

THE STATUS OF STATEWIDE CORE CURRICULA IN THE ELEVEN STATES
ACCREDITED BY THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF
COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS (SACS)

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John Stanley Virkler is the eldest son of Robert Yale Virkler and Bertha Flournoy Ford Virkler. He was born on October 22, 1946 in Richmond, Virginia. He has earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Richmond in Richmond, Virginia, a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, a Master of Arts in Political Science and a Master of Arts in College Teaching (Economics) from Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama, and a Master of Arts in Public Administration from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. For twenty-six years, he served as a chaplain in the United States Reserves, retiring as a lieutenant colonel. He is married to the former Kasia Kozicka and is the father of two daughters, Klaudia and Krystyna.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT
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The eleven states that belong to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) have each adopted a statewide core curriculum or its functional equivalent (transfer blocks, transfer modules, or a series of statewide articulation agreements). By addressing a 50-question survey to representatives of the eleven SACS states, I found that the primary reason for the adoption of statewide core curricula was to reduce articulation difficulties for students transferring from two-year colleges to four-year institutions. A secondary purpose was to ensure the quality of general education.

Statewide core curricula vary from state to state, both in administration and in policy. Some cover only state-supported two-year institutions, while others apply to both

two-year and four-year state colleges and universities. The SACS states' core curricula or transfer blocks range from 33 semester hours to 60 semester hours. For the most part, statewide cores include survey courses that would count toward a major in that field. Interdisciplinary courses, capstone courses, and courses intended for non-majors are not included in statewide core curricula. Statewide core curricula have been designed to help students doing all kinds of transfer--traditional vertical transfers, horizontal transfers, reverse transfers, and "upside down" transfers.

All eleven SACS states have concluded or assumed that having statewide cores has reduced articulation difficulties for transferring students. For example, research in the state of Florida has found that the difference between the number of semester hours transferring students and native students require to earn a baccalaureate degree is now less than one three-hour course. The most likely reason for improved articulation is Florida's imposition of a statewide core curriculum.

My research indicated that the SACS states have indeed moved towards effective transfer policies, flexible core programs, and means of assessing student performance. Such policies and programs should increase the number and percentage of students who complete two-year and four-year degrees. They are likely to reduce the cost of higher education to students and taxpayers.

Core curricula have helped colleges and universities to provide equity to a more diverse student population. They have made the transfer process more efficient. At this point, the SACS states need empirical data showing that core curricula improve the educational experiences of all their students.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

American higher education has been a growth industry since the founding of Harvard University in 1636. Since World War II, in particular, the growth of college enrollment has been both speedy and extensive. The first great post-World War II wave of increased college enrollment resulted from the GI Bill of Rights. Schugurensky (2006) reported that America's GI Bill of Rights gave 2,300,000 veterans an opportunity of which they had never dreamed—the chance to get a college education.

The baby boom caused another great expansion of college enrollment, beginning when the children of the World War II generation reached college age in the 1960s. More recently, the community college movement has enabled many Americans belonging to ethnic minorities to begin college studies. In addition, many students at two-year institutions are people older than the traditional 18-year-old. Inevitably, as community college enrollments have increased, transfer issues have increased as well.

The American Association of Community Colleges (2006) reported that the community college serves a socially and ethnically diverse population. American community colleges teach 47% of all African American students in higher education, 55% of all Hispanic American students in higher education, and 47% of all Americans of Asian or Pacific Island descent in higher education. Among all undergraduates, 45% are in community colleges. In addition, community colleges are disproportionately popular with women: 59% of community college students are female. The average community

college student is 29 years old and employed full time. Largely because of their employment and family responsibilities, 60% of community college students are enrolled part time. Meeting the needs of this non-traditional student population has meant a huge growth in enrollment. In recent years, community colleges have awarded almost 500,000 associate's degrees annually. Total credit enrollment in community colleges in the United States is about 6,600,000.

Increased population eventually leads to increased college enrollment. The expected growth in college enrollment due to overall growth in population points to the importance of articulation, the communication and agreements among two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions that make transfer easier and more efficient. Marks (2005) said that all the SACS states will experience population growth in the period 2004-2014, placing an increasing demand upon state colleges and universities:

**TABLE 1:
PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH IN THE SACS STATES, 2004-2014**

State	Population Growth	Percentage Growth
Florida	3,400,000	20
Texas	3,700,000	16
North Carolina	1,600,000	16
Georgia	1,300,000	14
Virginia	915,000	12
South Carolina	406,100	10
Tennessee	546,200	9
Kentucky	189,100	5
Mississippi	103,900	5
Louisiana	147,100	3
Alabama	119,800	3

Marks (2005) pointed out that the number of African American and Hispanic American students earning an associate's degree in the 16 SREB states increased 33%

from 1993 to 2003, reaching about 210,000 a year. The increase in associate's degrees awarded to African Americans and Hispanic Americans accounted for 58% of the increase in such degrees in the 16 SREB states. Clearly, two-year state-supported colleges in the South are helping citizens who belong to ethnic minorities to advance their education. Many of these students from ethnic or racial minorities are first generation college students. They are particularly likely to benefit from programs that facilitate transfer. Easy and efficient transfer can help these students in their progress toward the baccalaureate.

The move toward greater ethnic and racial diversity in two-year and four-year institutions in the SACS states, a movement that began in the latter part of the twentieth century, will continue in the twenty-first century. Marks (2005) said that demographic projections indicate that more than half of the population growth (51%) in the United States over the next 20 years will be in states that are members of the Southern Regional Education Board (the 11 SACS states plus Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Missouri, and Oklahoma).

In its 2005 population estimate, the United States Census Bureau (2006) said that the population of the 11 states that belong to SACS was about 92,400,000. The population of the 16 states that belong to SREB was about 107,000,000. Thus, the population of the 11 SACS states made up 86.4% of the population of the 16 states belonging to SREB. Keeping this overlap in mind, it seems safe to use population and enrollment trends from SREB to draw conclusions about population and enrollment trends in the 11 states that belong to SACS.

As Marks (2005) noted, the increased enrollment of Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and women has been the key to enrollment growth. Hispanic enrollment grew 73% from 1993 to 2003, to reach a total of 500,000 Latino students in the 16 states that belong to SREB. The number of African American students grew 54% from 1993 to 2003, to reach 1,000,000. In 2001, minority enrollment in public schools exceeded 50 percent in 3 SACS states: Louisiana (51%), Mississippi (53%), and Texas (59%). Soon, students belonging to these two ethnic groups will comprise 50% of high school graduates in the 11 SACS states. This demographic change will, of course, have a great impact on higher education and articulation.

