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The following is a summary of the various activities in which the ASSIST Coordination Site has been engaged since the last ASSIST Board meeting. There will be time on the May 20, 2002 meeting agenda to discuss these items in more detail.

1. ASSIST Staffing

Bill Cooper has been working at the ASSIST Coordination Site as a Programmer/Analyst for almost 10 years and will be retiring as of June 7, 2002. Bill programmed the first version of ASSIST on the Internet, he developed the original prototype of Web ASSIST, and he has done all of the front-end programming for Web ASSIST and the ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System Reports web site. He has also developed numerous utilities and software tools that have helped the Coordination Site manage ASSIST over the past 10 years.

Bill's position handles all programming for presenting information from the ASSIST database via web browsers and remains an important position to retain. No other Coordination Site staff are experienced in this area of programming and filling this vacant position is critical to the continued operation of ASSIST. The other Coordination Site programmer/analyst (Starling Walter) programs everything related to the data entry system and the Technical Manager (Larry Coon) does all of the database programming. Each of these three positions utilizes a different programming language and requires specialized knowledge.

2. Articulation Maintenance System

The Coordination Site has now released all components of the new ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System which has been operating since January 2001. Over the past few months a number of specialized maintenance reports were released that help universities manage their ever growing database of articulation. Also the ASSIST Database Summaries are now available so that anyone can see a summary of the available data for any college or university. The database summaries provide similar information to what was included in the appendices of the 2001 ASSIST Legislative Report and are available on the ASSIST Information Center. Coordination Site staff are continuing to address various Web ASSIST and Maintenance System software bugs that are identified by users.

3. Web ASSIST Usage

Use of Web ASSIST for looking up articulation information has remained high but has not increased at the same rate as last year.

	<u># Report</u>	<u># Hits</u>
January 2001	165,530	2,616,264
February 2001	137,523	2,155,163
March 2001	194,939	2,843,238
April 2001	170,370	3,239,328

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May 2001	250,166	4,318,722
June 2001	189,605	3,236,119
July 2001	174,975	3,040,424
August 2001	215,886	3,719,450
September 2001	164,122	2,899,932
October 2001	194,869	3,647,059
November 2001	268,508	3,721,430
December 2001	158,645	1,950,470
January 2002	246,692	3,001,571
February 2002	192,306	2,291,651
March 2002	230,991	2,673,669
April 2002	(statistics unavailable due to a computer failure)	

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.

Note: The computer that manages activity data recently crashed and is currently being rebuilt. Activity reports will be available after this computer has been repaired.

4. ADA Compliant Version of Web ASSIST to be Released in May

The Coordination Site has completed all work on a new version of Web ASSIST that is ADA compliant. No new features have been added and the basic look and feel are the same as before, however, a number of key changes have been made as described by various guidelines on ADA compliance for web sites. This new version of Web ASSIST is currently being tested and is expected to be deployed by Monday, May 13.

5. Curriculum Updates and Error Corrections

All public colleges and universities have been using the Web ASSIST Curriculum Update System to provide details on curricular changes for transferable and articulated courses. The Spring 2002 update cycle was conducted during October 2001, Summer 2002 in February 2002, and Fall 2002 in April 2002. 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 April, the Coordination Site sent letters to 24 colleges and universities who had not logged into the Curriculum Update System in a timely manner. Only 1 college failed to update their data during the Fall 2002 update cycle.

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Immediately after each Curriculum Update cycle finishes, the new and updated curriculum information is made available for the universities to use in entering and updating articulation agreements using the new Articulation Maintenance System.

The Coordination Site has also continued to receive many 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.

6. TCA Data Clean-up

The Coordination Site has concluded all work in cleaning up data inconsistencies between curriculum data, the UC Transferable Course Agreements, CSU baccalaureate lists, IGETC lists and CSU GE Certification lists as related to the central curriculum data. All of this information is now available in ASSIST.

The Coordination Site is expecting information on 02-03 IGETC approvals some time in May 2002 and has already been receiving 02-03 CSU GE approvals for some colleges. It is expected that 02-03 IGETC, CSU GE, and CSU Baccalaureate Lists will be posted in ASSIST in June 2002. This will be dramatically earlier than in prior years and is due, in large part, to the effective synchronization of the various processes.

7. CSU Campus Data Entry

As reported at the last Board meeting in October 2001, all of the CSU campuses are doing their own data entry of articulation data (instead of contracting with the Coordination Site) with the exception of SDSU. SDSU will begin doing their own data entry as of July 2002.

8. Articulation Data Extracts

In March 2002 the Coordination Site completed the programming to generate the various ASSIST Articulation Data Extracts out of the new system and a number of colleges and university are now using these extracts. The extract specification were revised and an updated document was posted on the ASSIST Information Center.

The ASSIST Board Workgroup has been discussing a possible Board Policy on the appropriate use of the ASSIST data extracts. A draft policy is being developed and should be ready in time for the May 20th Board meeting.

9. Technology and System Outages

Coordination Site staff have continued to pay very close attention to the current server computers that run ASSIST, providing a higher than normal level of preventative maintenance. While these

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computers are beyond their recommended operational life span, they are still working and have not experienced any significant hardware problems.

