

**ASSIST Transcript Analysis Tool
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 summarizing their discussions on the scope and possible development methodologies of desired transcript analysis capabilities within ASSIST.

Background

Since ASSIST was started in 1985, computerized transcript evaluation (especially of transferable course work) has been an important capability desired by many people within the California higher education community.

The Revelation-based ASSIST software included a comprehensive transcript analysis tool (the ASSIST Progress Check). However, due to a variety of factors, the Revelation-based ASSIST Progress Check is being phased-out and will not be converted into the new Internet-based ASSIST software.

The current ASSIST mission and vision statements, established by the ASSIST Board of Directors, continue to recognize the importance of transcript evaluation capabilities. One of the secondary goals in the ASSIST Strategic Plan calls for the establishment of transcript analysis capabilities within the general context of ASSIST. On June 23, 1997 the ASSIST Executive and Technical Advisory Committees met to further clarify the desired scope of such a system.

The following information outlines the general capabilities and features of an ASSIST transcript analysis tool as discussed by the ASSIST Executive and Technical Advisory Committees.

Potential Evaluation Capabilities

A new ASSIST transcript analysis tool would be focused primarily on the evaluation of transfer-related academic goals such as:

- Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) Certification
- CSU GE-Breadth Certification
- UC and CSU Campus General Education for Transfer Students
- UC and CSU Campus Lower Division Major Preparation for Transfer Students

Student, as well as college and university staff, would have direct access via standard web browsers connected to the Internet. Other systems such as UC Pathways and CSU Mentor would also be able to integrate with this system via the Internet.

User Authentication and Security

This system would employ sufficient user authentication and security mechanisms to ensure privacy of student data. Other web-based systems (UC Pathways and CSU Mentor) are developing user authentication and security mechanisms that should be directly applicable to ASSIST.

Transcript Access

This system would access student transcript data using whatever technologies are adopted by UC, CSU and the Community Colleges. This may be some form of real-time Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) using the ANSI X12 (SPEEDE) standards.

Possible Development Methodologies

In order to find the most effective way of achieving the desired capabilities and features for this system, the following steps have been suggested:

Define Functional Requirements

Specific functional requirements should be established to clearly define the desired capabilities and features of this system. These functional requirements should be developed and/or reviewed by campus and systemwide office representatives as primary stakeholders in the success of this system.

Analyze Existing Systems Capabilities

There are a number of degree audit systems currently being used at college and university campuses. These systems should be reviewed to determine how they could meet the defined functional requirements for the ASSIST transcript analysis tool.

Survey Users of Existing Systems

For any of the existing systems that adequately meet the defined functional requirements, the campus staff responsible for implementing and using these systems should be surveyed to gain additional information regarding the feasibility of using these systems as the ASSIST transcript analysis tool.

Customer Interest Survey

With a clear definition of the capabilities and features for this tool, potential customers should be surveyed to gauge their specific levels of interest and readiness. This could help to establish priorities for a phased development. The list of potential customers surveyed should include representatives from campus and systemwide office information systems (such as Pathways and Mentor) that may be interested in integrating with an ASSIST transcript analysis tool.

Development Alternatives

There may be a number of viable alternatives for developing the ASSIST transcript analysis tool. Three possibilities are described below. For any of these alternatives, additional funding will be required to support software development and data entry. The ASSIST Board has already discussed the possibility of requesting additional funding via the Intersegmental Budgeting Task Force.

Use an Existing Degree Audit System

If any of the existing degree audit systems meet the functional requirements for an ASSIST transcript analysis tool, one of these systems could be selected (possibly enhanced) to function as the ASSIST transcript analysis tool.

Contract with a Vendor or Campus to Develop

The ASSIST Board of Directors could contract with a qualified vendor or campus who demonstrates the potential to successfully develop a system to meet the defined functional requirements for an ASSIST transcript analysis tool.

ASSIST Coordination Site Develop Software

The ASSIST Coordination Site could develop new software to meet the defined functional requirements for this system.

Outstanding Issue

One outstanding issue that the ASSIST Board needs to address is that in their 1996-1997 ASSIST Strategic Plan, they assured the availability of a statewide transcript analysis tool by December 1999. Given the current status of these activities, a December 1999 time frame seems improbable. Many campuses have commented that their local plans are dependent upon the availability of such capabilities and that if delays are expected, they need to be informed so that they might plan accordingly.