

Joint Boards Articulation Commission

Annual Report 2002-03

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2002-03 Commission Members

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Executive Summary

The Joint Boards Articulation Commission (JBAC) was created by the State Board of Education and State Board of Higher Education in July 1992 and recently completed its eleventh year of operation. The Commission is comprised of representatives from the community college, university system, K-12, and independent college sectors and was established to encourage active cooperation and collaboration among the education sectors in the state. This document outlines the proceedings of the JBAC for the period September 2002 to June 2003.

During this past year, the major activities of the JBAC were:

- **Production of a significant new report on transfer student data.** In December 2002 the report, *Transfer Activity in Oregon Postsecondary Education, 1996-97 to 2000-01* (<http://www.ous.edu/aca/OregonTransfer02.pdf>), was presented to the Joint Boards via a meeting of the Joint Boards Working Group. This report summarized five consecutive years of transfer student information by analyzing data furnished through the Oregon University System/Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development "data-match project."
- **Recommendation of a new statewide transfer degree for adoption by the State Board of Education.** At the conclusion of an approximately two-year long process of review and consultation, the proposal for a new statewide transfer degree [the first degree of its type since the Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer degree (AA/OT) was legislatively mandated in the late 1980s] was forwarded to the Oregon State Board of Education for approval. The Board unanimously adopted this new degree at its April 2003 meeting; to date, four community colleges have begun implementing the degree.
- **Review and reconsideration the Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer (AA/OT) degree requirements; examination of related issues.** In its continuous process of review of the implementation of the AA/OT degree, the JBAC this year considered issues related to the role of "skills" or "experiential" courses; the meaning of the "communication/rhetoric" requirement; and a range of problematic issues associated with the degree. A policy memo (*Do We Need to "Fix" the Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer Degree?*, available online at <http://www.ous.edu/aca/TransferPolicy.htm>) was produced that explained the various limitations of the degree as well as provided a listing of the various "fixes" that have, at one time or another, been proposed.

- **Continuing intersector communication efforts and initiatives.** As part of its ongoing mission to advocate for improved intersector communication and collaboration, the JBAC continued to make articulation and transfer information available at its website; have JBAC members take a significant role in the annual OUS Articulation & Transfer Conference; and consult with other groups interested and involved in matters that involve student transfer and course/program articulation issues.

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Purpose and Introduction

This document outlines the activities of the Joint Boards Articulation Commission (JBAC) for the period September 2002 to June 2003. In this first section of the report, background information regarding the JBAC is briefly presented. In the following section, specific JBAC issues and activities for the year are described.

The JBAC was created by the State Board of Education and State Board of Higher Education in July 1992 and recently completed its eleventh year of operation in June 2003. The Commission is comprised of representatives from the community college, university system, K-12, and independent college sectors and was established to encourage active cooperation and collaboration among the education sectors in the state. Commission members are appointed by the Oregon University System (OUS) Chancellor, the Commissioner of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD), the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Executive Director of the Oregon Independent Colleges Association (OICA).

Specifically, the JBAC is charged with:

- Advising the Joint Boards on intersector policy issues regarding: student access and transfer; course and program articulation; and implications of data pertaining to transfer students and the transfer function.
- Monitoring the implementation of the Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer Degree (AA/OT) and other transfer degrees; and making recommendations for revisions to these degrees, when appropriate.
- Monitoring policies and practices that affect, or have the potential to affect, the flow of students between the postsecondary sectors; and making reports and recommendations to the appropriate bodies that are responsible for these policies and practices.
- Acting as a problem solving and referral forum for articulation- and transfer-related issues.
- Addressing other articulation- and transfer-related issues as assigned/delegated to them by the OUS Chancellor, CCWD Commissioner, or the Joint Boards of Education.

The JBAC meets regularly throughout the academic year to address issues arising from its charge. In order to maximize the number of topics and issues to be addressed, a variety of concerns are occasionally considered by the standing and/or ad hoc committees of the Commission. During 2002-03, the Student Transfer Committee (a standing committee of the JBAC), was assigned several issues to consider.

JBAC Issues and Activities

During this past year, the JBAC initiated, discussed, completed, and/or made significant progress in the following areas:

1. Transfer Student Data and Reporting

Oregon University System/Oregon Community Colleges Data-Match Project

In November 2000, the Joint Boards Articulation Commission presented the Joint Boards of Education with the first comprehensive report outlining the data available from the joint Oregon University System/Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development “data-match” project. Although that report reviewed four consecutive years of transfer student information from the state of Oregon, the project was still considered to be in its infancy. Since that time, two more years of data have been compiled and a follow-up report produced. *Transfer Activity in Oregon Postsecondary Education, 1996-97 to 2000-01* (<http://www.ous.edu/aca/OregonTransfer02.pdf>) was completed in December 2002 and presented to the Joint Boards at that time.