Women currently make up more than half of all college and university enrollment in all 11 SACS states (Marks, 2005). While women are not a minority group, they have often been, in the past, an underserved group. Cultural expectations have meant that their attendance as full time students at four-year colleges and universities has sometimes been discouraged by their friends and families. Moreover, many women have had practical problems in attending school. Improved transfer procedures are of particular benefit to women and others who cannot attend full time, or continuously, due to the demands of child care and other family responsibilities. Meeting the needs of women students is especially true at a time when many women are single mothers and the chief economic supports of their families.

The community college system has made higher education a real possibility for millions of Americans. Marks (2005) commented on the growing college enrollment rates of recent high school graduates, rates that have reached new highs in the last decade. The following chart utilizes figures that Marks obtained from the Southern Regional

Educational Board. It shows, for each of the SACS states, the percentage of recent high school graduates who enrolled in college in 2002. This chart lists them in descending order, beginning with the state with the highest percentage:

TABLE 2: COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATES OF RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES (2002)

State	Percentage of Recent High School Graduates in College
North Carolina	65
Mississippi	64
South Carolina	62
Kentucky	61
Tennessee	61
Louisiana	58
Georgia	57
Alabama	56
Florida	56
Virginia	53
Texas	52

Marks (2005) also found positive news in the trends in student progression rates. Appropriate student progression for students enrolled in four-year institutions will show, six years after initial enrollment, that they have either graduated, or are enrolled in their original institution, or have transferred to another institution. In other words, they have either completed or are continuing their progress toward the degree. The progression rate for the 1992 student cohort in SREB states was 67%, while the progression rate for the 1997 student population was 74%. The progression rate for students enrolled in public two-year institutions also has improved. Looking at the 1995 student population, 40% had graduated or were still enrolled or had transferred within 3 years. The progression rate for the 2000 student cohort in public two-year institutions increased to 43%.

Statement of Problem

Because there are so many students enrolled in state-supported two-year institutions in SACS states, articulation issues affect a large number of people, particularly students. Some transferring students may experience no problems, but students who do have articulation difficulties require more time and additional courses to graduate. They may even find that time and money constraints make it impossible for them to complete their studies.

Inevitably, the ease or difficulty with which students transfer from two-year institutions to four-year institutions affects state spending on higher education. There is an obvious economy in ensuring that courses offered in two-year institutions will be transferable. Logically, states with easy articulation can be expected to have more students complete their degrees.

For several reasons, community colleges appeal to students from families that have not traditionally attended college. Community colleges are economically and geographically available to people who cannot leave home to attend college full time. They offer courses with immediate relevance to employment. Moreover, they accept students who lack the prerequisites for enrollment in four-year colleges. In many cases, students accepted by community colleges need remedial courses before they are ready to take college-level courses.

Alliance for Excellent Education (August 2006) said that two-year colleges will play an increasing role in remedial education. About 42% of community college freshmen are enrolled in remedial courses, while only 20% of first-year students at four-year institutions are enrolled in remedial courses. This disparity will increase, as 11 states

have passed laws forbidding or discouraging four-year institutions from offering remedial courses. Improving remedial education is imperative if states want to increase transfer from two-year institutions to four-year institutions. It should be noted that remedial courses never count for transfer. Consequently, the more quickly students can complete their remedial work, the more likely they are to continue their studies and eventually complete a baccalaureate degree.

The fact that more and more universities are no longer offering remedial education means that students who once might have attended state-supported four-year institutions now are forced to attend two-year institutions in order to receive remedial education or to take courses that they need to qualify for admission to a four-year institution. Students can graduate from high school without taking foreign languages, algebra, or natural sciences courses, but they cannot be admitted to four-year colleges without them. Taking these courses at community colleges can help them to make that transition.

In the survey that I circulated among representatives of the SACS states (explained subsequently), Survey Question 50 deals with the minimum admission standards for freshmen in the 11 SACS states. I chose representative institutions from each of the 11 states to see what courses these institutions in SACS states typically require of the students whom they accept as entering freshmen. I found a remarkable similarity in minimum freshman admission requirements. The typical state university in a SACS state requires 4 years of English, 3 years of math (usually 2 years of algebra and 1 year of plane geometry), 3 years of natural sciences (2 of them laboratory courses), 3 years of social sciences, and 2 years of a single foreign language. A few more selective

institutions require a fourth year of math (Georgia Tech, the University of Georgia, and all 16 institutions in the University of North Carolina system). Most institutions in this sample require 2 years of the same foreign language; only Clemson University requires 3 years of the same foreign language. A few institutions require a course in computer use (not just keyboarding but mastery of software applications). A few universities require either 1 or 2 courses in the fine arts (Louisiana Tech, University of Kentucky, and the University of Louisville). Of the universities surveyed, the University of Alabama was unique in requiring 4 classes in the social sciences. Representatives of several institutions stated that they require additional electives, which must be courses they consider academically rigorous.

I have concluded, from my past experience with higher education, that university admission standards have tightened over the past 4 decades. The increased difficulty of gaining admission to state universities has affected and will continue to affect community colleges, which generally offer admission to any applicant with a high school diploma or its equivalent. Any tightening in admission standards will naturally affect transfer. In addition, it must be remembered that these admission standards are minimum entrance requirements. Four-year colleges and universities are not required to accept all qualified applicants; naturally, they choose the best-qualified students in the pool of applicants. Some institutions recommend additional units—for example, a course in advanced mathematics. It seems safe to say that an applicant who has taken additional units in advanced courses will have an advantage over an applicant who has taken only the required minimum.

Striplin (1999) pointed out that one way to increase the rate of transfer for first generation community college students is to clarify transfer agreements between two-year colleges and four-year colleges. Striplin also calls for improved counseling and advising of students, to ensure that they understand the transfer requirements. Students who are encouraged to choose a major early will be able to choose courses that will transfer in the particular degree they are seeking.

Creech (1997) agreed with Striplin on the need to facilitate transfer, since making transfer easier would benefit both students and institutions. Institutions with efficient transfer policies and practices could increase the number and percentage of students who complete two- and four-year degrees. If all public colleges and universities in a state were to agree on how students can fulfill core requirements, then the transfer process would be more predictable. Moreover, institutions that agreed on a core curriculum could assess student learning and performance across institutions.

Although Creech's remarks specifically concern public colleges and universities within a state, agreement on core requirements and prerequisites can also facilitate transfer between state-supported two-year colleges and independent colleges and universities. According to responses to my survey questions, some states (Florida, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia) have worked to ease articulation difficulties between state-supported and private institutions.

The Southern Regional Education Board (2000) reported that college enrollment is growing, especially in the South. In SACS states, the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college (either full time or part time) during the years 1987 to 1997 increased from a minimum of 5 percentage points (in Georgia) to a maximum of 10 percentage

points (in Arkansas). In 1997, Alabama and North Carolina had the largest rate of enrollment of 18- to 24-year-olds among the SACS states—32%. Their enrollment rate compares favorably with the national average of 31%.

