reference.
- Transfer Guides: Transfer advisors or other university faculty/staff at Regent universities assist students in drawing up an individual transfer "plan." In other words, they will work individually with a student to help him/her choose classes at the community college that will transfer and help the student have a smooth transition to the four-year program.

LACTS has played a central role in the forging of eight statewide articulation agreements which serve as the foundation for the transfer of credit. The list of statewide articulation agreements is listed in the Overview section of this report. The statewide agreements are reviewed annually and changes are made as appropriate. The most recently signed agreement is the Associate of Science Articulation Agreement which was signed in the spring of 2007.

The Associate of Arts Articulation Agreement is a key agreement between the Iowa Regent universities and 15 community colleges. The agreement allows for students transferring from Iowa community colleges to Regent universities with an AA degree who have fulfilled the requirements outlined in the agreement to meet all freshman- and sophomore-level general education requirements. The students are enrolled at junior level status in any major within the participating colleges at the Regent universities listed below:

- Iowa State University—College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, College of Business
- The University of Iowa—College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Henry B. Tippie College of Business, and the College of Education
- The University of Northern Iowa—All undergraduate programs (common general education program across the university)

*The total number of participating majors at the three Regent universities is 234. For a complete list of the majors participating in the Associate of Arts Articulation Agreement at each Regent university, see Public Connections, volume I at [www.transferiniowa.org/pdf/lacts\\_1.pdf](http://www.transferiniowa.org/pdf/lacts_1.pdf).*

In addition to all of the majors/programs that accept the AA degree as a package to satisfy general education core, there is an ever-growing (and constantly changing) number of individual institutional articulation programs to help students satisfy specific major requirements at each university. Some are full program agreements, some are block core agreements or individual course transfer plans, while others still are additional institutional partnerships designed to facilitate effective transfer. Students are encouraged to contact the office of admissions of the university they plan to attend for specific and updated information on each program.

*The total number of individual agreements as of 11/2008 is 1,016. For a complete summary of the more comprehensive individual agreements between each Iowa community college and each Regent university, see Public Connections, volume II at [www.transferiniowa.org/pdf/lacts\\_2.pdf](http://www.transferiniowa.org/pdf/lacts_2.pdf).*

**Programs and Innovations for Seamless Transfer and Articulation**

**TransferInIowa.org**

In response to 2007 legislation, Iowa Regent universities and public community colleges created an articulation website called TransferInIowa.org that addresses the number one question transfer students ask, "How will my credits transfer?" By following the 'Transferring Your Credit' link, students from Iowa's public community colleges can discover how their courses may transfer to the Regent universities. Additional links include information about the transfer process, distance education, existing statewide transfer agreements, and contact information for each of the three Regent universities.

TransferInIowa.org, launched July 1, 2008, lets students at any of the 15 Iowa community colleges know if a community college course will transfer to a Regent university—before they even register for that class. TransferInIowa.org was designed to:

- provide a seamless transition for students transferring from Iowa community colleges to Regent universities; and
- allow students to make informed, cost-effective decisions regarding their postsecondary education plans.

An Articulation Website Team comprised of representatives from Iowa community colleges, Regent universities, Board of Regents Office, and Iowa Department of Education managed the development and implementation of the new articulation website. According to Indian Hills Community College President Dr. Jim Lindenmayer, "The articulation website is an important step in providing qualified students with a seamless transition to our state's Regent universities. Development of the Website is a tremendous example of the cooperative efforts among our institutions of higher learning and the resultant benefits that can be reaped on behalf of our students."

The development process was led by a set of guiding principles and included considerable input and feedback from various constituencies, including 1,254 currently enrolled and prospective Iowa community college students who plan to transfer to a Regent university, 64 Iowa community college transfer advisors, Regent university academic and administrative units, and Iowa community college administrators. The surveys, focus groups, and administrative feedback indicated that 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.

Department of Education Director Judy Jeffrey said, "The TransferInIowa' Website will be a valuable resource to community college students and community college academic advisors involved in the transfer process. By accessing the website, students, their parents, and advisors will quickly see how a student's courses transfer and what courses may still be needed to complete the major and degree at the Regent universities."

A key feature of the articulation website, launched on July 1, 2008, is the introduction of easy-to-use transfer credit applicability systems—Iowa State University's TRANSIT system; the University of Iowa's I-CHART system; and the University of Northern Iowa's TRANSFER PLAN-IT system. Board of Regents President David Miles said, "Many Iowans choose to begin their college experience at a community college with the goal of eventually transferring to a Regent

university. The Board of Regents understands the need to provide information and support to prospective transfer students to make their transition between institutions as seamless as possible. We anticipate that this articulation website will support that process. The Board appreciates the support of the legislature and the collaboration with the community colleges and the Department of Education in this important endeavor.”

