



Common Course Numbering House Bill 2979 Report

A report to the Oregon Legislature

Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission

12/1/2013

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Executive Summary

Passed during the 2013 Oregon legislative session, House Bill 2979 (HB 2979) stated:

“The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall convene a work group to examine and recommend adoption of strategies to facilitate student transfers between public colleges and universities in Oregon.

(2) The work group shall:

(a) Identify strategies to establish a common course numbering system for lower-division undergraduate courses; and

(b) Recommend implementation strategies and, through the State Board of Higher Education and the State Board of Education, recommend how community colleges and institutions of higher education may implement the strategies.”

The HB 2979 work group membership was appointed by the HECC during its August 2013 meeting. Membership included representation from the HECC, the Oregon University System and the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development. The workgroup met jointly with the Joint Boards Articulation Commission during the fall of 2013. As a result of these meetings, the workgroup found the following:

1. Community Colleges and Universities have been identifying and implementing strategies for over 30 years to improve student transfer. HB 2979 is the most recent request. Each request has resolved a set of issues around transfer and each request has had additional recommendations that were minimally funded or unfunded based on the economic and policy climate at the time.
2. To meet the goal of 40-40-20, the 24 public institutions of higher education and their private sector partners are committed to increase transfer and decrease the need for repeating similar courses.
3. With a new Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) this report is timely to inform the HECC Commissioners and commission staff of the “implementation strategies” that can assist all students and higher education institutions to improve student success and learning outcomes.
4. The long term sustainable need regarding common course numbering is actually about common learning outcomes. There is an ongoing need to bring community college, university and high school faculty together to align course learning outcomes on a regular basis. This practice is found and recommended from other states that have alignment of common course

numbering and equivalencies. The report on common course numbering needs to reflect the need for aligned outcomes and equivalencies; this intersectional effort will be referred to as Common Course Numbering/Equivalencies/Outcomes (CCNEO) within this report.

5. To accomplish this goal it is recommended that a full-time state-level staff person be responsible for convening the academic areas (writing, math, psychology, history, etc.) to ensure that course outcomes, equivalencies and (where agreed upon) common course numbering remain aligned. It is recommended that this person have experience in learning outcomes and assessment (LO&A). This full-time person could assist in other curriculum/credit areas that connect to learning outcomes such as dual credit, Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) alignment that all require a yearly review and updating with faculty, colleges and universities.

6. Create a resource for travel and virtual convening for high school, college and university faculty and staff for the alignment work recommended above.

7. Build/modify/enhance a technology solution for the course equivalencies and common course numbering. Options include: Improve/build upon the existing ATLAS model; development of a statewide portal; or a basic spreadsheet that details commonalities for course equivalency. The “way” to share the learning outcomes has several solutions. There is not a single solution that stood out from the research conversations with colleagues from the other states. It is recommended that Oregon begin by using the Oregon Registrar equivalencies table as a starting point.

8. When there is agreement on the course outcomes and course number there will be notation in all schedules and catalogs. This approach only works when there is ongoing communication between faculty in the 11-14 transition arena.

Setting the Stage for HB 2979 with Historical Context

HB 2979 is not the first bill in Oregon to direct colleges and universities to implement strategies to improve transfer and student success. Each bill was developed during a unique time and place in Oregon postsecondary education. In 1987, House Bill 2913 was passed by the Oregon Legislative Assembly to implement a Common Course Numbering (CCN) system. In an effort to fulfill legislative requirements a Commonly Numbered Course List was developed. This list functions as a recommendation for campuses as they develop and/or revise academic programs. Some of the numbers remain, Writing 121 for example. However within a few years course numbering evolved as colleges and universities were growing rapidly and many changes/additions of faculty and staff were not matched by the same level of communication in the 11-14 transition arena.

Oregon's public postsecondary institutions have a strong history of collaboration in response to Legislative requests. These collaborations have led to the identification of best practices and needed next steps. Examples of these collaborative efforts follow:

SB 342

Passed in 2005, Senate Bill 342 (SB 342) called for postsecondary education sectors to cooperate regarding particular alignment initiatives. These initiatives included the revision of the Associates of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT) degree, expansion of career pathways, outcome-based alignment of general education courses, transferability of 100/200 level courses, Advanced Placement crosswalk, ATLAS, and expanded early college opportunities. A copy of the final SB 342 report can be found here:

http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/state_board/jointb/files/SB342finalreport10292008b.pdf

HB 3418

House Bill 3418 (HB 3418), passed during the 2011 legislative session, called for the appointment of a Task Force to “examine best practices and models for accomplishing student and institutional success” while reviewing barriers to student completion. The bill also called for the Task Force to “examine methods for students to acquire basic skills and career preparation skills”. In addition, the Task Force reviewed funding options association with student and institutional success.¹ Multiple public hearings were held to obtain stakeholder input and feedback into the work. A final report was submitted to the Oregon Legislature in October

¹ See Oregon House Bill 3418 (2011 Regular Session):
<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2011R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB3418/Enrolled>

2012. The report identified best practices for removing barriers and accomplishing student and institutional success. A copy of the report can be found here:

<http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/dept/plan/HB3418TaskForceFINALREPORT10.15v2eh.pdf>

