

Framing the Study Question and Its Contextual Information:

Although not a subject of high visibility, course articulation is a key ingredient in student academic success. There are three types of course articulation in a community college: Articulation with 4 year institutions, articulation with feeder high schools, and articulation with colleges within a community college district. Articulation of courses across the three colleges in our district, known as SMCCCD reciprocity or intra-district articulation, is important to students in reaching their degree and transfer goals. If done well, it provides students with a seamless process to navigate their academic life, enhances the effectiveness of counseling, and eliminates barriers to transferring to 4-year institutions. Intra-district articulation is the focal point of today's study session.

Course articulation of any kind is very complex in nature and intra-district articulation is no exception. Developing a new course is a demanding task. As part of the course development process, checking for course articulation with sister colleges effectively makes the task more complicated. It involves many layers of review and approval. It requires careful interpretation of the rules and regulations. It must accommodate faculty academic freedom for course content development. It needs to be respectful of individual college culture in our district.

Intra-district articulation is an issue unique to multi-college districts. SMCCCD is not alone in confronting these problems. SMCCCD has for the most part accomplished a great deal. There is a district policy of 6.26 in place. Information is published both in digital and printed formats. Newly proposed courses at one college are communicated with the other two colleges. A number of disciplines hold regular meetings with area experts from all three colleges to align courses. Proposals have been made to review course outlines for inconsistency and recency. Plans have been underway for some time even before the proposed study session to continue improving our work in this area. To accomplish all this, faculty and staff from all three colleges operate with a strong belief in streamlining the course development and approval process, while recognizing college autonomy and faculty academic freedom.

On a semester basis, our district serves over 20,000 students. They enroll in over 3,000 active courses to a total of 60,000 enrollments. Up to 6 % of the students may be “concurrently cross-enrolled” in classes outside their immediately “home” college. According to the state Chancellor's Office, over 1,000 students transfer to CSU and UC from our district's 3 colleges. Theoretically, chances of problems occurring do exist. They can arise anywhere in the process.

Job change, study interest change and favorite professors can all be the reasons for a student to take classes outside their “home” college. Working adults also find it difficult to match their schedule to that of any particular college's. Distance education will greatly challenge all of us who have not made intra-district articulation front and center. The students who take classes at different colleges in the district either concurrently or during separate semesters have different reasons – all are legitimate and important to meeting

their needs. They create a market demand, which prompts us to constantly improve our teaching and services.

Further, the recent adoption of district-wide enforcement of prerequisites has also created expectations. The increasing use of maturing technology by students for web base course selection and comparisons has also made colleges feel the urgent need to develop transparent processes.

To make our institutions truly student-centered, we need to place what's important to them above what's easier for us. We must make the course comparisons transparent and easier than what we have today.

For this board study session, we are concentrating on intra-district articulation and will attempt to answer the following question:

How does the District facilitate intra-district articulation?

We will start with an examination of key successes and barriers in intra-district articulation through a demonstration of our Web Smart registration system and explanations of definitions and curriculum processes from the district faculty senate president. This will be followed by an update on the work in progress that is aimed at enhancing our successes and reducing or eliminating the challenges and barriers. Lastly, we will list recommendations for work to be done in the short-term and long-term.

Definitions to be explained by Nick Kapp:

Common Course Numbering

Pre-requisite

General Education attributes

Advanced Placement

Majors

Course Outlines

Course Development Process (review and approval)

Existing district coordination of curriculum development role.

Ignore below for now:

Additional Recommendations?:

Short Term:

Enhance the role of the district curriculum committee and pay particular attention to the communication among curriculum committees at the colleges in curriculum design and approval processes.

Long Term:

Make greater use of technology by exploring the possibility of developing web based course and major planning to assist both the counselors and students