The Southern Regional Education Board (2000) has urged that states help more students to graduate by easing articulation barriers through developing general education and prerequisite courses that can be applied at both two-and four-year colleges. The Southern Regional Education Board (2000) has praised Southern states for easing obstacles to transfer through state-mandated policies, and has concluded that most Southern states have reviewed their policies and procedures related to transferring from two-year colleges to four-year colleges or universities. During the 1990s, most Southern states improved articulation in various ways: by creating a core of freshman- and sophomore-level courses that meet academic degree requirements at any public two-year or four-year college; by providing academic planning and counseling for transfer students; and by establishing procedures to ease the process of transferring credits.

More is at stake than merely increasing graduation rates. Community colleges make higher education available to many people who cannot, for economic or social or personal reasons, begin at a four-year college or university. Eaton (1997) pointed out that because many low-income and minority students find it necessary to begin their collegiate work in a two-year institution, efficient transfer is a factor in providing social justice. Eaton also pointed out that successful transfer is used as a way to evaluate educational institutions. Eaton observed that colleges and universities are increasingly required to verify educational attainment, especially the role of transfer.

Eaton (1996) summarized the scope of transfer by pointing out its widespread ramifications. About 23% of entering community college students will transfer to four-year institutions. This means that about 200,000 community college students transfer each year. Two-thirds of these transferring community college students have taken numerous college-level courses and earned 49 credits or more. Indeed, about 37% of transferring community college students have earned an associate's degree.

Unfortunately, at the time Eaton was writing, some state departments of education collected information on transfer, but they had not established state benchmarks for transfer activity. Moreover, many state departments of education were, in 1997, not routinely calculating transfer rates. Such statistics were important partly because so many transferring students are from low-income families and minority ethnic groups, groups traditionally underserved by colleges and institutions. It can be argued, said Eaton, that transfer is not just an administrative issue but a social and economic justice issue, too.

Wellman (August 2002) pointed out that until recently it has been difficult to document transfer performance because institutions were not tracking students after they left their original institutions. However, improvements in technology and tracking have allowed state officials to measure transfer and student performance better. About 1 in 4 first-time degree-seeking students at four-year institutions will transfer, and about 43% of students who begin at two-year institutions will transfer.

The situation has changed greatly in the decade since Eaton (1996) said that departments of education were not collecting sufficient data on transfer. All 11 states that belong to SACs maintain at least one Website that provides information on transfer. For example, Florida maintains the Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking Center

(FACTS). On its Website, FACTS (2006) provides a good deal of information about transfer in Florida: what transfer services are available; how to do a 2+2 transfer; what state universities require from transfer students; what Florida's Transfer Bill of Rights says; and how to appeal an admission or transfer difficulty.

Townsend (1999) noted that for many years, the traditional route for students who attended a two-year institution was to transfer from it to a four-year institution. Now, however, there are multiple transfer patterns. Just over half (52%) of transferring students take the traditional route. Thirteen percent transfer from one two-year institution to another two-year institution before transferring to a four-year institution. Some (22%) have a complicated pattern of transfer, starting at a four-year institution and transferring to a two-year institution before transferring to a four-year institution. Thirteen percent follow another pattern. Some of this group (8%) are students who are dually enrolled in both a community college and a four-year institution. Clearly, these varying routes of transfer require efficient and adaptable transfer procedures.

McPhee (2006) reported a study by National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This study was a nationally representative sample of recent baccalaureate graduates. An American Association of Community Colleges researcher looked at these results and made 4 major observations. First, almost half (49%) of baccalaureate recipients had, at some time, attended a community college. Second, about 22% of all baccalaureate recipients were traditional transfers, students who began their studies at a community college and then transferred to a four-year institution. Third, about 6% of baccalaureate recipients were reverse transfers, students who began at a four-year institution, transferred to earn an associate's degree or certificate, and then returned to a

four-year institution. Fourth, about 22% of baccalaureate recipients were *casual attenders* who had attended community college either during summer sessions or while dually enrolled to graduate earlier or to fill a deficiency in the schedule at their baccalaureate institutions. These numbers underline the importance of transfer, while the diverse patterns of transfer point to its complexity.

Adelman, Daniel, and Berkovits (2003) measured the temporary migration of students from four-year institutions to two-year institutions (*reverse transfer*). Some students transfer for the long term, often earning an associate's degree before transferring to their original four-year institution or another four-year institutions. Others enroll for one or more courses in summer school before returning to their original four-year institution for the fall term. In sum, they found that 28% of four-year students earned 9 or more credits during the summers at two-year institutions. Whether reverse transfers enroll in two-year colleges for a long term or a short term, articulation is a vital issue to them.

Yang (2006) summarized the importance of reverse transfer, saying that reverse transfer has reached significant numbers in two-year institutions. Reverse transfer students overwhelmingly enroll in credit programs, which strengthens the two-year colleges' transfer function and puts pressure on the institutions to have courses and programs of a calibre equal to that of the four-year colleges. In addition, two-year colleges often save the educational careers of students who have performed poorly in their first enrollment at a four-year institution.

Wellman (August 2002) calculates that just over half of the students who transfer from a four-year institution are transferring to another four-year institution. The rest transfer (reverse transfer) to a two-year institution.

Research Questions

I will discuss my four research questions further in Chapter III. Briefly, my research was directed toward answering the following four questions:

1. What is the status of statewide core curricula in the 11 states that are members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)?
2. Why have the SACS states adopted statewide core curricula?
3. What is the content of core curricula in the SACS states?
4. Has the adoption of these statewide core curricula reduced articulation difficulties for transferring students?

Limitations

This study will deal only with the 11 states that belong to SACS. In alphabetical order, they are Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. These states (with the exception of Kentucky) are the states that made up the Confederacy, and they share a common history. They are more ethnically diverse than many parts of the United States. They share many economic, cultural, and social traits.

I will occasionally mention the issue of transfer and the status of core curricula in other states. However, to keep it manageable, I have limited my study to the relatively homogeneous states that belong to SACS. My study also focuses on the period from 1967 (when Georgia adopted its core curriculum) to 2006. According to the responses to Survey Question 2, Georgia was, in 1967, the first SACS state to adopt a statewide core curriculum (revised in 1996). The most recent is Tennessee, where the statewide core curriculum was adopted in 2000 and went into effect in the fall semester of 2004.

I have chosen to include all 11 SACS states in my study of statewide core curriculum, although not all the SACS states use that term. According to survey responses, Mississippi authorities refer to the state's system as a series of 194 articulation agreements. (The number varies annually; it was 194 in April 2006.) Institutions in Kentucky, North Carolina, and South Carolina use the term *transfer blocks*. In Virginia, SCHEV uses the term *transfer modules*. Despite the difference in terminology, these states' transfer blocks or modules and articulation agreements are designed to fulfill the same major purposes that statewide core curricula serve—facilitating transfer and ensuring educational quality.