Data Sharing with Oregon Independent College Association (OICA) Institutions

As the data-match project between OUS and CCWD has become more routinized, the JBAC has entertained the possibility of a similar data-sharing effort between the community colleges and the independent colleges/universities. Discussions were undertaken during fall 2002 to determine the feasibility of such an effort. At this time, however, cross-sector incompatibilities with data and reporting systems appear to prohibit moving forward with such a project.

2. Associate of Science/Oregon Transfer Degree(s)

Associate of Science/Oregon Transfer Degree in Business (AS/OT-Bus)

At the conclusion of a JBAC-led process lasting approximately two years, the community colleges’ Council of Instructional Administrators (November 2002) and the OUS Academic Council (December 2002) approved the Associate of Science/Oregon Transfer Degree in Business (AS/OT-Bus), per the final proposal forwarded to them from the statewide group of Business Chairs and University Deans. Those approvals paved the way for the JBAC’s ultimate recommendation to the Board of Education, with the Board considering the recommendation for the new statewide degree in March and April 2003, and finally adopting the AS/OT-Bus at the April 2003 meeting. To date, four community colleges have been authorized to offer this degree.

Associate of Science/Oregon Transfer Degree (“Generic”)

Discussions continued during the year regarding the feasibility of establishing a “generic” (non-discipline-specific) Associate of Science/Oregon Transfer degree

(AS/OT) that would be a companion to the current Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer degree. While the notion of having a more direct track to baccalaureate programs in the physical and life sciences (and engineering) is appealing to many, others questioned the need for another generic degree and what it could accomplish that the present AA/OT does not. The Student Transfer Committee studied the matter in-depth and concluded that many of the “problems” that an AS/OT would “fix” could likely be more directly addressed by examining the AA/OT and its possible limitations. The JBAC subsequently produced a policy memo analyzing the status of the AA/OT (see below) and the discussions regarding an AS/OT were suspended.

Associate of Science/Oregon Transfer Degree in Computer Science (AS/OT-CS)

With the successful adoption of the discipline-specific AS/OT-Bus (see above), other discipline-specific AS/OT degrees are viewed as possibilities. Some interest has been expressed in the development of such a block-transfer degree in computer science. However, while some administrators of computer science departments in the colleges and universities have engaged in preliminary discussions, little substantive progress has been made to date.

3. Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer Degree

Based upon a review of the AA/OT conducted in 2001-02, the JBAC had posed possible refinements for the “notes and clarifications” section of the general degree guidelines. It was anticipated that enhancements to the guidelines would be useful in providing advice to colleges that were contemplating modifications to their local AA/OT degrees. The discussions of these possible refinements are summarized below, as are two policy memos by the JBAC, both produced in order to explore the questions about and limitations of the current implementation of the AA/OT degree.

The “Communication/Rhetoric” Requirement

The AA/OT degree requirements include, in its general education component, a requirement in “communication/rhetoric” that is described as “three credits of a fundamentals of speech or communication course with a grade of “C-” or better.” A review of the AA/OT programs of the community colleges yielded the information that this requirement is not being uniformly interpreted. In drafting possible revisions to the “notes and clarifications” section of the degree guidelines, the proposal was made to advise colleges that the original intent of this requirement was of a traditional “stand and deliver” speech course. Resistance was expressed to this proposed advisory note, however, as some colleges posit that courses such as interpersonal communication, persuasion, and cross-cultural communication are consistent with the intent of the original requirement. Although a proposal was made by the Student Transfer Committee that a faculty group be convened from the communication/rhetoric areas to discuss the intent and outcomes of a degree requirement in this area, the process was postponed until more is known about the ongoing discussion regarding the proposal of a statewide set of general education requirements (see below).

The Role of “Skills” or “Experiential” Courses

As part of the AA/OT review process, the question of the inclusion of “skills” or “experiential” or “studio” courses arose. (Examples of such courses are music performance and studio art.) Specifically: are such courses allowable in the distribution requirement areas of the transfer degree? Language proposed for the JBAC to consider in the “notes and clarifications” section would have prohibited such courses in the distribution requirements (but left them acceptable as electives).

Some community colleges, as well as OUS institutions, allow experiential courses in their general education core, and resistance was expressed to including language in the AA/OT prohibiting such courses in the core curriculum.

One approach to this issue is to develop criteria to determine a course’s eligibility for inclusion in the general education core. With a set of criteria in place, an individual course’s description/syllabus may be compared to the established criteria and the determination then made whether or not the course merits inclusion in the core curriculum. Lane Community College, for example, has drafted criteria for inclusion of courses in the Arts & Letters portion of the AA/OT, with criteria for the other distribution areas under development. Similarly, the University of Oregon has published criteria in their undergraduate education requirement policies.

The Student Transfer Committee has been asked to coordinate a course syllabus comparison exercise, with the goal of establishing criteria for experiential courses to be allowed in (distribution areas of) the AA/OT.