Study of Rural Access and Semester Conversion

Passed in 2009, Senate Bill 442 (SB 442) required the Joint Boards of Education to examine two potential areas of increased efficiency and three other areas. The summary provided the conclusions and/or recommendations relevant to each of five areas addressed in SB 442. A copy of the report including the summary and recommendations can be found here:

http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/state_board/meeting/dockets/ddoc100909-ASC4.pdf

Applied Baccalaureate

Also passed in 2009, House Bill 3093 (HB 3093) required the Joint Boards of Education to “develop a plan for offering applied baccalaureate degree programs at community colleges and state institutions of higher education.”² The bill also required a report to the legislature regarding the matter. A copy of the report can be found here:

<http://ous.edu/sites/default/files/dept/indaffairs/AB/HB3093-report.pdf>

Both of these reports recognized the need for faculty to align curriculum and to work together to increase access to learning in rural areas of the state.

Credit for Prior Learning

House Bill 4059 (HB 4059) was passed during the 2011 legislative session. The responsibility for implementing HB 4059 was given to the HECC. A Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Advisory Committee was appointed by the Commission to organize and complete work associated with achieving the goals as set forth in HB 4059. Standards have been developed and are currently undergoing Oregon postsecondary education institutional review. A copy of the draft Standards can be found here:

<https://ccwd.oregon.gov/studentsuccess/edocs/Standards%20Draft%20For%20Institutions%2010-18-13.docx>

It is important to note that while minimal or no funding was included for any of the above conversations and resulting work, progress was made in each area and recommendations were

² See Oregon HB 3093 (2009): <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2009R1/Measures/Overview/HB3093>

made for future steps and investments. Collaborative efforts continue in many areas, however, financial investments are needed to implement recommendations and to address many of the barriers identified.

Thus, HB 2979 passed during the 2013 Legislative session calls for additional study of CCN and strategies for implementation. While the CCN conversation has shifted over the years, statewide collaborative efforts surrounding the Associate of Arts – Oregon Transfer (AAOT), Associate of Science – Oregon Transfer (ASOT), Oregon Transfer Module (OTM), Core Course Equivalency, etc. have continued in order to ensure the transferability of credits for students navigating public postsecondary institutions. Faculty and staff feedback into these multiple efforts over the past 15 years began with alignment of content and have recently shifted to alignment of learning outcomes and course equivalencies. The report on common course numbering needs to reflect the need for outcomes and equivalencies; CCNEO is the framework for this report.

Statewide Collaborations on Transfer & Common Course Numbering: An Oregon Timeline

The following timeline provides a quick overview of the statewide collaborative efforts regarding student transfer and success:

1987	HB 2913 was passed by the Oregon Legislative Assembly. The bill called for a Committee to study common course numbering. During this time “outcomes” were not part of accreditation language.
1988	HB 2913 Committee completed the first AAOT Degree Standards.
1992	HB 2913 Committee completed the Common Course Numbering list. JBAC replaced the HB 2913 Committee and the University System/Community College Coordinating Committee.
1999	JBAC submitted Course and Credit Transfer Plan to the Oregon Legislative Assembly (HB 2387). Recommendations for continued activity included K-16 alignment, communication and access to student information, automated course equivalency and electronic degree audit system, ongoing data collection and research and a commitment to regional partnerships, co-enrollment and dual-admissions programs.
2001	Catalogue of Lower Division Collegiate Courses (LDCC) was completed by CCWD. The document differentiated “college level” from “lower division collegiate course” and called for the alignment of community college courses with those offered at the state’s universities. JBAC adopted a Credit for Prior Learning and Transfer Credit Limitation Policy. (The LDCC was later built into the process of adding/revising/deleting courses and programs in a program called the Oregon Community College Program Submission System also known as “Webforms”.)
2003	Oregon State Board of Education endorsed Career Pathways initiative.
2004-05	JBAC Implemented the OTM. SB 342 called for the implementation of a statewide course applicability system. (ATLAS) and alignment of AP, IB and Dual credit. JBAC also agreed to a shared set of Outcomes and Criteria for Transferable General Education Course in Oregon.
2007	Oregon became a Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) state. AAOT was aligned to the learning outcomes and all 17 community colleges offer the same AAOT.
2009	HB 3093 was passed and directed the Oregon Joint Board of Education to develop a plan for applied baccalaureate degrees in Oregon. SB 442 was passed and directed OUS on behalf of the Joint Boards of Education, to conduct a study of approaches to increase student enrollment and success for rural Oregon students in institutions of higher education.
2010	Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) Interstate Passport initiative conceived. The initiative was created by WICHE states to advance policies that support seamless transfer of students in the region. Oregon began to apply for Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) state, Common Core State Standards, Win-Win and Reverse Transfer grants, each support the goals of CCN. CCWD launched the Oregon Community College Program Submission System also known as “Webforms” for course/degree submission.
2011	Transfer Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities (HB 3521) was passed by the Oregon Legislative Assembly. The measure directed the Joint Boards to articulate uniform protocols for transferring credits. The measure also provided for the development of Reverse Transfer programs.
2012	DQP Grant to the State of Oregon supported the exploration of five broad learning outcomes from Associates to Masters degrees.
2013	Oregon Legislative Assembly adopted HB 2979. The measure established a workgroup to study how to implement common-course numbering for lower-division undergraduate courses. HB 2970 continued Transfer Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities and called for the development of new transfer degrees in areas such as engineering.

