

**ASSIST Board of Directors
Director's Report - November 1998 - Page 1**

The following is a summary of the various activities in which the ASSIST Coordination Site has been engaged. There will be time on the November 2, 1998 meeting agenda to discuss these items in more detail.

1. Web ASSIST Version 2 Deployment

This past July the Coordination Site completed development and testing and activated the most recent upgrade of Web ASSIST. Web ASSIST 2 includes a number of upgraded and new features as outlined in the "Web ASSIST 2 Definition of Functional Requirements" including: more concise prompting sequences and descriptive information to make selecting information easier, integrated links to "articulation policies" documents provided by universities, smoother printing process, user feedback form, frequently asked questions, and expanded help.

There are a couple of additional features outlined in the project plan that are waiting for implementation. One of these is the integration of CAN articulation in articulation agreement reports. The Coordination Site is planning to begin working on this item once the new CAN Director is in place as there are data consistency issues that will have to be handled by the CAN System Office in order for this feature to be implemented.

The new feedback form has already provided a great deal of useful information regarding problems users encounter. Many of these problems are outside the scope of ASSIST including questions about specific majors or campus policies. Coordination Site staff forward these issues to college and university campuses as appropriate. Many positive comments have been received that indicate strong support for the changes made in Web ASSIST 2.

2. Web ASSIST Usage

The use of Web ASSIST has continued to be very high. Over the summer, usage dropped to about half the volume seen during the Spring. However, beginning in August, usage jumped back up to Spring 97 levels. On an average day, approximately 3000 reports are provided and there appear to be many users accessing ASSIST from places other than colleges and universities.

The Coordination Site has had some problems with the software used to track web site usage. This has meant a delay in providing new on-line reports with specific information for campuses on the numbers of reports requested on a campus-by-campus basis. This is an item of great interest to many articulation officers. The Coordination Site has finally solved the problems and expects to have these reports available by late November 1998.

3. CSU Baccalaureate List Project

The Coordination Site has finally completed the entry and clean-up of the 95-96, 96-97 and 97-98 CSU Baccalaureate Lists for all 107 Community Colleges. This project began in February 1998 in coordination with the CSU Chancellor's Office. The lists are now being reviewed by each college one final time before the information is included in the on-line ASSIST database. The Coordination Site expects that the reviews will be completed in November and all further corrections made during December so that the information can finally be posted in January 1999.

This project has been key to cleaning up curriculum data throughout the ASSIST database to provide better quality data and to provide a workable base for the new Web ASSIST Maintenance System. This new system requires much cleaner curriculum data throughout the database than did the Revelation software.

Based on ongoing work with the CCC Chancellor's Office and as discussed at the May Board meeting, mid-way through this project, the Coordination Site integrated curriculum data from the CCC MIS system for Fall 95 through Spring 98. While this additional data was key to helping ensure that courses in ASSIST match with those colleges actually used on transcripts, it also slowed down the process as there was a greater than expected difference between existing data in ASSIST and the information colleges have been reporting to the Chancellor's Office. As will be discussed later in this report, this extra work has impacted the overall time line for the Web ASSIST Maintenance System.

Once this data is released in the public ASSIST database, it will also be available for CSU campuses to use with their local degree audit systems (via the ASSIST Articulation Data Extracts). Many CSU campuses have been waiting for this data to help provide a better base of curriculum data for these systems.

In January, the CSU Chancellor's Office and the Coordination Site will coordinate the update of the CSU Baccalaureate Lists for the 98-99 academic year.

4. 1998-1999 IGETC & CSU GE Cert List Updates

The annual cycle for collecting technical updates and new course approvals for IGETC and CSU GE-Breadth Certification was supposed to be completed by July 1. However, the CSU Chancellor's Office was not able to provide information on CSU GE-B course approvals until mid-August (originally expected in April). This delay meant that by the time the Coordination Site was able to begin working on the entry of this information, they were in the middle of the CSU Bacc Lists project and the entry/update of IGETC and CSU GE-B data for 98-99 was slowed further. The Coordination Site expects to have this information completed and published in Web ASSIST by late November.

5. Web ASSIST Maintenance System

The Coordination Site has continued to work on the development of the Web ASSIST Maintenance System which will enable all articulation data entry/updating to be conducted via the Internet and completely phase-out the older Revelation-based ASSIST software. This software was originally planned for deployment in January 1999.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the CSU Baccalaureate List project has enabled the Coordination Site to clean up a great deal of curriculum data in preparation for the new Web ASSIST Maintenance System, but this project has taken much more time than originally expected. This has meant substantial delays in the development of the Web ASSIST Maintenance System. This system requires consistent referencing of curriculum data among all of the database components, and until each of the database components is clean, the programmers cannot complete all of their work. While the Course List, CSU Bacc, IGETC, and CSU GE-B lists are now clean, the Coordination Site still has to finish working on the UCOP TCA and Articulation Agreement database components. This will take a number of additional months to complete as cleaning up the Articulation Agreements component will require careful coordination with the individual CSU and UC campuses.

