



The State University of New York

Memorandum to Presidents

Vol. 11, No. 1

Date: February 11, 2011

From: Office of the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Subject: *Policy and Guidance: State University Student Mobility Policies*

To: Presidents, State-Operated Campuses
Presidents, Community Colleges
Statutory College Contacts

This memorandum explains University policy on student mobility based on resolutions adopted by the State University's Board of Trustees:

- Trustees Resolution 2009-138, *Reaffirmation and Strengthening of the State University Board of Trustee Policy on Student Mobility (Transfer and Articulation)*, on November 17, 2009; and
- Trustees Resolution 2010-006, *Amendments to General Education Requirement*, of January 19, 2010.

Also relevant is the *Joint Resolution on Transfer and Articulation* endorsed by the Faculty Council of Community Colleges (Resolution AA1-2008-09; October 18, 2008), by the University Faculty Senate (Resolution 150-03-1; October 18, 2008), and by the SUNY Student Assembly (Resolution 0809F-5; October 18, 2008).

These resolutions and their implementation support the education pipeline goals – including student mobility and degree completion – in *The Power of SUNY: Strategic Plan 2010 and Beyond*.

This memorandum supersedes and replaces Memorandum to Presidents (Vol. 87, No. 9) and, together with Memorandum to Presidents (Vol. 10, No. 1), supersedes and replaces Memorandum to Presidents (Vol. 3, No. 5). It was developed in consultation with Presidents and Chief Academic Officers in all sectors of the University as well as faculty governance leaders, the Undergraduate Committee of the University Faculty Senate, and the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Council of Community Colleges.

Questions about this memorandum may be directed to the Office of the Provost or transfercredit@sysadm.suny.edu.

Copy: Chief Academic Officers, All Campuses
Chief Enrollment Officers, All Campuses
President, University Faculty Senate
President, Faculty Council of Community Colleges
President, Student Assembly

I. Salient Provisions

1. Students transferring within the State University of New York will be treated by their receiving institution in the same way as native students of that institution for all academic purposes. [Note that this statement represents a guiding principle. In some specific instances, exceptions are subject to subsequent provisions.]
2. Students transferring without a SUNY A.A. or an A.S. degree will receive full credit for SUNY general education courses successfully completed as well as for all other first- and second-year courses generally offered at SUNY four-year institutions, and will not be required to repeat successfully completed courses with similar curricular content. They will also receive credit toward the major for all successfully completed first- and second-year courses with similar curricular content offered at that SUNY four-year institution.
3. Students transferring with a SUNY A.A. or an A.S. degree will have junior status when accepted into a parallel program at a SUNY four-year institution. These students will receive full credit for SUNY general education courses successfully completed as well as for all other first- and second-year courses generally offered at SUNY four-year institutions, and will not be required to repeat successfully completed courses with similar curricular content. They will also receive credit toward the major for all successfully completed first- and second-year courses with similar curricular content offered at that four-year institution.
4. Students transferring from one SUNY two-year institution to another will receive full credit for general education courses successfully completed as well as for all other first- and second-year courses generally offered at SUNY institutions, and will not be required to repeat successfully completed courses with similar curricular content.
5. Students transferring among SUNY four-year institutions will receive full credit for general education courses successfully completed as well as for all other first- and second-year courses that are generally offered at SUNY four-year institutions. Students will not be required to repeat successfully completed courses with similar curricular content. They will also receive credit toward the major for all successfully completed first- and second-year courses with similar curricular content offered at the destination four-year institution.
6. Students transferring among SUNY four-year institutions may also transfer 300/400-level courses among institutions, subject to a transcript evaluation by the departmental or college faculty in the major program in which the student enrolls. The extent to which such courses fulfill requirements toward the major and the degree will be subject to established major requirements and campus residency requirements.
7. Students transferring from a SUNY four-year institution to a two-year institution will receive full credit for general education courses successfully completed as well as for all other first- and second- year courses that are generally offered at SUNY institutions, and will not be required to repeat successfully completed courses with similar curricular content.