Why Course Equivalency Systems are Important

Policy makers, community college and university leadership and faculty members agree the ease of transfer is vital to the success of today's students. In the 1980's and 90's discussions focused on course numbering, articulation and unique transfer agreements. In recent years, national conversations have moved towards learning outcomes and course equivalencies. Course equivalencies describe how a specific course offered by a postsecondary institution correlates to a course offered by another based on the learning outcomes.

The alignment of learning outcomes and equivalencies is a foundational step in reaching CCNEO. It is this CCNEO framework that is needed in Oregon.

While progress has been made to assist students to transfer without repetition of similar courses, there is still work to be completed. Degree Partnership admission to both a community college and a university-provide an advisor at each college/university to coach the students. This is key for those students who are clear on their degree/career goals. Articulation Agreements permit universities and community colleges to determine course equivalencies and transfer credit amounts that count towards university degrees regardless of course numbering. The Transfer Student Bill of Rights addresses the need to think of student learning and ease of transfer as a priority. Each of these efforts needs to be continued. The foundation for maintaining momentum is to commit to faculty coming together to ensure learning outcomes are aligned in the core classes and first year courses to assist all students to move to the next step with minimal repeating of courses .

Current Oregon Assets That Facilitate Student Transfer

Over the years, Oregon’s journey to facilitate student transfer has led to the development of tools, initiatives and partnerships. These assets articulate the multi-faceted approach that seven universities and the 17 community colleges have taken in the recent years. While progress has been made to assist students to transfer without repetition of similar courses, there is still work to be completed. A few of these assets are listed below:

Articulation Agreements Articulation Agreements permit universities and community colleges to determine course equivalencies and transfer credit amounts that count towards university degrees regardless of course numbering.

Course Catalog The Catalog of Lower Division Collegiate Courses was developed as a resource for community colleges to use in course development/approval process. While it was not intended to be used as a guarantee of course transferability, it does work to align courses and curriculum with courses offered at Oregon University System (OUS) institutions.

- 2001 Catalog is released
- 2008 Oregon Community College Program Submission System (known as “Webforms”) is launched.

Degree Partnerships Formerly known as “Dual Enrollment Programs” in Oregon, these partnerships allow eligible students to submit single admission applications to both a participating public university and a community college. Students who are participating in these degree partnerships may combine credits being taken at both institutions for financial aid purposes and can lower the costs of the degree. They also have the ability to use campus facilities and student services at either institution. The Degree Partnerships provide an advisor at each college/university to coach the students. This program is key for those students who are clear on their degree/career goals.

ATLAS One important tool that may be used to connect CCNEO with learning outcomes is the Articulated Transfer Linked Audit System (ATLAS). ATLAS functions as the statewide implementation of U.Select software which provides students and advisors with information about how and where courses transfer between Oregon institutions. ATLAS articulates course equivalencies and aids students’ in decision making by comparing their completion prospects based on their current credits. Such tools are a vital resource in operationalizing CCNEO, or a like system. To prevent duplicative work, it is important to utilize the significant investment of

staff time and fiscal resources that has been made in ATLAS. To prevent increased costs associated with licensing fees, the state must continue its investment in this area.³

AAOT The Associate of Arts-Oregon Transfer (AAOT) degree prepares students to transfer into the OUS with the guarantee that the student has met all of the lower-division general education requirements for OUS. Upon acceptance at an OUS school, the student is given “junior status” for registration purposes. The AAOT does not guarantee admission into specific departments or programs and does not guarantee admission into the student's OUS institution of choice. The AAOT was developed to match the general education outcomes. All 17 community colleges have the same AAOT. This is helpful if a student desires to continue on for a bachelor’s degree but is not yet clear on academic or career goals beyond community college.

Transferable General Education Outcomes Building on the identification of fundamental principles that shape and guide General Education in colleges and universities in Oregon, the Transferable General Education Outcomes use the principles in two ways: (1) to create a rational basis for determining the equivalency of courses intended to transfer; and (2) to enhance General Education throughout Oregon by encouraging direct dialogue among faculty in each of the disciplines within the curriculum. The Joint Boards of Education called for the development of a “new, faculty-led” system in which “transferability will not depend on identity of course numbering or content, but more on general characteristics that can be shared by courses on diverse topics.”⁴

- Spring 2006: Statements drafted by faculty groups
- Fall 2006 – Fall 2007: Draft statement discussions among OUS and community colleges
- Fall 2007 – Fall 2008: Feedback organized and revisions completed
- Winter 2008 – Winter 2009: Feedback returned for faculty consideration (writing completed first)
- Fall 2009: Final statements reviewed by JBAC, OUS, and CIA
- November 2009: Transferable General Education Outcomes are approved.

