

**Minnesota State Colleges and Universities**  
**Transfer Oversight Committee Meeting Notes--DRAFT**  
March 06, 2008, Wells Fargo Place, St. Paul, MN

**Members Present:** Nancy Black, Jordan Brandt, Monte Bute, Brian Donovan, Louise Hoxworth, Jim Kehoe, Louise Mengelkoch, Greg Mulcahy, Anne-Marie Ryan-Guest, Stephanie Shea, JoAnn Simser, Michael Spitzer, Betty Strehlow, Carol Ziehlsdorf.

**Members Not Present:** Brad Burns, Jean Evens, Leeann Jorgensen, Anne O'Meara, Dan Sperling

**Guests present:** Graeme Allen, MSUSA, Linda Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, Manuel Lopez, Associate Vice Chancellor, Continuous Improvement, Jessica Medearis, MSCSA

**Welcome and Purpose of the Meeting:** Transfer Oversight Committee members invited Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer to meet them and to provide an opportunity for members to ask questions and to express their perspectives on current transfer issues. The proposed agenda for the meeting was developed from committee suggestions at the September 21, 2008, November 28, 2008 and February 15, 2008 meetings and circulated to members; common course numbering was added to the agenda in response to proposed legislation on common course numbering. As per the committee charge statement, the committee provides recommendations to the Senior Vice Chancellor. The Senior Vice Chancellor considers the recommendations, researches the issues as appropriate, and responds to the committee.

Members of the committee introduced themselves. Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer expressed appreciation to the committee for their work in assuring the quality of education and enhancing the transfer experience for transfer students. She thanked them for their guidance and direction and for providing criteria for the institutional Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Review.

**Institutional MnTC Review [www.transfer.project.mnscu.edu](http://www.transfer.project.mnscu.edu) :** College and university reports of the institutional MnTC review are posted to the Web site as permission from the institution is granted. Reports include the results of the review, suggestions for the Guidelines for the Review and Design of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum and suggestions for the MN Transfer Curriculum 1994, Goals and Competencies. The committee heard faculty presentations and rationale on proposed changes to remove Guideline # 4 and to delete "health/physical education" from Guideline #4 at the February 15, 2008 meeting. Transfer Oversight Committee recommendations on the proposals and the institutional MnTC Review are on the committee agenda for April 18, 2008.

Proposals for Changes to Guideline #4

1. "Some disciplines are excluded by decision of the collaborating institutions. Because not all courses that might address a competency are general education, courses will not be included from: business, health/physical education, computer science (an exception was made for programming for math, but for most programming courses a high level math is a prerequisite), field experience, career orientation, or, in general, any occupational courses or programs, first year world languages".

Some university and college faculty oppose checking off courses individually based on the discipline to determine whether they belong in the MN Transfer Curriculum; the question should be whether the Goal and competencies are met in the course. Guideline #4 seems to say that the prefix determines whether the outcomes are met. The removal of Guideline #4 en masse may

cause problems due to the vocational nature of some courses. Without guideline #4, some colleges might choose to include occupational courses such as the history of radiography or speech for dental assistants. Some computer courses like Computers in Technology have been excluded based on Guideline #4. Departments have broken out into separate divisions over time as specialties developed, e.g. sociology to social work or criminal justice. The Course Applicability System (CAS) should be able to indicate if a course with a criminal justice designator and a sociology designator can be the same. Prefixes can be useful in determining the nature of the course, the department the course comes from tells you something about the approach to the topic, sometimes the course comes from a different department because it is more applied and less general.

Where is the prohibition for including occupational courses in the MN Transfer Curriculum outside of Guideline #4? The 1994 MN Transfer Curriculum was based on general education in the liberal arts and sciences. Criteria #1 on the Checklist of Criteria for Inclusion of Courses in the MnTC states occupational courses do not belong in the MnTC. The Transfer Oversight Committee definition of Occupational Courses is posted to the Web site.

The MnTC review seemed broader. Curriculum committees need to be able to discuss questions about whether courses should be in the MN Transfer Curriculum, e.g. if a course is unique in the system does it belong in the MnTC?

