

**University of California 2001-2002 Regents Budget
Budget Language for ASSIST - 9/18/00**

**Articulation System Stimulating Inter-institutional Student Transfer
ASSIST (\$1.1 million Increase)**

The University is requesting an increase of \$1.1 million to augment the technical infrastructure of ASSIST to ensure 24-hour-a-day, 7-days-a-week Internet access for students, faculty and staff; make the ASSIST system more usable for students; and to provide support for the work required to enter and update course articulation data directly into ASSIST by University of California, California State University, and California Community College staff members.

ASSIST is a computerized information system that provides students with detailed course transfer and articulation information to help them plan their academic careers, facilitate a seamless transfer process, and reduce the number of redundant courses they may take as they move from Community Colleges to universities. Students use ASSIST to determine how courses taken at various Community Colleges will be applied to specific major programs of study at universities once they transfer. This helps students plan a more efficient package of course work, significantly reducing the frustration and cost of retaking what may have appeared to be similar courses. Students also use ASSIST to help decide alternative courses of study as their interests change by providing them with information to compare how courses they have already taken may apply to different areas of study.

ASSIST is California's on-line source for official course articulation and transfer information. Every University of California and California State University campus is required to maintain in ASSIST all of the most current agreements that have been established with any California Community College campus. Since 1996, the extensive ASSIST database has been available free of charge to all students, faculty and staff via the Internet at www.assist.org. Many colleges and universities integrate the use of ASSIST into a variety of local student services, including college preparatory courses, counseling centers, outreach, and individual campus web sites. Throughout the state, there is an increasing commitment to provide more major-specific course articulation with more Community Colleges. ASSIST is recognized as a critical component for colleges and universities to manage this increasing database of information.

The information in ASSIST is entered and updated throughout the year by college and university staff. The ASSIST Coordination Site, located in Irvine, manages the day-to-day operations of ASSIST including all software development, technical operations, data coordination, training, and user support. Students, faculty and staff are currently receiving over 150,000 course articulation reports each month (or 8,000 reports each day) from ASSIST.

Operating since 1985, ASSIST is a cooperative, intersegmental effort overseen by a Board of Directors whose membership includes the California Community Colleges, California State University, University of California, and California Postsecondary Education Commission. ASSIST enjoys broad support from throughout the three systems of California public higher

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education and is an important component of the recent Memoranda of Understanding between the California Community Colleges and the University.

While use of the Internet has greatly expanded access to ASSIST and the number of students who are served, ASSIST needs increased permanent support to ensure that the central operations can continue to meet the increasing student demand and the more complex technologies required for Internet-based services.

The additional funds requested for 2001-02 will be used to establish and support improved Internet hardware, software and networking to ensure that ASSIST is available to increasing numbers of students at any time of the day or night, every day of the year. Current technologies supporting ASSIST are quickly becoming outdated and will soon be unable to ensure that growing needs and expectations can be met. Second, the Coordination Site will conduct student focus groups to determine how ASSIST should be enhanced to better meet changing student needs and then develop these enhancements. The current ASSIST web site was designed with input from campus staff. Now that ASSIST is directly serving a rapidly increasing number of students, it is important to make sure that it is tailored to meet student needs. Finally, the new funds will ensure that as colleges and universities create new and update existing articulation agreements, the information will be entered into ASSIST in a timely manner so that students always have access to the most current information.

Currently, ASSIST is funded jointly by the three public higher education systems at a combined level of \$1,309,000. The University of California's portion of the ASSIST budget is \$360,000.