8. A successfully completed course, in terms of transfer eligibility, is defined as one for which credit was awarded and a grade of C or better was achieved at the prior institution. Campuses may require a grade higher than a C, but only if the requirement is the same for both native and transfer students. Campuses may also choose, at their discretion, to give credit for a grade below a C.
9. Students transferring into any SUNY institution will receive a transcript evaluation as close to the time of admission as possible, but no later than payment of their enrollment deposit or upon written request after acceptance. The transcript evaluation will detail how their prior courses will be accepted in transfer and credited toward general education and the selected major. At the time of the evaluation of credits, and in the event that credits are not considered transferable, students will be notified of their right to appeal such credit evaluation through a process that is transparent and easily accessible. The Provost of the State University of New York will make the final decision in the appeal process. Unless conclusive evidence demonstrates otherwise, first- and second-year undergraduate courses successfully completed at one SUNY institution will transfer with full credit to other SUNY institutions.
10. Any SUNY institution may appeal another SUNY institution's refusal to award credit for one or more of its courses. The appeal will be reviewed by a faculty-led committee. Unless conclusive evidence demonstrates otherwise, first- and second-year undergraduate courses will be expected to transfer with full credit. The committee will make a recommendation to the Provost of the State University, who will make the final decision in the appeal process. Final decisions that support acceptance of credits for courses successfully completed will result in such courses being added to the SUNY-wide database of equivalent courses.

II. Implementation Policies and Procedures

A. SUNY General Education Requirement [see Memorandum to Presidents (Vol. 10, No.1)]

1. Credits

Transfer students who meet the 30-credit SUNY General Education Requirement (SUNY-GER) at sending campuses shall be deemed to have met the 30-credit SUNY-GER at a receiving campus. Similarly, transfer students who meet a SUNY-GER area at sending campuses shall be deemed to have met that SUNY-GER area at a receiving campus. As feasible, to promote student mobility and timely degree attainment, a receiving campus shall waive local and programmatic requirements for transfer students who have completed the 30-credit SUNY-GER or who have met a SUNY-GER area that is comparable to a local or programmatic requirement.

2. Grades

A SUNY-GER area successfully completed at a sending campus shall be accepted as meeting the same SUNY-GER area at a receiving campus. With regard to the transfer of a SUNY-GER course to meet local and/or programmatic requirements, a grade of C or higher shall be guaranteed acceptance. A grade higher than C may only be required of transfer students if it is also required of native students.

3. Transcript Addendum

A sending campus shall provide a General Education Transcript Addendum (GETA) for each transferring student, and a receiving campus shall accept the GETA as certification of completed SUNY-GER areas.

4. AAS programs

The University's policy on student mobility does not address AAS programs, which are designed to lead to employment rather than transfer. However, campuses are encouraged to include as many SUNY-GER knowledge and skills areas as feasible, including Basic Communication and Mathematics, in their AAS programs, especially if a program tends to transfer significant numbers of students or graduates to SUNY baccalaureate programs.

B. Courses in the Major

1. A course in the major area, defined as a course that is typically taken by students in the first two years of a baccalaureate program as identified on the transfer section of the <http://www.suny.edu/student> website, and that is successfully completed at a sending campus, shall be accepted as meeting the same requirement at a receiving campus. These specified courses and their course descriptors are available on the transfer section of the <http://www.suny.edu/student> website. Other courses in the major not guaranteed for SUNY-wide transfer may transfer according to campus-to-campus agreements.
2. With regard to the transfer of a course to meet local and/or programmatic requirements, a grade of C or higher shall be guaranteed acceptance. A grade higher than C may only be required of transfer students if it is also required of native students.
3. Courses in the major which are guaranteed shall be listed on the campus website (see C1). It is important to note that there is an upper limit to the number of credits in the major that are typically taken in the first two years of a baccalaureate program, and, therefore, included in the transfer guarantee.
4. Courses in the major that fit the SUNY course descriptors are only guaranteed to transfer for a period of five years after course completion. After that time, campuses can review the content of the course to determine if it remains consistent with the current course descriptor.

C. Information for students

1. Campuses shall have a link on their website for transfer students that easily links to the SUNY transfer student website and is clear, accurate, complete, current and easy to find. Besides general education requirements (see C3), this website will include information on any courses in the major listed on the SUNY website for which a grade higher than C is required.