Associate of Science Oregon Transfer (ASOT) – Business The Associate of Science Oregon Transfer (ASOT) – Business prepares students to transfer into the OUS with the guarantee that the student has met all of the lower-division general education requirements for OUS business

³ The Oregon University System Chancellor’s Office currently pays a system-wide licensing fee of approximately \$7,000 annually. Without this “grandfather clause”, the cost would jump to approximately \$8,500 *per institution*. Source: Lisa Mentz, OUS Chancellor’s Office

⁴ See Outcomes and Criteria for Transferable General Education Courses in Oregon: http://ous.edu/sites/default/files/state_board/meeting/dockets/ddoc100107-GenEd.pdf

degrees. Upon acceptance at an OUS school, the student is given “junior status” for registration purposes. The ASOT does not guarantee admission into specific departments or programs and does not guarantee admission into the student's OUS institution of choice.

OTM The Oregon Transfer Module (OTM) is an approved 45 credit subset of general education courses (foundational skills and introduction to discipline courses) that are common among Oregon's colleges and universities. Any student holding an Oregon Transfer Module will have met the requirements for the Transfer Module at any Oregon community college or institution in the Oregon University System.

- 2004 The OTM was implemented

Dual Credit Study In Oregon, dual credit has undergone a steady review. Senate Bill 342 (SB 342) called for a dual credit task force to review barriers to dual credit success. Consistent standards and delivery was identified as an issue which was resolved when the Joint Boards adopted the National Dual Credit Standards. The Joint Boards also required all postsecondary institutions who wanted to offer dual credit to meet these standards and be approved by Joint Boards by July 2013. Another issue identified was the rigor of classes offered at the high school meeting the rigor on campus. A pilot study in 2008 evaluating the effectiveness of dual credit instruction and student performance was conducted by the OUS Office of Institutional Research and the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD). The study revealed that students who received college course instruction in a high school setting were as prepared for subsequent college-level coursework as students who received instruction in the same course on a college campus. The study focused on two questions: (1) Do high school students who take dual credit courses succeed when they continue on to college? and (2) Do dual credit courses give students the preparation they need to handle subsequent college coursework?

- 2008 Pilot study found dual credit students perform as well or better than students who take the same courses at OUS or community colleges campuses.
- 2010 the study was repeated and reached the same conclusions.
- 2013 the study is scheduled to be completed.
- 2012/2013 a group of community college presidents and superintendents began a review of ways to increase dual credit opportunities for high school students.
- 2013 all colleges and universities who want to offer dual credit had to be approved based on national standards for the delivery of dual credit.

Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Alignment The alignment of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate ensures that all public institutions award

equitable credit in identified areas. Both policies are reviewed yearly to ensure alignment with curricular changes. The curricular changes are reviewed by OUS and community college faculty and feedback is provided regarding those changes and their effects in relation to the Statewide Policies. The IB/AP credit list is updated and published each year.

- 2007 Statewide AP Policy was adopted
- 2010 Statewide International Baccalaureate Policy was adopted

LEAP States and the WICHE Passport The American Association of Colleges and Universities launched the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative, targeting the goals of liberal education through principles of excellence and Essential Learning Outcomes.⁵ These initiatives reflect educator and employer consensus about the learning needed to prepare students for life after degree. The WICHE Interstate Passport Initiative focuses on forging general education core transfer agreements, based on the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes, between 23 institutions in the five partner states. The initiative's goal is to improve graduation rates, shorten time to degree, and save students money by introducing a new framework for transfer based on this outcomes work. The project focuses on the lower division general education core—concentrating on it as a whole, not on individual courses—and will allow for a cross border “match” of outcomes.

- 2007 OUS Endorsed LEAP principles and learning outcomes leading Oregon to become a “LEAP State”
- 2011 WICHE Interstate Passport Initiative was launched

Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) The Oregon DQP Project is a joint effort between the OUS and the community colleges to explore the DQP for Oregon. The DQP Project provides a curricular framework for describing institutions' degree outcomes across the state. The [DQP framework](#) outlines what students should be expected to know and able to do once they earn a degree, and focuses on five dimensions of learning: applied learning; civil learning; intellectual skills; broad, integrative knowledge; and specialized knowledge.

- 2011 Cliff Adelman from Institute for Higher Education Policy presented at Lane Community College
- 2012 Oregon received a three year DQP Grant to explore five broad degree outcomes.

⁵ Rhodes, Terrel. L. and Finley, Ashley. American Association of Colleges and Universities. *Using the Value Rubrics for Improvement of Learning and Authentic Assessment*. 2013

Transfer Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities Passed in 2013, House Bill 2970 (HB 2970) directed the HECC to develop standards and processes that assist students in transferring from a community college to a university with minimal loss of credit and clarity of a degree paths. The Bill asked for further exploration and development of new transfer degrees in areas such as engineering.

State Models for CCNEO

The Goal

The goals of CCNEO initiatives are to:

- Enhance student access and success in attaining degrees by facilitating seamless transfer;
- Minimize wasted credits;
- Make the process more intuitive and transparent for students, including first-generation students to whom such processes may seem particularly opaque; and
- Facilitate faculty engagement in the alignment of learning outcomes.

The Workgroup conducted informational interviews with representatives of multiple state systems who have implemented CCNEO. Questions asked of the states included the following:

- *What was the amount of and source of initial investment for infrastructure setup?*
- *Is there an ongoing investment for maintenance of effort?*
- *Is staffing supported at the state and local levels?*
- *Are there resources for faculty participation and engagement?*
- *Were there hurdles to implementation? If so, what were they? Any advice for Oregon?*
- *Did the state start with certain disciplines?*
- *Has the state conducted an impact analysis or assessment?*
- *What platform is used for equivalencies (Texas only question)?*

For those systems that have been successful in designing, implementing and maintaining systems, it is important to note that significant state or institutional resources were invested and many were “top-down & centralized” state systems.

