

ACT 623: Articulation and Transfer
2011-12 Report to the House and Senate Education Committees
September 2012

Background

Act 623, sponsored by Senator Ben Nevers during the 2012 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, established modifications to existing postsecondary education articulation and transfer implementation and reporting requirements. More specifically, Act 623 adjusted the deadlines for creation and implementation of a statewide common course numbering system for public postsecondary education. It also altered annual reporting requirements relevant to the articulation and transfer of credits across public colleges and universities with a more defined focus on the transfer associate degree program, seeking information on: (1) the number and percentage of students who complete an transfer associate degree program; (2) the number and percentage of students who earn an transfer associate degree and subsequently transfer to a four-year college or university; (3) the number and percentage of transfer students who complete a baccalaureate degree; and (4) a comparison of the academic performance of transfer students and native students including the number of credits earned, degrees awarded, and time to completion of degree. Those elements are addressed, to the extent possible at this point in implementation, within this report.

Statewide Common Course Numbering

With the goal of establishing statewide common course descriptors for those courses to be included on the Board of Regents' Articulation Matrix (the core statewide inventory of course-by-course articulation information), Board of Regents staff brought together faculty representatives from all of the public colleges and universities starting in the fall of 2011 to discuss this initiative. The faculty worked to establish common course content to be covered for each course included on the Matrix and such descriptors, along with statewide course rubrics and titles, are reflected in the *2012-13 Louisiana Common Course Catalog (LCCC)*. The revised 2012-13 Matrix accurately reflects the current statewide articulation of specified courses among the institutions of higher education. The most significant changes for students in the new matrix are that it has no footnotes or caveats for courses listed, and students can see how a course would articulate upon transfer (e.g., as a match to an existing course, or "by title" as credit in the subject area). Board of Regents staff will continue to work with the colleges and universities in order to expand the Matrix so that all relevant courses are addressed and Act 623 is responded to accordingly.

The Matrix and LCCC provide a valuable and necessary service to students and faculty across the state. As such, both documents are posted on the Board of Regents' website (www.regents.louisiana.gov – under *Data and Publications*), and they are also made available on the statewide Transfer site (www.latransferdegree.org) as a *Transfer Course Guide* with an interactive query function that makes it easier to use. These tools will continue to be refined and expanded so that the most up-to-date information is available in a user-friendly manner.

Louisiana Transfer Associate Degree

In May 2010 the Louisiana Board of Regents approved the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science Louisiana Transfer (AALT and ASLT, or "LT") degrees to be added to the curriculum inventory of every SACS-accredited two-year and community college for implementation in Fall, 2010. Enrollment (declared majors) has grown from 214 declared majors in fall 2010 to 1,174 in fall 2011. In 2010-11 seven completers were reported with the LT degree; at the end of 2011-12 another 87 LT completers were reported. LT graduates in 2011-12 accounted for 4% (85/2105) of all students who earned an academic (not applied science) associate degree from a SACS-eligible two-year and community college.

Since the LT degree was designed to facilitate an easy transfer for students from a two-year community college to a Louisiana four-year public university, it is important to track LT completers to measure whether and how the transfer degree is working. Of the 85 students that earned the LT degree in 2011-12, six have continued their education at a public university in Louisiana by enrolling in the fall 2012. The source of this information is self-reported data from campuses based on preliminary enrollment. While at this time the number of LT graduates continuing their education is small, the expectation is that this number will increase over time. The Board of Regents will continue to work with the campuses to coordinate student tracking and data collection efforts to assess the merits of the LT degree.

As the LT degree was initiated only two years ago (Fall, 2010), not enough time has elapsed for there to be baccalaureate completers who began as Louisiana Transfer graduates. For the same reason, it is not possible to compare the academic performance of LT transfer students with native students since the number of such students is so small and these students are in their first semesters of enrollment. As more time transpires and as the number of continuing LT graduates increases, a more statistically significant comparison between these two types of students will be feasible. Campuses, in collaboration with the Board of Regents, will continue to gather data to assist in this analysis.

Summary

Great strides were made during the 2011-12 academic year toward the development and implementation of a statewide common course numbering system. Faculty from across the state continue to gather to establish statewide common course descriptors and statewide course rubrics and titles for many General Education courses, and their work will continue throughout the 2012-13 academic year. The Board of Regents and postsecondary education community worked together to promote the Louisiana Transfer Degree and will continue to coordinate their efforts in order to capture pertinent data on LT completers. The collective goal is to improve articulation and increase transfer student success statewide. While progress has been made to achieve this goal, such efforts will continue in order to ensure that students can successfully and seamlessly transfer between and among postsecondary institutions which will, in the end, improve degree completion rates.