

MSCF Minute



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MnSCU's Transfer Pathways Process Begins, Part 1

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When the Minnesota State College and University system was formed about twenty years ago it was probably imagined by its creators that earning an Associate of Arts degree at a two-year campus would pave a smooth path to the completion of a bachelor's degree at a state university. For a myriad of reasons the process of transfer to a university and completion of a bachelor's degree has not been as efficient as it could have been since the inception of MnSCU, and in today's higher education environment we are all feeling increasing demand from students and taxpayers to improve the process. All of us that desire to see our students move successfully into a major at a receiving institution agree that the lost time, money, and credits that our students experience benefits no one.

To that end in the spring of 2014 the Minnesota State Legislature passed HF 3172, Chapter 312, Sec. 12 which required the Board of Trustees to "develop a plan to implement multi-campus articulation agreements that lead to baccalaureate degree completion upon earning the

number of credits required for the degree minus 60 credits at a system university after transfer to the system university by a student with an associate in arts degree, associate of science degree or an associate of fine arts (AFA) degree from a system college." That in turn created 2015 Legislation (Chapter 69, SF No. 5, Article 3 Higher Education Policy, Sec. 21. [Baccalaureate Degree Pathways](#)) that requires the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to follow the plan developed in 2015 by Charting the Future's Academic Planning and Collaboration Group.

Much of the process that will be detailed in next week's Minute article is based on successful statewide efforts in California and Pennsylvania. As in other states we are not creating a statewide curriculum or narrow set of common courses, but rather are creating pathways that address the same competencies within a discipline. As part of the process it will be necessary to recognize that there will be autonomy and different expressions of a curriculum within a discipline at different

campuses. As a MSCF faculty member of the Biology Transfer Pathways Team, I have already observed in our meetings great cooperation and agreement in the early development of our transfer pathway. It has been fun to work with IFO faculty, administrators, and student services personnel that share a common goal for our students.

Creation of successful transfer pathways should have many benefits for our students, colleges, and, potentially, ourselves as faculty members in departments at two-year campuses. Sixty credit degrees that contain the first two years of a major that will be accepted at any of seven state universities will cut cost and credit totals for our students, give students clear plans and an identity early in their academic careers, and hopefully, increase the number of credits we teach in major track courses. These possibilities will need support in the form of early advising and system-wide, as well as, local marketing if they are to become a reality.

Watch for next week's Minute article which will

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provide a brief introduction to the process and groups involved in creating what have become known as transfer pathways, the groups responsible for the work, and how you can get involved in improving the transfer experience for our students who wish to earn an associate degree (A.A, A.S. or A.F.A.) that includes the first two years of their desired major's coursework. The work to implement the laws referenced above has started and as 2016 progresses you will begin to increasingly about the development of Transfer Pathways.



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website to register. You will create your own password. If you use a personal email, please email mscf@edmn.org with your name and the email used so membership can be verified. Please allow up to seven days before having access to "Members Only" information. Thank you for your patience during this implementation and transition phase.