Presentation for USA Administrators, Faculty, & Staff
Thursday – April 14, 2005

Making a Difference....
# State of Alabama Higher Education Governance

## Two-Year Colleges
- **Make up:**
  - 26 Community/Junior/Technical Colleges
  - Athens State University
- **Governance:**
  - Alabama State Board of Education (K-14)

## Four-Year Universities
- **Make up:**
  - 16 Universities
- **Governance:**
  - Individual Board of Trustees or System Board of Trustees

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**This difference in governance can lead to transfer problems for students!**
Complaints

- Loss of course credit hours for students
- Extra cost for students
- Not graduating in timely manner
- Two-year college costs for duplication of courses
- Phone calls/letters to legislators
Solution

- **Legislative Act 94-202 (March 17, 1994)**
  - Created the Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC) to implement provisions of the Act
  - Designated the Statewide Transfer and Articulation Reporting System (STARS) as the vehicle for dissemination of information and implementation of AGSC policy
Legislative Charges to AGSC

- Develop a statewide transferable general studies curriculum by September 1, 1998
- Develop a statewide articulation agreement by September 1, 1999
- Examine the need for a uniform course numbering system, course titles and descriptions
- Resolve problems in administration or interpretation of articulation agreement
## AGSC Areas I-IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English Composition</td>
<td>6 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>3 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>3 SH</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fine Arts or Humanities</td>
<td>3 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Literature* or (Fine Arts/Humanities)</td>
<td>3 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two Lab Sciences</td>
<td>8 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History</td>
<td>3 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>6 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History** or Social Science</td>
<td>3 SH</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Only in Engineering did the AGSC allow fewer hours in the General Studies. In some programs, choices may be limited in certain areas by the AGSC Academic Committees (GSACs and PACs).
AGSC Area V

Pre-professional, Major, and/or Electives 19-23 SH

Courses appropriate to the degree requirements and the major of the individual student (or electives)
Organizational Structure

AGSC

General Studies Academic Committees (GSACs)

Pre-professional Academic Committees (PACs)

AGSC Institutional Points of Contact

Colleges/Universities
AGSC
Articulation & General Studies Committee

- 3 Two-Year Representatives
- 2 Regional University Representatives  
  (chosen from UNA, TSU System, UWA, JSU, and UM)
- 1 Auburn University Representative
- 1 University of Alabama System Representative
- 1 University of South Alabama Representative
- 1 Alabama State Representative
- 1 Alabama A&M Representative

TOTAL of 10 MEMBERS  
★ (Each member has an alternate.)

Current USA Representatives:
Dr. Judy Stout
Dr. John Coker - alternate
AGSC – Roles/Responsibilities

- Interpret and take necessary action to develop, implement, and maintain the Alabama Articulation Program as mandated through Legislative Act 94-202
- Approve courses
- Ratify templates
- Resolve problems in administration or interpretation of articulation agreement
- Oversee and monitor work of STARS Office in relation to the state articulation program
- Make final rulings on all appeals
- Meet periodically to address current articulation issues
The STARS Office is located on the campus of Troy University.

STARS serves all public two-year and four-year institutions.

STARS is a web-based data system that allows students, advisors, faculty, and administrators of all community and technical colleges and universities as well as the general public access to information about the general studies curriculum, articulation of degree program requirements, and the transfer of academic credit.

Students using this system can obtain a transfer guide that includes an agreement that obligates the receiving state university to honor the equivalent credits identified.

The STARS office is involved in the day-to-day operations of the AGSC and in coordinating the activities of the various Academic Committees (GSACs & PACs).
## General Studies Academic Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GSACs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area/Ethnic Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art and Art History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biological Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
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<td>Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geology and Earth Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary/Honors/Innovative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music and Music History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosophy and Religious Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics, Physical Science, Astronomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre and Dance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If The University of South Alabama offers at least one major in any of the following areas, then they are granted one voting member per committee. These individuals are appointed by the Institutional Point of Contact for The University of South Alabama.
GSACs – Roles/Responsibilities

- Annual review of discipline specific guidelines
- Review and make recommendations to the AGSC for the approval of new courses (two-year and four-year)
- Periodic review of currently approved courses
- Periodic review of discipline templates and development of new templates
- Serve as academic resource for AGSC in specific discipline area
- Continuing dialogue with the faculty in their discipline, campus curriculum committee(s), departments, and discipline organizations at their respective institution
- Communicate with state professional organizations in the discipline where one exists
- Other tasks as may be assigned by the AGSC
PACs
Pre-professional Academic Committees

- Allied Health
- Business
- Communication
- Computer Science
- Criminal Justice
- Education
- Engineering
- Human Sciences/Home Economics
- Nursing
- Social Work
- Speech Pathology
- Technology

If the University of South Alabama offers at least one major in any of the following areas, then they are granted one voting member per committee. These individuals are appointed by the Institutional Point of Contact for The University of South Alabama.
PACs – Roles/Responsibilities

- Periodic review of discipline templates and development of new templates
- Serve as academic resource for AGSC in specific discipline area
- Continuing dialogue with the faculty in their discipline, campus curriculum committee(s), and discipline organizations at their respective department/institution
- Communicate with state professional organizations in the discipline where one exists
- Other tasks as may be assigned by the AGSC
Each two-year and four-year school has appointed one individual (and an alternate) to serve as the central point of contact for AGSC and STARS matters.

