

2004-2006 ASSIST Strategic Plan

Draft – April 20, 2004

Introduction

In order to sustain the forward momentum of ASSIST, the ASSIST Board of Directors meets every two years to update strategic plans for the project. The following plan represents the updated mission, vision, goals and objectives for ASSIST to guide activities through the 2004-05 and 2005-06 project years. In addition to moving ASSIST forward in a number of key areas, the goals and objectives in this plan also cover unmet items from the prior plan. Individual activities in this plan which require additional or redirected resources are noted as appropriate.

The prior 2001-2003 ASSIST Strategic Plan as developed at a time when a significant increase in annual ASSIST funding was expected to be approved. While this funding augmentation did not get approved due to the worsening economic climate in the state, a number of significant accomplishments were achieved including:

- Continued entry and maintenance of articulation data in ASSIST to maintain a complete database of all of the most current articulation established between all CCC, CSU and UC campuses
 - Operation of ASSIST as California's official repository of articulation and transfer information
 - Operation of the primary ASSIST components and services (Web ASSIST, ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System, ASSIST Curriculum Update System)
 - Increase in the amount of articulation, especially major preparation articulation
 - Increase in the use of Web ASSIST
 - 2003 calendar year usage: 560,000 unique visitors requested over 4.5 million articulation reports in over 3.3 million visits where the ASSIST servers handled over 64 million web site hits
- Enhancement of the Web ASSIST user interface for ADA compliance
- Acquisition and operation of new server computer hardware to support ASSIST services and databases – more secure, more stable, and much faster technology environment
- Development and implementation of the California Model Articulation Format which supports increased consistency among articulation agreements at different universities
- Development and operation of OSCAR (Online Services for Curriculum and Articulation Review) which allows CCC campuses to submit course outlines electronically for UC TCA, IGETC, and CSU GE-B review

- Development and operation of the ASSIST DAP Compendium which supports the UC Dual Admissions Program (DAP) by providing new ways for students and advisors to access articulation in ASSIST that is related to their DAP contracts
- Displaying CAN Identifiers in ASSIST articulation agreements and synchronizing official CAN Catalog of Courses data with ASSIST curriculum data
- Working with UCOP and CSUCO to help streamline the UC TCA, IGETC, and CSU GE-B processes
- Increased use of ASSIST Data Extracts by universities and colleges to support local degree audit and other information systems
 - Increased use of ASSIST Data Extracts for other efforts including CaliforniaColleges.Edu and UC Pathways
- Development and operation of a Web ASSIST feature for students to report incidents when articulation has not been honored by universities
 - Continued support of the student feedback process to answer student questions about ASSIST, articulation, and transfer

Mission Statement

The mission of ASSIST, California's official repository of course articulation information, is to support academic planning by California Community College students seeking transfer to California's public universities through an internet-based system that delivers accurate, timely, and complete information in a readily accessible format. ASSIST also facilitates the articulation of coursework by providing software tools, data, and analytical services to college, university, and system office faculty and staff.

Vision Statement

ASSIST will become an increasingly student focused internet-based information system for students planning to transfer by 1) adapting to changing student academic needs; 2) facilitating the articulation of coursework; and 3) integrating with and proactively supporting other statewide, system, and campus transfer and articulation efforts.

Goals

Goal 1: Improve the quality of ASSIST data through enhanced collection, organization, presentation, completeness, accuracy and timeliness

Goal 2: Improve the usability of ASSIST for clients, especially students

Goal 3: Increase the awareness and use of ASSIST among students and other constituents

Goal 4: Increase collaboration with other statewide efforts to facilitate the academic planning and transfer of students

Goal 5: Improve central ASSIST hardware, software and networking to ensure continuous availability of ASSIST services

Objectives

Goal 1: *Improve the quality of ASSIST data through enhanced collection, organization, presentation, completeness, accuracy and timeliness*

Objective 1: Continue various campus compliance, validation and reporting processes that are currently in place

