

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

COMMUNICATIONS PROPOSAL IN THE DIRECT TRANSFER AGREEMENT November 2009

Background

In January 2009, the Joint Access Oversight Group (JAOG) requested that the Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC) review the credit language in the Communications requirements of the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) and draft a recommendation for change if appropriate. The JAOG is comprised of public and private university and community and technical college instruction leaders. The ICRC is comprised of public and private university and community and technical college deans and registrars.

JAOG expressed concern that the current credit language in the Direct Transfer Agreement may be confusing to students. The current language requires

“10 credits of communication skills which must include at least two courses in English Composition which total at least six credits.”

Most, if not all, community and technical colleges teach only 5 credit English Composition courses, therefore two courses would equate to the required 10 credits. This leaves the language of “must total at least six credits” confusing for students. No other issue was brought forward from JAOG for review or discussion.

Summer 2009, the ICRC Executive Committee presented the following proposed DTA language change to clarify potential confusion regarding credits in the Communications requirement.

“10 credits of Communication Skills which must include at least two five credit courses in English Composition.”

Community and technical college faculty, staff, and administrators participated in an ITV session November 3, 2009 regarding changes to the Direct Transfer Agreement. During the session, questions regarding the proposed changes were solicited. Below are the question and answers that may help in further clarification of issues and discussion regarding the proposal.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: *What courses apply to meet the new English Composition requirement?*

A: **Local college curriculum committees determine criteria for English Composition courses. The proposal does not change local decisions related to course content.**

Q: *Will courses in Journalism and Creative Writing still count to meet the new English Composition requirement?*

A: **Please see the answer above. If local colleges currently have Journalism and Creative Writing classes meeting English Composition requirements—nothing will change. Course content is determined by local colleges.**

Q: *Why isn't oral communication considered part of the requirement for the Direct Transfer Agreement in Communications?*

A: **JAOG did not intend to review the content of the Communications requirement in the DTA through this process. The current efforts focus ONLY on the potential credit confusion in the Agreement as currently written.**

Q: *What are the outcomes that public and private universities want out of this proposal?*

A: **The only expressed outcome related to this proposal is to clarify credit language in the DTA with actual practice on campuses to meet the current 10 credit Communication requirement. There was no intention to review the content of the Direct Transfer Agreement through this process or to increase or decrease the credit requirement for Communications.**

Q: *How many community and technical college faculty members were involved in the development of the proposal?*

A: **The proposal was specifically sent to ICRC for review and to create a draft proposal because JAOG's concern related to transfer credits. ICRC is the appropriate to draft a proposal for this issue. It was JAOG's intention, as can be seen through the process, to involve faculty, staff and administrators in full discussions about the proposal.**

Q: *What should we do if a student transfers to our system from either a semester system or a college that has less than 5 credit English Composition courses?*

A: **Receiving institutions have local authority for how they accept credits from other schools. This proposal will not change local authority or any policy or practices currently in place to deal with students transferring into your college.**

Q: *Are community and technical college students required to have more English Composition credits than native students at the public and private universities?*

A: **There are a variety of approaches the baccalaureate institutions have for satisfying the communications requirement in general education. Some universities require more written communication than 10 credits—a few require a bit less. During the development of the DTA it wasn't possible to develop a communications requirement that matched every baccalaureate, but community colleges felt strongly that their students benefitted from two courses in composition.**

Many colleges have course requirements beyond the Direct Transfer Agreement. For example, a number of colleges require 15 credits of Communications for their degree—two composition courses and one oral communication course. Requirements beyond the written DTA will remain local authority.