

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from electronic originals
(may include minor formatting differences from printed original)



January 15, 2014

The Honorable Rebecca Millett, Chair
The Honorable W. Bruce MacDonald, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
126th Maine Legislature
Augusta, Maine 04333

RE: Report in Compliance with Public Law Chapter 368 (126th Maine Legislature)
"An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State
Government ... [Sec. EEEEE]"

Senator Millett, Representative MacDonald, and the Members of the Joint Standing Committee
on Education and Cultural Affairs,

We are pleased to present this report on behalf of The University of Maine System (UMS) and the Maine Community College System (MCCS) to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs in compliance with the above referenced legislation. Section EEEEE -- one of the many components of the workforce development bill, LD 90, which was sponsored by the Joint Select Committee on Maine's Workforce & Economic Future -- provides for the development of a transition process that facilitates and allows transfer of credits earned at a community college in this State to a public university in this State for use toward a baccalaureate degree in accordance with agreements developed between the UMS and the MCCS.

Specific components of this process include:

- a) development of **articulation agreements** across majors with a priority emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM);
- b) development of **block credit** agreements between general education programs to ensure that a minimum number of credits can transfer from the MCCS to the UMS for those programs for which there is no equivalent program at the university level;
- c) development of a process whereby students who transfer from the MCCS to the UMS and subsequently gain the appropriate credits towards their associate degree can

transfer those credits back to the home MCCS institution in order to receive that degree (e.g., “reverse transfer”); and

- d) Implement a study of the **feasibility of a common course numbering system** across the two Systems.

We are pleased to report that *within* each System significant strategic initiatives are now in place in compliance with the timelines provided in the Public Law which are **necessary preconditions for our joint work**.

Maine Community College System

Maine Community College initiatives have been led by the seven campus presidents under the direction of President Fitzsimmons. The work of the Academic Affairs Council and faculty has contributed to these achievements, as has the dedicated work of staff. They form a sound foundation for the joint work to be conducted over the upcoming months.

Internal Transfer

- In December of 2013 Maine Community College System created an internal transfer agreement, which is signed by each of the seven community college presidents. The Transfer Articulation Agreement establishes a seamless pathway for students transferring among the seven colleges of the Maine Community College System by ensuring that the maximum allowable credits for substantially similar courses earned at one community college can transfer to other colleges of the MCCS as equivalent courses, rather than as electives. The agreement requires colleges to accept the results of Prior Learning Assessments from one college to another MCCS institution. All student appeals regarding internal transfer decisions will be handled between the presidents of the respective institutions.

General Education Equivalency

- In November of 2013, the MCCS Academic Affairs Council reviewed and updated the General Education Course Equivalency Matrix for publication at community college websites. The Matrix provides guidance to students and personnel in the transfer process.

Faculty Preparedness

- In October of 2013, the MCCS held a Math Summit for instructors from the seven colleges to look at best practices in remediation, as well as college level courses. This is the first in a series of workshops designed to build relationships and share resources across campuses which will serve to enhance the transfer process.

STEM Alignment

- Most recently, the MCCS reviewed all STEM Programs and related CIP Codes to enable research in these areas. This work will guide future articulation efforts with the University of Maine System.

Articulation Agreement Inventory

- Additionally, the MCCS created an inventory of articulation agreements between community colleges and universities to determine opportunities for additional work in this area.

University of Maine System

Reporting to the Chancellor, the UMS has created a high-level Credit Transfer Steering Committee to oversee the formation and implementation of a System-wide Credit Transfer Plan. After reviewing dozens of national best practices, the Steering Committee's change analysis process selected four (4) best transfer practices (shown below). They align closely with the provisions of Public Law. Progress on implementation of the plan's major components is reported regularly to the UMS Board.