Objective 2: Provide periodic gap analysis to help CSU/UC/CCC system office staff understand the status of campus articulation efforts – provide longitudinal analysis

Objective 3: Support efforts that strengthen system and campus articulation processes (e.g. UC TCA, CSU GE-B, IGETC, major prep articulation, etc.) by developing tools, providing access to data, and providing data analysis

Goal 2: *Improve the usability of ASSIST for clients, especially students*

Objective 1: Utilize focus groups as a mechanism to collect input on the usability of ASSIST

Objective 2: Maintain ADA compliance of Web ASSIST as ADA requirements and technologies continue to change

Objective 3: Make the UC Major Preparation Explorer user interface available for general ASSIST users

Objective 4: Assess usability for non-student users (counselors, advisors, faculty)

Goal 3: *Increase the awareness and use of ASSIST among students and other constituents*

Objective 1: Identify and enhance web sites where a link to ASSIST would be effective or could be improved

Objective 2: Include ASSIST as a component of transfer public relations projects or communications at CCC, CSU, and UC campuses and system offices as appropriate

Objective 3: Clarify intent/purpose of ASSIST web site when entering Web ASSIST

~~Objective 4: Include mention of ASSIST in transfer related or articulation related correspondence, where appropriate, from CCC/CSU/UC system offices~~

Objective 4 has been combined with objective 2

Goal 4: *Increase collaboration with other statewide efforts to facilitate the academic planning and transfer of students*

Objective 1: Maintain and enhance communication with and across institutions

Objective 2: Facilitate the education of decision makers about the role and capabilities of ASSIST

Objective 3: Develop new functionality and review existing functionality to support transfer and articulation efforts (collaboration with other entities)

Goal 5: *Improve central ASSIST hardware, software and networking to ensure continuous availability of ASSIST services*

Objective 1: Establish service level standards for ASSIST services

Objective 2: Maintain the currency of central ASSIST hardware and software

Objective 3: Continue technology planning procedures

Objective 4: Determine and implement practices to promote staff training, etc.

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives

Primary Goal 1

Improve the quality of ASSIST data through enhanced collection, organization, presentation, completeness, accuracy and timeliness

Objective 1

Continue various campus compliance, validation and reporting processes that are currently in place

Activities:

- Collecting CSU/UC articulation planning matrices, midyear report to segments, follow-up by system offices, and report to Board
- Collect info from CCCs re: information not in ASSIST, confirm information, follow-up with universities and system offices, and report to Board
- Collect info re: articulation not honored when students transfer and report to Board
- Ongoing collection of CCC, CSU, and UC curriculum update via the ASSIST Curriculum Update System – Fall CUS cycle compliance check, report to Board on level of compliance

Responsibilities:

- ACS collect, analyze, and report information to system offices and Board
- CSU/UC system offices follow-up with campuses

Timeline:

- Ongoing annual activities with reports at the Winter Board Workgroup and Spring Board meetings

Costs:

- Supported by the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 1

Improve the quality of ASSIST data through enhanced collection, organization, presentation, completeness, accuracy and timeliness

Objective 2

Provide periodic gap analysis to help CSU/UC/CCC system office staff understand the status of campus articulation efforts – provide longitudinal analysis

Activities:

- Provide gap analysis for CSU and UC top 20 majors for all CCCs
- Collect information on top 20 majors from universities in the Fall of each year along with Articulation Data Entry Planning Matrixes
- Develop and conduct longitudinal analysis of changes in articulation gaps from year to year

Responsibilities:

- ACS and Board Workgroup

Timeline:

- Initial gap analysis UC November 2003, CSU March 2004
- Summer 2004 ACS develop specifications for longitudinal analysis
- Annual Fall collection of top 20 majors from CSU and UC campuses
- Annual analysis in January with report to the Board Workgroup in February

Costs:

- Supported by the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 1

Improve the quality of ASSIST data through enhanced collection, organization, presentation, completeness, accuracy and timeliness

