The Joint Boards Articulation Commission (JBAC) proposes the attached Oregon Transfer Module in response to the desire of the Boards of Education and Higher Education to improve the transfer of General Education course work within Oregon. We recommend implementation of the Module in Fall 2005, recognizing that it is a first step in a collaborative effort to revitalize General Education in the state and to speed the transfer of students among Oregon’s public institutions of higher education. This letter includes our recommendations for assessment of the Module and progression toward a General Education model that is based on outcomes.

Rationale for the Oregon Transfer Module:
The existing AA/OT degree includes both general education and elective coursework and is designed to be completed in two years. The proposed Oregon Transfer Module includes one year of coursework, exclusively general education, and could lead either to an AA/OT or AS/OT-BUS degree from a community college or to a baccalaureate degree from a university. By marking a level of academic achievement that is short of a degree, but still significant, the module would complement the AA/OT degree. After completing the module, students would anticipate taking some additional, institution-specific, General Education coursework, if they pursued an AA/OT, an AS/OT-BUS, or a baccalaureate degree.

Refinement of the Module:
The attached Oregon Transfer Module is an improved version of the 9/15/04 original. It incorporates suggestions from the large group of faculty, academic advisors, and administrators, who gave it thoughtful review during the past two months. The energy and collegial spirit of that undertaking, which included OUS and community college personnel at all levels, bodes well for the success of the Module. JBAC recommends that assessment be built into the Module implementation process and that a comprehensive review occur in 2010.

Future Work:
In addition to refining the Module, the recent state-wide discussions have provided valuable guidance for implementing the Module and for ensuring that it is imbedded in a common understanding of General Education. Therefore, we have also attached letters submitted by three groups (The Council of Instructional Administrators, The Provosts Council, and the Inter-Institutional Faculty Senate), and we summarize their key points below:

**Academic Advising is an Essential Element of OTM Implementation**
The Council of Instructional Administrators (CIA) has endorsed the concept of a General Education Transfer Module, but emphasizes that such a Module must be supported by strong academic advising, which would include clear pathways for connecting to majors. The Inter-institutional Faculty Senate joins the CIA in recognizing that advising is essential and must extend beyond any Module to include specific information regarding a student’s desired major and degree. Both groups reinforce JBAC’s original note that the Module will not replace
effective academic advising to ensure efficient use of credits. Students will need guidance in selecting the specific Module coursework that is most compatible with their future academic plans. Both the Student Transfer Committee and JBAC point out that the Electronic Degree Audit and Course Applicability Systems, currently in use on some Oregon campuses, would allow academic advisors to meet this challenge much more effectively than is currently possible.

**General Education Should be Offered within an Outcome-based Framework**

Both the CIA and the Provosts Council strongly support collaborative development of a framework of General Education outcomes. The Provosts Council notes that education of undergraduate students is the most important goal of the post-secondary education system. While undergraduate education needs to provide discipline-specific knowledge and skills, it is imperative that it help students develop into mature, productive citizens of a global community. Defining the learning experiences and processes that can achieve this result in Oregon will require dialogue within and between educational institutions and with the larger community. This conversation needs to shift from credit hours (inputs) to outcomes (fundamental and essential preparation for advancement into discipline-based majors). Only then will we be able to create a truly seamless system that spans K-16. At this early stage, the examples listed below are meant to indicate the nature of desired General Education outcomes, and to encourage vigorous discussion of this subject throughout the state.

General Education should help students develop the following:

- Capacity for critical thinking and problem solving
- Ability to communicate effectively, including listening, observing, speaking and writing
- Understanding of the natural world and the role of humans in it
- Appreciation of the arts and humanities and the richness of human experience and expression
- Awareness of multiple perspectives and the importance of diversity
- Sense of societal responsibility, community service and global citizenship
- Ability to develop a sense of direction, with the self-discipline needed for the ethical pursuit of a purposeful life.

We look forward to continuing the work that has been started with this proposal. Rewarding cross-sector working relationships and new understandings of varied curricula have already emerged. These will be the basis of creative collaborations during the next phase.