Based upon the research the Workgroup made the following observations:

1. Most of these states (Utah is the notable exception) have centralized staff (1 FTE or more) and budget to manage CCCNEO.
2. Faculty-driven processes and engagement are seen as critical in states where it is working well.

3. Faculty are not compensated, but their travel is paid for, either centrally or (more often) by institutions.
4. A focus on course equivalencies (Ohio's TAG and Arizona's SUN) is equally effective (OUS Registrars like this approach).
5. There are equally compelling voluntary (Texas of their statewide registrars association) and mandated (Florida "forced compliance") stories. The voluntary story will most likely resonate with JBAC and institutions and Oregon higher education stakeholders generally.

Examples

Utah System of Higher Education CCNEO Utah's General Education Task Force has been innovating in the area of aligning degree outcomes, course outcomes, transfer and articulation, and course equivalencies for more than two decades. This state's [procedure](#) takes an integrated and sustainable approach to establish and maintain coordination of course learning outcomes to facilitate students long-term transfer success. The [trademark of Utah's success](#) has been their ability to facilitate meaningful cooperation to continue to focus the endeavor on students and sustain course and learning outcome alignment. This has been primarily accomplished through annual convenings or "majors meetings" of faculty from across institutions and sectors. Utah has a single consolidated governing board for all eight public colleges and universities, the State Board of Regents which is assisted by local Boards of Trustees.

Each institution paid for faculty and academic advisor travel to support the efforts associated with the development of the Utah CCN system. Every three years, the institutions pay for faculty members to participate in a face-to-face majors meeting. The faculty member groups meet over a system-wide video network for the other two years.

Florida Statewide Course Numbering System This CCN system is used by all public postsecondary institutions in Florida and by 31 participating non-public institutions. The major purpose of this system is to facilitate the transfer of courses between participating institutions. The use of the CCNs is mandatory for all public institutions. The [web-based tool](#) provides valuable information about each course, but is noticeably less user-friendly than some other models. The tool is maintained by the Florida Department of Education. Higher Education in Florida receives oversight through separate governing boards, and obtains policy recommendations from the Higher Education Coordinating Council.

The initial investment included funding for staffing, faculty travel and release time. Currently, three staff support the statewide effort along with targeted investment in technology and support for faculty participation/travel. The expenses are included as part of the State Board of Education Budget.

Texas Common Course Number System A voluntary effort among community colleges and universities statewide, the Texas CCN System provides a shared, uniform set of course designations for students and their advisors to determine both course equivalency and degree applicability of transfer credit. The state’s [web-based tool](#) is a model for utility and flexibility and 110 institutions have opted into this system. Institutions are not required to use the common course number (although many do). Instead, institutions have identified and aligned their course learning outcomes and made these equivalent courses available in an easy-to-use tool to aid seamless transferability. The tool is maintained by the University of Texas Pan American. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, serves as the primary governing body for state colleges and universities. The Board of Regents of the Texas State University System governs 10 of the state’s public institutions.

Currently, the Texas CCN System is staffed by a Coordinator who maintains the CCN System and website. Institutions pay a \$300 fee annually to participate in the system and for the maintenance of their course updates to the website. Institutions pay for the costs associated with faculty travel and participation in course content/learning outcomes discussions.

Arizona Shared Unique Numbering System In 2011, the Arizona legislature mandated the creation of a CCN system to include all public institutions. Arizona established the Shared Unique Numbering (SUN) system, which identifies often-transferred courses with a common number. The goal has been for students to know that if they take a course at one campus, it will be equivalent to any course with the same number on another campus. The [web-based tool](#) is more sophisticated than most with tools specific to students, parents, counselors, etc. Students know that if they take a course at one campus, it will be considered directly equivalent to the course sharing the same number at another campus. The tool is hosted and maintained by AZTransfer. The Arizona Board of Regents governs the state’s three public universities by way of a consolidated board.

AZTransfer maintains the database, interfaces and other items related to the SUN system. Arizona institutions are expected to participate in the SUN system and appropriate Articulation Task Forces annually. The SUN system is mainly focused on course equivalencies and less on course numbering.

Montana University System Common Course Numbering In 2007, the Montana Legislature funded a request from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) to provide staff and operating resources to review all undergraduate courses in order to identify courses that will transfer as equivalents. The decision to change course labels—the CCN project—represented OCHE’s tactic to provide the kind of “transparency and predictability” that the Legislature had found lacking. Institutions are not *required* to conform courses with different learning outcomes to fit a CCN, but if area faculty believe the outcomes do fit the CCN and want

it to transfer, then the CCN is mandatory. The Montana CCN initiative is based on defined learning outcomes for all courses. The result is a CCN system operationalized in a user-friendly [web-based guide](#) that assists students in identifying transferable courses and their availability across public four-year and two-year institutions. The tool is maintained and hosted by the Montana University System and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. Montana public higher education is governed by a consolidated Board of Regents, with authority over the Montana University System's 16 universities and colleges.