Objective 3

Support efforts that strengthen system and campus articulation processes (e.g. UC TCA, CSU GE-B, IGETC, major prep articulation, etc.) by developing tools, providing access to data, and providing data analysis

Activities:

- OSCAR for UC TCA
- OSCAR for IGETC/CSU GE-Breadth
- New types of data in ASSIST
 - UC Transfer Eligibility data
 - CSU American Institutions data (including requests submitted via OSCAR)
 - CSU/UC A-G data
- Related reports in Web ASSIST for new types of data
- Data extracts for new types of data
- OSCAR as an open repository of course outlines for articulation review
- Meet with college and university articulation staff to identify needs for additional tools within ASSIST to support articulation processes and report to the Board on findings

Responsibilities:

-

Timeline:

- OSCAR UC TCA, IGETC, and CSU GE-B activities are ongoing
- Complete UC Transfer Eligibility work by end of Fall 2004
- Complete CSU American Institutions work by end of Fall 2004
- CSU/UC A-G data work timeline to be established (complete during 04-05?)
- OSCAR as an open repository timeline to be established (initial discussions with CCC Academic Senate in Spring 2004)
- Meet with college and university staff at 2004 ASSIST Conference and report findings to Board in Spring 2005

Costs:

- OSCAR UC TCA, IGETC, CSU GE supported by existing budget
- CSU American Institutions development work funded by CSU \$10,000 contract
- Meeting with college and university staff covered by conference fees

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 2

Improve the usability of ASSIST for clients, especially students

Objective 1

Utilize focus groups as a mechanism to collect input on the usability of ASSIST

Activities:

- Identify objectives for seeking student feedback. Consider feasibility of using college success courses, online surveys, or CSU/UC grad student projects for gaining feedback
 - Develop alternative design ideas to test with students in addition to gaining feedback on current design
- Determine low cost activities to collect input directly from users
- Conduct related activities to collect input
- Report to Board on findings

Responsibilities:

- ACS

Timeline:

- Complete the identification of objectives and determine feasibility of methods by Spring 2005
- Conduct activities in Fall 2005 (or whenever appropriate given prior findings)
- Report to Board in Spring 2006

Costs:

- Initial work supported by existing budget
- Conducting focus groups may incur costs – to be determined

Notes:

- These activities may be coordinated with Goal 3, Objective 3 (clarify intent of ASSIST web site) so that alternate designs could be tested in focus groups

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 2

Improve the usability of ASSIST for clients, especially students

Objective 2

Maintain ADA compliance of Web ASSIST as ADA requirements and technologies continue to change

Activities:

- ACS web design staff remain current with ADA requirements and implications for web design
- Contact CSULB Center for Usability in Design and Assessment (or a similar organization) to gain understanding of current requirements and available technologies
- Assess level of compliance with Web ASSIST
- Develop proposed changes to maintain compliance
- Education of articulation officers related to ADA presentation issues

Responsibilities:

- ACS

Timeline:

- ACS web design staff education – ongoing with initial push in Summer 2004
- Identify outside organization by end of Fall 2004
- Educate AOs of ADA presentation issues at 2004 ASSIST Conference
- Assess level of compliance by end of Summer 2005
- Develop and implement proposed changes by end of Fall 2005

Costs:

- Costs for low-cost ACS web design staff education supported by existing budget
- Outside organizations may charge for conducting analysis – if this is the case, discuss further with the Board before proceeding
- Costs for developing changes supported by the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 2

Improve the usability of ASSIST for clients, especially students

Objective 3

Make the UC Major Preparation Explorer user interface available for general ASSIST users

Activities:

- Determine process and costs for including additional information from CSU campuses
- Determine interest level from CSU and possibility of CSU providing financial support
- If CSU will support further activities:
 - Coordinate with CSU campuses for data collection and data maintenance
 - Enhance Web ASSIST and ASSIST Articulation Maintenance software accordingly

Responsibilities:

- ACS and CSU Chancellor's Office

Timeline:

