

# BOARD OF REGENTS BRIEFING PAPER

## 1. AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Handbook Revision: NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee

MEETING DATE: Board of Regents Meeting: March 1-2, 2018

### 2. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Existing Board policy includes provisions governing transfer and articulation within the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), including an NSHE Articulation Board. At its October 19-20, 2017, Special Meeting and Workshop, the Board discussed multiple issues related to strategic planning, including a desire to address the continuing concern expressed by students and other stakeholders regarding student transfers and difficulties encountered with course transfers and articulation.

In response to these concerns, the Chancellor's Office presents the attached policy proposal for a new NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee that reports to the Chancellor and whose membership includes institutional articulation coordinators and the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, or his/her designee, as the Chair. The responsibilities of the Articulation Coordinating Committee would include – but are not limited to – reviewing institutional decisions in student appeals regarding the transfer and/or articulation of transfer credit and providing administrative oversight of the existing NSHE Common Course Numbering System. As reflected in the policy proposal, faculty will serve as members of the discipline committees charged with reviewing course offerings within the NSHE Common Course Number System and student requests for review of final institutional transfer and articulation decisions that are submitted to the NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee.

### 3. SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend Title 4, Chapter 14 to establish the NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee whose responsibilities include – but are not limited to – providing administrative oversight of the existing NSHE Common Course Numbering System and reviewing final institutional decisions in student appeals regarding the transfer and/or articulation of transfer credit. In addition, make related technical changes and delete obsolete language in this chapter that is no longer needed or is set forth in other sections of the *Handbook*. See the attached policy proposal amending *Title 4, Chapter 14, Sections 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, and 25*.

### 4. IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

The policy revision is presented in response to recent Board discussions at its October 2017 Special Meeting and to ongoing concerns regarding the transfer and articulation process within NSHE. The revision is consistent with the Board's strategic goals for student access, increasing student success, and closing the achievement gap.

### 5. CHECK THE NSHE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THIS REQUEST:

- Access (Increase participation in post-secondary education)
- Success (Increase student success)
- Close the Achievement Gap (Close the achievement gap among underserved student populations)
- Workforce (Collaboratively address the challenges of the workforce and industry education needs of Nevada)
- Research (Co-develop solutions to the critical issues facing 21<sup>st</sup> century Nevada and raise the overall research profile)
- Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals

### INDICATE HOW THE PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

The policy proposal is designed to support and facilitate effective transfer and articulation of courses, which promotes access and success for transfer students, in particular, and helps close the achievement gap among underserved student populations, many of whom may start at a community college and later seek to transfer to a four-year institution.

### 6. BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- **Systematic Approach** – The new NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee will provide a systematic approach through the Chancellor's Office to manage multiple issues relating to transfer and articulation, including common course numbering, policies governing the subject matter, and responding to individual student complaints regarding transfer and articulation. This approach is similar to the processes in other states, including Florida.
- **Institutional Representation, Including Faculty** – All institutions will have equal representation on the Articulation Coordinating Committee, and faculty will serve as the subject-matter experts in decisions concerning the common course number system under the jurisdiction of the Committee, as well as in reviewing institutional

decisions regarding the transfer and articulation of courses.

- **NSCCU Standards** – Consistent with NWCCU Standard 2.C.8, provided below, the Committee only has the authority to review the institutional decisions and transmit its findings to the Chancellor. Upon receipt of the findings, the Chancellor may transmit the findings of the Committee’s review to the institution and may request further consideration.