Statewide core curricula vary greatly from state to state with regard to content, who is covered, the significance of the two-year degree, and in other ways. However, I believe that the similarities are sufficient to allow for generalizations.

Students can also obtain college credits by taking *advanced placement examinations*. High school students in particular are encouraged to study for and obtain credit by taking advanced placement courses. I shall not discuss this trend, although it would be an appropriate topic for further research.

Definition of Terms

I have used the terms *two-year state-supported institutions* and *four-year state-supported institutions* throughout my paper. A two-year state-supported institution may be a community college, a technical college, a junior college, or a two-year branch of a state university (for example, the University of South Carolina at Beaufort). A four-year state-supported institution may be a college, a university, or an institute (for example, the Virginia Military Institute). I deal only with public institutions in this study.

The term *core curriculum*, strictly defined, would be a set of general education requirements that all undergraduates must complete in order to graduate. However, even a strict core curriculum allows for some choice within disciplines. In a typical university, for example, a student can select from several different courses offered in the natural sciences, social sciences, and foreign languages. One student might choose to take general education courses in biology, psychology, and French, while another might choose physics, sociology, and Japanese. Despite these different choices, however, both students must meet the same criteria: they must take both semesters of their introductory-level science course, pass two mathematics courses for which college-level algebra is a prerequisite, and reach elementary proficiency in a foreign language.

For the purposes of this study, a set of general education courses that allows for a wide choice among alternative courses is functionally equivalent to a core curriculum. The same is true of transfer blocks, which a number of states use for students transferring from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions. Transfer blocks or modules are groups of related courses that transfer automatically, so long as the student has completed the entire block. This paper will treat transfer blocks as the functional equivalent of a statewide core curriculum.

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (2006) stated that South Carolina has adopted 6 transfer blocks. Students chose a block by their area of interest: arts, humanities, and social sciences (46-48 semester hours); business (46-51 semester hours); engineering (33 semester hours); sciences and mathematics (48-51 semester hours); early childhood, elementary, and special education (38-39 semester hours); or nursing (60 semester hours). A student who has completed all the requirements of a

particular transfer block will automatically receive full credit at the four-year institution, so long as he or she continues in the same major for which the transfer block was intended.

SACS states have governing or advisory (coordinating) boards. The exact titles vary greatly from state to state, and so do their functions. In general, a governing board has the authority to establish education policy on a statewide basis, while an advisory or coordinating board facilitates cooperation between and among state institutions. I will discuss the differences between governing boards and advisory boards at greater length in Chapter III.

Rationale for This Study

The focus of this study can be summarized in these words—growth, equity, efficiency. The successful resolution of transfer issues will lead to growth in enrollment, equity in the treatment of students, and efficiency in the use of resources like money and time.

American higher education has seen explosive growth in the second half of the twentieth century, fueled by the students attending under the GI Bill and continuing with the expansion of community (junior) colleges to accommodate the arrival of the children of that generation during the 1960s. Lately, even as numbers in the traditional college-age population have leveled off, higher education enrollment has continued to grow.

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2000) reported that this enrollment growth, which has been especially strong at two-year state-supported institutions, has increased the importance of articulation. Marks (2005) pointed out that in 2003, enrollment at two-year state-supported institutions exceeded 50% of all higher

education enrollment in 3 of the 11 SACS states. In 10 of the 11 SACS states, over a third of all the students enrolled in state institutions are enrolled in two-year institutions.

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2006) has issued a report card for all 50 states. One of the categories judged the opportunities provided for state residents to enroll in higher education. A strong grade in participation generally indicated that the state was providing enough types of educational programs for its residents, as well as enough spaces for the students who wanted to take those programs. The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education report card gave Bs to 3 states (Kentucky, North Carolina, and Virginia), Cs to 5 states (Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Texas), and Ds to 3 states (Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina). Clearly, there is room for improvement in providing people with opportunities for higher education, and articulation reform is one way to increase participation.

Every year, articulation issues affect tens of thousands of students. Moreover, the students who begin their studies at community colleges and can continue to the baccalaureate only if they overcome articulation difficulties are disproportionately likely to be traditionally under-served students—African Americans, Hispanic Americans, females, older students, returning students, and part time students. While it is important to increase the transfer rate for all students at two-year state-supported institutions, it is crucial for first generation college students.

The second reason that articulation issues are important is equity. Students who are forced to retake courses that they have already passed simply because they have transferred from one state-supported institution to another are victims of bureaucratic obstacles unrelated to educational quality. Having to repeat courses will increase the time

it takes students to graduate, and it may discourage them so much that they never complete their bachelor's degrees. A statewide core curriculum is one way to reduce artificial obstacles to degree completion.

The third reason for reducing articulation difficulties is efficiency. At their best, statewide core curricula facilitate transfer. They are likely, in the long run, to increase both the number of students who earn a two-year degree and the number of students who eventually earn a four-year degree. Because they prevent wasteful duplication of courses, core curricula are likely to reduce the time it takes an undergraduate to earn a baccalaureate degree. From the viewpoint of both taxpayers and students, easy and efficient transfer between state-supported institutions is a desirable goal. It saves money for taxpayers and both time and money for students.

Changing patterns of transfer in SACS states (growth of reverse transfer, lateral transfer, and dual enrollment) have complicated the traditional role of vertical transfer. Statewide core curricula attempt to create a seamless transfer system, one without artificial boundaries or awkward disjunctions. Ideally, such a system would deal with all these sorts of transfer. It would benefit students, educators, taxpayers, and legislators.

The most important projected benefit of this study is to add to the literature comparing statewide core curricula. While researching, I found a great deal of literature concerning statewide curricula, but no research comparing the statewide core curricula of the different states. I hope that this paper will benefit anyone desiring to study the status and the recent history of statewide core curricula in the 11 SACS states.

Statewide core curricula may help educators to create a coherent common core curricula. They also help administrators to deal with a persistent transfer problem: how to

determine whether transferred courses are truly equivalent to courses in the second institution. They provide a beginning point for addressing questions of educational standards.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Creech (1995) pointed out that the boom in two-year college enrollment is continuing. The number of community college students enrolled in the 15 states that make up the Southern Regional Educational Board has grown from under a million in the 1970s to 1,700,000 in 1995. (SACS' and SREB's memberships overlap. All 11 SACS states are members of SREB, along with 5 additional states.) Unfortunately, many of these students will encounter difficulties when attempting transfer from a two-year college to a four-year college or university.

Responses to Survey Question 41 indicated that in 2003, there were about 1,594,952 students enrolled in community colleges in the 11 SACS states. This number indicates that the 11 SACS states had as almost as many students enrolled in two-year state-supported colleges as were enrolled in 1995 in two-year state-supported colleges in the 16 states that belong to the Southern Regional Education Board.