- Determine process and costs and write proposal for CSU by Summer 2004
- Determine CSU interest by Fall 2004
- If approved, complete data collection and development by the end of Spring 2005

Costs:

- Costs to be determined – development activities could not be supported within the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 2

Improve the usability of ASSIST for clients, especially students

Objective 4

Assess usability for non-student users (counselors, advisors, faculty)

Activities:

- Identify objectives for study and organizations that could provide useful feedback
- Collect information via on-line surveys, meeting with professional groups, etc. to understand needs of these groups
 - CCC Counselors Association, CCC Transfer Center Directors, UC evaluators, CSU evaluators, IMPAC faculty, etc.
- Draft a report of findings and present to the ASSIST Board.

Responsibilities:

- ACS

Timeline:

- Identify objectives and organizations in Spring 2005
- Collect information by the end of Fall 2005
- Report findings to the Board by Spring 2006

Costs:

- Supported by the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 3

Increase the awareness and use of ASSIST among students and other constituents

Objective 1

Identify and enhance web sites where a link to ASSIST would be effective or could be improved

Activities:

- Survey primary college and university web sites that include transfer information and recommend changes re: ASSIST information and links to ASSIST
- Identify and survey other websites (CCC Apply, CSU Mentor, UC Pathways, CaliforniaColleges.edu, etc.) and recommend changes re: ASSIST information and links to ASSIST
- Report to the Board on changes recommended and made
 - Include additional information on overall numbers and types of web sites linking to ASSIST

Responsibilities:

- ACS

Timeline:

- Ongoing annual survey of primary college, university and system web sites in the Spring

Costs:

- Supported within the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 3

Increase the awareness and use of ASSIST among students and other constituents

Objective 2

Include ASSIST as a component of transfer public relations projects or communications at CCC, CSU, and UC campuses and system offices as appropriate

Activities:

- Distribute information to campuses, system offices, and other agencies to identify transfer-related PR projects where ASSIST could be included
- Work with corresponding organizations to provide further information on ASSIST
- Provide information to CCC campuses that can be used in schedule of classes

Responsibilities:

- ACS, and the CCC/CSU/UC System Offices and campuses, CPEC, ICC

Timeline:

- August 2004, February 2005, August 2005, February 2006 send information to campuses, system offices, and agencies
- February 2005 and February 2006 send information to CCC campuses for schedules of classes

Costs:

- Supported within the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 3

Increase the awareness and use of ASSIST among students and other constituents

Objective 3

Clarify the intent/purpose of the ASSIST web site when entering Web ASSIST

Activities:

- Develop appropriate language and enhance the first pages of Web ASSIST as appropriate

Responsibilities:

- ACS

Timeline:

- Develop language/design and enhance ASSIST in Summer 2004
- Test effectiveness of new language/design with student focus groups in Fall 2005

Costs:

- Supported within the existing budget

Notes:

- These activities may be coordinated with Goal 2, Objective 1 (student focus groups to collect info usability) so that information from this activity could be tested in focus groups

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 4

Increase collaboration with other statewide efforts to facilitate the academic planning and transfer of students

Objective 1

Maintain and enhance communication with and across institutions

Activities:

- Educate and train users on current capabilities
- Conduct a low-cost ASSIST conference
- Communicate with users about usage, core functions, new ASSIST services/capabilities
 - Develop a more comprehensive approach to help clients understand special features and capabilities of ASSIST
- Publish an electronic newsletter
- Publish articles on ASSIST in other newsletters (e.g. UC Notes, CSU Review, etc.)
- Provide updates on ASSIST to constituents (e.g. CIAC, IMPAC, CAN, ???)

