

ASSIST - Official High School A-F List Repository
Initial Report
Draft - October 1997

At their June 23, 1997 meeting, the ASSIST Executive Committee directed the ASSIST Coordination Site to develop an initial report outlining the issues and options for creating a computerized, relational database of High School A-F Lists in the ASSIST Repository.

Background

High School A-F Lists identify courses from all California public and private High Schools that apply to the UC and CSU admissions eligibility requirements. UC and CSU admissions offices use these lists to determine the admissions eligibility of California High School students. High School students use these lists to help plan their academic course work prior to entering UC or CSU. Community College students and staff use these lists to help determine deficiencies in student admissions eligibility to UC and CSU.

While High School A-F Lists are not necessarily considered “transfer” information, many people believe that they are important information for High School and Community College students to use in transfer planning.

In 1988, the ASSIST Coordination Site (ACS) was directed to organize an intersegmental group of any interested campus articulation officers to redesign the articulation maintenance and display components of the ASSIST software. Along with specifying the details for new Articulation Agreement and Transfer Course Agreement components, this group requested the addition of a component to allow the display of High School A-F Lists. This component was eventually added to the Revelation-based ASSIST software and relied on data provided by the UC Office of the President (UCOP). This source data was in the form of simple word processing documents that the ACS converted into compatible text files for display via the Revelation-based ASSIST software. Whenever the source documents were updated at UCOP, an updated set of files was provided to the ACS and converted for use in the ASSIST software. A computerized, relational database of these data does not currently exist.

UCOP recently put copies of the High School A-F Lists on one of their Web sites so that these documents could be viewed more easily. During the development of Web ASSIST, the ACS decided not to include displays of these data within Web ASSIST since it would represent similar data as the UCOP site and would require redundant work to maintain. However, the ACS did provide a link from Web ASSIST to the UCOP High School A-F List site.

With the High School A-F Lists being in simple word processing documents and not in a computerized, relational database with course-level detail, there is only limited processing that can be done. Data can be displayed, but it cannot be processed to provide more useful capabilities. Additionally, the current data at UCOP does not contain additional information on performance courses that are used to further determine CSU admissions eligibility.

Issue

ASSIST has now been established as the official repository of statewide articulation and transfer information for California. One of the components approved by the Board to be in this repository is the High School A-F Lists. At this time, however, there are no A-F List data in the Internet-based ASSIST repository, only a link to a copy of the data at UCOP. The Revelation-based ASSIST software continues to include A-F Lists, but this software is scheduled to be phase-out by December 1998. In order to resolve this issue, the ASSIST Board of Directors needs to decide whether or not ASSIST will eventually function as the official repository of California High School A-F Lists.

If the Board continues to agree that ASSIST should be the official repository for this information, the Board will then need to decide in what manner this information will be represented in ASSIST. The following is additional information on two possible options for representing this information in ASSIST.

Option 1: A-F Lists as Textual Documents

One way of representing High School A-F Lists in ASSIST is to continue storing them as word processing documents. The current set of A-F Lists could be converted directly into ASSIST. If this were to be done, these official copies of these documents would be stored and updated directly in the ASSIST database. This would ensure that the data in ASSIST represents the most current and complete information available. The primary issue with this approach is that the word processing format of the data would severely restrict other possible applications of the data.

Option 2: A-F Lists as a Relational Database

Another way of representing High School A-F Lists in ASSIST is to store them in a relational database with course-level and historical detail. This option would ensure that the data in ASSIST represents the most current and complete information available (as does the first option). However, it would also provide for additional future capabilities which rely on course-level detail. Examples of such future capabilities are: data source for other information systems such as CSU Mentor and UC Pathways, cross-discipline and cross-institution reporting, historical tracking of courses, and automated evaluation of High School course work relative to the A-F requirements.

The primary issue with this approach is that a relational database with course-level detail cannot be created automatically from the source word processing documents. In order to establish the database, all of the courses in the A-F Lists would need to be entered by hand. This data entry would be similar to that required in 1989 when the current database UC transferable Community College courses was initially entered.

Development Issues

In order to establish the storage, maintenance, and display capabilities for either of these two options, the ACS would need to design and develop software to augment the current Web ASSIST Displays software and the Web ASSIST Maintenance software that is now being developed. Any such software development would follow the guidelines of the ASSIST Software Development Framework which provides for broad input on establishing the specific requirements and capabilities of any software and provides the ASSIST Board and TAC with opportunities for reviewing and approving any work before it is performed.