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The following is a summary of the various activities in which the ASSIST Coordination Site has been engaged. There will be time on the May 18, 1998 meeting agenda to discuss these items in more detail.

**1. ACS Staffing**

Suzanne Bolding is the new Administrative Assistant at the Coordination Site, replacing Jackie Cotton who accepted a position at the UCI Medical Center in early December 1997. Suzanne has been working at UC Irvine for many years and actually worked with articulation for a number of years under the UCI articulation officer, Raschel Greenberg.

John Sealey, Revelation Programmer/Analyst, will no longer be working at the Coordination Site as of July 1, 1998 as his position has been eliminated due to the phasing out of all Revelation-based ASSIST products.

**2. Regional Meetings**

This spring the Coordination Site is hosting nine regional meetings at campuses throughout the state. In addition to providing a comprehensive hour-long update on ASSIST activities, the Coordination Site will be previewing the new course list and articulation agreement maintenance components for the new Web ASSIST Maintenance system. This is not a training session, rather it is an opportunity for campus staff to understand what will be coming next year to help them better prepare. The ASSIST contacts at every public college and university are being invited to attend these sessions. Other campus staff are invited to attend, but the primary focus will be on providing information for ASSIST managers.

Because of the importance of these meetings, the Coordination Site decided to hold them at campuses throughout the state to help ensure that as many campuses as possible attend. Larger north/south meetings have been good for addressing large groups of people, but a more limited number of campuses attend. Given the importance of the topics at hand, it was decided to try and reach as many campuses as possible.

Since these meetings have not been completed as of the writing of this report, it is expected that additional information on issues raised may be provided at the Board meeting on May 18, 1998.

### **3. Web ASSIST Usage**

Web ASSIST continues to serve large numbers of students, faculty and staff. There have been over 21,000 unique visitors (computers) and over 12,000 of those visitors have viewed over 130,000 reports. Currently, on average approximately 1,500 reports are being viewed every weekday. Approximately 1 out of every ten reports viewed is printed. Usage has been steadily increasing since after the holiday break in December. Fluctuations in usage are expected as the summer approaches and fewer people desire access to this information. No significant service interruptions have occurred (a few brief interruptions have occurred, but none lasted more than 20 minutes). No delays in servicing individual requests have been recorded by the server. Some people have called reporting slowness and it has usually been found that it is either their campus network or the Internet.

### **4. Web ASSIST Version 2 Development**

As discussed at the November 3, 1997 Board meeting, the Coordination Site has met with campuses in various venues (including the annual ASSIST conference in December and student focus groups at campuses) to gain feedback regarding Web ASSIST usability. Subsequently the Coordination Site wrote a set of proposed software modifications to address these user needs. These proposed modifications are details in the Web ASSIST Version 2 Project Proposal and Definition of Functional Requirements. The Coordination Site is working with the ASSIST Technical Advisory Committee in pursuing the development of these modifications per the ASSIST Software Development Framework. Further information regarding this project will be discussed at the May 18, 1998 Board meeting.

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

Coordination Site staff have continued their work on the development of the Web ASSIST Maintenance system according to the Project Plan approved by the TAC in September 1997. While this project got off to a late start due to the difficulties in hiring a PowerBuilder programmer, the Coordination Site still hopes to deploy this system in January 1999. Numerous problems have been encountered related to data inconsistencies and poor data quality, but these problems have not yet seriously affected the overall schedule. Prototypes of the Course List and Articulation Agreement modules are being previewed with campus staff at the Spring ASSIST Regional Meetings.

## **6. Articulation Data Extracts**

Some universities are continuing to use the articulation data extracts first made available in October 1997. This utility creates files that can be used to seed other systems, such as degree audit systems, with data that would otherwise have to be redundantly entered into ASSIST and the other system. Many CSU campuses, however, are waiting for the data entry of all community college CSU Baccalaureate lists to be completed in order for these extracts to be most useful.

No community colleges have responded to Coordination Site offers to discuss possible uses of these data extracts in community college systems.

The Coordination Site will continue to support the use of this utility and will ensure that similar capabilities are available in the new Web ASSIST Maintenance system.

## **7. CSU Baccalaureate, IGETC & CSU GE-Breadth Lists**

The Coordination Site is now working on entering all of the CSU Baccalaureate level course data for 95-96, 96-97, and 97-98 that was recently collected by the CSU Chancellor's Office. This initial data entry is progressing very slowly as many colleges are reporting extremely high numbers of CSU Bacc level courses and related changes over the three year period. Once completed, the CSU Chancellor's Office will request 98-99 updates and the ACS will enter that data to complete this important aspect of the repository. In the future years, colleges will be asked to submit changes to this information as part of their regular, ongoing course list data maintenance.

The Coordination Site has received information on those courses recently approved for IGETC applicability beginning in 98-99. Once the Coordination Site receives similar information for new 98-99 CSU GE applicable courses and the 98-99 combined IGETC/CSU GE-Breadth technical changes, all of the information will be entered into the repository and released in Web ASSIST. It is hoped that all of this information will be provided in time for data entry and release with the semi-annual distribution in July.