***NWCCU Standard 2.C.8:** The final judgment in accepting transfer credit is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure high academic quality, relevance to the students’ programs, and integrity of the receiving institution’s degrees. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that the credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic quality, and level to credit it offers. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements between the institutions.*

- **Reporting Requirement** – The policy requires periodic reporting to the Board of Regents on the status of transfer and articulation of courses at NSHE institutions, including requests received by the institutions for evaluation of courses for transfer and articulation and the outcome of those requests; and the number of requests for review referred to the Articulation Coordinating Committee and the outcome of those requests. This new reporting requirement will provide a system-wide report on the challenges and difficulties with transfer and articulation within NSHE reported by students and stakeholders, and will allow the Board to more effectively evaluate the efficacy of the system.
- **Transfer and Articulation Ombudsperson** – Based on discussions at the Special Board of Regents meetings in October 2017 and January 2018, the System will hire a Transfer and Articulation Ombudsperson that will work with students, faculty and staff on transfer and articulation matters. The Ombudsperson will support and respond to students who are trying to navigate transfer and articulation within the NSHE System, particularly those students who are encountering difficulties or challenges. In addition, the Ombudsperson will provide staff support for the proposed NSHE Articulation Coordinating committee and other related committees, as well as participate in periodic and on-going efforts to audit transfer agreements and developing related protocols.

**7. POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

The potential arguments raised initially through the Academic Affairs Council and the Student Affairs Council have been addressed in the policy revision presented to the Board, and no additional arguments against have been presented.

**8. ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:**

None have been presented.

**9. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE:**

The Chancellor’s Office recommends approval of this policy revision.

**10. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:**

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_
- X Amends Current Board Policy: Title 4, Chapter 14, Sections 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, and 25
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual:
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Fiscal Impact: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X \_\_\_\_\_  
Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, SECTION 14**  
NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee and  
Institutional Articulation Coordinators

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**Section 14. NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee and Institutional Articulation Coordinators**  
**[Board]**

1. *The Board of Regents is committed to establishing a seamless system for transfer and articulation that promotes student success and helps students move easily from institution to institution as they progress toward their educational goals.*
2. A NSHE Articulation *Coordinating Committee* [Board] *is hereby* [may be] established [as needed] to review and evaluate current *transfer and* articulation policies and formulate additional policies *to help and promote the success of transfer students.*
  - a. The Articulation *Coordinating Committee* [Board] shall report to the Chancellor [and shall be appointed in conformity with Section 1.4.11 of the NSHE Code].
  - b. *The Articulation Coordinator for each institution appointed in accordance with this section shall serve as a member of the NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee.*
  - c. *The Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, or his/her designee, is a member of, and serves as the chair of, the Committee.*
3. The charge of the *Articulation Coordinating Committee* [Board] shall be set by the Chancellor *and includes but is not limited to* [but may include] the following tasks:
  - [+]a. Recommend to the Chancellor and the Board of Regents proposed policies [in] *regarding transfer and* articulation and conduct a continuing review of *transfer and* articulation practices.
  - b. *Provide administrative oversight of the NSHE Common Course Numbering System established in accordance with Section 16 of this Chapter, including but not limited to communicating curricular changes and periodic review of course offerings to ensure that students can readily transfer from one NSHE institution to another.*
    - i. *The Articulation Coordinating Committee may establish System-Wide Discipline Committees that shall include institutional faculty representatives of the disciplines.*
    - ii. *As required, the System-Wide Discipline Committees must review the course offerings within their respective disciplines system-wide periodically or at least once every 10 years to determine common versus unique courses and make the appropriate changes to ensure that students are able to readily transfer courses from one institution to another.*
  - c. *In accordance with this section, on a case by case basis, review institutional decisions in student appeals regarding the transfer and/or articulation of transfer credit.*

- d. *Develop a statewide postsecondary articulation and transfer manual that provides an overview of Board policies governing transfer and articulation at NSHE institutions, including the NSHE Common Course Numbering System, and an outline of the transfer process at each institution for NSHE and non-NSHE students.*

#### **4. *Articulation Coordinators***

- a. *Each university, State College, and community college President will designate an Articulation Coordinator who will serve on the NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee. The Articulation Coordinator should have a comprehensive knowledge of the issues and policies, protocols and processes related to articulation and transfer. A list of institutional Articulation Coordinators will be maintained by the Chancellor's Office and made available on the NSHE System website and each institution's website.*
- b. *The Articulation Coordinator, or his/her designee, will serve as the initial point of contact at each institution for individuals seeking transfer/articulation information or support and will assist students with problems in transfer, and provide current information on the transferability of courses and articulation to degree requirements.*
- c. *Articulation Coordinators will work with deans and department chairs to ensure a timely articulation decision on any course submitted for transfer.*