Electronic Communication Tools

- The development of a robust **transfer portal website** that both provides general information and guidance to potential transfer students is fundamental to streamlining the transfer process and providing the best information and tools to potential (and current) students interested in transfer.
- Embedded in the website is a comprehensive on line **course equivalency matrix** for all seven UMS campuses, all seven MCCS campuses, and selected other institutions.
- The website includes **degree audit software** applications for student use for each of the UMS campuses .
- The web portal became **fully operational** for all seven university campuses effective September 2013. It permits potential students to digitally explore transfer scenarios into any UMS program.
- The web portal serves as a platform for **intersystem web platform** which serves as a valuable online tool and resource for students transferring between our systems.

Block transfer/General Education

- Developed a **pathway for the block transfer** of general education requirements across the seven UMS campuses for students who have completed 100-level and 200-level general education requirements.
- Conducted a General Education Workshop on national best practices for faculty/staff teams from all seven UMS campuses.
- Faculty governance bodies on all seven UMS campuses will entertain **adoption of this block transfer pathway** in January 2014.
- Once complete, this pathway will form the basis for a similar **System-to-System approach on block transfer** of general education credit.

Major-to-Major Program Articulation (STEM)

- Updated a **comprehensive list of articulation agreements** between the 7 campuses of the MCCS and the 7 campuses of the UMS as of Dec. 2013.
- Conducted a Major-to-Major Articulation Workshop on national best practices for faculty/staff teams from all seven UMS campuses
- Working groups established across the UMS to standardize transfer between **priority workforce development majors**: STEM (Information Technology & Computer Science), Nursing, and Business.

Adult Degree Completion/Prior Learning Assessment

- Approval processes for **portability of Prior Learning Assessment Credit** are completed on three (3) campuses and under final review on four (4) other campuses of the UMS.

Maine's two public higher education Systems have a long tradition of working together to address mutually the educational needs of Maine's citizens and to add to the economic vitality

of the State. The seven institutions within each System have long worked together on campus-to-campus initiatives to address the needs specific to the students, programs, and regions they serve. The qualitative difference in the current effort is a shared commitment and focus on **System-to-System processes** which promote seamless transferability and better facilitate baccalaureate degree completion than the earlier, more diffuse campus-to-campus processes.

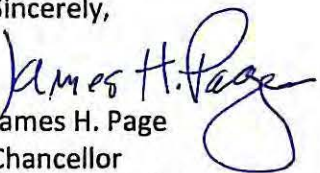
To further accomplish our shared work we have established a **joint high level leadership team**. It is comprised of the MCCS Vice President for Academic Affairs, UMS Chief Student Affairs Officer, and the chair of the UMS Credit Transfer Steering Committee (and President of UMFK). The elements of our on-going shared initiative include:


- formulation of a System-to-System agreement which will lay out the overarching expectations for collaboration and cooperation between our Systems to enable seamless transfer;
- implementing block transfer to lower level general education (a.k.a “core”) requirements;
- identification of comparable STEM areas within each System that can be aligned through articulation agreements;
- design and implementation of a plan to permit “reverse transfer;”
- development of enhanced on line tools
- revitalization and upgrading of the current credit transfer agreement (AdvantageU,) for students enrolled in the MCCS AA in Liberal Studies programs;
- development and implementation of an approach to the transferability of prior learning credit between our Systems;
- further development of regional relationships between institutions for expanded cooperation beyond articulation (ex. facility usage, collaborative work on grant projects, etc.); and
- implementation of a study of the feasibility of common course numbering across our Systems with a report to be delivered September 1, 2014.

As educators we share the intent of the framers of this section of the Public Law. Maine needs a reliable, robust college transfer system for students navigating through its community colleges to pursue baccalaureate offerings within its public university system. As described in this report we believe that this process is well begun. We look forward to providing updated reports on the further implementation of these initiatives to Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs in September 2014.

We stand ready to supply additional supporting documentation on the items contained in this report as your needs may require. We encourage you to contact either of us with any related questions or information requests.

Sincerely,


James H. Page
Chancellor
University of Maine System


John Fitzsimmons
President
Maine Community College System