

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee

Meeting Notes

November 19, 2010

10:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Dixon University, Harrisburg, PA

Remote Locations: CCBC, IUP, Bucks, Conference Call Line

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 A.M.

Updates/Announcements

See handout emailed to everyone prior to the meeting.

Pilot Project Wrap-Up Meeting

Pilot PAC wrap-up meeting resulted in constructive feedback that TAOC can use to revise the articulation model for future use. PDE provided TAOC with a list of the key discussion points and recommendations. Reports from all three PACs are also available for review. PACs had questions concerning issues that TAOC is currently grappling with as well such as the “rules”. PDE will revise the articulation model/process according to recommendations from the PACs and TAOC and submit to TAOC for approval.

Pilot PAC Agreements

PDE reviewed the pilot Math Agreement, noting the PAC used a different approach than the other two pilot groups. Rather than assigning minimum credit requirements, the PAC identified minimum competency requirements and chose to allow each institution to determine how many credits are needed to offer the competencies. TAOC will vote electronically to approve the Agreement. PDE is working with the Psych and PK-4 PACs to “clean up” the agreements and post the final versions to PA TRAC.

PDE shared comments submitted by TAOC members with their votes to approve/disapprove the Psych and PK-4 Agreements. Points of discussion from TAOC are as follows:

- PK-4 Agreement:
 - State or Act 50 does not have the authority to require NAEYC accreditation.
 - PDE requirements may change and something needs to be identified that is consistent with PDE requirements and allows for flexibility.
 - The PK-4 agreement is designed to be fit the needs of both career-oriented and transfer students.
 - Agreement is hard to adjust when students change majors. Under the Agreement, students would not only have to pick major but pick transfer institution due to requirements.
 - If Education majors don’t know from Day 1 that this is their career choice, then they are looking at more than four years to complete the bachelor degree. This is a consistent outcome for native students who enter the field of education late.
- Math and PreK-4 PAC used word “30-credit General Education” rather than “30-credit Transfer Framework”.
 - The Framework was not intended to be a Gen Ed curriculum and can not be referred to as such in the Agreements. Each receiving institution independently determines where Framework courses apply to a student’s graduation requirements.
 - The Framework does not include all of the requirements needed by education majors due to external accreditation, which is why there is a section called “30-Credit General Education”.
 - Students meeting the Transfer Credit Framework criteria must be able to transfer to a participating institution “without loss of academic progress.”
- Transferring the associate degree as a block of credits
 - The goal is to transfer the degree credits as an entire block, not just courses
 - Several institutions indicated they weren’t sure how to transfer the associate degree as a “block” of credits, seeing this type of transfer as a lot of work since course-by-course review was necessary to accommodate their student information systems.
 - PACs determine competencies for entry as a junior into a parallel degree program. The bachelor degree institutions determine what competencies remain to earn the degree.

-
- Transfer Students vs. Native Students
 - Transfer students are to be treated like native students. In certain circumstances, even if general ed transfers as a block, they would be required to retake courses to fulfill requirements. Native students have the ability to substitute some requirements.
 - Pilot PAC members are concerned with the interpretation of the AA/AS degree and only needing another 60 credits to earn a bachelor degree since some majors may require more than 120 credits to complete.
 - Act 50 requires students to transfer with “full junior standing”. Since some programs do require more than 120 credits to complete, it is possible that a student may need to attend longer than 2 years or complete more than 60 credits to earn the degree. However, this is acceptable as long as the student transfers without loss of academic progress and the policies/program requirements are the same for native students.

Rules of Statewide Articulation

1. **Issue:** Should TAOC set a minimum GPA requirement for all statewide articulation agreements or should the GPA be addressed by each individual PAC? Specific points of discussion from October were as follows:
 - Psychology Agreement requires minimum 2.0 GPA in Research Methods & Analysis only.
 - Math Agreement requires minimum 2.0 GPA in all major content areas.
 - Institutional policies vary on transfer of D grades for major courses.
 - Many institutions require grades of C or better in major courses.