Policy Memo Regarding the Limitations of the AA/OT

With the adoption of the AS/OT-Bus, discussions of a generic AS/OT and an AS/OT-CS, and proposals for new language to the “notes and clarifications” section of the AA/OT guidelines, the JBAC has continued to address many issues related to the implementation of the AA/OT. At the December 2002 JBAC meeting, a request was made of staff to produce a report that would outline the various proposals that had been mentioned in recent months regarding the AA/OT. The goal of producing such a document was to focus the discussion by providing a list of perceived limitations of the degree along with possible ways to address those limitations. A draft version of the report was available at the January Student Transfer Committee meeting; the JBAC received the report at its February meeting. Since that time, the document has been revised slightly, posted to the JBAC web site, and been used for conversations on several community college campuses regarding such issues as sequence requirements and the meaning of the general education core curriculum. In particular, one element of the report — the suggestion to establish a statewide, standardized, transferable, lower-division general education core curriculum as a means of addressing some of the limitations of the current transfer degree — has generated considerable discussion. The

full report, *Do We Need to "Fix" the Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer Degree?*, is available online at <http://www.ous.edu/aca/TransferPolicy.htm>.

Policy Memo Regarding a Statewide Transferable General Education Core Curriculum

In response to the conversation about a transferable general education core curriculum that commenced with the "Fixing the AA/OT" report, another policy memo was developed by JBAC staff that described the activity in other states with regard to transferable general education cores. This report, *Statewide Transfer Policy: The Transferable General Education Core Curriculum* (available online at <http://www.ous.edu/aca/GenEdCore.pdf>), was presented to the Student Transfer Committee and Joint Boards Articulation Commission in June 2003. Further discussion of the issues involved are planned for the 2003-04 academic year.

5. Intersector Communication Efforts

The JBAC workplan calls for continuing and improving communication between and among the educational sectors in Oregon in order to benefit transfer students. This section lists some of the efforts in this area supported by the JBAC.

JBAC Web Page and the Articulation Hotline List

The JBAC continues to sponsor its own web page (<http://www.ous.edu/aca/jbac>) devoted to transfer students and their issues. During 2002-03, the website enjoyed a comprehensive upgrade in terms of its appearance. Important features of the site include: (1) three main sections, depending on one's relationship to and interest in transfer issues (student; counselor or advisor; administrator or policymaker); (2) the Articulation Hotline List (see below); (3) information for transfer students who are encountering problems (names of OUS and CCWD staff who may be contacted); (4) links to the OUS institutions' home page sections and their course equivalency tables; (5) links to all the Oregon community college home pages; (6) information about the Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer (AA/OT) degree and the newly-implemented Associate of Science/Oregon Transfer Degree in Business (AS/OT-Bus); and (7) important JBAC documents such as the current version of the workplan, JBAC and Student Transfer Committee membership lists, miscellaneous policy documents and memos, and meeting minutes.

The Articulation Hotline List (<http://www.ous.edu/aca/articdoc.html>) is an essential feature of the JBAC website, and is refined and updated each fall. This document provides a list of names, phone numbers, and email addresses of individuals at OUS institutions, community colleges, and independent institutions who have responsibility for handling both policy questions and day-to-day issues related to transfer and articulation.

JBAC Member Participation in the Articulation and Transfer Conference

Every fall the Oregon University System sponsors a statewide conference aimed at bringing campus representatives together to discuss issues related to articulation and

transfer. In December 2002, this conference was held at Marylhurst University with the theme of "Building Pathways for Transfer Success." This one-day event included sessions that were both lecture and discussion oriented so that all participants were able to voice their views on a wide range of articulation- and transfer-related topics. Many members of the JBAC were in attendance, including several who led conference sessions.

6. Consultation with Groups Working in Areas that Impact Articulation and Transfer

The JBAC is committed to coordinating and consulting with other entities that have the potential to impact articulation and transfer efforts in the state. Such groups include, but are not limited to: the Oregon Writing and English Advisory Committee (OWEAC); the OUS Proficiency-based Admission Standards System (PASS) project; the statewide Business Chairs and University Deans group; the Oregon Council of Computer Chairs (OCCC); the OUS Academic Council; and the community colleges' Council of Instructional Administrators (CIA). During the past year, the JBAC had the occasion to work with most of these groups on many of the issues listed above.

In addition to coordination and communication with the statewide groups listed above, the JBAC and Student Transfer Committee were connected to transfer issues on the national level. The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) convened a small group of invited transfer experts from around the nation in Washington, D.C., during January 2003, and JBAC staff/member Jim Arnold from the Oregon University System was among those included.

Summary

During the 2002-03 academic year, the Joint Boards Articulation Commission successfully addressed a wide range of issues that fell within its charge, including the production of a major report on transfer student activity in Oregon; the recommendation of a new statewide block-transfer degree (Associate of Science/Oregon Transfer in Business); continuing a critical examination of the Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer degree; and continuing its advocacy for intersector communication and collaboration.