### **The Bachelor of Liberal Studies**

The bachelor of liberal studies (BLS) is a general studies degree in liberal arts with three areas of distribution instead of a traditional major. It supports the university's efforts in retention, outreach, and cooperative programming.

The BLS was created by Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa to provide a degree completion program that would build on the AA degree from Iowa community colleges. All three colleges collaborate on policies and course delivery and offer evening classes targeted for working adults throughout the state.

The program attracts, retains, and retrieves students who are experiencing educational barriers or who simply desire a broad curriculum. It serves both traditional and nontraditional students, on and off campus.

During a typical academic year, more than 300 students are enrolled in the program with over 120 students graduating annually. BLS graduates find employment in a wide variety of settings as well as gain admission to graduate and professional programs.

### **The Bachelor of Applied Studies**

The University of Iowa BAS program is designed for graduates of community college technical programs who wish to complete a bachelor's degree, but who, due to family and/or employment responsibilities, cannot engage in traditional on-campus study.

An interdisciplinary approach to coursework can reflect the student's interests as well as incorporate certificate programs into his/her studies: the Public Health Certificate, offered by the College of Public Health; the Certificate in Entrepreneurial Studies Management, offered by the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, Tippie College of Business; or the Nonprofit Management Certificate offered by the Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center.

The Bachelor of Applied Studies program does not have departmental major requirements, so a student works with his/her advisor to plan his/her area of emphasis.

### **Collaborative Program Initiatives**

The three Regent universities recognize the value of programmatic initiatives that go beyond the articulation agreements which are foundations for successful transfer. With over 3,100 students moving from the Iowa community college system to the Regent universities each year, joint venture programs have been initiated which seek to provide direct services to prospective transfer students. A simple strategy was conceptualized to strengthen the relationships with Iowa community colleges and better serve transfer students.

Known as the Admissions Partnership Program (APP) at Iowa State University and University of Northern Iowa and as 2 PLUS 2 at the University of Iowa, the program makes it easier for

community college students to transfer. Each program formalizes the Regent university's relationship with each respective Iowa community college; helps bridge the two college environments; and assists students with feeling connected to the university community from the beginning. The partnerships are designed to help community college students meet their educational goals within a reasonable time frame.

Transfer planning is the centerpiece of these programs. Personal guidance is available to help students stay on track throughout their studies. Transfer students are provided with more substantive contact with academic advisors who can mentor them while they select coursework and plan for their transfer. University academic advisors help the student build a four year plan as well as interpret their transfer credit evaluation and degree audit showing how their community college courses apply towards their intended degree program at the respective University. This planning minimizes surprises in how credit transfers—and that helps smooth the transition and reduce transfer shock, a term that, refers to the impact that transitioning from one college to another has on a student. Through the use of academic advising and transfer planning resources, students in APP or 2 PLUS 2 stay on track and ultimately experience a successful transfer.

At each university, participating students receive numerous benefits for being in the program, including receiving a university student ID card and email account as well as access to events and opportunities exclusive to the respective university community—like university housing, libraries, cultural and extracurricular activities, athletic tickets at student rates, career exploration, and recreational facilities. All the extras are intended to help these prospective transfer students get connected to the university with the goal being a more seamless transfer.

Among the highlights of the programs are:

- In the first two years, more than 750 students have chosen to participate and at least 185 have matriculated at the Regent universities
- Emphasis on transfer planning
- Commitment to helping students achieve the bachelor's degree within a reasonable time frame
- Connection to the university communities from point of initial participation

**LACTS Recommendations to the General Assembly**

LACTS exists to help make the student transition among Iowa public institutions of higher education as smooth and seamless as possible and serves as a conduit for articulation issues or concerns with statewide impact. As an advisory group, LACTS recommends the following:

1. LACTS shall strive to improve seamless transfer through existing statewide articulation efforts and new initiatives which meet students' needs.
  - a. Develop best practices and promote transparent processes for communicating how transfer students resolve articulation issues including identifying and publicizing a transfer and articulation contact at each Iowa community college and Regent university;
  - b. Facilitate additional opportunities for individual institutions to pursue program articulation agreements for Iowa community college career and technical education programs with Regent university programs of study; and
  - c. Develop and promote a process for expanding regular academic discipline, faculty-to-faculty meetings between Iowa community college and Regent university faculty. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss course content, the scope and sequencing of courses, and to identify specific information students should know about the transfer process which results in a seamless transfer into a specific program of study.
2. LACTS shall discuss and promote new opportunities for Iowa Regent university and community college faculties to review existing articulation agreements, such as the statewide Associate of Science articulation agreement, and support the development of new articulation agreements.
3. LACTS shall continue to sponsor in partnership with the community colleges of Iowa, the Iowa Department of Education, and the Regent universities an annual meeting whose purpose is to: a) discuss articulation issues; b) review and reaffirm existing articulation agreements; and c) review and approve proposed new agreements.
4. LACTS shall provide regular updates on the articulation efforts between Iowa community colleges and Regent universities including publishing the articulation agreements reflected in *The Public Connection*.