Proposal:

- Students transferring under any statewide articulation agreement must earn a minimum grade of C or better (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) in all major coursework included in the associate degree.
- Students transferring under a statewide articulation agreement leading to teacher certification must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale at the associate-degree granting institution.

Discussion:

- Should grade of C or better be required for all major-content areas?
- What about the transfer of Ds? Are institutions required to transfer courses with a grade of D, if the student earns the associate degree?
- Should a C or better be required in all major courses?
- What about a C+ or C-? Does grade of C include a C-?
- The language in the agreement states a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- This needs to be in the Articulation process and model. Are we telling them C or better? This could be one less decision the PACs have to make and could affect the PAC process.

Resolution: Topic will be discussed and finalized again at the December meeting after TAOC.

2. **Issue:** Students might interpret statewide articulation as a guarantee of admission to the parallel bachelor degree program or to a participating 4-year institution.

Proposed Rule:

- *A statewide articulation agreement is not a guarantee of admission to a participating institution or parallel degree program.*

Discussion:

- Admission to a participating institution does not mean automatically mean the student will be admitted to the parallel degree program.

Resolution: Revise the statement so it explains what the agreement does for the student rather than what it does NOT do for the student and propose to TAOC.

3. **Issue:** Institutions retain the authority to establish/maintain their own policies concerning admission to the institution and degree program, as long as such policies are consistent with those applied to native students at the institution.

Proposed Rule:

- *All decisions made with respect to the transfer process, including admission to the college and parallel bachelor degree program, will be subject to the four-year institution’s specific program requirements and will be consistent with such requirements for native students.*

Discussion:

- Statements like this are necessary for the front-line people, who need to have clear legislative language consistent with implementation
- A little bit of confusion with word “college”. Consider “transfer institution”, “four-year institution” or “baccalaureate institution”.

- Pilot PACs recommended rules that align with policies applied to native student and getting away from using references to “2-year” and “4-year”.
- Important to clarify that institutions retain right to develop own transfer policies while at the same time ensuring transfer students that they will not be treated differently than native students.
- Use of the word “same” vs. “consistent”.
- Wording should remain as “consistent”. The word “same” gets in way of circumstance.
- Students only admitted to university but not to program. Rules need still provide institutions some flexibility.

Resolution: Revise the statement to address the above concerns and propose to TAOC within the context of the larger statewide agreement.

Implementation of the Pilot Agreements

1. **Issue:** Due to the following concerns, TAOC deferred determining the effective date of the pilot agreements and subsequent agreements from the October meeting until the November meeting.

- Institutions need time to modify programs.
- Students need time to complete modified programs.
- Some institutions are ready to honor agreements now.
- Students should benefit as soon as possible.

Proposal:

- *Participating institutions will be prepared to honor the statewide articulation agreements in PK-4, Psychology and Math by the fall semester of 2012.*

Discussion:

- Legislation was not passed as part of the 2009-10 fiscal code. However, the deadlines were based on the legislation passing in the spring 2009. Had that been the case, the institutions would have had more time.
- Some institutions are ready to honor agreements now.
- Last date of implementation should be Fall 2012.
- Legislation requires agreements be developed by end of 2011. Community colleges do not want to see an extension beyond 2013.

Resolution: Send effective dates to TAOC for electronic vote.

2. **Issue:** TAOC needs to outline the process by which institutions will determine and identify when they are prepared to honor an Agreement. Issues from the October meeting were as follows:

- Who will verify that associate degree programs meet the required competencies?
- How will programs be verified?
- How will students know which institutions honor the agreements and when?
- How will receiving 4-year institutions know a student is eligible for transfer under an Agreement?

