

# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** December 5, 2005

**TO:** Legislative Education Study Committee

**FROM:** Dr. Jozi De Leon or Dr. Beverlee McClure (choose)

**SUBJECT:** Articulation Task Force Update

This memorandum is intended to update the Legislative Education Study Committee on the progress of the Higher Education Department's Articulation Task Force.

**Background (Historical):** During the 2005 legislative session, the legislature mandated guaranteed acceptance of certain transfer credits in SB 161: "An Act Relating to Higher Education Articulation." In anticipation of SB 161, the Commission on Higher Education created the Articulation Task Force (ATF) in June 2004 to develop and implement an articulation program. The Task Force is co-chaired by Bill Flores, provost of NMSU, and Steve Gamble, president of ENMU. The membership consists of representatives from the two- and four-year institutions and the Higher Education Department.

The key to the charge delivered to the Articulation Task Force in SB 161 is found in section 7: "The general education core, the discipline module for business and early childhood education and the common course numbering and naming system for all courses in these modules, shall be effective by spring 2006, and the printed material of all institutions shall conform to the system by fall 2006. A minimum of three additional discipline modules shall be effective no later than fall semester 2007 and an additional three discipline modules by fall semester 2008." (note: We will utilize a "crosswalk" approach; no institution will be required to renumber or rename its courses at this time.) The Articulation Task Force also adopted an unofficial charge: "To guarantee the state-wide transfer of selected courses and insure that these courses are accepted to meet specific (not elective) degree requirements."

The first initiative of the ATF was to develop an articulation of the New Mexico 35 hour Lower-Division General Education Common Course Curriculum. To accomplish this, five subcommittees (one for each of the general education areas) were created and staffed with 12 faculty members who teach in that general education area. Six of the members came from two-year institutions, and one came from each of the six four-year institutions. These subcommittees each developed Competency Statements and submittal forms (attachment) for their general education areas.

Several years ago, the Commission on Higher Education reviewed courses from two- and four-year institutions and identified those which were substantially equivalent to courses within the 35 hour Lower-Division General Education Common Course Curriculum. In order to expedite the progress of the Articulation Task Force, guaranteed transferability of these general education courses will be reaffirmed without further review if the courses are resubmitted. If an institution wishes to submit additional courses for purposes of meeting state lower-division general education requirements, the institution must evaluate its own courses against the criteria outlined in the Competency Statements of the five general education areas. If the institution determines that a course is substantially equivalent, it should be submitted to HED for approval/disapproval.

Once a course has been accepted for state-wide transferability to meet a lower-division general education requirement, it will be designated as such on the HED Articulation webpage. In addition, literature will be developed to inform faculty and students of the transferability of all courses which meet the general education core requirements. Approved courses will be designated on student transcripts, in university/college catalogs, on institutional websites and on the HED website.

**Background (New Mexico Common Course Numbering System):** The New Mexico Common Course Numbering System is a mechanism that coordinates the articulation of coursework among New Mexico institutions and simplifies the transfer process for students. The system establishes a set of uniform course designations that serves as a single reference point for courses taught throughout the state. This should not be confused as an effort to require colleges to change their internal numbering schemes; rather, it is a matrix of courses taught at New Mexico colleges that share substantially equivalent content and are linked to a single state-prescribed course number. So while every college may have its own unique designation for Freshman Composition I (for example, the course would be ENG 102 at ENMU-Portales, ENG 111 at San Juan College and EN 113 at New Mexico Junior College), a statewide equivalency table cross-references the institutional course and number with the state-prescribed “common course number” (in this case, ENGL 1113) creating an easy one-to-one match. Thus the three courses listed above from ENMU, SJC and NMJC would meet the transferability criteria at all New Mexico schools for Freshman Composition I, ENGL 1113. The courses would be accepted to meet the general education criteria and would be counted as three SCH towards a bachelor’s or associate’s degree. The acceptance of these courses is mandatory at every institution, as is the requirement that they count towards a degree.

The New Mexico Common Course Number is made up of a four alpha prefix that identifies the subject area. For example, the prefix for English courses is ENGL. The following number portion of the identifier is made up of four digits, each having meaning. The first digit signifies the level of the course (1 – freshman; 2 – sophomore). The last digit represents the number of credit hours assigned to the course, typically 3 or 4. The middle two digits taken together represent the sequence of the course, thus ENGL 1113 precedes ENGL 1123.

This system will allow universities to communicate in a crosswalk fashion how their individual courses match directly to the statewide common courses. Additionally, in degree plans and in course description sections of catalogs, universities can identify parenthetically the common course number alongside their internal number, making it easy for students to choose the appropriate course to use in transfer. The receiving institution will accept the course in transfer to meet general education degree requirements as if it were taken locally.

**Present:** At the present time, the two-year and four-year institutions have submitted their lower-division general education equivalent courses to HED for review, and HED is in the process of reviewing them. This review will be completed by January 10, and the equivalent courses for all institutions will be posted on the HED web page.

In addition to the general education equivalencies, 65 hour transfer modules in Business and Early Childhood Education have been articulated. These two modules have been developed by faculty in these disciplines and will be posted on the HED web page by January 10.

**Future:** By the beginning of the 2006 spring semester, the articulation for the 35 hour lower-division General Education Common Course Curriculum and the Business and Early Childhood Education modules will be completed. A campaign to publicize the articulation program will be underway, and the initiative to make the appropriate designations of courses on transcripts, catalogs and websites will be partially completed. The Task Force will also identify the next transfer modules to articulate. By fall 2006, the printed material of all two-year and four-year institutions will conform to the requirements contained in SB 161, and all appropriate designations of courses on transcripts, catalogs and websites will be completed.

In summary, the Articulation Task Force will meet the requirements for spring 2006 levied in SB 161: “An Act Relating to Higher Education.” Any questions should be addressed to Bill Flores at [provost@nmsu.edu](mailto:provost@nmsu.edu), Steve Gamble at [steven.gamble@enmu.edu](mailto:steven.gamble@enmu.edu) or Jose De Leon at [josephine.deleon@state.nm.us](mailto:josephine.deleon@state.nm.us). Thank you.