#### **5. *Review of Final Institutional Decisions of Student Appeals***

- a. *A student may submit a request for review to the Chair of the Committee only after the student exhausts all appeals processes available at the institution and receives written notification of the decision in accordance with Section 17 (Transfer Courses and Student Appeals) of this Chapter. The Committee shall establish a form by which to submit the request for review.*
- b. *Upon receipt of the request for review from the student, the Chair of the Committee, in a timely manner, shall:*
  - i. *Consult with the Articulation Coordinator for the institution to verify the institutional decision and may request documentation justifying the institutional decision to deny the transfer of credit or articulation of credit to the student's degree, major or college requirements; and*
  - ii. *Forward the request for review to the NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee for further review if the consultation with the Articulation Coordinator does not resolve the request for review in favor of the student.*
- c. *Upon receipt of a request for review from the Chair of the Committee, the Articulation Coordinating Committee shall review the institutional decision in a timely manner and report on its review regarding the student's institutional appeal. Before transmitting its findings to the Chancellor, the Articulation Coordinating Committee may establish a discipline committee to review the institutional decision. If a discipline committee is established:*
  - i. *The discipline committee shall include one faculty representative from the discipline from each institution, or if an institution does not have that discipline, a related discipline from the institution.*
  - ii. *The Chair of the Committee shall facilitate review by the discipline committee.*
  - iii. *The representative from the institution that made the final decision on the student's appeal must be allowed to present and explain the rationale for the institutional decision.*
  - iv. *The discipline committee shall evaluate in a timely manner the rationale for institutional decision and notify the Articulation Coordinating Committee whether it agrees or disagrees with the institutional decision.*

- d. Upon receipt of the review from the Articulation Coordinating Committee, the Chancellor may transmit the review findings to the institution and may request further consideration based on the findings of the Articulation Coordinating Committee.*
  - e. The Chair of the Articulation Coordinating Committee shall notify the student and the Articulation Coordinator for the institution of the findings from the request for a review.*
- 6. The Chancellor may establish procedures governing the Articulation Coordinating Committee in accordance with this section.**
- 7. The Chancellor's Office will report periodically to the Board of Regents on the status of transfer and articulation of courses at NSHE institutions, including requests received by the institutions for evaluation of courses for transfer and articulation and the outcome of those requests; and the number of requests for review referred to the Articulation Coordinating Committee and the outcome of those requests.**

- ~~2. Authorize committees or task forces consisting of representatives from all levels of higher education to facilitate articulation in subject areas.~~
- ~~3. Provide for cooperative research among the community colleges, the State College, and the universities in such areas as admissions, grading practices, curriculum design, and follow-up on transfer students.~~
- ~~4. Develop procedures to improve community college-State College-university articulation by exploring such issues as academic record forms, general education requirements, units of credit, course numbering systems, grading systems, academic calendars, and credit-by-examination.~~
- ~~5. Encourage regular communication between and among university, State College, and community college faculty members, particularly on joint curriculum projects.]~~

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, SECTION 16**  
**Courses Numbering System**

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**Section 16. Course Numbering System**

1. All undergraduate courses in the NSHE must be common-course numbered with equivalent courses offered throughout the System. To be assigned a new and unique course number at least 20 percent of the proposed course content must be unique and not found in a current or pending course within the NSHE.

Any additions or changes to undergraduate course prefixes, numbers, titles, and/or credits must follow the procedures established by the Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs and may not be included in class schedules or catalogs until written approval is received from the Department of Academic and Student Affairs.

2. *The NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee shall provide administrative oversight of the NSHE Common Course Numbering System.*

[2]3. An NSHE [~~transfer guide or~~] common course numbering master file shall be maintained by the Office of the Chancellor and published on the Web.