## **8. CCCCCO MIS Course Lists**

As follow-up to another Strategic Plan activity, the Coordination Site has been working with Jan Paulson and her staff at the CCCCCO to examine the feasibility of using curriculum data from the CCCCCO MIS system in ASSIST instead of continuing to work individually with each college to obtain course list updates each term. During an initial project to compare the curriculum data between the CCCCCO MIS system and ASSIST, numerous differences between the two databases

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were found. While a handful of colleges had 90% matches on a majority of courses, many had a significant number of differences in course name references, titles, unit values, transfer codes, and repeatability. The Coordination Site will continue to work with Jan's office on analyzing this data. While it is hoped that some colleges will be able to resolve inconsistencies, at this time it is recommended that ASSIST continue to work individually with colleges on obtaining complete course list information. Those colleges that can provide accurate data electronically will be encouraged to do so. Others will have to use a combination of methods to submit data to ASSIST until their electronic data is cleaned up.

**9. Processes for Complete Course List Data**

With the Board's adoption of the new "ASSIST Complete Data Policies" at their November 1997 meeting, all UC, CSU and CCC campuses are now required to provide course list data each term to the ASSIST repository. Those colleges and universities who have been using the Revelation-based ASSIST software are being asked to continue using it to provide course list updates each term.

For those colleges and universities who have not been using Revelation ASSIST, the Coordination Site is working with them directly to obtain course list updates. Generally, these are being provided as formatted data files that are loaded into ASSIST. A printout is then sent back to the campus for verification. Any corresponding error corrections or additions are then being entered into ASSIST by ACS staff. Currently, only a few of these colleges and universities have provided the required data and the Coordination Site is following up with campuses on an individual basis to help ensure compliance.

These two basic processes will continue for the Fall 1998 and the Spring 1999 course list updates. After that, all colleges and universities will be required to use the new Web ASSIST Maintenance System to do their Fall 1999 and beyond course list updates.

**10. Complete Data Status Report**

Per the "Complete Data Policies" adopted by the Board in November 1997, all UC & CSU campuses are now required to have all of their most current articulation established with any CCC's in ASSIST. Since the planned "Articulation Matrix" will not be distributed to the UC's and CSU's until this summer, the Coordination Site does not currently know precisely what articulation should be in ASSIST. However, the Coordination Site has prepared a separate report, for review by Board members, comparing UC and CSU articulation data availability between 96-97 and 97-98.

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The ACS has continued to do the data entry for 10 CSU campuses as funded by the CSU Chancellor's Office. However, some of these campuses have not been providing updated information throughout the year as often as has been expected.

Many of the other CSU and UC campuses have continued to provide new and updated articulation for 97-98 and the upcoming May 19, 1998 deadline for submitting data is expected to yield a large amount of additional data.

### **11. Database Coordination**

The ACS is continuing the cycle of semi-annual complete database collections and distributions along with monthly incremental distributions. The complete articulation database has continued to increase as colleges and universities update their data throughout the year. The amount of data being distributed during the monthly updates has continued to rise significantly as UC and CSU campuses work to move their articulation updates out to colleges on a more timely basis.

It is expected that these cycles for data collection and dissemination will only continue through January 1999. At that time, the new Web ASSIST Articulation Maintenance System will provide immediate publishing of data updates without the campuses having to send data to the ACS for further processing.

### **12. Marketing activities**

As directed by the Board at the November 1997 meeting, the Coordination Site has been engaged in a few low cost marketing activities to help raise the awareness of Web ASSIST in the student, faculty, and staff communities. The Coordination Site has developed and distributed a small "advertisement" that colleges and universities can use in their schedule of classes, general catalogs, and other print media. This ad includes the new ASSIST logo, a brief phrase, and the Internet address of Web ASSIST. To date, 54 colleges are using this ad. The Coordination Site will continue to encourage colleges and universities to use these ads.

The Coordination Site is also developing a few small graphics that can be included in campus web sites. When a user clicks on these graphics, they will be taken directly to Web ASSIST. Once these are ready, the Coordination Site will put complete information about them on the ASSIST Information Center (including instructions for downloading and installing) and will announce their availability via ASSIST-L.

### **13. Report on Student Focus Groups**

As follow-up to recommendations at the November 1997 Board meeting and the Annual ASSIST Conference in December, in March 1998 the Coordination Site sponsored a number of student focus groups to gain additional feedback on the usability of Web ASSIST. While only a limited number of students participated in these initial focus groups, they provided useful information and may be a useful tool in obtaining other types of feedback directly from students.

Students were asked to complete a very brief preliminary survey concerning their familiarity with articulation and transfer. They were then asked to use ASSIST to find a number of specific items and then look for other information in which they might be interested. Afterwards, they were asked to complete another brief survey regarding their evaluation of the software. Lastly they spoke with an ACS staff member regarding their experiences to help clarify details from the two surveys.

Overall, it was found that few of these student had problems navigating through ASSIST to successfully find the information they were seeking. However, many students were observed having difficulties understanding the contents of articulation agreements.

A more complete report on the results of these focus groups is available as a separate document.