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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 19, 2003 meeting agenda to discuss these items in more detail.

1. Web ASSIST Usage

Use of Web ASSIST hit an all-time high in April 2003 when over 428,000 articulation reports were provided to over 69,000 unique visitors and the system handled over 6,000,000 hits. If trends from past years continue, the activity for May 2003 is expected to be even higher. More detailed reports on ASSIST web site activity are updated daily on the ASSIST Information Center.

Since the new server computers were activated in October 2002 there have been no further complaints of system slowness or malfunction. Since October 2002 there has been only one brief system outage which lasted approximately 20 minutes. This was caused by a poorly written computer program at a university campus that was trying to access ASSIST information in an automated fashion. Their program caused an abnormally high number of errors to be generated in a very short time span. Web ASSIST did not handle this well and stopped processing further requests. Coordination Site staff have fixed the error-handling process in Web ASSIST and have worked with the programmer at the university campus to help them get what was needed.

2. Articulation Maintenance System

The ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System continues to operate effectively to support CSU and UC campuses in their data entry and updating of articulation agreements in ASSIST. There have been no significant issues with this component of ASSIST since the last Board meeting in October, 2002.

In response to numerous requests by colleges and further discussion at the 2002 ASSIST Conference, in March 2003 the Coordination Site activated the ability for Community College ASSIST Managers (primarily articulation officers) to use the curriculum reports in the ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System Reports web site. The curriculum reports in the Maintenance System allow colleges (and universities) to see more detailed information about the curriculum data in the ASSIST database for any college or university. Previously only the CSU and UC campuses had access to these reports. Use of this site requires a username and password and colleges can use the same username/password that they use for the ASSIST Curriculum Update System.

3. 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 Summer 2003 update cycle was conducted during February 2003 and the Fall 2003 update cycle

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was conducted during April 2003. 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. For the Fall term update each year the Board requests that the Coordination Site ensure that all colleges and universities submit an update. Those institutions who do not use the system within the first two weeks of the cycle receive an email reminder. Those institutions who do not use the system within the first three weeks get a letter sent to their campus Vice President/Vice Chancellor over articulation. For the Fall 2003 cycle, seven institutions received letters (down from 24 letters in Fall 2002) and all but one of those institutions eventually logged in and completed their work.

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.

4. ASSIST Information Center

In January 2003 the Coordination Site activated some minor changes to the ASSIST Information Center in an effort to better organize information. One item that has been added is a "Current ASSIST Activities" page which provides more details about current activities and is updated at the beginning of each month. This page can be accessed from the "About ASSIST" menu at <http://assist.org>.

5. "Articulation Not Honored" User Feedback

As requested by the Legislature and approved by the Board, ASSIST includes a special feedback form that allows students to report incidents where articulation was not honored. Since the last Board meeting on October 7, 2002, ASSIST has received over 300 messages via this feedback form and all but 6 of those messages were asking for general information about transfer. Of the 6 "on topic" reports, Coordination Site staff followed up with the students and the respective colleges and universities to get more complete information about the situation. In 5 of the 6 cases it was found that the student had either already been granted credit by the university or that the student was mistaken about the transferability of the courses. In one case the university subsequently granted the student credit after ASSIST raised the issue with the university.

There was also one case where a student found conflicting information between a university web site and ASSIST. The ASSIST information was correct and the university honored the articulation as represented in ASSIST.

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The Coordination Site also maintains a general feedback form on the ASSIST web site where students can ask a broad range of transfer-related questions or comment on ASSIST. About a dozen messages a day are submitted via this general feedback form and Coordination Site staff follow-up with students in all cases where a phone number or email address is provided. Any questions that require “counseling” advice are forwarded to the respective community college or university ASSIST Managers for proper follow-up.

6. ADA Compliance of Web ASSIST

As referenced at the May 2002 Board meeting, the ADA compliant version of Web ASSIST was activated on May 13, 2002. To date no problems related to these system enhancements have been found. However, further information regarding ADA compliance was provided by Judy Osman at the CSU Chancellor's Office. This information related to ADA compliance for the CaliforniaCollege.edu and CCCApply.org web sites. The only aspect of ADA compliance from the materials provided by Judy Osman that ASSIST has not yet addressed is specific testing with the JAWS web browser (which provided for adapted access to web pages). The Coordination Site will conduct testing with the JAWS browser and report to the Board on any finding.

7. Articulation Data Extracts

Many CSU and UC campuses continue to request data extracts from the ASSIST database in order to support their work with local campus-based information systems such as degree audit systems. Other statewide efforts such as CaliforniaColleges.edu also use the data extracts in various ways. UC Pathways, CSU Mentor, and CaliforniaColleges.edu are also considering the use of additional ASSIST data extracts to support a new method for students to self-report community college coursework in a more accurate manner that is currently employed. More information on this topic will be discussed at the May 19, 2003 Board meeting.

8. Survey of Campus Web Site

In November 2002, Coordination Site staff surveyed all California Community College web sites to see if and how information on ASSIST and links to ASSIST were included along with other transfer-related information. The ASSIST Managers at colleges with no links to ASSIST were sent an email which encouraged their campus to add a brief description of and link to ASSIST on the local campus web site. Suggested language was included in the email. The ASSIST Managers at colleges where there was a link to ASSIST but there was no descriptive information were sent a similar email with the suggested language. Coordination Site staff have continued to follow-up with colleges to increase the number of campuses that include links to ASSIST. More information on this activity will be presented at the May 19, 2003 Board meeting.

Coordination Site staff are working with a limited number of Orange County colleges to include basic information about ASSIST on their local cable channels that are used to communicate campus events and messages to the community. These are generally known as Chyrons, single

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screen “slides” that show continually on a local access channel. If this activity appears to be useful, the Coordination Site will distribute further information to all college ASSIST Managers suggesting they pursue such an item.

Coordination Site staff are working on writing articles that could be included in Community College student newspapers. These articles will provide some basic information about articulation and how students can use ASSIST to access key course transfer information. Coordination Site staff are working with the newspaper staff at a few colleges to try this approach. If this activity appears to be useful and no-cost, the Coordination Site will distribute further information to all colleges ASSIST Managers.

9. 2002 ASSIST Conference

On November 12, 2002 the ASSIST Coordination Site hosted the 2002 ASSIST Conference in Irvine. The conference was well attended by approximately 175 Community College, CSU, UC and system office representatives. A number of break-out sessions were conducted and conference evaluations were quite positive. Conference materials have been posted on the ASSIST Information Center.

Until the funding status for ASSIST becomes more stable the ASSIST Conference is being held every other year. The next ASSIST Conference will be held in November 2004.