The Web ASSIST Maintenance System has two primary components for campuses: Curriculum, and Articulation Agreements. The Coordination Site is currently reworking the project schedule to ensure that the curriculum component will be ready in April 1999 when CCC, CSU, and UC campuses will need to begin updating their curriculum information for Fall 1999.

Note: This new curriculum update process will finally combine a number of different processes colleges have had to follow to provide curriculum information for various purposes to just one. And, this single process will be more closely integrated with the CCCCO MIS process to provide an even easier process for colleges and help to ensure more consistent curriculum data throughout ASSIST. However, since the curriculum update cycles at campuses are fixed and consistent curriculum data is so important, the Coordination Site feels very strongly that this new process must be in place by April (for the Fall 1999 cycle) instead of delaying it until the Spring 2000 cycle.

Combined with a longer than expected data clean-up process, this will delay the deployment of the articulation agreement component until sometime in the summer. A new, detailed schedule will be provided to the ASSIST Technical Advisory Committee and the Board as soon as possible. Also this new schedule will be presented to campuses and discussed in detail at the Annual ASSIST Conference in December.

6. 1999-2000 Technical Update Process

As mentioned in the previous section of this document, the new Web ASSIST Maintenance System will include a new process for campuses to provide technical updates to curriculum. This means that beginning with the upcoming 1999-2000 cycle, the Coordination Site will no longer request separate technical updates for course lists, CSU Baccalaureate, IGETC and CSU GE-Breadth lists. The Coordination Site is planning on calling a meeting of CCC, CSU and UC systemwide office representatives who have been coordinating the UCOP TCA, CSU Bacc, IGETC and CSU GE-Breadth processes in order to review this new process and discuss any changes to policies and practices to ensure a smooth transition.

7. Complete CSU & UC Articulation Agreement Data Status Report

As discussed at the May Board meeting, after the semi-annual data collection in June, the Coordination Site updated the "Four Year Articulation in ASSIST Comparison" report originally provided at the May Board meeting. The Board Workgroup met over the summer and discussed this report.

The 1998 ASSIST Strategic Plan includes new processes for ongoing semi-annual reports to the Board on the status of complete data in ASSIST. To begin this process, the Coordination Site distributed Data Entry Planning Matrices to each UC and CSU campus. These matrices ask the campus to indicate what types of articulation they have established with each college, the year of the most recent agreement with each college, and whether or not they plan to update the agreement during the coming academic year. Most all universities have completed and returned these matrices, and the Coordination Site has forwarded them to the Board Workgroup members. Copies of these matrices are available to Board members on request.

8. Database Coordination

The Coordination Site has continued to collect data from universities on a monthly basis for publishing in Web ASSIST. CSU and UC campuses have been providing a great deal of new/updated information each month. When these updates are published each month (generally by the first of the month) the Coordination Site also updates a set of "Database Summaries" that users can access from within ASSIST to better see what types of information are available for specific institutions and which agreements were updated in a given month.

9. Articulation Data Entry Training

The Coordination Site has recently been providing articulation data entry training for a number of UC and CSU campuses who have had staff turnover. This training is still provided at the Coordination Site and is generally conducted in one day. When campuses call for training, the Coordination Site requests that both the new staff member and the Articulation Officer attend to help ensure consistency.

10. Marketing Activities

As outlined in the Strategic Plan and discussed at various Board and Workgroup meetings, the Coordination Site has continued to provide low-cost marketing activities to help maintain awareness about ASSIST. Over the summer, the Coordination Site posted graphics and instructions for campuses to use in establishing links from their campus web sites to ASSIST. Also, the Coordination Site published the electronic files used to print the Web ASSIST announcement cards. Campuses can give these files to a local printing company if they would like to print additional copies of these cards. They can also add information about the campus in some blank areas on the back of the card if desired.

In order to publicize the availability of the newest version of Web ASSIST, Coordination Site staff presented a session at each of the five UC Counselor Conferences this Fall. All five sessions were very well attended and most attendees had not been to an ASSIST presentation before. Also, there were a large number of high school counselors attending these sessions.

The University of California Regents requested an informational presentation on articulation at their October 15 meeting. ASSIST was prominently mentioned by many of the presenters and a brief demo of ASSIST was shown.

Director Taggart attended the Northern and Southern CIAC meetings on October 16 and 20 to provide a general update on ASSIST activities since the Coordination Site did not sponsor Fall ASSIST Regional Meetings this year. Since most all of the UC and CSU articulation officers attended these sessions, Director Taggart also discussed the delays in the development of the Web ASSIST Maintenance System and informed the groups that more detailed information on the new schedule for this project would be provided at the Annual ASSIST Conference in December.

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