Creech (1997) encouraged states to develop common core requirements to facilitate transfer. Creech made specific recommendations that states can follow to improve transfer. First, general education requirements should be established for both two-year institutions and four-year institutions, so that courses taken at any public institution will be accepted by all the other public colleges and universities in that state. In particular, any student with an associate's degree should be awarded third-year (junior) status upon transfer. Second, computer technology (Websites, e-mail, and electronic

course listings) should be used to inform students and potential students about these statewide core curricula. This technology should be supplemented by transfer coordinators, whose responsibility it is to advise all transferring students. Finally, statewide transfer committees should continually evaluate the effectiveness of current transfer policies and recommend improvements.

Marks (2005) found that the percentage of undergraduates enrolled in two-year state-supported institutions in 2003 increased in 8 of the 11 SACS states. This chart shows the figures for each state.

TABLE 3: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN STATE-SUPPORTED HIGHER EDUCATION ENROLLED IN STATE-SUPPORTED TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS (2003) AND CHANGE SINCE 1997-1998

State	Percentage	Change 1997-1998 to 2003
Texas	54	+0
Florida	53	-2
Mississippi	52	+3
North Carolina	49	+4
Virginia	46	+4
South Carolina	45	+4
Kentucky	42	+15
Georgia	38	+10
Alabama	38	+1
Tennessee	36	+0
Louisiana	27	+5

The percentage of students attending two-year state-supported institutions increased during the period of 1997 to 2003 by 3 percentage points or more in 7 SACS states. For the United States as a whole, 6,207,618 persons graduated from two-year institutions in 2003. Two-year institutions are, and have been, increasingly important in American higher education.

Eaton (1997) discussed the difficulties involved in articulation and transfer. Eaton cited the Academic Model, which was developed by the National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer (NCAAT). The Academic Model has two key elements that deal with articulation and transfer. The first is the encouragement of collaboration between two-year and four-year institutions. The second is monitoring of the transfer population to determine transfer effectiveness.

Unfortunately, Eaton (1997) observed, the Academic Model has encountered many obstacles. For one thing, the traditional American decentralization of higher education has led to high levels of autonomy for institutions, which has made transfer difficult. On the faculty level, autonomy of faculty in the classroom means that there is little pressure for faculty members to work as a team. Finally, there has been reluctance among colleges and faculties to invest a great deal in inter-institutional cooperation.

One argument for granting credit for course work completed by students at two-year colleges is that data indicate that the quality of education in two-year colleges is comparable to that provided at four-year colleges. It is true that, as State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (June 2003) reported, many students experience a transfer shock in their first semester at a four-year institution. Transfer shock, which is analogous to the transplantation shock that plants experience when they are moved from one place to another, is a temporary drop in grades after transfer. It is not a lasting problem.

A 2003 study of 2,695 transfer students from the Virginia Community College system showed a transfer shock of only -0.11 (State Council on Higher Education for Virginia, June 2003). Transfer students on average had a grade point average (GPA) of 2.84 during their first year in the community college system and a grade point average of

2.73 after transfer to a senior institution. In other words, C, B, and A students from Virginia's community colleges were still respectively C, B, and A students at four-year institutions after they transfer.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (2003) stated that assessments have consistently shown that 74.9% of community college transfer students remain in good academic standing at the four-year college or university to which they transfer. The fact that transferring students do so well seemed to indicate that the quality of academic work (including general education) in two-year institutions was comparable to the quality of academic work (including general education) in four-year institutions.

Texas Higher Education Coordination Board (June 2001) said that transfer shock has not been a problem in Texas. When it compared students' grade point averages, the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board found no significant difference in the quality of student performance at the receiving institutions among college and university students who had transferred after completing at least 30 semester hours and students with at least 30 semester hours who had remained at their initial universities.

The Florida Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges (April 1999) reported that in Florida, most community college students who transfer earn grade point averages of 2.50 or higher in state-supported universities. For the fall semester of 1996, 68.5% of transferring students earned grade point averages of 2.50 or higher. Overall, 87.71% of transferring community college students in Florida have earned a grade point average of 2.0 or higher in Florida's state-supported universities.

The fact that most transferring community college students in Florida succeeded in their upper level studies after transferring to state universities would seem to indicate

that the quality of general education in Florida's community colleges was comparable to the quality of general education in Florida's state universities. Their success as upperclassmen offers evidence for the position that students transferring into state-supported four-year institutions should receive credit for general education courses they took in state-supported two-year institutions.

For many reasons, interest has been growing in the imposition of a statewide core curriculum as a means of reducing articulation and transfer difficulties. Increased enrollment, in both two-year and four-year institutions, has meant more students in need of efficient transfer processes. The need is particularly great because this is a time of increased geographical mobility, and many students take courses at two or more institutions. Moreover, much of the increased enrollment at two-year institutions involves traditionally underrepresented demographic groups like older students, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans. Efficient transfer increases the likelihood that they will obtain the baccalaureate degree. In addition to these pressures from the student population, there is pressure from state legislators, who realize that each credit hour costs not only the student but the state that subsidizes its educational institutions. They want to save taxpayers money by reducing the time it takes undergraduates to graduate.

Recent growth in student enrollment has produced problems for both students and institutions. The typical college graduate before World War II began his or her studies just after graduating from high school as a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old freshman and enrolled as an on-campus student at a four-year college or state university, graduating four years later from the same institution. Currently, many students begin their studies at a two-year community college and may transfer to one or more community colleges and

then transfer again to one or more four-year institutions before graduating—often after 6 or more years. Moreover, many older students and more minority students are attending college now, usually beginning their studies in two-year colleges.

Bender (1990) said that recent legislative action regarding transfer reflected an extreme concern for students' interests. Occasionally, this concern has worked to the detriment of traditions cherished by colleges and universities or values important to teachers and professors. This shift in emphasis has happened because of changes in societal attitudes toward higher education. Popular thinking holds that citizens have a right to higher education, and states have a duty to provide it.

Bender (1990) summarized recent state legislative hearings, seeing a focus on unfairness in the transfer process, a perception that transfer students are treated unfairly compared with native students. (*Native students* are those who finish the baccalaureate without transferring from the college or university in which they enrolled as freshmen.) Bender found that many people believe that students are being treated unfairly when they transferred from one institution to another, especially when transferring from a junior institution to a senior institution. Legislators have heard these complaints about unfair treatment of transfer students. They have become concerned about the cost to taxpayers when transferring students have to repeat coursework already successfully completed or when take more courses than native students do in the same degree program.

The Education Commission of the United States (February 2001) pointed out that more than 50% of the postsecondary students in the United States are enrolled in state-supported two-year colleges. If these students are to earn a baccalaureate, their successful transfer from two-year colleges to four-year colleges and universities is essential. The

Commission charged, however, that most states still do not have legislation providing streamlined transfer of credit.