2. Campuses shall endeavor to keep their course equivalent information at the campus website link they have provided for the SUNY student transfer website as up-to-date as possible.
3. A campus shall provide information about its general education requirements using its catalog, website and other locations. It shall include:
 - a. general education requirements (which should include the SUNY General Education Requirements as well as any local requirements);
 - b. a list of courses that students may use to satisfy general education requirements (as feasible);
 - c. a list of majors with different general education requirements;
 - d. campus policy on grades in general education courses for native and transfer students;
 - e. campus policy on student choice of effective date for the 2010 policy (i.e., whether students who entered SUNY before fall 2010 may, or may not, opt to use the flexibility in the 2010 SUNY-GER); and
 - f. campus contact information for questions about general education.

D. Transfer Credit Evaluation

Students transferring into any SUNY institution shall receive a preliminary transcript evaluation as close to the time of admission as possible, but no later than payment of their enrollment deposit or upon written request after acceptance. The transcript credit evaluation shall detail how their prior courses will be accepted in transfer and credited toward general education requirements and the selected major. At the time of the evaluation of credits, and in the event that credits are not considered transferable, students will be notified of their right to appeal such credit evaluation (see A3). This provision becomes effective when the course-to-course data are available on the transfer section of the <http://www.suny.edu/student> website

E. Student Appeal Process

1. Campuses shall have a transfer appeal website that is easy to reach, transparent and clear in terms of the appeal process.
2. Campuses shall have an appropriate office/officer(s) who will oversee the campus appeal process. The names of these individuals shall be posted on the campus website and on the transfer section of the <http://www.suny.edu/student> website.
3. Campuses shall have a campus-level appeal process that:
 - a. is communicated to transfer students BOTH when students receive their transcript evaluation and on the college website.

- b. acknowledges receipt of student appeal and the date it was received; and
 - c. should not exceed 10 business daysⁱ from receipt of completed appeal application (15 business days when the college is not officially in session).
4. If the student has not had a response from the campus within 10 business daysⁱ, or is not satisfied with response at the campus level, he/she can submit an appeal to the SUNY Provost with supporting materials. The SUNY Provost or designee will gain additional information from the student and receiving institution as needed. The SUNY Provost will respond to the student within 10 business daysⁱ from receipt of complete appeal application.
 5. If the SUNY Provost reverses the campus's decision on a course, that reversal will apply only to that student, not to the generalized acceptability of the course. All decisions will be officially communicated to the student and the campus provost or provost's designee.
 6. If appropriate, the SUNY Provost may recommend that the University-wide Student Mobility Steering Committee consider this course during the next campus appeal cycle.

F. Provost's Student Mobility Steering Committee

1. The Student Mobility Steering Committee is a SUNY shared-governance standing committee that reports to the SUNY Provost, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and the University Faculty Senate.
2. The Steering Committee membership will include three faculty selected by the Faculty Council of Community Colleges and three selected by the University Faculty Senate; two members of the System Provost's office; two chief academic officers, one from a four-year campus and one from a two-year campus; and two professional staff members involved in transfer articulation, one from a two-year campus and one from a four-year campus.
3. Specific committee activities shall include but not be limited to:
 - a. Establishing and reviewing processes that facilitate SUNY students' ability to transfer their A.A. and A.S. degrees seamlessly throughout SUNY, according to SUNY Board of Trustees policy. The Committee will also establish and review processes that facilitate the ability of SUNY students transferring without A.A. or A.S. degrees to receive full credit for successfully completed general education courses and first- and second-year courses within the major. Students transferring within SUNY will not have to repeat courses with similar curricular content, according to SUNY Board of Trustees policy. The Committee will facilitate the transfer of other first- and second-year courses generally offered at SUNY four-year institutions.