**USA:**
Dr. Judy Stout
Dr. David Johnson

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Maintain information flow between AGSC/STARS and their respective campuses
- Distribute (on their campus) materials, reports, and information from the AGSC/STARS to appropriate persons and departments
- Verify names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses for faculty members serving on GSACs or PACs (this is initiated in two times a year by the STARS Office)
- Oversight of institutional Transfer Assistance Pages and Area V Pages
- Coordinate course approval process for your institution
- Coordinate annual review of institution specific templates for your institution
- Become the central source for AGSC/STARS information on your institution
- Other duties as assigned by the AGSC
STARS System Usage Since 1998

STARS Usage since Fall 1998

Over 270,000 Transfer Guides!
Annual STARS System Usage July 2003 - June 2004

TOTAL USAGE
49,794
STARS System Usage By Major 2003-2004

- Business (All Business Majors): 16%
- Nursing: 43%
- Elementary or Early Childhood Education: 9%
- Computer Science: 11%
- Biology: 9%
- Psychology B.A. or B.S.: 4%
- Criminal Justice: 3%
- Social Work: 4%
- Radiologic Sciences: 4%
- Engineering - Electrical: 2%
- Other: 2%
STARS System Usage by Two-Year Institution 2003-2004

Two-Year Usage Information by Institution for 2003-2004
How does a student obtain a transfer guide?

- See back of one page handout
What time limits exist on transfer guides?

- The guides are valid for **four years** from the date printed.
What if student is unsure about a major?

- Students usually print a guide for each major.
- They then take the common courses on each.
- Student may have to make a decision sometime in the sophomore year.
What if student changes majors?

- If student receives a guide in one major (let’s say business) and follows the transfer guide for two years – then – upon transfer, the student decides they want to change to another major (let’s say Math), then the receiving institution can evaluate their transcript course by course.
- At that point the Transfer Guide in business is no longer in effect.
- If student changes major --- “ALL BETS ARE OFF!”
What is required of receiving institution upon transfer if student has a transfer guide?

- If a student transfers to a 4-year institution with a transfer guide in their chosen major, the four-year institution **MUST** accept the course work taken from the guide and apply it toward the student’s total degree hours.

- As long as the student received **DEGREE CREDIT** for all coursework taken from the guide, the receiving institution can determine how the hours are applied.
Does obtaining an Associates Degree guarantee the transfer of all credits taken?

- **NO** – The STARS transfer guide is the ONLY way to guarantee that all of a student’s credits will transfer.
- Completion of the associates degree **DOES NOT** guarantee that everything taken toward the associates degree will transfer.
- If a student completes the work as prescribed by the STARS Transfer Guide, he/she will have completed between 60 - 63 semester hours of transfer credit. At that point, they would most likely be very close to meeting the associates degree requirements at their two-year institution. However, it is up to the individual two-year institution to make the final degree determination.
What if a student takes only part of a sequence from the guide?

- Students are encouraged to take complete sequences at one institution when possible.
- However, if they only take World History I, then the four-year institution must give them 3 SH of degree credit in history and then determine the second course that would complete the sequence.
What if a student loses his or her guide?

- If the student loses his/her guide, they can contact the STARS Office and request a replacement.
- If the STARS Office can verify that the student did in fact receive the guide, STARS will reproduce the guide as it appeared the year it was printed.
- While this is a service the STARS Office provides, you can help prevent this by **encouraging your students to keep a copy of their transfer guide for verification purposes**.
- **WE RECOMMEND** that students print two copies...one to use as a checksheet and another to use for verification upon transfer.
What if a receiving institution requires a certain grade for a course?

- If a four-year institution requires a certain grade for a course for their native students, then the same can be required of the incoming transfer students.
- However, four-year institutions cannot require a transfer student to make a certain grade in a course that is higher than the grade required of the native student.

For example, let’s say a four-year institution required all native students to make a “C or higher” in English Comp II. They then can require the transfer student to retake their Comp II course if the student made a “D or F”. However, the four-year institution cannot require them to make higher than a “C”.
What can a student do if he/she feels their transfer guide has not been honored?

- There is an APPEALS PROCESS that students can use if they feel their transfer guide was not honored by a receiving institution.
- Officially, as of today, we have had ZERO Appeals.
What about transfers from out-of-state or private schools?

- Students can only receive transfer guides from public two-year institutions in Alabama.
- Private schools are not included. (Currently there are no plans to include these institutions.) Therefore, each receiving institution should evaluate their transcripts on a course-by-course basis.
- Same holds true for out-of-state transfers.
What if an outside accrediting body mandates a change?

- If an outside accrediting body mandates a change in curriculum then the four-year institution can require transfer students, like native students, to pick up the extra course or courses.
AGSC/STARS Website

http://stars.troyst.edu

IN MAY OF 2005, 
the web address will change to 
http://stars.troy.edu
Question and Comments

- Questions?
- Comments?
Contact Information

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