

**University of Maine System**  
**Credit Transfer Initiative**  
**Status as of 6/11/15**

The following credit transfer practices were identified as the foundation for the enhancement of credit transfer within the University of Maine System. System-wide best practices to improve the college credit transfer process and to make it easier for students to move among Maine's public universities include:

- Electronic communication tools
- Block Transfer /General Education Core Curriculum
- Major (program-to-program) Articulation
- Adult & Transfer degree completion - including Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
- Development of other initiatives, including reverse transfer, in collaboration with the Maine Community College System

Following is a detailing of the work to date and expectations for the future.

**Electronic Communication Tools**

- We developed a robust transfer website and portal for potential and current students. Contained within these two elements are 1) more comprehensive information for the range of transfer students (MCCS, adults, military, etc.), 2) a portal which enables a potential student to do "what if" modeling specific to their program of interest, and 3) a link into MaineStreet which enables a potential or current student to search the availability of those courses for enrollment. We are now in phase 3 of its development – we are adding additional functionality to the equivalency searches so that a student can look at equivalencies across all of our campuses at the same time and are adding a component to the portal itself that would give advisors and students better tools related to actual program outlines so that they can see how courses at a given community college or one of our colleges match up/are equivalent to courses within a given degree program at a new institution. We are hoping to develop a way

that community college advisors can access this electronic tool in order to more easily advise students who meet with them related to transfer.

### **General Education**

#### ***Within the University of Maine System:***

- Block Transfer/Equivalencies
  - All campuses have updated their equivalency tables to reflect equivalencies across the system
  - 6 of 7 campuses (faculty senates) passed broad based block transfer language. All 7 campuses are now expanding this to include articulated outcomes for most general education categories which would result in a block of approximately 35 credits being uniformly accepted across all of our campuses.
    - The UMS Gen Ed group is finalizing work with the various faculty senates on the outcomes based general education block. Our goal is to finalize this piece through all campuses' faculty senates and leadership by the middle of the semester.

#### ***With the MCCS:***

- We have had several discussions with the MCCS around a block transfer approach for general education, focusing on learning outcomes. The MCCS is in the process of increasing their general education requirement for the AA from 19/21 credits to 34-35 credits, and are taking the same outcomes approach to this work as we are. Our goal is the formulation of a similar block transfer policy with the MCCS and our expectation is that we will complete the work in this academic year.
  - In December, the UMS General Education Workgroup sent the MCCS all of the guidance needed for the MCCS to do corresponding work on their side related to outcomes and the designation of the large block. The MCCS held an all day retreat with general education faculty to work through this concept, and presented their work to the UMS at a meeting on March 10 when the two groups reconvened. The two groups have mapped out the plan for next steps, including curricular adjustments and the development of assessment plans; we

hope to complete this phase of our work by the end of the academic year for a fall 2016 implementation.

### **High Demand Major-to-Major Pathways**

- A joint UMS MCCS team across CSIT met in January and again in May to designate pathways across the discipline and to also tie in with the addition of associate degree programs in CSIT thru the MCCS IT grant. We inventoried current articulations and work underway and identified additional opportunities for articulation.
- A joint UMS MCCS team across Nursing met in February to designate clear pathways across the discipline and to also determine pathways into masters and doctoral level (to encourage more to teach nursing which is going to be a critical shortage in Maine) [Preliminary discussions held with nursing leads in December]; our plan is to determine the appropriate next steps at a meeting in June.
- Numerous other discussions between UMS and MCCS institutions related to articulation are underway.

### **Prior Learning Assessment**

- Six of seven campuses approved processes for the transportability of prior learning credits across the UMS, the seventh is underway. All campuses have made adjustments to their PLA scores and requirements to bring these into alignment systemwide.
- We have had two meetings with the MCCS to further align PLA across the two systems (MCCS is in development due to their \$13M IT grant for which they received funding to beef up PLA) – our expectation is that we will be able to align test scores associated with PLA first and then will work together on the development of more consistent processes across the two systems related to portfolio review and credential review. Our goal is to have all of this completed within this academic year.

### **Reverse Transfer**

- USM and SMCC piloted this Fall 2014
- We have met with transfer officers across both systems (twice) and will be developing the implementation plan (and implementing) across both systems for spring/fall 2015.

### **System to System Agreement**

- The UMS and MCCC have signed a broad based system-to-system memorandum of understanding related to transfer and ensuring maximum transfer of credits for students moving between our systems. A second MOU related to the block transfer of general education credit was signed in June.

### **Regular meetings of the transfer officers and other initiatives**

- We are implementing regular meetings of the transfer officers from each system for each semester; our hope is to have at least one joint meeting annually with the Chief Academic Officers across both systems.
- UMS IR and MCCC IR are working together in the development of required legislative reports, in the work with DOL around employment outcomes and in enhancing the data available about our transfer students.
- We are working with DOE on a series of workshops related to Common Core State Standards, the Smarter Balance assessment process and the implementation of the proficiency-based diploma.
- Members of Senior leadership from each System meet on a regular basis (approximately 2 times each month and even more by email).
- We have submitted two combined updates (UMS and MCCC; January 2014 and September 2014) to the Legislature's Education and Cultural Affairs Committee as required by LD 90.



