

BOARD OF REGENTS  
BRIEFING PAPER  
*Handbook Revision, Reverse Transfer*

**BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:**

The Board has had in place for a number of years a policy that encourages students who transfer from an NSHE community college to UNLV, UNR, or NSC prior to receiving a transferable associate degree to transfer back to the community college the courses they have taken at the four-year institution to complete the associate degree requirements. This is called a reverse transfer degree. There are many advantages of a reverse transfer degree. For the student, they have a valuable degree in hand should their attaining the baccalaureate degree be delayed. For the community college, their degrees awarded will more accurately reflect their actual contribution to student success.

In spite of this policy, few students are taking advantage of the reverse transfer. Recently, institutions began communicating in earnest about how to encourage the awarding of more reverse transfer degrees. This conversation is leading to a more aggressive policy to promote the reverse transfer use by students which is proposed in this document. (See attached Policy Proposal.) To increase student awareness of this degree option, data will be shared so that colleges and universities can let students know when they are potentially eligible for an associate degree under the reverse transfer policy. A much greater use of the reverse transfer is anticipated as institutions work together for the benefit of students and consequently award more degrees.

**SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:**

Amend Board policy (*Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 15 and new Section 16*) to clearly define the “reverse transfer degree” and provide that on a periodic basis the System Office or the four-year institution will provide to the community colleges a list of students previously enrolled who earned at least 15 credits at the respective community college and have recently transferred to a university or state college and have accumulated at least 60 college-level credits who may be eligible for an associate degree in order to facilitate conversations between institutions on the reverse transfer. (See attached Policy Proposal.)

**IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):**

The proposal is brought forward at the request of the community college presidents.

**BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:**

If adopted as proposed, the reverse transfer policy will:

- Increase student awareness of the reverse transfer option;
- Increase the number of associate’s degrees awarded by the community colleges;
- Contribute to the degree completion goals of the Complete College America initiative;
- Establish a process that will facilitate conversations between the community colleges and four-year institutions regarding the reverse transfer – enabling the community college to contact those students who may be delayed in getting a bachelor’s degree and assisting them in getting the associate degree; and
- Providing those students who are delayed in getting a bachelor’s degree with a recognized associate’s degree.

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

None have been brought forward.

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

Maintain the existing policy that does not include a process for the System Office to provide to the community colleges a list student potentially eligible for an associate’s degree under the reverse transfer policy.

**COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:**

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_
- Amends Current Board Policy: *Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 15 and new Section 16*
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # \_\_\_\_\_ Section # \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Fiscal Impact: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No        
Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, SECTION 15**  
**Reverse Transfer**

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

**Section 15. Transfer Courses**

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. In order to be sure that all students who start at the community college have the opportunity to complete the baccalaureate degree in the same number of credits as those who start at a university or college, if lower division courses required in the major are not offered by the community college, the university or college shall either offer the courses at the community college or offer a reverse transfer agreement with the community college. If on a case-by-case basis, specific baccalaureate degrees appear unable to be articulated by either method, the NSHE Department of Academic and Student Affairs office shall resolve the impasse.]~~
- [4]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 encouraged throughout the evaluation process.
- [5]4. A receiving institution shall not require a transfer student to take examinations to validate credit in those courses that are approved as transferable.
- [6]5. Application of credits toward 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.
- [7]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.
- [8]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.

**POLICY PROPOSAL**  
**TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14, *new* SECTION 16**  
**Reverse Transfer**

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

INSERT A NEW SECTION 16 AS FOLLOWS:

*Section 16. Reverse Transfer*

- 1. Reverse transfer is a degree-completion opportunity for students who have started their education at a community college and transferred to a four-year NSHE institution prior to the completion of an associate's degree. Course credits may be transferred from the university or college to the community college for the purpose of meeting the requirements for an associate's degree.*
- 2. In order to ensure that all students who start at the community college have the opportunity to complete the baccalaureate degree in the same number of credits as those who start at a university or college, if lower division courses required in the major are not offered by the community college, the university or college shall either offer the courses at the community college or establish a reverse transfer agreement with the community college. If on a case-by-case basis, specific baccalaureate degrees appear unable to be articulated by either method, the NSHE Department of Academic and Student Affairs shall resolve the impasse.*
- 3. Periodically, the System Office or the four-year institution will provide to the community colleges a list of students previously enrolled who earned at least 15 credits at the respective community college and have recently transferred to a university or state college and have accumulated at least 60 college-level credits. The list will include the student's name and universal identification number (NSHE ID) for the purpose of the community college contacting the student regarding the options for reverse transfer of courses to encourage students to earn an associate's degree. In consultation with the respective university or state college, the community college will develop a form to be signed by the student authorizing the release of one transcript to the community college.*

RENUMBER SECTIONS 16 THROUGH 23 AS SECTIONS 17 THROUGH 24.