Decision making authority Who should decide what courses are included in the MN Transfer Curriculum? Is it each institution's faculty or a central office or authority? Each institution just reviewed the courses included in their MnTC according to the Checklist of criteria. They did not always agree. The 1994 Minnesota Transfer Curriculum model is based on faculty determination of each institution's MnTC as a transferable package of at least 40 credits of general education whereby each institution certifies that a student completing the MnTC meets competencies in ten goal areas. With the 2001 Higher Education Omnibus act that requires each college and university to accept a MnTC course or goal as determined by the sending college or university, and with the increase in student transfer, more questions arose concerning consistency across the system, leading to the institutional review and to the revision of transfer policy and procedures. The real discussion is what stand is the system going to take in response to what students and faculty want? The decision making process is impeded by not knowing who has the real authority. The system's authority is not clear or is not being exercised when looking at the MN Transfer Curriculum and some of the transfer policies, e.g. D grades. We need more clarity from the system. The crux of the issue is what needs to be more standardized on behalf of students? Faculty have the right and responsibility to develop curriculum, but the MN Transfer Curriculum needs consistency as students transfer, variations cause issues. The system office does not do high levels of policing. Compliance is based on relationships with institutions and providing guidance and consultation to institutions. That is until some issue such as financial aid comes up where there is a question about compliance with federal law where the Office of the Chancellor did provide directives to institutions to be compliant. Transfer is more difficult because of the need to be sensitive to student and faculty perspectives. When one institution determines a course is included in the MN Transfer Curriculum and a student transfers to another institution the student is held harmless by the 2001 Omnibus Higher Education Act, the course must be accepted as determined by the sending institution. Are other institutions willing to live with the autonomy and decisions of the faculty at other institutions within the system?

Written Composition—concerns to be addressed regarding University of MN changes in written composition requirements, writing intensive requirements, and the addition of Writing Skills

course WRIT 1201 Writing Studio. The committee recommended department/discipline meetings be organized by faculty through CTL Department/Discipline meetings. (9/21/08) Richard Jewell, IHCC facilitated a session at the CTL Realizing Student Potential Conference 2/29/08 about organizing a CTL discipline meeting of English faculty with the University of MN. There is confusion about what the requirements are and how MN State College and University courses will transfer.

Mathematics: (Insert language from notes for Linda; check summary for numbers)

World Languages: A proposal to include 1<sup>st</sup> year world languages in goal 8 has been submitted by Normandale Community College faculty. Suggestions in the institutional MnTC Review Reports vary: include 1st yr world languages in Goal 8 (4 institutions), include 2nd yr world languages in Goal 6 (2), include 1st yr world language in Goal 6 (1), do not include 1st yr world language in Goals 6 or 8 (1). If world languages are excluded, this is extremely unfortunate in today's global environment. We should require students to remedy the defect rather than turn them away. The decision not to include 1<sup>st</sup> year language in the MN Transfer Curriculum is related to the admission requirements for state universities for two years of a single world language in grades 9-12, equated with one year of college world language, that grew out of the Q7 initiative of the state universities and the agreement regarding admission requirements by the state universities and the University of MN (Policy 3.04 Undergraduate Admissions). The admission requirements are different for colleges, committed to open admissions, with no requirements for world languages. A transfer student who has completed an AA degree and the world language requirement or who has completed the MN Transfer Curriculum and the world language requirement will have met all state university preparation requirements. If a student has proficiency in a world language acquired by other means (e.g. a world language as a first language) the student may demonstrate it by means of a test out. Students with a deficiency in the world language requirement have an opportunity to remedy it. Universities may make exceptions by requiring the student to make up the deficiency within the first year of enrollment. There was a concern that some students who took world languages in high school may not be adequately prepared for university intermediate level courses. Three universities include first year or beginning advanced languages in the MN Transfer Curriculum. Others do not include them in the MnTC, but do include them in their university general education or liberal education requirements for graduation. MSU, Mankato reported a Liberal Education subcommittee recommendation to the university to not include first year languages, contingent upon enforcement of the university's admissions policy.

Upper division courses: The inclusion of upper division general education courses in the MN Transfer Curriculum is not addressed in the Guidelines, but is addressed in the memo, Inclusion of Upper Division Courses in the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum, Linda Baer, March 2, 2005.