- b. Establishing and reviewing appeals processes based on the processes developed by the Transfer Review Committee [see *Joint Resolution on Transfer and Articulation*] for the following:
 - i. Campus-to-campus appeals - A receiving campus may appeal having to accept a course listed in a category from a sending campus. A sending campus may appeal a decision by a receiving campus not to accept a course specified for the major or for general education or by an articulation agreement to meet the same requirement as a native student taking a corresponding course. After receiving an appeal request, the Provost's Office will attempt to have the campuses arrive at a mutually acceptable outcome. If this is not achieved, the appeal will be referred to the Committee.
 - ii. Campus to SUNY System Administration Appeals, such as:
 - a) *General Education Transfer Appeals* - If the Provost's Office determines that an individual course does not meet a general education category requirement, the campus may appeal this decision.
 - b) *Transfer Assurance within the Major Appeals* - Faculty may ask to have course lists revised because of the evolution of the discipline or there may be a desire to modify the process for including courses on the transfer assurance list within the major. The Provost's Office will work to ensure that there is agreement between and among all SUNY campuses on the establishment of courses guaranteed to transfer within the major.
 - c) *Course Category Descriptor Appeals* - Faculty may wish to have descriptors revised to better reflect content expectations.ⁱⁱ
 - d) *Appeals for Acceptance/Rejection of a Course within a Course Category* - If a campus wishes to include a course in a course category, it should first submit the course to the SUNY Provost. If the SUNY Provost approves the campus request, the decision will be sent to the Committee for information purposes. If the SUNY Provost does not approve the course, the SUNY Provost will send the request to the Committee for further deliberation and recommendation.
- c. Establishing an ongoing review process for evaluating the appropriateness of course descriptors and the list of courses assured transfer within the major, with mechanisms for proposing changes when and if necessary.
- d. Convening, when necessary, discipline committees, in consultation with the Faculty Council of Community Colleges and the University Faculty Senate, to advise the Committee with regard to activities related to appeals and review processes.
- e. Reviewing the Provost's decisions on Student Appeals, as prescribed by SUNY Board of Trustees policy, to determine if any system-wide action needs to be pursued.

4. Courses declared assured of transfer within the major shall be considered provisional through the fall 2011 semester. Suggestions for revision should be submitted by October 15, 2011, to allow the faculty review committees, composed of faculty in the respective disciplines from two- and four-year campuses, to consider them and make recommendations so that the website can be updated for the spring 2012 semester. If no appeal to a descriptor is received within this time period, the descriptor and courses assured of transfer within the major as designated on the website will be considered permanent until the Committee, using a systematic and transparent review process, recommends otherwise.
5. It is understood that campuses will make the initial assignment of courses to the appropriate categories, consistent with stated course descriptors.

III. Resources for Campuses

Trustees Resolution 2009-138, *Reaffirmation and Strengthening of the State University Board of Trustee Policy on Student Mobility (Transfer and Articulation)*, November 17, 2009 <<http://www.suny.edu/provost/transfer/BOTpolicies.cfm>>

Trustees Resolution 2010-006, *Amendments to General Education Requirement*, January 19, 2010 <<http://www.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation/campusgenedresources.cfm>>

Memorandum to Presidents (Vol. 10 No. 1), May 28, 2010
<http://www.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation/MemoToPres2010_01.cfm>

Memorandum to Presidents (Vol. 3 No. 5), July 22, 2003
<<http://www.suny.edu/provost/MTP/mtp03-5.pdf>>

Memorandum to Presidents (Vol. 87, No. 9), August 24, 1987
<<http://www.suny.edu/provost/MTP/mtp87-9.pdf>>

University Faculty Senate Resolution 150-03-1, *Joint Committee on Transfer and Articulation Resolution*, October 18, 2008
<<http://www.suny.edu/facultysenate/plenmtg150.cfm#150-3>>

General Education – Resources for Campuses
<<http://www.suny.edu/provost/generaleducation/GenED.cfm>>

Student Mobility – Student Information and Resources for Campuses
<<http://www.suny.edu/student>>

ⁱ Excluding those holidays officially recognized by New York State on its official website.

ⁱⁱ The term course category is used because several individual courses with a variety of titles may correspond to a single course descriptor, such as “British Literature.” In these cases, any course that satisfies the descriptor is guaranteed to transfer into the appropriate academic major.