



UTAH SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# MEMORANDUM

TAB H

March 26, 2021

## Board Transfer Council Recommendations

Streamlining transfer is one of the Academic Education Committee's top priorities, since transfer can affect several of the important elements in the Board's strategic plan, including affordability, completion, and equity. Efficient transfer can help students avoid accumulating excess credits that do not apply to their degree, eliminate the cost associated with excess credits, provide access to bachelor's degrees for students who started at a community college, and help students complete their degrees, even if life circumstances cause them to leave their original institution. To address the efficiency of transfer within the Utah System of Higher Education, the Board authorized the creation of a Board Transfer Council, tasked it with making recommendations to streamline transfer, and required it to report annually to the Board.

The Transfer Council began meeting in February of 2020. It identified the most immediate priority as determining the best ways to guarantee that students who complete an associate degree at a USHE institution can complete a bachelor's degree as efficiently as possible—with only 60-62 additional credits or two years of full-time coursework. (Later conversations will address transfer between technical and degree programs.)

After extensive discussion on specific transfer difficulties within USHE and on structural misalignments between associate and bachelor's degree requirements, the Board Transfer Council is recommending that Associate of Arts (A.A.) and Associate of Science (A.S.) degrees be restructured in Board policy by creating direct transfer associate degree pathways that will stack neatly into specific bachelor's degree majors and by adjusting the requirements of general associate degrees around disciplinary "meta-majors" to improve transfer efficiency while maintaining the flexibility and exploration that have been the hallmarks of general A.A. and A.S. degrees. The council recommends that the Board authorize the Commissioner's office and degree-granting institutions to begin piloting direct transfer associate degree pathways and to begin work with institutions and consortia groups like the Chief Academic Officers and the General Education Task Force on updating Board policies (including [R470](#) and [R401](#)) to create more transfer-focused associate degree structures.

### **Commissioner's Recommendation**

The Commissioner and the Academic Education Committee recommend that the Board approve the Board Transfer Council recommendation to authorize the Commissioner's office and degree-granting institutions to begin piloting direct transfer associate degree pathways and to begin work on updating Board policies to create more transfer-focused associate degree structures.



# Recommendations from the Board Transfer Council

February 2021



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# Streamlining transfer to address completion and affordability

When transfer is not efficient, it

- Increases time to completion through repeated courses, accumulation of excess credits that don't count toward a degree;
- Increases cost to students to pay for those extra credits;
- Increases student frustration; pushes some students out.

# Streamlining transfer to address equity and inclusion

- Community colleges are cheaper and more accessible than four-year institutions
- Life circumstance cause students to stop out of school or move
- Making transfer efficient = better accessibility, retention, and completion

# Two Transfer Initiatives

- Aim 1: Provide students with accurate information on their transfer options:
  - Electronic Utah Transfer Guide
- Aim 2: Address policy gaps, define standards, and facilitate transfer across USHE institutions:
  - Board Transfer Council, Feb 2020

# Council Responsibilities from Board Resolution

- Review and analyze System transfer data
- Identify transfer and articulation obstacles
- Develop policies and practices
- Require regular follow-up from institutions on implementing transfer/articulation policies
- Establish an appeals process and serve as the final level of appeal from students or institutions
- Annually report to the Board the Council's activities, priorities, recommendations and institutional progress on implementing recommendations

# Work over the last year: Associate to Bachelor's Pathways

- Addressing structural misalignments between associate and bachelor's degrees
- Defining systemwide expectations for major program alignment and lower-division pathways



# BTC recommendations on AA/AS degrees

## Direct Transfer AA/AS

- Credits: min 60/max 63
  - Must include all pre-requisites
  - Excess credits must have Board approval
- General Education
  - Entire Gen Ed package completed (except in only a few specialized programs that would be allowed to parallel the bachelor's pathway, with Board approval)
  - Should include specific Gen Ed courses if required by the major
- Only lower division coursework
- Within a major
  - Completes all requirements for the first two years of a bachelor's degree in a specific major
  - Guarantees ability to complete the bachelor's degree in the same major in two additional years of full-time study

## General Transfer AA/AS

- Credits: min 60/ max 63
  - Must include all pre-requisites
  - Excess credits must have Board approval
- General Education
  - Entire Gen Ed package completed
  - Should specify Gen Ed courses appropriate to meta-major (i.e., QL)
- Only lower division coursework
- Within a meta-major
  - Could transfer to certain types of majors (i.e., those without excessive major requirements that would have to be completed in the first two years)

# Motion

- I move that we approve the recommendations from the Board Transfer Council and authorize the Commissioner's office and the institutions to work on piloting direct transfer pathways in selected majors and to redefine the expectations for associate of arts and associate of science degrees in policy.