

Region 10 Articulation Council of San Diego and Imperial Counties
Response to New ASSIST Updates
August 2018

Overview

The ASSIST database is the foundation of the statewide transfer and articulation system for the California's Community Colleges, California State Universities and the University of California systems. It is the only official repository for course articulation agreements between the two segments. The ASSIST database was developed in the mid 1980's (*Legacy ASSIST* or *Legacy*) to display transferability and articulation information accessed by students, counselors, instructional faculty and articulation officers. Eventual capacity limitations of the Legacy Assist system led to the development of a new modernized and updated system (referred to as *New ASSIST* or *ASSIST Next Gen*) designed to display articulation information beginning in the 2017-2018 and future years.

In Fall 2016, each segment's Articulation Officers attended *New ASSIST* trainings in preparation for the publicly announced January 2017 release date. This target launch date, however, failed to take place. In fact, four additional release dates were announced and then rescinded until finally, in September 2017, the ASSIST Executive Management Oversight Committee (EMOC) announced that a new public release target date was yet to be determined. At that time, EMOC announced that a central temporary website would be developed to display only transfer course lists and that this would be completed by December 2017. This website was to make transferability lists beginning with the 2017-18 academic year available to the public for Spring 2018.

On Monday, August 27th, 2018, the California Community Colleges' Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) forwarded a communication from EMOC regarding *New ASSIST* updates to articulation officers; counselors and advisors; Directors of Admissions; Directors of Outreach; Directors of Transfer; registrars; evaluators; and administrators. The memo revealed three key problems:

1. The planned temporary *Course Transferability Tool* website did not launch in Spring 2018 due to data validation problems. Consequently, the tool would not be available for Fall 2018 and a new target date for the launch of this temporary measure was set for December 2018.
2. A fifth target launch date for the *New ASSIST* public website was set for Summer 2019.
3. In the interim, students would be directed to "work closely with a counselor to confirm the transferability status of any courses not listed on ASSIST" without the ASSIST transferability tool.

Members of the Region 10 Articulation Council are concerned that the continued delay in releasing the *New ASSIST* database is creating problems that seriously hinder transfer guidance to students, curriculum development, and institutional program planning, such as Guided Pathways. We fear that continued failure to meet the expected target deadlines will cause harm to the students we serve.

Impact to Students and those who serve them; Counselors, Transfer Center Directors, Articulation Officers, and Instructional Faculty

1. *Inability to clarify a transfer path for students.*

The ASSIST articulation repository informs the Transfer Center Directors and Counselors who help them make their educational plan with consistent, up-to-date, and accurate course selection required for students to compete for admission to their selected university and major. The recent

memo implies that counselors can determine course transferability without ASSIST. This is not possible because ASSIST is the source of that information.

As a result of the failed attempts to launch the *New ASSIST*, some CCCs, CSUs, and UCs have created in-house tools and ad-hoc websites in response to the critical need for articulation information for students, Transfer Center Directors and Counselors. In fact, EMOC has requested that each segment create its own interim solution in response to the failures of ASSIST. This has shifted the responsibility to provide coherent articulation information on to the colleges and universities. However, it is impossible to track and confirm the accuracy of course transferability and major preparation without a single repository of official articulation agreements, which is why the statewide California Intersegmental Articulation Council (CIAC) handbook recommends against creating homegrown documents.

2. *Impacts to curriculum and program development that supports students ability to enter and stay on a path toward an Associate Degree and transfer to a four-year university.*

Current, up-to-date articulation and transfer information is critical and fundamental to facilitating student pathways. Innovation and the creation of new courses and awards are central to this goal. As faculty respond to student needs through course and program development as is their purview, according to Educational Code through AB 1725, they need up-to-date articulation information to assure that they are creating viable paths to transfer universities. Furthermore, the CCCCO requires proof of such viability each time a program award proposal is sent to its office for approval. Providing that proof is becoming increasingly inefficient and problematic.

3. *Impacts to satisfying requirements of California Community College (CCC) initiatives and the recently-adopted funding formula.*

Transfer achievement is identified as a CCC scorecard metric and thus directly ties to the new CCC funding formula, Guided Pathways initiative, and the Vision for Success overall. Furthermore, research on curriculum trends nationwide reveal an estimated 5% change annually. We can assume that each year without a functional ASSIST results in a significant loss of visibility of curriculum changes. The current loss is 10% over two years, impacting enrollment, completion, and funding. A potential further loss totaling 15% could be mitigated, if new ASSIST is released to the public Summer 2019.

Recommendations/Proposed Action

Members of the Region 10 Articulation Council respectfully request action and commitment in order to mitigate additional harm to our students and programs. Region 10 Articulation Officers agree that a functioning system needs to be in place immediately. To that end, the following prioritized recommendations are critical to address the current gap in service:

1. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges shall appoint one Articulation Officer and one Transfer Center Director to serve on EMOC by December 2018. The California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) may also designate at least one university Articulation Officer to serve on EMOC.
2. EMOC shall allocate all the required resources for the completion and release of new ASSIST by the specific date in Summer 2019 as community colleges begin peak student advising periods for their upcoming summer and fall sessions.

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3. EMOC shall identify a specific date in Summer 2019 on which the new ASSIST will be available for public use.
4. EMOC shall provide segmental reports on a monthly basis indicating progress toward completion.
5. In the event that ASSIST is delayed beyond Summer 2019, a coherent intersegmental contingency plan shall be agreed upon by Articulation Officer and Transfer Center Director EMOC representation for Fall 2019 implementation.