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323 State Street  
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September 1, 2014

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

**RE: Report in Compliance with Public Law Chapter 368: “An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations of the Expenditures of State Government ... (Sec. EEEEE)”**

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

We are pleased to present this final 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 – L.D. 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 Maine community college to a Maine public university for use toward a baccalaureate degree in accordance with agreements developed between the UMS and MCCS.

The following is a detail of the many components of our UMS/MCCS collaboration which are fundamental to our work now and into the future:

- **System-to-System Agreement** – To achieve the purposes of the workforce development bill, the MCCS and UMS have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding effective September 1, 2014 (*please see Attachment A*). The Memorandum of Understanding describes the many initiatives the systems have undertaken to ensure maximum transfer of credits for students moving between community colleges and universities.
- **Reverse Transfer** – A primary accomplishment in this work is the creation of a Reverse Transfer Agreement (*please see Attachment B*). This agreement is designed to facilitate reverse transfer between the MCCS and UMS so that students are able to attain all of the degrees and certifications to which they are entitled. A pilot program between Southern Maine Community College and the University of Southern Maine began in August 2014.

- **Common Course Numbering** – The systems completed a common course numbering feasibility study (*please see Attachment C*). The results of this study have been presented to Chancellor Page and President Fitzsimmons for consideration. It is our opinion based on this research that, while common course numbering seems to be a logical idea and may at some point in the future make sense for a small subset of courses, implementing this now when we have so many other important shared transfer initiatives underway would not make sense. We believe that our other initiatives, combined with the work we have already completed related to course equivalency, will be far more beneficial to students.
- **General Education** – UMS and MCCS appointed on August 1, 2014, a Joint General Education Committee to complete the LEAP process. The goal of the Committee's work going forward is to create a shared understanding of expected outcomes which will result in new curriculum design. Rather than comparing existing course offerings in the two systems, the Joint General Education Committee will design a new pathway for students in Associate in Arts and Associate in Science to assume maximum transfer of credits from one system to the next. This pathway may require the Systems to make changes in order to create a truly seamless transfer from a community college to a university. The Committee will define, also, a smaller block of general education courses for transfer from an Associate in Applied Science program to a four-year program at the university level.
- **Prior Learning Assessment** – The UMS is nearing completion on alignment of its prior learning assessment components, including transportability, across the System and has shared this work with its counterparts in the MCCS. The MCCS Academic Affairs Council adopted a common Prior Learning Assessment Standard and process for use in evaluating a student's application for prior learning credit. This process is now in use at the seven community colleges and has been shared with counterparts at the UMS. A joint MCCS and UMS Committee will consider further modifications and/or adoption at their October 2014 meeting. In addition, collective professional development opportunities related to prior learning assessment will be shared across the two Systems.
- **Transfer Pathways** – The MCCS received a \$12.5 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (*Maine is IT*) to implement 36 programs at the seven colleges. The colleges will share curriculum and related materials in the delivery of these credentials. Two colleges will provide test centers for use by the seven institutions. The MCCS will identify faculty members to work with the information technology faculty in the UMS to build transfer pathways related to this important work.

- ***Regular meetings of institutional transfer officers*** – Transfer officers from both MCCS and UMS are meeting each semester and will play a key role in ensuring that each System is aware of and informed about curricular changes.

We are also 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. An overview of this work was contained within the report delivered to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs in January 2014 (*please see Attached D*). In addition to this work already underway, the following has occurred since that time:

#### **MAINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**

- ***General Education Equivalency***
  - In July of 2014, the MCCS Academic Affairs Council began a second review and update to the General Education Course Equivalency Matrix to capture recent changes and to conform to a process established by UMS in this work. The MCCS Academic Affairs Council scheduled a training session in the use of the LEAP framework for September of 2014. The Council will apply LEAP principles in categorizing general education courses for transfer to the UMS. The UMS General Education Committee employed this system in the internal review of UMS courses offerings. The two resulting tables will be blended into one matrix by December of 2014.
- ***MCCS Academic Policies and Procedures***
  - The MCCS Academic Affairs Council and Presidents Council have reviewed appropriate academic policies and procedures to support transfer initiatives with the UMS. Proposed changes are currently being reviewed by the Education Committee of the MCCS Board of Trustees.

#### **UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM**

- ***Electronic Communication Tools***
  - The web portal developed in 2013 is now entering its third phase of development. The most important component of this phase will be the introduction of program planning sheets whereby a student from a community college can easily see how the courses at their institution fit in with the requirements at one of the universities. Further, UMS is hopeful that it can develop an advisor view for transfer counselors at the community colleges to access these online and live in the computer system.

- *Block Transfer/General Education*
  - All seven university campuses have approved the concept of block transfer and will be enhancing this with a further refinement to define the essential learning outcomes (based on LEAP criteria) expected within the block.
- *Prior Learning Assessment*
  - Five of seven UMS campuses have approved processes for the transportability of Prior Learning credit. The final two campuses will take action during Fall 2014.

We are confident that the structures we have put in place will greatly improve the transfer process for our students. 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





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.

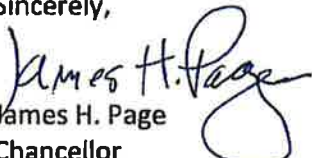
To further accomplish our shared work we have established a **joint high level leadership team**. It is comprised of the MCCS Vice President for Academic Affairs, UMS Chief Student Affairs Officer, and the chair of the UMS Credit Transfer Steering Committee (and President of UMFK). The elements of our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

