

**ASSIST Board of Directors  
Director's Report - May 2000 - Page 1**

The following is a summary of the various activities in which the ASSIST Coordination Site has been engaged since the November 1999 Board meeting. There will be time on the May 15, 2000 meeting agenda to discuss these items in more detail.

**1. Staffing Changes**

In August 1999, Andre Humphrey, ACS LAN/Unix Systems Administrator, resigned for a significantly higher paying position at a private company. The ACS actively recruited for a replacement for many months and finally selected Ken Segroves based on his extensive experience with Unix, NT, Networking and database administration. The fiscal impact of the higher salary for this position was discussed at the November meeting and will be referenced again in May as part of the 2000-2001 budget discussion.

During the many months of recruitment the Director and Technical Manager handled the key duties of this position. This resulted in overall delays in other technical work at the Coordination Site including the continued recovery from a server crash on October 14<sup>th</sup> and development of the new ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System.

**2. Web ASSIST Usage**

Use of Web ASSIST for looking up articulation information has continued to be very strong. After a predicted lull over the winter break, spring usage has picked up significantly.

	<u># Report</u>	<u># Hits</u>
July	79,551	1,144,947
August	78,245	1,153,664
September	93,949	1,311,070
October	106,513	1,577,671
November	183,972	2,563,215
December	105,805	1,488,927
January	150,982	2,212,652
February	123,346	1,617,471
March	148,151	1,954,262
April	120,000 est.	1,700,000 est.

The Coordination Site is continuing to provide detailed Web ASSIST activity reports on the ASSIST Information Center under the "Database" category. More detailed information on usage can be found there. Colleges and universities use this information to monitor the number of reports being requested for specific institution/majors each month. This information is automatically updated on a regular schedule.

### **3. Curriculum Updates and Error Corrections**

All public colleges and universities have been using the new Web ASSIST Curriculum Update System to provide details on curricular changes for transferable and articulated courses. The Summer 2000 update cycle was conducted during February and the Fall 2000 update cycle during April. There has continued to be a very high level of compliance on the part of all colleges and universities in using this system to update their curriculum.

In November, the Coordination Site distributed the most recent curriculum update data to all universities for use in entering and updating 99-00 articulation agreements. As mentioned at the last Board meeting, this data had to be converted back into Revelation for distribution since the universities are still using the older Revelation ASSIST software for all articulation agreement data entry.

The Coordination Site has also continued to receive an extremely high number of curricular error corrections and late course additions via the web-based form. This is the process institutions use to correct historical errors in curriculum and to submit new courses being added after the update cycle for a given term closes. The Coordination Site received thousands more curricular changes since F99 and has been working to enter these into the database. While the Coordination Site has almost caught up on entering these changes, there is growing concern that colleges need to pay more attention to the curriculum update process each term to ensure the most accurate data.

### **4. Data Cleanup and Conversion**

The Coordination Site has continued its work on database clean-up and conversion activities related to the development of the new Web ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System. In November, the Coordination Site prepared another "sample" database that shows universities how the "central" copy of curriculum data affects individual articulation agreements in the new system. This sample database is password-protected and many university staff have been using it to help in their local data clean-up activities.

Continuing data cleanup activities are now focused on UC Transferable Course Agreement data and how it relates to the new central curriculum data. The Coordination Site has continued to work closely with UCOP staff on the clean-up of data related to the UC TCAs. The UC TCAs represent another important part of the overall database that must align with the new centralized curriculum data in ASSIST. Since UC TCAs have been historically based on college catalogs (instead of curriculum files like the CSU Bacc, IGETC, and CSU GE lists) numerous discrepancies exist between the current UC TCAs and the curriculum data in ASSIST. UCOP and ACS staff have been providing colleges with detailed lists of discrepancies for them to clarify and return. These discrepancies must be examined carefully so that CCC courses are not mistakenly dropped from UC transferability during this transition.

## **5. Web ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System Development**

The Coordination Site has continued to work on the development of the new Web ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System that will replace the Revelation-based ASSIST software. Due to delays in hiring the LAN/Unix Systems Administrator position, the Coordination Site is not on track for a June 2000 deployment. While the system is much closer to being finished, beta testing with campuses has not yet begun. Since numerous factors can affect the actual deployment date, the Coordination Site is not going to publicize a final deployment date until about two weeks into actual campus beta testing. This should assure a more reliable final deployment schedule.

## **6. UC/CSU Articulation Officer Meeting**

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, the Coordination Site hosted a meeting of all UC and CSU articulation staff to preview the new Articulation Maintenance System and discuss various issues related to the development of the new system. This meeting was held in a computer lab at the UC Irvine campus and approximately 45 university representatives attended. Each person had access to their own computer and followed a handful of exercises to familiarize themselves with the new software. Discussion continued to focus on processes for updating data most effectively and handling the high volume of curriculum error corrections. The Coordination Site has tentatively scheduled another hands-on meeting for June 20<sup>th</sup>. This next meeting will focus on further details of data update processes and attendees will be able to use the most recent version of the software currently under development.

The Coordination Site hopes that by conducting these types of meetings as well as video-teleconferences, the transition from the old Revelation-based ASSIST system to the new Internet-based Articulation Maintenance System will be much smoother for university staff.

## **7. Student Focus Groups**

As referenced via email to the Board in March, the Coordination Site has engaged a group of CSU Long Beach graduate students to conduct student focus groups to collect information directly from student regarding the usability of the ASSIST user interface and the usability of articulation agreements found in ASSIST. The Coordination Site has suspended work in pursuing a private company to conduct these focus groups since the two identified companies have not responded to further follow-up.

The Coordination Site expects to have a preliminary report in time for the May 15<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. Information collected during these focus groups will be used to discuss possible changes to the user interface and to help guide the development of a model articulation agreement format.

### **8. CAN/ASSIST Data Integration**

The Coordination Site has provided complete extracts of current and historical curriculum data to technical staff at the CAN System Office. These extracts will be used in the new system being developed to manage the CAN database.

### **9. Student Friendly System (SFS)**

On January 24<sup>th</sup>, the Coordination Site facilitated a meeting of the ASSIST SFS Workgroup and XAPP corporation to discuss using data from ASSIST in SFS.. On January 28<sup>th</sup>, the Coordination Site provided XAPP corporation with a complete extract of ASSIST curriculum, CSU GE Certification, and IGETC data for all 107 California Community Colleges. There has been no further information from XAPP or SFS regarding this activity.