**MN Transfer Curriculum—Review to update the agreement** The 1994 agreement has been superseded by the merger of the state universities, community colleges and technical colleges into one MN State Colleges and Universities system in 1995, 2001 legislation, changes in guidelines, and memos—what is there now to which both systems are signatory? In their MnTC Review reports several institutions suggested a general or a periodic review of the MN Transfer Curriculum. There was a question about University of Minnesota involvement in the Checklist of Criteria or the Guidelines. The Checklist was developed by the Transfer Oversight Committee for the MN State Colleges and Universities Institutional MnTC Review. Guidelines were included in the 1994 agreement, revised by an original transfer oversight committee and again in 2001 and 2003, when the agreement was reached to include intermediate world languages in goal 8. The Guidelines were reaffirmed with the University of Minnesota Assistant Provost and Dean of

Academic Affairs and academic administration when the Associate Vice Chancellor and Transfer staff met in November, 2007. Members expressed appreciation for the memos from the Senior Vice Chancellor which make it easier for the institutions to implement and enforce the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum. The University of Minnesota, College of Liberal Arts, Council on Liberal Education has been involved with their own review of their MN Transfer Curriculum and Liberal Education requirements. Report of the Council on Liberal Education recommendations <https://www.myu.umn.edu/metadot/index.pl?iid=826509> (cut and paste into browser line). The Council recommended an additional theme area in Technology and Society. Bemidji State University was interested in this in the past. The MN State Colleges and Universities Center for Teaching and Learning completed a 2007 Core Student Outcomes Study Report <http://coreoutcomes.project.mnscu.edu>. Can we get a document from the MN State Colleges and Universities Institutional MnTC Review that tells us where we are and what approach we would like to discuss for the future, major revisions or minor adjustments? What MN Transfer Curriculum will prepare graduates for the 21<sup>st</sup> century? What resources can we bring to the table for a roadmap of where to go? The Association of American Colleges and Universities produced Greater Expectations in 2002. If the University of Minnesota is interested why don't we invite the representatives to meet with the Transfer Oversight Committee? The committee is scheduled to make final recommendations on the MnTC review at the last meeting of the academic year in April, 2008. Does that mean that Fall, 2008 would be the time to embark on the next process we would like to pursue? Could we compile a package of recommendations or items for discussion and then move forward with the University of MN? If the University of Minnesota were ready, could we invite them to join this group at the next April meeting to explain their process, the resources they used and how they came to their recommendations? If the Transfer Oversight Committee could talk about where we want to go next and outline their expectations for the next steps, transfer staff could work on some possible scenarios for moving ahead during the summer. DARS and CAS should be implemented by all institutions by June 30, 2008. The purpose of inviting the University of Minnesota representatives to the meeting would be to see if we can't learn something from their process and to invite them back to the discussion.

**Transfer policy and procedure implementation—acceptance of D grades** Clarification Scenarios [www.transfercenter.project.mnscu.edu](http://www.transfercenter.project.mnscu.edu) >transfer basics>policies and procedures. This committee has discussed the acceptance of D grades many times over the last few years and would like clarification on the issue of D grades across the system. Institution practices and policies have varied. Winona State University accepts D grades and requires a 2.4 cumulative gpa for admittance. Some institutions did not accept D grades in transfer, but accepted D grades from their direct entry students. Transfer and non-transfer students should be treated comparably. If a university accepts the courses with D grades from transfer students, but does not include the grades from transfer courses in the cumulative gpa, the direct entry students are not treated comparably. Some don't accept D's until the AA is completed; a national standard may be to accept D's if the AA has been completed. Several majors require calculation of a cumulative gpa for the major, including courses transferred in. Not every transfer student is from a college, many transfer from universities. Most students transfer without having completed an AA degree.

The committee suggested a compromise in the policies and procedures implemented August 2007

- 1) that if a student completes a course with a D grade at a MN College or University, it will be accepted by the receiving institution toward the MnTC as determined by the sending institution and
- 2) that a student must have an MnTC gpa of at least 2.0 to complete the MnTC at any MN state college or university. Does that mean a 2.0 gpa to complete a course or goal component of the MnTC? No, a minimum 2.0 MnTC gpa is required to complete the entire MnTC. A receiving college or university may decide whether a course with a D grade meets its program or

graduation requirements, e.g. C or better in Written Composition. Each institution must compute a separate MnTC gpa. Does this take away a Metropolitan State University's right to require a C or better in each MnTC course, as long as the university requires a C or better for direct entry students? Is there any other university that would not accept D grades in general education courses for their own students? No, acceptance into a major may have higher requirements. Why have D grades if the institution does not accept them? Can we agree that the issue is settled and take it off our agenda? Yes. Each institution must accept D grades toward the MnTC.

**Proposed legislation on Common Course Numbering—**

University student perspective: common course numbering came up quickly. Legislators were looking for legislation to get at problems students have. Some student problems come with late transfer decisions; we need to inform students when they come in what can expect about transfer. Students need consistency of information from the registrar, faculty advisor, etc. We need to work better collectively about how courses transfer within and outside of the system. Students need to be better informed before there are problems. How does common course numbering resolve this? This is not a 4-year student concern.