[3]4. Each NSHE institution shall list and update the requirements for each program leading to the bachelor's degree and publicize these requirements for use by all other institutions in the state.

[4]5. Each NSHE institution shall include in its official catalog of undergraduate courses a section stating all lower-division prerequisites for each upper-division specialization or major program.

[5]6. A system-wide course numbering rubric for all institutions shall be maintained so that baccalaureate transfer courses are clearly identified for student reference prior to registration under the following general course numbering parameters:

- |                                   |         |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| a. Remedial/developmental courses | 001-099 |
| b. Lower-division courses         | 100-299 |
| c. Upper-division courses         | 300-499 |
| d. State College graduate courses | 500-699 |
| e. University graduate courses    | 500-799 |

[6]—~~Course selection for students who plan to seek a baccalaureate degree at another NSHE institution shall be based on degree requirements published pursuant to subsection 3 and the governing course catalog of the institution.]~~

7. Community colleges may utilize a B suffix for course numbers to alert students that the course may be non-transferable for a NSHE baccalaureate degree.

8. Within the *student* [~~college's~~] information system, non-transferable courses and courses that are transferable for a bachelor's of applied science degree only must be appropriately identified for students and advisors during the registration process.

9. Professional schools may establish their own distinct course numbering rubric that extends beyond the numbering rubric set forth under Subsection 6 [5].

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, SECTION 17**  
**Transfer Courses and Student Appeals**

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**Section 17. Transfer Courses and Student Appeals**

1. A transfer course is one that is acceptable by a receiving NSHE institution to apply toward an approved degree program at that institution.
  2. All baccalaureate level courses are transferable. In general, a baccalaureate level course is one that is commonly offered by a regionally accredited four-year educational institution as being applicable toward a bachelor's degree. Some courses within an AAS degree may be applicable only toward a BAS degree if that degree is offered by the receiving institution.
  3. Each institution shall determine the acceptability of general elective transfer courses, and departmental, college, or other requirements or equivalents shall be forwarded to the appropriate department or college for course evaluation. If general elective credit from a non-NSHE institution is granted by one NSHE institution, then all NSHE institutions shall accept the credit unless the facts on which the original decision was based have changed. Appropriate consultation with the faculty is *required* [~~encouraged~~] throughout the evaluation process.
  4. A receiving institution shall not require a transfer student to take examinations to validate credit in those courses that are approved as transferable.
  5. Application of credits toward *degree* [~~major or college~~] requirements is the responsibility of the college and department in which the student is seeking a degree. Validation of course content may be required when lower-division courses are used to satisfy upper-division curricular requirements.
  6. Pursuant to *Nevada Revised Statutes* 396.568, an NSHE institution shall not require a student to repeat a course on transfer to a university or State College if an equivalent course was taken and successfully completed at any other NSHE institution, except for programs that have defined a time limit for completion.
  7. [~~Each NSHE institution will create a brochure and Web site that outlines the transfer process and the protections given to baccalaureate degree-seeking students who enter the NSHE at a community college. Designed for students, parents, faculty, and legislators, these resources must include an explanation of the transfer process and a transfer student's "Bill of Rights." Telephone numbers regarding where a student can find assistance must be provided by each campus.~~]
- 8.] Each NSHE institution shall evaluate military transcripts pursuant to Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 23.

**8. Student Appeals**

- a. If the institution denies the transfer of credit or the articulation of the credit to the student's degree requirements, the student may appeal the institutional decision.*
  - i. Each institution shall establish an appeal process that must be made available to all students and posted on the institution's website.*
  - ii. Courses identified as non-transferrable in the student information system or the originating institution's catalog are not subject to appeal.*
  - iii. The institution shall notify the student in writing of the final outcome of the appeal and, if transfer credit or the articulation of credit is denied, the reason for the denial.*

*b. After all institutional appeal processes are exhausted, a student may submit a request for review of the final institutional decision to the NSHE Articulation Coordinating Committee in accordance with Section 14 of this Chapter.*