Responsibilities:

- ACS

Timeline:

- Ongoing education and training of users
- 2004 ASSIST Conference in December 2004
- Ongoing communication of services and capabilities available in ASSIST
- Publish ASSIST newsletter in September and February each year beginning September 2004
- Ongoing publication of information on ASSIST in other newsletters
- Ongoing providing of ASSIST updates to collaborative constituents

Costs:

- Supported within the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 4

Increase collaboration with other statewide efforts to facilitate the academic planning and transfer of students

Objective 2

Facilitate the education of decision makers about the role and capabilities of ASSIST

Activities:

- Develop a set of talking points for use by system representatives stressing the role ASSIST plays in facilitating transfer and articulation, including information on ASSIST usage and features
 - Keep the document updated over time and provide revised copies to system office staff
- Encourage ASSIST Board members continue to represent ASSIST, participate in and provide support to relevant articulation-related activities, and to play a more active role in advocating for ASSIST
- Support the system offices as they target and strategize contacts and lobby opportunities for ASSIST with appropriate agencies

Responsibilities:

- ACS

Timeline:

- Provide updates talking points to system offices in August and January of each year
- Other activities ongoing as needed

Costs:

- Supported within the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 4

Increase collaboration with other statewide efforts to facilitate the academic planning and transfer of students

Objective 3

Develop new functionality and review existing functionality to support transfer and articulation efforts (collaboration with other entities)

Activities:

- ACS work with the ABD Workgroup to develop criteria for prioritizing/authorizing new projects and eliminating existing functionality
- Identify feasible projects
- Identify current functions related to collaborations that could be eliminated

Responsibilities:

- ACS and Board Workgroup

Timeline:

- Develop criteria in Summer 2004
- Identify feasible project in Fall 2004 and ongoing
- Identify functions that could be eliminated in Fall 2004

Costs:

- Supported within the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 5

Improve central ASSIST hardware, software and networking to ensure continuous availability of ASSIST services

Objective 1

Establish service level standards for ASSIST services

Activities:

- Investigate service-level standards that have been established for other systems such as Pathways, CSU Mentor, Student Friendly, etc.
- Develop a proposed set of standards. Submit proposal to ASSIST Board for review and adoption
- Monitor appropriate service levels and report to Board annually

Responsibilities:

- ACS

Timeline:

- Complete the investigation of existing service-level standards for other systems by the end of Fall 2004
- Complete the development and publication of ASSIST service-level standards by the end of Summer 2005
- Annually report to the Board on monitoring of service level standards at Fall meetings

Costs:

- Supported within the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 5

Improve central ASSIST hardware, software and networking to ensure continuous availability of ASSIST services

Objective 2

Maintain the currency of central ASSIST hardware and software

Activities:

- Report to the ASSIST Board on needs and costs
- Report to ASSIST Board on vulnerabilities
- Investigate alternatives for maintaining currency of equipment using system offices computers, grant funding, etc.

Responsibilities:

- ACS

Timeline:

- Develop a report of hardware and software needs and costs and system vulnerabilities in Spring 2005
- Investigate alternatives in Spring 2005
- Report findings to Board at Spring 2005 meeting

Costs:

- Supported within the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 5

Improve central ASSIST hardware, software and networking to ensure continuous availability of ASSIST services

Objective 3

Continue technology planning procedures

Activities:

- Continue technology planning activities to maintain a current ASSIST Technology Plan and ensure that ASSIST remains in synch with segmental technological directions

Responsibilities:

- ACS and ASSIST Technical Advisory Committee

Timeline:

- Ongoing as new projects arise

Costs:

- Supported within the existing budget

Activities to Meet Primary Goal Objectives - continued

Primary Goal 5

Improve central ASSIST hardware, software and networking to ensure continuous availability of ASSIST services

Objective 4

Determine and implement practices to promote staff training, etc.

Activities:

- Establish goals and provide cost effective opportunities for ACS Staff training and professional development. Report to Board on activities annually

Responsibilities:

- ACS

Timeline:

- Establish ACS staff training and professional development goals by the end of Summer 2004
- Provide cost effective opportunities for training and development as they arise
- Report to the Board on activities at Spring Board meetings

Costs:

- The existing budget does not include funds for staff training and development, but a very limited amount of low cost activities may be able to be supported within the current budget