Proposal:

- *Institutions will use a **Program Articulation Matrix** to show where competencies are embedded in AA/AS.*
- *Institutions will submit matrices to PDE prior to effective date of agreement.*
- *PDE will serve as the repository for the articulation matrices.*
- *PDE will notify TAOC when matrix is submitted and list the institution on PA TRAC.*

Discussion:

- Who will approve the CC programs?
 - If programs need to be approved, TAOC would be group to do this since it is the approving body of the transfer system.
 - PDE does not approve programs but can be a repository.
- Articulation Matrix
 - Proposal by PDE in consultation with CC and PASSHE is a program articulation matrix – a tool to identify where competencies are embedded.
 - There would not be approval but program verification – one tool for 2- and 4-year institutions – the point about back to course by course evaluation is noted.
 - A matrix would be helpful but no reviewing body. The student will be the one to suffer – the primary focus should be the student acquiring the knowledge needed for junior standing. If the matrix would not hold up, the student would suffer. There would be a dispute resolution mechanism in place. This is almost like curriculum mapping.
 - Institutions will most likely still use course-by-course evaluation for a transferable bachelor degree, so they need to have the course number/title.

- Why have future PACs do this? Let the faculty do this at the institutions otherwise creating another layer of extra work for the PACs.
- How will students/TAOC/public know which institutions are ready?
 - What about self verification?
 - Who will sign the agreement? Should there be one paper for the institutions to perform self verification and attest that the institution has self identified?
 - There could be a committee or group to look at the whole thing. Use the PACs to verify?
 - Four-years should have faith in the 2-year institutions and trust that they are prepared when they say they are. Having the PACs create the matrix as part of the articulation process just creates more work.
 - The student will be transferring with full junior standing as outlined and posted. Therefore, extra verification is not necessary.

Resolution: Continue discussion at next TAOC meeting.

Developing New Articulation Agreements

1. **Issues:** TAOC voted to form new PACs for Business, 4-8 Certification and Criminal Justice. However, according to the criteria of alignment established by TAOC, PDE estimates at least 30 more agreements need to be developed. The legislative deadline is December 31, 2011.

Proposal:

- *December 2010 -- Form 8-10 PACs*
- *January 2011 – Kick-off meeting for PACs*
- *May/June 2011 – Agreements submitted to TAOC for approval*
- *New PACs and agreements would then be developed every 6 months*

Discussion:

- Each PAC requires 13 people. Does PDE, TAOC and the institutions have the necessary resources to support 10 PACs in the spring and every 6 months thereafter? What is the impact if all 30 agreements were started in the spring?
- Could TAOC stagger the start dates of the PACs so they are beginning and ending at different times? TAOC would determine the deadlines according to each PAC's start date. PACs with complex disciplines or accreditation would be among the first to begin. PACs that need additional time would be given until the absolute final deadline to complete their agreements.
- Deadlines need to be structured carefully so faculty can participate and feedback can be collected.
- The timeline should include a longer period for public feedback.
- The more time the PAC has, the lazier it will get. Give the PACs a shorter, more reasonable time frame.
- PACs from similar fields of study could attend the same kick-off meeting. For example: Chemistry and Biology, Social Sciences, etc.
- PASSHE's collective bargaining unit will begin negotiations in the summer of 2011. To avoid potential disruption, suggest keeping the work contained to a semester and using the summer break to solicit feedback from the other institutions.
- Avoid having PACs meet the first week of the semester or during the week of finals.
- PACs said they wanted more communication with peers – online – add comments – that the people commenting didn't know what they were commenting on – 6 months or 4 months structured – incorporate other mechanism Psych in August – draft – had issues – sent out for thoughts from peers and benefited.
- Try to estimate which PACs might take longer and start them earlier in the year.
- In order to streamline the process and keep the PACs moving with their work, TAOC should develop a document for advising new PACs, such as a "tool kit".

Resolution:

- Each sector will submit the names of their PAC members for the next three PACs.
- PDE will provide TAOC a list of all programs of study that need to be developed.
- At the next meeting, TAOC will discuss how to approach the remaining PACs.

Meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.