**Appendices**

**Appendix I  
Transfer Advising**

For students to be successful in the transfer process, it is important that they work with their Iowa community college advisor in defining career goals, gathering information about four-year colleges and universities, and selecting transferable courses. Community college advisors have a great deal of knowledge about transfer credit issues and policies, and the Regent university transfer representatives continue to build relationships with them to keep them well informed. This is done in a number of ways including the following examples:

- Regent university newsletters sent to Iowa community college advisors two to four times annually
- Listserv for Iowa community college advisors where periodic updates on events, policy, and program changes are provided by the Regent university representatives
- Periodic meetings to address current issues and to answer questions that have recently arisen in their advising sessions with prospective transfer students
- Statewide face-to-face meetings once per semester to distribute new recruitment and advising materials, help train and orient new community college staff, and provide ongoing staff development for experienced advisors
- Articulation conferences held annually to focus on a selected academic discipline. This conference is also a forum for community college and Regent university faculties to discuss course content and issues in the chosen discipline.
- Joint meetings with advisors after community college visits to address questions that might be unique to that particular campus, discuss trends in that College's transfer majors and patterns, and review important policies, deadlines, and program updates
- Community college Update Programs where community college advisors are invited to a Regent university campus to learn more about selected colleges and majors. Advisors may meet with university faculty and staff to learn specific advising tips and program facts, tour campus facilities, and receive comprehensive advising materials to take back to their campus to share with their colleagues.
- Advisory boards to work with the Universities' Admissions Offices to revise and improve transfer publications, discuss new consortia, and strategize about new methods of enhancing the academic and social transitions of transfer students

## Appendix II Resources for Transfer Students

As students begin their postsecondary academic career at community college, there are many resources available to them. The following is a list of the type of information and programs available to prospective transfer students.

- The TransferInIowa.org website serves as a portal for the Regents' on-line articulation systems and admissions and transfer planning resources.
- Regent university websites (i.e. www.iastate.edu; www.uiowa.edu; www.uni.edu)
- Print publications which provide information on academic programs, admissions requirements, applying for admission, transfer credit policies, financial aid, and scholarships
- Community college visits by Regent university representatives
- Partnership admission/advising programs.
- Four-year graduation program for students who are "on track" when they transfer.
- Transfer fairs at Iowa community colleges hosted by community college advising staff where admissions representatives from Regent universities are available to answer questions from prospective students
- Transfer open house programs on Regent university campuses where students explore academic and student life opportunities
- Individual campus visits for transfer students
- Group visits to Regent universities provided by the student's community college
- Course equivalency guides developed by the Regent universities which assist students in planning their coursework at their Iowa community college to ensure transferability to a specific Regent university
- Transfer plans and articulation agreements developed cooperatively between Iowa community colleges and the three Regent universities
- *The Public Connection* publications produced by LACTS which were completed to outline transfer admission requirements at each of the Regent universities and provide students with an overview of the current statewide articulation agreements
- Joint Iowa community college visits in both the fall and spring semesters. Each year, Regent universities visit approximately 8-10 Iowa community colleges together to provide students the chance to gather information from each one of the Regent universities at the same time. During these visits, Regent university representatives also meet with the advising staff at the Iowa community college to provide updated information and discuss transfer issues.

Before or upon admission to their selected Regent universities, students receive an evaluation of their transfer credit and other pertinent information about enrolling at the Regent university of their choice. Transfer students are also invited to attend early transfer registration/orientation programs where they meet with an advisor and register for classes at the same time as students currently enrolled at their Regent universities.

**Appendix III  
TransferInIowa.Org**

*(Note: TransferInIowa promotional poster used at the Iowa community college will be attached as Appendix III.)*

**Appendix IV  
The Public Connection, Vol. I and II**

*(Note: The Public Connections documents, volumes I and II, will be attached as Appendix IV. These documents can be found at [www.transferiniowa.org/agreements.php](http://www.transferiniowa.org/agreements.php).)*