The statewide CCN system is supported by a full-time CCN Manager who is housed within the Montana Commissioner's Office. Each campus has delegated in the provost's office to act as a CCN liaison officer, this delegation equates to approximately .25 FTE per campus. Participation in course alignment committees is financially supported by the Commissioner's Office budget.

Ohio Course Equivalency System

Ohio has had tools, policies and staff dedicated to transfer and articulation since 1990. In 2003 the Ohio legislature passed Ohio Revised Code 3333.16, which required the development of a course equivalency system. As a result the Transfer Assurance Guides (TAGs) were developed. As workload increased in relation to the TAG development, additional staff was added to assist with implementation and technology. Currently the review and submission process for courses is done electronically which allows for increased faculty engagement and participation while reducing institutional costs associated with participation in the effort.

Currently, Articulation and Transfer is included as a line item in the state budget. This line item includes funding for eleven staff which cover multiple statewide transfer initiatives, support the technology infrastructure and conduct research. Additional staff members are currently made possible through a grant with the Ohio Department of Education.

How does Oregon compare with the CCNEO research?

In gauging Oregon's ability to successfully implement a CCNEO strategy, it is important to consider methodologies that have been put to the test by other states. With this in mind, the Workgroup examined the policies and practices that have been implemented in other states. Common threads have been identified among the course equivalency and common numbering systems which influence the success of these programs.

In most states⁶ surveyed by the Workgroup, ***centralized staff*** or dedicated Common Course Numbering /Equivalency Liaisons are utilized to administer the system and provide functional oversight. Through budget allocations, states have been able to develop common course equivalency /numbering systems that support faculty engagement and involvement, and conduct impact analyses to ensure their effectiveness. It is found that without ***faculty engagement***, states experienced a greater number of implementation hurdles, suggesting that a faculty-driven process is critical in states where CCNEO has worked well. Faculty are generally not directly compensated for their work in this area. However, they do receive support through paid travel, suggesting that determination of course equivalency, and in particular course outcomes are considered to be components of their workload.

Another common thread found among states is the ***increasing focus on course equivalencies***, as opposed to a literal interpretation of common course numbering. Examples of programs that have successfully worked in other states include Ohio's Transfer Assurance Guide or TAG,⁷ and Arizona's Shared Unique Number (SUN) System.⁸ When linked with academic advising, these programs are intended to help students understand the transferability of credits as well as transfer programs that are available to them in their state. In addition, states have developed a variety of models that include both voluntary and compulsory participation, demonstrating the variability in menu options that states studying a course equivalency and common course numbering may choose from.⁹

How can Oregon address the need for staff, faculty engagement and focus on learning outcomes and equivalencies? In Oregon, community college and university stakeholders have a longstanding history of collaboration. This partnership is sporadic to meet a legislative request and is not sustained. One sustained effort is the Joint Boards Articulation Commission (JBAC), established in 1992 by the State Board of Education and the State Board of Higher Education to encourage cooperation and collaboration among education stakeholders in order to create

⁶ States that were interviewed/ survey respondents include: Utah, Florida, Texas, Arizona, Montana and Ohio. Interviews took place throughout the month of September, 2013.

⁷ <https://www.ohiohighered.org/transfer/tag>

⁸ <http://www.aztransfer.com/sun/>

⁹ <http://www.tccns.org/>; http://scns.fldoe.org/scns/public/pb_index.jsp

efficient and effective articulation. While the Joint Boards no longer convenes, the JBAC group has continued its work.¹⁰ In addition to JBAC, both the community colleges and universities regularly convene their chief academic officers through the Council of Instructional Administrators (CIA) and the OUS Provosts Council. These groups were created for peer connection and to share and coordinate policy responses and recommendations to governing bodies around program articulation, student retention and quality.¹¹ Another group, the Oregon Writing and English Advisory Committee (OWEAC), is a self-organizing faculty group that has served as an advisory committee on writing alignment. The group promotes high academic standards in English composition and literature in high school dual enrollment programs, and at community colleges and bachelor's degree granting colleges and universities.¹²

In addition, postsecondary leaders have taken up a variety of initiatives to improve quality and learning outcomes, namely, the WICHE Interstate Passport Project, Degree Qualifications Profile, LEAP, and the Common Core State Standards. These efforts are often grant or legislatively driven, and without local buy-in run the risk of tapering off over time. Through these types of initiatives, postsecondary leaders have been able to build a network of national experts to examine issues rooted to Oregon's landscape and expand existing relationships to meet the needs of students as the state invests in reaching 40/40/20. But there is no ongoing committed resource, leadership or focus on learning outcomes, course equivalences and common numbers.

Furthermore several factors exist which help paint a picture of Oregon's readiness and general need for CCNEO and shared learning outcomes:

First, several OUS institutions – among them Portland State University and the University of Oregon – have made a commitment to annually map equivalencies of every course offered by every postsecondary institution in Oregon to their curriculum. In addition, many institutions have adopted courses with the same numbers and similar content such as WR 121 and 122, as well as MTH 111. However there is no process to keep the learning outcomes of these courses aligned. These examples bring into focus the need to greater align our efforts in fostering student success and completion.

