

November 19, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: University of Hawai'i Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
David Ross, Chair, and Susan Hippensteele, GEC Liaison

FROM: University of Hawai'i Faculty Senate General Education  
Committee -- Scott Rowland, Chair



SUBJECT: Report on draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) amending E5.209, dealing with articulation of General Education requirements between University of Hawai'i System campuses, dated September 14, 2009

Background:

On Sept. 24, 2009, members of the GEC were provided with copies of a draft MOA that deals with E5.209, the articulation agreement between the UH System campuses. The GEC was asked to develop a statement, either favoring or opposing it, that would be brought before the Faculty Senate. The GEC discussed this memo at two of its regular meetings (11/4 and 11/18). The MOA is also being discussed by other committees, some of which include members of the GEC. The following report draws upon information gained during discussions of multiple committees, including the GEC, the UH Mānoa Task Force on Articulation, the UH Mānoa Council of Academic Advisors (CAA), and the University of Hawai'i Council on Articulation (UCA). Combining these discussions was important because there was considerable mystery and confusion regarding the MOA, and this was only cleared up by information gathered by, or presented to, these other committees. The GEC now believes that it knows where the MOA originated, and what its goals are.

Brief Statement:

We wholeheartedly agree with the overall goal of the MOA, which is to make transferring from one UH System campus to another easier. However, we feel that as written, the MOA will instead cause considerable confusion among students, advisors, and admissions personnel. It would thereby make the transfer process more, not less, difficult. Therefore we recommend that a revised version be presented to all ten Faculty Senates. We provide suggested revisions at the end of this report. If, however, the only two choices are to favor or to oppose the MOA in its current language, we would reluctantly recommend that it be opposed.

The present articulation agreement:

One part of the present articulation agreement that affects many students has to do with the Associate of Arts (AA) degree. It states that if a student earns an AA degree at a community college (the "sending campus") and transfers to one of the 4-year universities (the "receiving campus"), then he or she is considered to have satisfied the General Education (GenEd) core requirements of the receiving campus. At UH Mānoa the GenEd core consists of Foundations and Diversification courses. These are referred to as Basic and Area, respectively, at some other UH System campuses. The current AA agreement works

because earning an AA by definition means that the student has satisfied the GenEd requirements of the sending campus. This agreement has been in effect for a number of years, and seems to be reasonable despite the fact that the GenEd core requirements of the 10 system campuses are not identical (see appended comparison chart).

Any time a student transfers within the system (with or without an AA; see below), a course-by-course review is performed by the receiving campus. Each course receives a Transfer Credit Evaluation (TCE), which essentially matches the course with an existing course (or closest existing course) at the receiving campus. One reason this is done is because in Banner and STAR, courses cannot merely be entered as “generic intro-level xxx” or “generic 200-level yyy”. More importantly, some of a transferring student’s courses undoubtedly will count as pre-requisites for upper-division courses. If the student’s courses don’t have TCEs, the student may lose out on pre-requisites that s/he has already taken, and won’t be able to register for the upper-division courses. Finally, students want to know what their courses from the sending campus count for at the receiving campus. This helps them and academic advisors plan semester schedules, select majors, etc.

Even a student transferring with an AA degree under the present E5.209 agreement has his or her courses reviewed, not for the purpose of determining GenEd core status, but for the reasons outlined above. Thus although course-by-course reviews have a negative stigma (probably because they imply that the receiving campus does not trust the records or course definitions of the sending campus), they are an indispensable part of the transfer process. The only way for this course-by-course review to be eliminated would be if there were a computerized system-wide cross-listing of courses from all campuses (see concluding comments section below).

#### What the MOA proposes:

The MOA proposes three changes to E5.209. The first says that regardless of whether or not a transferring student has earned an AA degree, that student will be considered to have satisfied the GenEd core requirements of the receiving campus if he or she has satisfied the GenEd core requirements of the sending campus. The MOA specifically says that those courses that satisfied the sending campus’ GenEd core will not be subject to a course-by-course review. Note that at present there is no way to designate that a student has satisfied a GenEd core in isolation (i.e., if the student hasn’t earned an AA degree), but we learned at the UCA meeting that such a designation would be added to Banner.

The second change essentially considers the Foundations portion of the GenEd core by itself, and says, similar to the first change, that a student will be considered to have satisfied the Foundations part of the GenEd core requirements of the receiving campus if he or she has satisfied the Foundations part of the GenEd core requirements of the sending campus. Again, the MOA states that these courses that satisfied the Foundations portion of the sending campus’ GenEd core will not be subject to course-by-course review. But as above there is no way at present to designate that a student has satisfied the Foundations portion of the GenEd core in isolation. We assume that such a designation is also planned for Banner.

The third change has to do with the Diversification portion of the GenEd core, but it does not consider it in isolation in a similar manner to what is proposed for the Foundations portion. Instead, it deals with the fact that certain courses have different diversification designations at different campuses. For example, HWST 270 (Hawaiian Mythology) is a Diversification-Literature (DL) course at Kapi’olani CC and UH Mānoa, but it is a Diversification Humanities (DH) course at Windward CC. The third part of the MOA states that the receiving campus will consider a transferring course to have the designation given to it by the sending campus.

