

# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Commissioner of Education



July 8, 2008

Dr. Eric J. Smith  
Commissioner of Education  
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1514  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

Dear Commissioner Smith:

The attached six-month follow-up of Office of Program Policies Analysis and Government Accountability report 07-49, *Students Encounter Barriers When Transferring Credit from Non-Public Institutions to Community Colleges* is for your information.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 245-9418.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Ed W. Jordan".

Ed W. Jordan

EWJ/br

Attachment

c: OPPAGA  
Florida Legislative Auditing Committee  
Sandy Cho  
Linda Champion  
Judy Bilsky

ED W. JORDAN, CIG, CFE, CIA  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

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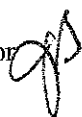
LINDA K. TAYLOR

Dr. Eric J. Smith  
Commissioner of Education

Dr. Willis N. Holcombe, Chancellor  
Division of Community Colleges

July 7, 2008

**TO:** Mr. Ed Jordan, Inspector General  
Office of the Inspector General

**FROM:** Dr. Judith Bilsky, Acting Chancellor  
Division of Community Colleges 

**SUBJECT:** 6-Month Follow-Up to OPPAGA Report: *Students Encounter Barriers  
When Transferring Credit from Non-Public Institutions to Community Colleges*

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on activities related to OPPAGA's report *Students Encounter Barriers When Transferring Credit from Non-Public Institutions to Community Colleges*.

In its report, OPPAGA recommended that the Department of Education take specific action to facilitate transfers from non-public institutions participating in the Statewide Course Numbering System to community colleges. In his initial response to this report, the Chancellor of Florida's College System, Dr. Willis Holcombe, supported all of OPPAGA's recommendations, four in total, and has made headway on select recommendations.

Recommendation 1 – Improve communication with participating institutions.

The Statewide Course Numbering System maintains open lines of communication with all participating institutions and is in frequent contact with designated institutional contacts.

The Division of Community Colleges has designated a staff member as a liaison to the Florida Community College Registrars and Admissions Officers (FCCRAO). This staff member, a former assistant administrator of the Statewide Course Numbering System, attends all FCCRAO meetings and has engaged the group in discussions about non-public transfer since the issuing of this report. As a result of those discussions, the Statewide Course Numbering System has developed enhancements to a previously existing report that will better facilitate decisions related to course transferability.



Mr. Ed Jordan  
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Recommendation 2 – Implement an appropriate policy for awarding credit for discontinued courses.

The Department is working with the Articulation Coordinating Committee to come to a policy recommendation.

Recommendation 3 – Monitor how institutions transfer credit for equivalent courses in the Statewide Course Numbering System.

The Office of Articulation, Division of Community Colleges and Board of Governors' Office have key personnel designated to address identified student issues related to articulation. Since the issuing of this report, there have been no student inquiries regarding inappropriate credit awarded for equivalent courses.

The Division of Community Colleges is currently reviewing select data elements including an existing data element related to student transfer and a proposed data element that would track the transfer hours for transfer students. Decisions related to this review will assist the Department in analyzing transfer credit awarded from non-public institutions participating in the Statewide Course Numbering System.

Recommendation 4 – Review courses that are equivalent courses with different academic levels in the Statewide Course Numbering System.

The Statewide Course Numbering System's standard operating procedures include periodic discipline reviews by faculty discipline committees. The faculty committees are charged with reviewing course content and course leveling to ensure appropriate equivalencies are maintained. The Statewide Course Numbering System has conducted 11 field reviews since the issuance of this report.

In addition, the Statewide Course Numbering System conducts an annual review of all institution courses in the inventory to identify instances where course leveling conflicts occur within the same course number. Leveling conflicts identified in this manner are resolved by the Department in conjunction with the affected institutions.

Should you have any further questions about the Statewide Course Numbering System, please contact Matthew Bouck at [matthew.bouck@fldoe.org](mailto:matthew.bouck@fldoe.org). Questions about community college articulation should be directed to Julie Alexander at [julie.alexander@fldoe.org](mailto:julie.alexander@fldoe.org). Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to this report.

JB/jal

c: Dr. Heather Sherry, Director, Office of Articulation  
Mr. Matthew Bouck, Deputy Director, Office of Articulation  
Ms. Julie Alexander, Director of Articulation and Educational Services, Division of Community Colleges

Office Of Inspector General  
FL Department of Education

JUL 8 2008

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