IAI Transfer Policy
Recommendations from Articulation Work Group

Preamble

- Northern Illinois Regional P-20 Network Articulation Work Group recognizes the importance of creating a process for ensuring that general education coursework taken at Illinois Community Colleges transfers as seamlessly as possible to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.

- The Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) has overseen this process since 1998. Generally, the Illinois system has worked quite well with its model of bringing representatives of both community colleges and universities to the table through articulation panels. Given the changing landscape in higher education, the different approaches toward articulation criteria among GECC panels, and some inconsistencies in transferability of courses, it appears to be an opportune moment to review the current process.

- To date, the primary focus for the articulation of courses is predicated upon course content rather than the acquisition of competencies or student learning outcomes within broad academic areas. (For a definition of competency based learning, see The Glossary of Education Reform at http://edglossary.org/competency-based-learning/.

- With the ongoing implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards in K-12 there is a need for alignment with these standards within the GECC.

- With an eye to working collaboratively with the IBHE, ICCB, and the IAI, this paper makes a series of recommendations.

Background

There is a national conversation going on about what the university should look like in the 21st century. One element of the conversation focuses on the need to ensure that student learning has taken place. For one perspective, see Carol Geary Schneider, “Making the LEAP: Connecting Liberal Education with 21st Century Challenges.” Plenary Address at the Institute of Integrative Learning and the Departments, AAC&U, July 2013. The potential changes to higher education are driven by multiple forces:
Assessment tools: Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP), etc.

Organizations: National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessments (NILOA)

Initiatives: Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)

New Pressures: Academically Adrift; Aspiring Adults Adrift; AAC&U Employer Survey

New Philosophy: Demonstrating Learning vs. Delivering Content

While many states have statewide articulation agreements between baccalaureate degree-granting institutions and community colleges (e.g. North Carolina, Colorado, Virginia, Mississippi, Iowa, etc.), there is a move to review these agreements in the face of the changing higher education landscape. For example, Kentucky revised its General Education Transfer Policy in 2012 towards competency-based learning criteria within the context of the AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes.

IAI Practices and GECC Panels

Review of the different GECC panels reveals variations among the panels in terms of criteria set for transfer of courses. A standardized panel approach is missing (i.e. content, breadth, student learning outcomes, competencies—each panel emphasizes different aspects).

- Humanities & Fine Arts: Focus is on meeting distribution requirements in content areas or disciplines. Broad approach to general topics. There is a writing requirement.
- Mathematics: Course content and SLOs need to match but are not specifically articulated in the panel documents. It is important to note the panel uses the guidelines of the ISMAA/IMACC and urges that these guidelines be consulted when submitting courses.
- Physical Sciences: Course description and objectives should align. Student learning objectives are left up to the submitting institution. Lab courses and interdisciplinary courses have specific requirements.
- Communication: Delivery mode, assignments (writing and speech), and evaluation are specified in overall document while specific student learning outcomes or performance criteria are set forth in the course description section.
- Social & Behavioral Sciences: Some outcomes are offered for the interdisciplinary courses in this area (e.g. “students will derive a balance of the 1) concepts, 2) theories, 3) methods, and 4) conclusions of each discipline”). However, there is vagueness on what a student must demonstrate.
• History: Assessment criteria for the panel is well developed with students being able to demonstrate specific learning outcomes.

• Life Sciences: In addition to specific requirements such as a societal component for courses with that IAI code and combinations of content breadth, the panel offers specific goals for students. There are also demonstrated skills related to the laboratory experience.

Recommendations

• Create a common template to be used by all GECC panels
• Information should be easily obtainable in one location
• The Humanities/Fine Arts Panel should specify student learning outcomes as well as review their current descriptors (outdated, strong emphasis on content)
• Provide evidence that the IAI panels are focusing on Illinois State Learning Standards when applicable

Next Steps

1. Ask articulation work group to review and provide feedback
2. Share draft with appropriate individuals at IBHE and ICCB
3. Make revisions based upon feedback from different groups.
4. Present draft document to Regional P-20 Network meeting

(Draft August 30, 2015)