### What we like about the MOA:

We like the fact that the UH System considers it important that transferring from one campus to another should be as seamless as possible. We also like the idea that a student should be able to essentially transfer his/her GenEd core or the Foundations portion of his/her core without necessarily achieving an AA degree. This will encourage more students to transfer earlier to a 4-year university because they won't have to first earn an AA degree. Finally, we like the idea that different GenEd requirements (defined by the different campus' faculties) can be accommodated despite their differences.

### What we do not like about the MOA:

In general the GEC feels that the MOA ignores some of the realities of the transfer process. The most glaring examples are the specific statements that there will not be course-by-course reviews of the courses satisfying the GenEd core or the Foundations portion of the GenEd core. As we explain above, there are many reasons why course-by-course reviews are necessary. If these reviews are not done, TCEs won't occur, courses won't be entered into Banner, students may lose out on credit for pre-requisites, and they'll have difficulty planning their academic careers. Students and academic advisors expect to be provided with detailed course equivalencies, if they exist, so that prerequisite checking can be done electronically and STAR degree audits can be effective. In an apparent effort to placate those who consider course-by-course reviews to be punitive, the MOA, as written, will only cause huge headaches for transferring students and academic advisors. Notably these problems probably won't arise until the student has transferred, putting the burden of fixing the problems on the receiving campus.

An additional, almost opposite problem that we are worried about is that by highlighting the lack of course-by-course reviews, there is a great risk that students and sending-campus advisors will consider that the courses from the sending campus will count for more than they really will. This may cause students and advisor to not carefully look at the major and college requirements of the program the student hopes to transfer into. Upon arriving, that student may be unpleasantly surprised to find that his or her classes don't count as specific pre-requisites or don't count towards college graduation requirements, etc. because the stated lack of a course-by-course review gave the impression that every course may have counted for more than it really did. Again, the problem won't show up until the student has transferred to the receiving campus.

A third problem is that the different campuses have different requirements for their GenEd cores, and they change now and then. Because it isn't specified, the changes proposed by the MOA suggest that it will be the receiving campus who has to verify whether or not a student has satisfied all or part of the sending campus' GenEd core, and this will be an almost impossible task. The check boxes in Banner may alleviate this problem, but it is important that a revised MOA state that the sending campus has to verify a transferring student's status with regard to GenEd status.

A fourth problem is that the MOA separates out the Foundations portion of the GenEd core, but doesn't separate out the Diversifications portion. General Education is confusing enough for students and advisors, and treating these different parts of GenEd differently will only add to the confusion. We suggest that once the wording of the MOA is made clearer and precise, that it include a Diversification clause similar to that for Foundations.

The CAA had major concerns about how the MOA's suggested changes would be implemented. Their report has been submitted to you as well. Briefly, they are concerned that because there is no start date specified, the changes would be implemented immediately. This would obviously be problematic with regard to having advisors and Admissions & Records personnel learning the new policy. It also is problematic with regard to the idea of "core year", which defines which set of policies apply to a student based on

when that student enters the UH system. Without addressing the core year issue, even more confusion will occur. Finally, the CAA is worried about how the definition of a student having completed the GenEd core or Foundations portion of the GenEd core will be handled given the new “reverse AA” program. In this program, if a student transfers without having earned an AA degree and then at the receiving campus completes the coursework for the AA of the sending campus, he or she is awarded an AA from the sending campus. Would such a student be designated as therefore having also completed the GenEd core of that sending campus, even if he or she actually hadn’t? Finally, the CAA is concerned about who will verify that the student had achieved the GenEd core or Foundations portion of the GenEd core, and feels that it has to be the sending campus.

#### Recommendation:

Based on the arguments presented above, and discussions with the other committees mentioned above, we have the following recommended text. In this we have retained the overall goal of the MOA, making transferring easier, because we agree with this goal. You will notice similarity in our wording with that recommended by the CAA, and they agreed to let us “borrow” some of it. Italics indicate where specific issues outlined above are dealt with. Note that the 4<sup>th</sup> clause is identical to what was the 3<sup>rd</sup> clause in the draft MOA.

1. Core Requirements. *Starting in Fall 2011*, students who enter the UH System *in Fall 2011 or later* and who complete the general education core (i.e., Foundations/Basic and Diversification/Area) requirements at one UH campus *before transferring* will be considered *upon transfer* to have satisfied the general education core requirements at any UH campus. Fulfillment of the general education core *will be verified by the campus at which the student completed the requirements*. Upon transfer, the course requirements will not be subject to course-by-course review *for the purpose of determining general education core compliance*. However, *course-by-course review will take place in order to determine whether or not the transferring courses satisfy specific college requirements, satisfy the pre-requisites for upper-division courses, and satisfy the requirements of Banner and STAR*.