Second, Oregon does not regularly update learning outcomes for the AAOT and ASOT.¹³ Evaluating and updating learning outcomes is important to preserving academic quality, and

¹⁰ http://www.ous.edu/state_board/jointb

¹¹ <http://www.ous.edu/about/provcouncil>

¹² <http://oweac.wordpress.com/>

¹³ <http://www.ous.edu/stucoun/transfer/planning/ccdegrees>

exemplifies the framework of the LO&A group, and may provide opportunities for faculty to converge to define learning outcomes for lower-division undergraduate courses.¹⁴

Third, it is also important to note that Oregon currently does not have an effective statewide transfer vehicle specifically designed for students entering Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields.

Fourth, it is equally important to note that ATLAS (U-Select)¹⁵ is not currently functional at all institutions in this state, limiting the ability to easily articulate course equivalencies and provide students, staff and faculty with a tool to guide them in making decisions that impact course registration, persistence and completion.

In response to the work done in other states, and the ever changing landscape in postsecondary education, the Workgroup has developed a set of recommendations that seeks to provide pathways for students to more easily understand and transfer between postsecondary institutions. This framework reflects models and best practices used in other states, and considers course equivalency and common course numbering to be one of many tools that will help provide equitable access to higher education for all Oregonians.

¹⁴ OUS Learning Outcomes Assessment Initiative. Proposal for a System-wide Assessment Framework

¹⁵ <http://www.ous.edu/stucoun/transfer/planning/courses/atlas>

Recommendations

In order to facilitate equitable opportunities for all students to succeed, the work of CCNEO must be a faculty-driven effort to identify and maintain course learning outcomes alignment. This is essential to ensure ease of transfer and student success. Without this the current process does create some obstacles as students transfer between institutions. However, this work requires sustained statewide coordination and significant cooperation across institutions. Institutions in the past have frequently opted out of similar, optional collaborations.

Most states with established systems have prioritized the identification and alignment of learning outcomes as the foundation of their CCNEO effort. With this in mind, focusing on learning outcomes at a statewide level has the potential not only to facilitate seamless transfer, but to create synergy with the future of postsecondary learning, including Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), and initiatives like the DQP designed to guarantee our students essential skills post-degree. Efforts such as the DQP have been supported by private foundation grants and the activities associated with these efforts are likely not sustainable past the life of the grant. However, without well-defined learning outcomes, the potential for CPL growth is severely limited.

Specific Workgroup recommendations include:

1. Establish regular and ongoing work groups or convenings across postsecondary sectors to facilitate the alignment of essential learning outcomes at the course and major level as the consistent foundation for CCN. The long term sustainable need regarding common course numbering is actually about common learning outcomes. There is an ongoing need to bring faculty from community colleges, universities and high schools together to align course learning outcomes on a regular basis. This practice is found and recommended from other states that have alignment of common course numbering and equivalencies. This effort should be faculty-driven, begin with General Education Outcomes, build on existing assets, and identify what students should know and do in their discipline to earn a degree. Independent/private postsecondary institutions who wish to participate should be included.
2. To accomplish this goal it is recommended that a state-level full-time staff person be responsible for convening the academic areas (writing, math, psychology, history, etc.) to ensure that course outcomes, equivalencies and (where agreed upon) common course numbering remain aligned. It is recommended that this person have experience in learning outcomes and assessment (LO&A). This full-time person could assist in other curriculum/credit areas that connect to learning outcomes such as dual credit, Credit for Prior Learning (CPL),

Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) alignment that all require a yearly review and updating with faculty, colleges and universities.

3. Create a resource for travel and virtual convening for colleges and universities who send faculty and staff for the alignment work recommended above.

4. Provide adequate accountability and resources to build/modify/enhance a technology solution for the course equivalencies and common course numbering. There is not a single solution that stood out from the research and conversations with colleagues from the other states. Possible considerations include building upon the foundation of ATLAS to expand usability and access for all public institutions. A statewide portal could be an option. A basic table in Excel could be the starting point for tracking information. We recommend that Oregon begin by using the Oregon Registrar equivalencies table as a starting point.

5. Postsecondary education institutions in Oregon do not need new statutes or directives to help them overcome the barriers to student success identified by the Task Force. Statutes provide sufficient authority for postsecondary institutions to act. Nor will the problem be solved merely as a result of direction from the legislature.

Funding Recommendations to meet the goal of common course numbering/equivalences and learning outcomes are outlined below, ranging from no investment to priority investments. The following options outline the activities associated with varying state investment levels:

Option one -no new additional investment:

- ATLAS will no longer be maintained.
- Websites may be designed to be searchable using common terms for students.
- Without a long term commitment to align learning outcomes, Oregon will continue to respond to transfer issues on a case-by-case basis.

The following options outline the levels of investment that the state should consider while developing strategic initiatives:

Option two - staff and travel investment:

- To accomplish this goal it is recommended that a full-time staff person be responsible for convening the academic areas (writing, math, psychology, history, etc.) to ensure that course outcomes, equivalencies and (where agreed upon) common course numbering remain aligned. It is recommended that this person have experience in learning outcomes and assessment (LO&A). This full-time person could assist in other curriculum/credit areas

that connect to learning outcomes such as dual credit, Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) alignment that all require a yearly review and updating with faculty, colleges and universities.