The Education Commission of the United States (February 2001) summarized state transfer policies in 6 categories:

TABLE 4: TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION POLICIES IN THE 50 STATES

Cooperative agreements between Institutions (articulation agreements)	40 states
Transfer data reporting	33 states
Legislation on transfer	30 states
Statewide articulation guide	29 states
Common core curriculum	23 states
Common course numbering	8 states

Many states have adopted more than one of these articulation policies.

A later report by the Education Commission of the States (2003) said that at least 17 states have now adopted a common course numbering system. Education Commission of the States concluded that a common course numbering system reduces confusion over which courses will transfer.

Another motivation for reducing articulation problems is the desire to reduce the time it takes students to graduate. King (1995) reported that it is taking many students longer than 4 years to graduate from college. For example, in South Carolina, only 38% of Clemson University's entering freshmen graduate within 4 years, although 72% of Clemson freshmen do graduate within 6 years. (The statistics are similar for all state universities in South Carolina.)

The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2000) reported that in the highest-ranking states, 66% of entering first-time full time students complete a bachelor's degree within 5 years of enrolling. None of the SACS states scored that high. From the most successful to the least successful, these are the statistics reported for the SACS states for the 1997-1998 academic year:

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN THE SACS STATES WHO COMPLETE THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE WITHIN 5 YEARS OF FIRST ENROLLMENT

State	5-Year Graduation Rate
Virginia	59%
North Carolina	56%
Florida	52%
South Carolina	52%
Georgia	46%
Tennessee	45%
Mississippi	45%
Alabama	45%
Texas	43%
Kentucky	37%
Louisiana	28%

Marks (2005) reported similar figures for progression within 6 years of enrollment. The six-year progression rate for the 1997 cohort of students completing a degree at the institution of initial enrollment for SACS was 74% in the 16 SREB states (which includes the 11 SACS states). However, these results are not exactly comparable, because the first study used a five-year cohort and the second study used a six-year cohort. In addition, the progression rate lumps graduates with students who are still enrolled in the same institution. However, SREB's findings showed that nearly three-quarters of the first time, full time, baccalaureate seeking students who began their

at a public four-year university in the SREB states in the fall had either graduated or were still enrolled and pursuing a degree. Progression rates appear to be improving.

Marks (2005) found that only 43% of the 2000 cohort of full time students enrolled in two-year state-supported colleges had completed a degree or certificate, were still enrolled, or had transferred during a three-year period. The other 57% had dropped out without completing a degree or certificate. Apparently, full time students enrolled in two-year state-supported colleges were less likely to persist than full time students enrolled in state-supported four-year institutions.

There are many good reasons why it often takes students longer than four years to graduate. Whatever the reasons, however, legislators and taxpayers are eager to reduce the time it takes students to graduate in order to reduce the cost to the state. Since the states subsidize education at state-supported colleges and universities, extra courses and extra years of study mean extra expenses. Reducing transfer and articulation difficulties is one way to reduce the amount of time it takes students to earn a baccalaureate degree, thereby saving the states (and their taxpayers) money.

Several states have adopted or imposed a statewide core curriculum as a way to reduce the amount of time it takes undergraduates to graduate. According to the Florida Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges (April 1999), the core curriculum means that transfer students take fewer courses that do not receive credit when they transfer. It reported that students in Florida who transfer from community colleges to state universities and then receive a bachelor's degree earn an average of 139.3 semester hours, while graduating native students earn 136.1 semester hours. The difference between the groups is only 3.2 semester hours, or about 1 course. The Florida

Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges has judged this economy in credit hours an indication that transfer in Florida is efficient.

It is important to note, however, that instituting a statewide core curriculum does not guarantee that transferring students will take no more courses than native students do. In an unpublished paper written for Dr. Andrew Weaver of Auburn University in 1995, I reported that students may need to take prerequisite courses before taking a core course. In an interview with me on December 8, 1995, Auburn University's Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Carol F. Daron, noted that, for example, a student may need to take several math courses before he or she is ready for the required core course in pre-calculus with trigonometry. A two-year institution's college algebra class might count for general elective credit but not fulfill the four-year institution's math core requirement. Developmental or remedial courses do not count towards transfer or graduation. Consequently, a transferring student might need to pass more than 124 semester hours in order to earn the baccalaureate. In addition, most four-year institutions limit the number of hours a student may transfer, and a transferring student may have earned more hours at a two-year institution than the four-year institution will accept.

Students have a variety of reasons for taking excess hours. However, taking excess hours will increase the amount of time it takes to graduate. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (April 5, 2004) studied the 1998 student cohort in Texas. Students who graduated in four years earned an average of 131.3 semester hours. Students who took 6 years to graduate earned an average of 168.1 semester hours. A baccalaureate in Texas requires a minimum of 120 semester hours and a maximum of 140 semester hours.

The increasing number of older undergraduate students also has drawn attention to the importance of articulation and transfer. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (February 2005) reported that for the fall semester in 2004, 31.4% of Tennessee undergraduates were 25 or older. The Commission's goal is that by the academic year 2009-2010, 34% of Tennessee's undergraduates will be 25 years of age or older. This is significant, because generally the older a student is, the more critical articulation issues are to his or her success.

The Board of Governors, State University System of Florida (September 21, 2005) reported that the average age of undergraduates in Florida's state university system was 22. The Department of Education, Division of Accountability, Research, and Measurement (February 2006) reported that in Florida the average student age in the community college system was 28. In Florida, then, the average community college student is 6 years older than the average undergraduate in the university system. The higher average age for community college students actually understates the difference, because community colleges do not enroll juniors or seniors. Articulation issues are especially important to older students, who—because of time and budget restraints—find it more of an impediment to have their transfer credits denied.

Most discussions about the problems of articulation and transfer deal with students transferring from two-year colleges to four-year colleges and universities. However, Brinkman (1994) noted that students have problems with both vertical and horizontal transfer. *Vertical transfer* is transfer between two-year and four-year institutions, while *horizontal transfer* is transfer from one two-year college to another two-year college or from one four-year institution to another four-year institution.

Brinkman (1994) noted that many students, for personal or economic reasons, attend college sporadically, taking college courses at different colleges and at different times. Efficient transfer is especially helpful to students who are unable to concentrate their courses into four years and a single institution. When transfer is smoothly articulated, students can move from one college to another without losing credit hours. Over time, even part time students can accumulate enough credit hours to finish a program or degree. In addition, programs set up to facilitate horizontal transfer usually benefit vertical transfer as well.

Brinkman (1994) pointed out that reducing transfer difficulties will increase the number of students entering community college who go on to receive the baccalaureate degree. Currently, only about 20% of students who enter community college eventually earn their bachelor's degrees. The seriousness of this problem is clear from the fact that nationwide, almost half of all undergraduate students (45.5%) are enrolled in two-year public community colleges. (The percentage varies greatly from state to state.) Reducing transfer barriers will increase the number of community college students who eventually graduate from four-year institutions.