2. Foundations/Basic Requirements. *Starting in Fall 2011*, students who enter the UH System *in Fall 2011 or later* and who complete the Foundations/Basic requirements portion of the general education core at one UH campus *before transferring* will be considered *upon transfer* to have satisfied the Foundations/Basic requirements portion of the general education core at any UH campus. Fulfillment of the Foundations/Basic requirements portion of the general education core *will be verified by the campus at which the student completed the requirements*. Upon transfer, the course requirements will not be subject to course-by-course review *for the purpose of determining Foundations/Basic compliance*. However, *course-by-course review will take place in order to determine whether or not the transferring courses satisfy specific college requirements, satisfy the pre-requisites for upper-division courses, and satisfy the requirements of Banner and STAR*.

3. Diversification/Area Requirements. *Starting in Fall 2011*, students who enter the UH System *in Fall 2011 or later* and who complete the Diversification/Area requirements portion of the general education core at one UH campus *before transferring* will be considered *upon transfer* to have satisfied the Diversification/Area requirements portion of the general education core at any UH campus. Fulfillment of the Diversification/Area requirements portion of the general education core *will be verified by the campus at which the student completed the requirements*. Upon transfer, the course requirements will not be subject to course-by-course review *for the purpose of determining Diversification/Area compliance*. However, *course-by-course review will take place in order to determine whether or not the*

*transferring courses satisfy specific college requirements, satisfy the pre-requisites for upper-division courses, and satisfy the requirements of Banner and STAR.*

4. Diversification/Area Requirements. UH courses with Diversification/Area designations that transfer to another UH campus will be accepted with the sending campus' designation. Across the campuses, the Diversification/Area designations are sufficiently consistent in content and disciplinary category that these designations may be deemed equivalent. All campuses approve the designations of their own courses and complete a review process at least every five years.

Concluding comments:

As we noted above, we are glad to see that the UH System is taking an interest in simplifying the in-system transfer process while simultaneously balancing the autonomy of faculty governance regarding academic matters. However, this process of MOA review was much more complicated than it needed to be, mainly because the various faculty senates were asked to vote on a draft. For future cases involving changes in academic policy, we strongly urge the UH System to contact all concerned constituencies (faculty, admissions & records personnel, etc.) and collect feedback and comments from them *before* asking anybody to vote on it. To her credit, Joanne Itano, who apparently actually authored the MOA, has said that she is willing to consider changes to it, but if she does, what will become of those votes that have already been taken?

Additionally, two problems that this MOA deals with could be solved or at least greatly simplified with help from the UH System. First, if there were a system-wide computerized course-by-course comparison, then course-by-course reviews by hand would not be required, and a transferring student's records could automatically be in a form that academic advisors, Banner, STAR, and the student him/herself could use. Second, if the system invested some time and effort in standardizing the courses across the 10 system campuses, there would be no need to clarify whose Diversification designation is to be accepted. The different-Diversification-designation-for-same-course problem is actually minor compared to the many courses that have the same alpha and number but different title, or same alpha and title but different number, etc. These mis-matches cause headaches for students, advisors, and computers, and some assistance in helping to eliminate them would be appreciated.

**General Education Committee/Mānoa Writing Program**

**COMPARISON OF GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM (Nov. 2009)**

	UHH prop	UHH now	UHM	UHWO	Hawai'i	HCC	Kapi'olani	Kaua'i	LCC	Maui	WCC
Total GenEd	34	40	31	31	43-46	31	31	43-45	43	46	31
"FW"	3	3	3	3	6-7	3	3	6-7	3	3	3
"FS"	6	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
"FG"	3	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Lang. arts	3	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.
Oral comm.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	3	3	n.r.
Numeracy	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	3	n.r.
Computer Info.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	3	n.r.
Total "F"	15	12	12	12	15-16		12	15-16	12	21	12
DA	6 of	9 of	6 of	6 of	3	6 of	6 of	3	3	6	6 of
DH	DA + DH	DA + DH	DA + DH	DA + DH	3	DA + DH	DA + DH	3	3	n.r.	DA + DH
DL	+ DL	+ DL	+ DL	+ DL	3	+ DL	+ DL	3	3	n.r.	+ DL
DS	6	9	6	6	9	6	6	9	9	n.r.	6
Human Understanding Individual	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	3	n.r.
Human Understanding Community	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	6	n.r.
DB	7 from DB +	9 from DB +	3	3	9 from DB +	3	3	9 from DB +	9 from DB +	7 from DB +	3
DP	DP, one w/a lab	DP, one w/a lab	3	3	DP, one w/a lab	3	3	DP, one w/a lab	DP, one w/a lab	DP, one w/a lab	3
DY			1	1		1	1				1
HI/Asia/Pacific	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	n.r.	3	n.r.
Total "D"	19	28	19	19	28-30	19	19	28-30	28	25	19
<b>Total GenEd</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>43-46</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>43-45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>31</b>

n.r. = not required or applicable