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, SECTIONS 20, 21 and 24**  
Community College Course Prefixes, Curriculum Planning, and  
Concurrent Registration

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**DELETE THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:**

**[Section 20. — Community College Course Prefixes**

1. ~~It is the intent of the Board of Regents that all community college transfer courses follow a statewide system of course designation. Although not encouraged, exceptions to this policy are permitted. Any exceptions must be reported to the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs for information.~~
2. ~~Letter designators indicating the transfer value of a course shall continue to be used by the System in course schedules, catalogs, transfer guides, and official student transcripts, with the exception of the B-designator, which shall not be required to appear on official student transcripts.]~~

**[Section 21. — Curriculum Planning**

1. ~~Community college students should be encouraged by counselors and academic advisors to choose as early as possible the institution and program into which they expect to transfer.~~
2. ~~To increase communication among all institutions, each Articulation Coordinator or representative will be invited to participate in appropriate curricular meetings at other regional campuses. This will ensure all campuses are aware of current or pending changes in university, State College, and community college curricula.~~
3. ~~Credit completed within the NSHE does not constitute an interruption of the resident credit regulation in satisfying the minimum on-campus resident credit requirements for graduation.]~~

**[Section 24. — Concurrent Registration**

~~NSHE policy permits students to register concurrently in courses at the various institutions subject to these regulations:~~

1. ~~Each student who plans a concurrent registration is personally responsible for obtaining the advanced written approval of the assigned faculty advisor or counselor at the home institution to assure the course(s) are applicable toward satisfying degree requirements.~~
2. ~~The maximum combined concurrent registration load in any one semester is determined by the advisor and the dean of the college (or equivalent) of the student's home institution offering the degree or program.]~~

**RENUMBER SECTIONS 22 AND 23 AS SECTIONS 20 AND 21.**

**RENUMBER SECTIONS 25 THROUGH 30 AS SECTIONS 22 THROUGH 27.**

**MAKE THE NECESSARY INTERNAL REFERENCE UPDATES TO REFLECT THIS RENUMBERING, INCLUDING:**

- *Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 17:* Change reference from “Section 23” to “Section 21”
- *Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 23:* Change references from “Section 22” to “Section 20”
- *Title 4, Chapter 14, Sections 26 and 28:* Change references from “Section 26” to “Section 24”

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, SECTION 25**  
Advising, Counseling and Other Student Services

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

**Section 25. Advising, Counseling, and Other Student Services**

1. Counselors and advisors should assist students in evaluating academic progress and the appropriateness of their educational objectives. Each institution shall provide current information on a continuing basis in each of the following areas: admission requirements, general education requirements, *credit by examination, military credit*, transfer status of courses, *transfer agreements*, major and minor fields of study, lower- and upper-division levels of study, upper-division standing, and graduation requirements.
2. Counselors and academic advisors should be well informed about student services available at the State College and universities serving their transfers. Such services include financial assistance, including loans, scholarships, and employment, housing, counseling and guidance, developmental or basic skills programs, health services, and student activities.
- ~~3. Each campus shall designate an office responsible for community college relations, State College relations, or university relations to assist the students with problems in transfer, to provide current information on the transferability of courses and articulation issues, and to act as ombudsman where needed in student cases.~~
4. Articulation Coordinators
  - ~~a. Each university, State College, and community college President will designate an articulation coordinator who will be responsible for expediting transfer decisions. The coordinator should have a comprehensive knowledge of the issues and policies related to articulation and transfer.~~
  - ~~b. Coordinators at the universities and State College will work with deans and department chairs as well as regional community colleges to ensure a timely articulation decision on any course submitted for transfer status by the community colleges.~~
  - ~~e. In compliance with Board of Regents' policy Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 16(3), which states that "If general elective credit is granted by one university, then all institutions shall accept the credit," it will be the responsibility of the university articulation coordinator to notify the Chancellor's Office and his/her counterpart at the other institution concerning any decisions or changes made to such courses.]~~