Faculty perspective is that students are well-served within the system. Universities accept up to 16 credits of technical credits. Students change majors frequently. We don't know the best way to get to students. The system does a good job with websites.

College student perspective: It is a transparency issue. CAS system is acceptable, but not great; Students have never heard of it; that is a publicity problem. What students want with common courses is greater transparency with what they'll get when they transfer. CAS doesn't let you know if you take Physics course that it's the right Physics course for a major at another school. Most students do transfer. If a student transfers from Biology to Business within a university, the math course the student took might not be right one. College students are proposing an amendment that would require a common course number based on learning outcomes. We hear transfer is not happening way it should be. Students do see MN State Colleges and Universities as a system.

How would common course numbers work? It may be just as confusing for students. All physics courses that are calculus based would have a certain number—that would let students know up front. The key is that if a student knows when he or she takes course that that is the one needed, advisors can help the student select the appropriate course. It doesn't work when the student changes his/her mind later. Some students don't even go to an advisor. That assumes that advising is done well. What solves problem besides knowing the student's goal is effective advising. If the student says he/she is an AA or AS student, advisement guides are provided that indicates what is needed, using CAS and articulation agreements. It comes down to effective faculty advising. Curriculum and programs build are a reflection of strengths of faculty leading to unique programs. If you are looking for learning outcomes in the physics example, you could have calculus-based physics course that could be different on every campus—content not necessarily the same. Students are not saying common course numbering would be a silver bullet, but it would provide an additional layer of transparency. Advising is certainly not at that level. It is not always that students change mind mid-stream. We need system-wide way with transfer guides. So is this about a physics course being counted toward a major? The bill was limited to "core curriculum" Eastland did bill on his own, talked to students—he got call from Pine Technical College.

There is confusion about the bill. There is no definition of “core curriculum”—some members thought “core curriculum” was about general education, but students are talking about majors. The system has over 1600 articulation agreements; there are mechanisms that spell this out clearly. It would cost millions of dollars to address this. This would be duplication of what we’ve done. Who will decide what common number is or course is? There are over 49,000 courses in the system. If there were only 500 courses we could agree on; we would not have something worthwhile in the end. A student perspective is that we have too many different articulation agreements. It takes a long time to get DARS report. The percentage of transfers varies in different institutions. Even some students that meet with advisors are finding that they not transferring credits well. Transfer is the most complex student issue, problems are across the board.

Wouldn’t common numbers make DARS easier? It wouldn’t make it any different; the institutions would still need to determine program requirements and course equivalencies. With common course numbers how would institutions address distinctions among institutions? Institutions should be able to have different courses, they would just have different numbers. There is sometimes a difference between transferring into liberal arts program and specific major; curriculum may be more prescriptive in a professional program to follow accreditation and professional requirements. It would be a logistics nightmare to do common course numbers. It would involve massive meetings across the state with different types of institutions. Course outcomes are much more complex and specific than goal area competencies. The system has evolved dramatically and it is much better; this is a step backwards. Faculty are concerned that they will see faculty leave the system with this.

How many students are we talking about with transfer issues? In anecdotal evidence, it is often not clear who students are. When the individual situation is investigated, it is often different than the anecdote. It may be that the student has not gone to an advisor to resolve the situation. There are over 56,000 records evaluated for transfer per year.(39 % is outside of our system) The proposed legislation does not address transfer to and from institutions outside the system. The Minnesota system is different from other states; we have state universities, technical colleges and community colleges in the same system. We do have something, the MnTC, DARS/CAS and articulation agreements, that counts for most students. Legislation holds students harmless for the MnTC. What we have is about as good as we can get. There is a concern that we will do more damage to students and to quality of education with common course numbering. Students are using: DARS and CAS and comparing schools for acceptance of transfer credits. Students didn’t have that 5 years ago. We need to include DARS and CAS during orientation—walk them through it. There needs to be a definition of “core curriculum”. If it is MnTransfer Curriculum, we already have core competencies. The college students are saying that there are transfer problems. The committee needs documented cases of problems, so we know how to address them.

**Future Transfer Oversight Committee meetings:**

- Friday, April 18, 2008 10 am -2pm. WFP Room 3304.  
Send requests for staff analysis of MnTC Review reports to [joann.simser@so.mnscu.edu](mailto:joann.simser@so.mnscu.edu) .  
Proposed agenda items:
  1. Recommendations on proposed Guideline changes
  2. Uses of 2007 Core Student Outcomes Study Report  
<http://coreoutcomes.project.mnscu.edu>