Robertson and Frier (1998) reported that up until about 1970, there was almost no state involvement in transfer and articulation. Now, however, all 50 states have mechanisms for coordinating higher education from the top down, and most states are actively promoting transfer among their state colleges and universities. These coordinating programs take many forms. Some states have formal and precise articulation agreements. Some states have established state agencies with statutory powers to direct transfer activities. Some states have funded specialized services for transfer students.

Some states require that colleges collect and report statistics on the performance on transfer students. Florida has a State Articulation Coordinating Committee, which was established specifically to ensure that students who hold an associate's degree are guaranteed admission to and granted credit at the state's baccalaureate institutions.

Robertson and Frier (1998) also reported that during the 1980s, responsibility for transfer and articulation in public higher education shifted from the local level to the state level. This shift to state control proved necessary because individual institutions had not dealt adequately with the situation, which had become an overwhelming problem due to the increasing numbers of students attending two-year colleges. The state mandates were a response to the failure of some colleges and universities to work closely with other institutions to formulate articulation agreements and to disseminate transfer information. In 1989 alone, 13 states passed laws on transfer and articulation. Robertson and Frier have concluded that these new laws on articulation and transfer have made the faculties at four-year colleges aware that their state governments will not tolerate what they perceive as transfer abuses—practices that make transfer harder and end up costing taxpayers money.

Bender (1990) concluded that proposed changes in the laws regarding transfer and articulation are due to the perception of legislators that four-year institutions have treated two-year college students unfairly when they attempted to transfer to a four-year institution—that they have required them to take more courses than students who enrolled without transferring. Bender also discussed other articulation concerns, pointing out that since minority students are disproportionately likely to attend community colleges, articulation and transfer issues are disproportionately likely to affect them. An additional

problem is that transfer has been made more complicated by growing enrollment in applied science programs in health, business, technologies, and services. Students in these programs who transfer to four-year institutions have fewer hours in general education than most graduates with Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degrees have when they transfer to four-year institutions.

According to the Office of Legislative Research (March 2, 2005), 20 states have approved applied sciences associate degrees like the Associate of Applied Sciences and Associate of Occupational Studies degrees. Most courses for these degrees are technical and vocational. General education requirements in these associate degrees equal only 20-25% of the 60-73 semester hours required for the applied sciences associate degree.

The number of students who transfer with an Associate in Applied Sciences is relatively low compared to those who transfer with an Associate of Arts or an Associate in Science degree. To cite just one example, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (2006) said that for the summer 2005 and fall 2005 semesters, only 27 students who had earned the Associate in Applied Sciences transferred from the Kentucky Community and Technical Colleges System to one of Kentucky's state-supported universities, compared to 568 students who transferred with either an Associate in Arts or an Associate in Science degree.

Some states have started special baccalaureate degree programs to accommodate students transferring with an Associate in Applied Sciences. The Website of Stephen F. Austin State University (July 14, 2005) reported that their university had established a Bachelor of Arts in Applied Sciences, which allows Associate of Applied Arts recipients in Texas to transfer up to 48 semester hours of credit toward a baccalaureate in applied

sciences. According to the response of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to Survey Question 19, Associate in Applied Sciences recipients ordinarily transfer only 15 semester hours of credit in Texas. The Bachelor of Arts and Sciences at Stephen F. Austin State University requires 130 credit hours: 47 in the general education core; 36-48 in the student's area of specialization (vocational or technical), 24-36 in professional development, and 9-14 in approved elective courses. The 15 hours of credit normally transferred for Associate in Applied Sciences recipients are only a small part of those 130 hours. The Bachelor of Arts and Sciences program, by contrast, would allow them to transfer with over a third of the required hours.

The Tennessee Board of Regents (November 2002) said that Tennessee has enacted a 41-semester hour core that all of Tennessee's four-year and two-year state-supported institutions have adopted, effective in the fall semester of 2004. The Tennessee Board of Regents also adopted a core of 15 to 17 semester hours for students pursuing the Associate of Applied Sciences. The Tennessee Board of Regents emphasized that specific courses to satisfy the requirements for the Associate of Applied Sciences degree must be the same courses that satisfy the general education requirements for the Associate of Arts or Associate of Science and the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree.

Bender (1990) said that the goal of all state policies regarding articulation and transfer is to facilitate transfer students' unimpeded movement through upper division institutions with full recognition and credit for all successfully completed courses and with their assimilation into the student body with the least possible dislocation or trauma. Furthermore, the ideal relationship of two-year and four-year institutions would be collaborative rather than articulated efforts. Prior to 1965, Bender noted, there was very

little comprehensive higher education policy on a statewide level. However, passage of the Federal Higher Education Act of 1972 meant that central coordinating agencies were created in most of the 50 states. Once these agencies were set up, they assumed the additional responsibility of coordinating student transfer and program articulation.

Other factors that have led to an increased state involvement in articulation and transfer include social, economic, demographic, and financial forces. In the years since World War II, employers have increasingly required a more highly trained work force. The need for skilled workers, particularly in health, computer, and technical fields, is one reason why the states' education systems have seen increased enrollment among non-traditional students. This increased enrollment has been especially noticeable in community colleges. In addition, state governments are particularly likely to become involved in transfer issues when these increased needs take place in a time of budgetary constraints.

Robertson and Frier (1998) noted that national educational associations like the American Council on Education and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (now called American Association of Community Colleges) have called for major changes in transfer and articulation to ensure the fair and equal treatment of all transfer students by all four-year institutions. When transfer is fair and simple, students can keep their options open and move from the junior level to the senior level with minimal loss of time and effort. The proposed changes all involve state action. First, governors and legislatures should establish guidelines and rules for articulation and transfer. Second, governors and legislatures should develop special programs and

services to help transferring students. Third, state administrators should develop systems to inform transferring students about transfer opportunities.

Kintzer (1996) summarized the history of published material on articulation and transfer during the past 90 years. Kintzer described the historical transition from simple transfer arrangements, often controlled entirely by the universities, to complex documents involving many types of applicants and a wide range of educational organizations and non-educational organizations like state legislatures. Kintzer reported four basic trends. First, state legislatures (either directly or indirectly through commissions) have begun to endorse or demand policies to control articulation. They are mandating assessment procedures for the first admission of transfers and for granting advanced credit. Second, demand is increasing for a uniform method to report transfer numbers. Third, demand has increased for equal access for underrepresented groups to higher education. Since this demand currently is being filled to a large extent by community colleges, it is important that they be fully accredited units of the state educational system. Finally, statewide formulas and agreements between individual colleges and universities are being established to provide support for transferring students.