The following is a summary of the various service interruptions that have affected ASSIST since the last Board meeting:

Wednesday, October 3, 2001 – 9:20am – 11:30am - UCI's network connection to the Internet experienced intermittent failures. During this time ASSIST services were generally available to the public and the campuses, and systems appeared to run very slowly with occasional drops in connectivity.

Thursday, October 4, 2001 – 11:20am – 12:30pm – The computer that runs the data entry application had intermittent problems that eventually required a reboot. During this time the data entry system was very slow - Web ASSIST was not affected.

Wednesday, October 10, 2001 – 11am - 11:30am – The database server that supports the data entry system experienced problems that required a reboot. During this time the data entry system was unavailable – Web ASSIST was not affected.

Thursday, October 11, 2001 – 11am – 3:45pm – An extremely heavy load in Web ASSIST during most of the day caused Web ASSIST and the data entry system to be extremely slow and at times totally unresponsive. Coordination Site staff eventually restarted all systems to clear the log jam of backed up requests which had been clogging the system.

Monday, October 29, 2001 – 11:45am – 12:pm – The primary database server for Web ASSIST and the data entry system failed and had to be restarted. The Curriculum Update System was open for Spring 02 updates but was unaffected as it runs from a different database server.

Thursday, November 1, 2001 – 6am-7am – In the very early morning one of the servers for the data entry system failed and had to be repaired and restarted. During this outage the data entry system was unavailable – Web ASSIST was not affected.

Thursday, November 1, 2001 – 3pm – 3:30pm – The primary database server for Web ASSIST and the data entry system failed and had to be restarted.

Monday, November 5, 2001 - 9:15am – 9:45am – The primary database server for Web ASSIST and the data entry system failed and had to be restarted.

Monday, November 5, 2001 – 1pm – 1:30pm – The primary database server for Web ASSIST and the data entry system failed and had to be restarted.

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Thursday, November 8, 2001 – 7:45am – 8:30am – Due to an unknown problem (probably related to extremely heavy use of Web ASSIST) all systems had to be restarted. During this outage, no ASSIST services were available.

Thursday, November 8, 2001 – 10:15am – 10:45am – Due to an unknown problem (probably related to extremely heavy use of Web ASSIST) all systems had to be restarted. During this outage, no ASSIST services were available.

Friday, November 9, 2001 – 11:30am – 12:30pm – Due to a power outage in the area around the Coordination Site (caused by a construction accident) all ASSIST services were unavailable. All systems handled the power loss well and restarted without any problems.

Sunday, November 18, 2001 – 10:30 pm – Monday, November 19, 2001 6:40am – Due to a power loss in the building housing the Coordination Site, all ASSIST computers lost power for some amount of time on Sunday evening. When power was restored, two computers did not restart correctly and required a significant amount of work to get them operating correctly. During this outage, all ASSIST services were unavailable.

Tuesday, November 20, 2001 – 1:30am – 7:45am – Due to an unknown problem Web ASSIST was extremely slow and sometime unresponsive. During this outage the data entry system was unaffected.

Wednesday, December 12, 2001 – 11:45am – 12pm – Due to a problem with UCI networking all ASSIST services were intermittently unavailable.

Thursday, January 3, 2002 – 11am – 11:15am – The computer that runs the Web ASSIST application failed and had to be restarted. During this outage Web ASSIST was not available – the data entry system was unaffected.

Monday, January 14, 2002 – 9am – 9:30am – The computer that runs the data entry application system failed and had to be restarted. During this outage the data entry system was unavailable – Web ASSIST was not affected.

Tuesday, January 15, 2002 – 10am – 10:15am – The uninterruptible power supply for the computer that runs the data entry application failed and had to be removed and the computer had to be restarted. During this outage the data entry system was unavailable – Web ASSIST was not affected.

Tuesday, January 22, 2002 – 11am – 11:45am – Due to a problem with UCI networking all ASSIST services were unavailable. Afterwards until 2:30pm access was intermittent until UCI replaced the faulty equipment.

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Friday, February 8, 2002 – 3:30pm – 4pm – The primary ASSIST database server failed and had to be restarted. During this outage all ASSIST services were unavailable.

Tuesday, February 19, 2002 – 10:45am – 1:45pm – Due to problem with UCI networking access to all ASSIST services was intermittent until they replaced some failing equipment.

Monday, April 8, 2002 – 1:30pm – 1:35pm – Due to extremely heavy use of Web ASSIST, Web ASSIST was deactivated for 5 minutes and the backlog of hung reports was cleared.

These past few months represent the most frequent and significant incidents of ASSIST service interruptions. Prior to this, most interruptions happened infrequently, lasted a few minutes and were usually related to the aging network connection from the UCI campus to the building housing the Coordination Site. Many of the more recent problems are related to aging equipment and we can expect more of these types of problems in the future. Whenever problems occur, Coordination Site staff notify campuses of the problem as soon as possible via the ASSIST-L listserv and/or direct email to the campus ASSIST Managers.

The speed of ASSIST systems continues to be an issue. Fine-tuning of the database server has improved basic performance, but the Coordination Site continues to receive comments about the overall slowness of the system whenever usage increases.