

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education



December 4, 2008

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

Dear Commissioner Smith:

In accordance with Section 20.055(5)(h), F.S., the attached six month follow-up response to the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability report number 08-11 regarding *Inconsistent Implementation of Common Prerequisites Creates Barriers to Effective "2+2" Articulation* dated March 2008, 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
Inspector General

EWJ/br

Attachment

c: OPPAGA
Florida Legislative Auditing Committee
Sandy Cho
John Newman

JLAC
Rec'd 12/8/08

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

December 3, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ed W. Jordan, Inspector General

FROM: Heather R. Sherry, Director, Office of Articulation *KS*
Willis N. Holcombe, Chancellor, Division of Community Colleges *WJ*

SUBJECT: Six- month follow-up to Report 08-11 *Inconsistent Implementation of Common Prerequisites Creates Barriers to Effective "2+2" Articulation*

This letter is a follow-up to OPPAGA Report 08-11 entitled *Inconsistent Implementation of Common Prerequisites Creates Barriers to Effective "2+2" Articulation*.

The Department of Education, through the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC), has been working in collaboration with the Board of Governors to review the Common Prerequisites for all baccalaureate programs. The process requires faculty discipline committees to review and revise the common prerequisites for each baccalaureate degree and make recommendations to the ACC Oversight Committee. The faculty discipline committees and the Oversight Committee are comprised of equal representation from each public postsecondary sector. The role of the Oversight Committee is to review faculty committee recommendations, approve or deny requests for additional "tracks" within common degree programs, and resolve any disagreements between institutions regarding which courses should be designated as prerequisites. The Oversight Committee then makes recommendations to the Articulation Coordinating Committee and, upon approval, the common prerequisites are posted in the Common Prerequisite Manual.

To date, 41 baccalaureate programs have been through the complete review process, approved by the ACC, and are ready for posting in the Common Prerequisite Manual (housed on FACTS.org). An additional 85 degree programs have been reviewed by state university representatives and are currently being reviewed by Florida College System (FCS) representatives on the faculty discipline committees. Ninety-nine programs are under review by faculty at the baccalaureate degree granting institutions (61 of which should be ready for FCS review by mid-December). Of the remaining 7 programs: 1 is ready for



Oversight Committee approval; 3 are ready for FCS review, but awaiting recommendations from the remainder of the 2-digit CIP; and 3 have been sent back to the discipline committees for further discussion.

Programs Completed in October, 2008:

Legal Assisting, General English, Rhetorical Speech & Communications, General Biology, General Botany, Plant Pathology, Microbiology, Zoology, Marine/Aquatic Biology, General Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Statistics, General Business, Business Admin & Mgmt., Transportation Mgmt., Accounting, Business Managerial Economics, Finance General (BS)/Banking (BAS) Financial Services, Project Mgmt (BAS), Logistics and Materials Mgmt., Supervision and Mgmt. (BAS), Human Resource Mgmt., Management Science, Business Marketing Management, Real Estate, Insurance and Risk Management, International Business Mgmt, Management Info Systems (Track 1 & 2), Actuarial Science, History, Nursing (Track I). Education programs (including): Special Ed, Ed of Emotionally Handicapped, Ed of Mentally Handicapped, Ed of Blind and Visually Handicapped, Ed of Specific Learning Disabled, Elementary Ed, Pre-Elem/Early Childhood Teacher Ed, Technology Education, and Dance Ed.

In addition, of the 14 popular degree programs identified by OPPAGA in its report, it is anticipated that the remaining programs (**Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Hospitality, and Civil Engineering**) will be completed prior to the February 25, 2009 ACC meeting.

The Oversight Committee has scheduled two meetings in January and February 2009 to review faculty discipline committee recommendations for the bulk of the remaining baccalaureate degree programs. It is anticipated that 90 percent of the programs will be forwarded to the Articulation Coordinating Committee for approval at the February 25, 2009 meeting.

The OPPAGA report recommended that the Legislature: 1) modify statute to specify that the common prerequisites apply to limited access bachelor's degree programs; 2) require universities to provide prerequisite information in their catalogs; and 3) require the Department of Education and the Board of Governors to complete a review of all university prerequisites and report the results to the Legislature by June 30, 2009. The Legislature did not act on any of these recommendations.

The OPPAGA report also recommended that the Department of Education and the Board of Governors take the following actions:

1) Improve communications with state universities and community colleges

In conjunction with the College Access Challenge Grant, staff from the Department of Education and the Board of Governors have conducted 2+2 Articulation Workshops at the University of Florida (September) and the University of South Florida (November) that addressed the Common Prerequisites Project and outlined the process for proposing changes to common prerequisites in the future. Additional workshops are scheduled at 6 more state universities during the months of January and February. So far, the workshops have helped to enhance communication between the department and the institutions and increase awareness of the process among institutional staff.

Staff from the Office of Articulation, the Division of Community Colleges, and the Board of Governors, have begun formal communications that focus on preserving and enhancing Florida's 2+2 articulation system. A statewide commitment to establish Common Prerequisites bolsters

the successful implementation of the statewide articulation agreement and ensures the seamless transition of students toward baccalaureate degree completion.

2) Review the process for updating the common prerequisites

Staff from the Department of Education and the Board of Governors are currently developing a streamlined process for submitting proposed changes to the Common Prerequisite Manual. Once the comprehensive review of all prerequisites is completed, the process for submitting requests for modifications or new programs will be solidified. The intent is to automate the process so that there is a greater ease of communication between the department and the institutions, which should increase the timeliness of the reviews as well.

3) Require institutions to implement corrective actions to address the remaining inconsistencies identified by the OPPAGA review

The Common Prerequisite Project has already resulted in a number of corrective actions taken by individual institutions (and academic departments within those institutions). By ensuring full participation in the review process by all institutions who offer a given degree program, there is a feeling of ownership among the faculty. If necessary, the Articulation Coordinating Committee may recommend rule/regulation language regarding common prerequisite compliance for consideration by the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors. In addition, recent revisions to the FACTS.org 2+2 evaluation system will enable the Articulation Coordinating Committee to monitor institutional compliance via an automated mechanism that compares university level requirements with the Common Prerequisite Manual.

4) Adopt the Council of Community College Presidents' guidelines for student pre-majors

According to a survey of Florida College System institutions conducted in November 2008, 13 institutions reported that they currently require students to declare a pre-major as part of the Associate in Arts degree. However, the Division of Community Colleges is in the process of investigating a potential issue with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) regarding the use of the term "pre-major" for AA degree programs.

Should you have any further questions regarding the common prerequisites, please contact Dr. Heather Sherry at Heather.Sherry@fldoe.org or Dr. Willis Holcombe at Will.Holcombe@fldoe.org.

HS/WH/cc

c: Dr. Mark Rosenberg, Chancellor, State University System