- Create a resource for travel for colleges and universities who send faculty and staff for the alignment work recommended above.

Option three - a technology investment:

- ATLAS will be centrally supported and maintained at its current level.
- Resources will be devoted to securing and maintaining technology to enable virtual convenings of faculty to augment in-person meetings.

Option four –Portal and embedded CCNEO

- Build more robust equivalency tables.
- Develop and maintain a Portal facilitating ease of transfer.
- Complete CCNEO embedded for all 24 public institutions and participating independent colleges and universities.

Common Course Numbering Workgroup Members:

Affiliation	Name
Oregon University System, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Success Initiatives	Joe Holliday (Co-Chair)
Oregon Community College Presidents Council, Tillamook Community College President	Connie Green (Co-Chair)
Oregon Dept. of Community Colleges & Workforce Development, Research and Communication Director	Elizabeth Cox Brand
Oregon Dept. of Community Colleges & Workforce Development, Education Division Director	Shalee Hodgson
Oregon University System, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Strategies	Karen Marrongelle
Oregon University System, K-16 Alignment Technologies Program Manager	Lisa Mentz
Higher Education Coordinating Commission Member	Betty Duvall
Higher Education Coordinating Commission Member	Rosemary Powers
Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Operations & Policy Analyst	Donna Lewelling

Collaborating Partners/ Joint Boards Articulation Commission:

Affiliation	Name
Clatsop Community College, VP for Academic & Student Affairs*	Donna Larson
Portland Community College, Dean of Academic Affairs*	Kendra Cawley
Oregon Department of Education, Education Specialist*	Jennell Ives
Oregon Institute of Technology, Provost & VP for Academic Affairs*	Brad Burda
Central Oregon Community College, Dean of Student & Enrollment Services*	Alicia Moore
Oregon State University – Cascades, Director of Enrollment Services*	Jane Reynolds
Clackamas Community College, Director of Enrollment Management/Registrar*	Tara Sprehe
Lane Community College, Mathematics Division Dean*	Kathie Hledik
Southern Oregon University, Associate Professor*	Joan McBee
University of Oregon, Special Advisory for Undergraduate Education Initiatives*	Karen Sprague
George Fox University, Interim Provost*	Linda Samek
Oregon State University, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs*	Rebecca Warner
Dept. of Community Colleges & Workforce Development, Education Specialist*	Lisa Reynolds
Oregon University System, Academic Policy Analyst & Government Relations Associate	Anna Teske

**= Indicates Joint Boards Articulation Commission Member*

Enrolled House Bill 2979

Sponsored by Representatives DEMBROW, JOHNSON; Representative WHISNANT

CHAPTER

AN ACT

Relating to higher education courses; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall convene a work group to examine and recommend adoption of strategies to facilitate student transfers between public colleges and universities in Oregon.

(2) The work group shall:

(a) Identify strategies to establish a common course numbering system for lower-division undergraduate courses; and

(b) Recommend implementation strategies and, through the State Board of Higher Education and the State Board of Education, recommend how community colleges and institutions of higher education may implement the strategies.

(3) The work group shall solicit significant participation in its analysis from: (a) The Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development; and (b) The Oregon University System.

(4) The work group shall report to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Upon receiving the work group's recommendations, the commission shall consider the recommendations and prepare a final report. The commission shall forward the final report to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly with subject matter authority over higher education before December 1, 2013.

(5) The final report must identify any strategies that require rule adoption by the State Board of Higher Education and the State Board of Education, and any strategies that require additional legislation.

(6) The work group may accept technical assistance from any source in preparing its recommendations.

SECTION 2. Section 1 of this 2013 Act is repealed on the date of the convening of the 2014 regular session of the Legislative Assembly as specified in ORS 171.010.

SECTION 3. This 2013 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2013 Act takes effect on its passage.

Passed by House April 3, 2013

Received by Governor:

.....M,....., 2013

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Ramona J. Line, Chief Clerk of House

Approved:

.....M,....., 2013

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Tina Kotek, Speaker of House

.....

John Kitzhaber, Governor

Passed by Senate May 7, 2013

Filed in Office of Secretary of State:

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Peter Courtney, President of Senate

.....M,....., 2013

.....

Kate Brown, Secretary of State

Frequently Used Acronyms:

AB: Applied Baccalaureate

AP: Advanced Placement

ATLAS: Articulated Transfer Linked Audit System

AAC&U: American Association of Colleges and Universities

AAOT: Associate of Arts - Oregon Transfer degree

ASOT: Associate of Science - Oregon Transfer degree

CIA: Council of Instructional Administrators

CCN: Common Course Numbering

CCNEO: Common Course Numbering/Equivalencies/Outcomes

CCWD: Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development

CPL: Credit for Prior Learning

DQP: Degree Qualifications Profile

FTE: Full Time Equivalent

HECC: Higher Education Coordinating Commission

IB: International Baccalaureate

JBAC: Joint Boards Articulation Commission

LDCC: Lower Division Collegiate Courses

LEAP: Universities Liberal Education and America's Promise

LO&A: Learning Outcomes and Assessment

OTM: Oregon Transfer Module

OUS: Oregon University System

OWEAC: Oregon Writing and English Advisory Committee

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math

WICHE: Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education