Wangen (1985) cited Minnesota's general education reforms, which arose because of a concern that increasing numbers of students were taking general education courses from two or more institutions, each with its own courses and its own definition of general education. Consequently, students were merely meeting distribution requirements, and they viewed their general education courses as pointless and unrelated requirements.

In order to reduce difficulties in transfer, Minnesota has adopted a transfer pact consisting of four parts. First, the Minnesota Transfer Standards define common procedures for transfer at all campuses. The standards are competency-based and identify expected outcomes. Using them, faculty can develop common goals. The Minnesota Transfer Standards require that completion of an institution's transfer curriculum (or an associate's degree) is sufficient to satisfy the lower division general education requirements at any Minnesota university. Second, Articulation Councils were established to improve communication about the curriculum among the faculty. Third, student mobility and performance are measured by a systematic collection of data. Finally, the Minnesota curriculum takes a competency-based approach, defining the goals of general education in terms of the skills that students need to develop.

Rifkin (September 1998) stressed the importance of having effective technical support and research. Technical support includes statewide systems for disseminating information to students and potential students. Technical support also includes systems for tracking transfer students' performance and for judging the success of different modes of articulation. Research on transfer evaluates and compares transfer systems. The most effective state transfer programs have extensive technical support and research, and they almost always are found in states where higher education is centrally controlled or coordinated by a state agency. Rifkin praised Texas and Kentucky for having effective technical support and research.

Colby and Hardy (1988) noted that informal agreements between two-year colleges and four-year colleges and universities have existed since the beginning of the

two-year college movement. Over time, however, informal agreements have been replaced with formal articulation agreements.

As college enrollment has increased, particularly in two-year institutions, the agreements made at the institutional level have been supplemented or replaced by broad agreements or mandates made at the state or regional level. Colby and Hardy (1988) reported that efforts to facilitate the smooth transfer of students from community colleges to baccalaureate-granting institutions included 3 broad tactics. First, institutions agreed to use statements of student competencies as the basis of course and program articulation. Second, institutions agreed to identify, assess, and track potential transfer students early in their postsecondary careers. Third, institutions agreed to develop information systems to monitor and promote students' academic progress.

Creech (1995) made several cogent points on student mobility—movement from one educational institution to another—with a focus on Southern states. Enrollment at Southern two-year colleges is increasing faster than it is at Southern four-year colleges and universities. Indeed, in Florida, half of public four-year graduates started their degree programs at two-year colleges. (In 1995, that was the highest percentage for any Southern state.)

For the entire South, about a third of entering freshmen begin their studies at state-supported two-year colleges. Surprisingly, the number of students who transfer from a four-year public institution to another four-year public institution or from a four-year public institution to a two-year college is almost as great as the number who transfer from two-year colleges to four-year institutions. As more students complete technical programs at two-year colleges, four-year institutions must decide how to treat credits

earned in occupational and technical programs. This is an interesting situation in which transferring students complete their general education requirements during their junior and senior years. This type of transfer is often called *upside-down articulation*.

Creech (1995) noted that currently, transferring students face a myriad of obstacles. Colleges and universities should recognize that transfer policies are of great importance to students, institutions, and taxpayers. If transfer credit is denied for core curricula or prerequisite courses, a four-year curriculum may take 5 or 6 years to complete. Since about 80% of higher education costs are borne by the state, this cost is borne by both transferring students and taxpayers.

Both the transferring student and the receiving institution are faced with articulation issues. The transferring student has the problem of receiving credit for general education courses, while the receiving institution must evaluate the student's transcript to see if these courses are really the equivalent in both content and rigor to courses taught on that campus. Four-year institutions are reluctant to grant credit automatically, since they want to preserve the integrity of their degrees. Understandably, many transferring students think that they are being treated unfairly compared to native students.

The transferring student naturally wants to ensure that all or most of his or her general education courses transfer, while the receiving institution wants to maintain the quality of its degree. The sending institution (usually a community college) wants to ensure that its courses are accepted as fulfilling the general education requirements of four-year institutions. If the receiving institution denies credit for community college courses, then the credibility of the community college's curriculum is assailed.

Rifkin (1996) pointed out that the problem of articulation is especially important for minority students. Half of all first-time college students begin their studies in community colleges, but the percentage of minority students beginning their collegiate studies in two-year colleges is even higher.

Many administrators and faculty at two-year colleges consider their course offerings equivalent in content to those in four-year institutions, and they regard denial of transfer credit as arbitrary and unfair. Additionally, taxpayers do not want to subsidize unnecessary duplication of course offerings by requiring transferring students to retake general education courses that they have already mastered. Legislators also do not want to subsidize the unnecessary duplication of general education requirements by transferring students.

Schmidt (1997) reported that a number of states have taken measures to make transferring easier. The states are trying to force their public colleges to accept more credits from transfer students. In some cases, states have mandated that the institutions accept credits earned elsewhere. Texas has enacted legislation that requires every public college to offer an undergraduate core curriculum that can be automatically transferred to any other public university in the state. Other states—Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, and Ohio—have adopted legislation similar to the Texas legislation that requires public colleges to establish an undergraduate core curriculum. Massachusetts has required all public colleges to enter into statewide joint admissions agreements.

Some states have tried to ease the transfer of students by encouraging public colleges to use common course titles and course-numbering systems. North Carolina has adopted a common academic calendar for all two-year and four-year institutions. The

common academic calendar has meant a major restructuring, as North Carolina community colleges have had to switch from a quarter system to a semester system to coincide with the universities.

Schmidt (1997) observed that some states have greatly reduced the number of hours lost by students who attempt to transfer. In 1996, students transferring into North Dakota State University lost only 50 hours of the 50,000 hours they attempted to transfer. In 1996, Kentucky passed a law that required all public four-year institutions to accept a sixty-hour block of general education courses for students transferring from community colleges.

The increased popularity of two-year state institutions has presented many challenges to teachers and administrators. Schmidt (1997) noted that many states are adopting an educational philosophy in which two-year colleges provide remediation and general education credits to students who plan to continue their education at other institutions. Advocates believe that reducing barriers to transfer will make community colleges more attractive to potential students who are seeking the bachelor's degree. On the other hand, Schmidt observed, some university officials resist statewide joint admissions agreements because they are infringements upon the autonomy of the university. Some administrators and professors also think that indiscriminate transfer of community-college credit will devalue the degrees conferred by their institutions.

Schmidt (1997) went on to say that there are clear reasons for reducing barriers to transfer. First, it meets the needs of transient students—students who move from one area to another while pursuing a degree and consequently start their education at one institution and finish it at another. Second, making transfer easier reduces the time it

takes students to complete a baccalaureate degree, often reducing it from 5 or more years to 4 years. Third, reducing barriers to transfer helps states to afford the high cost of tuition. Georgia, for example, has negotiated a set of 280 transfer agreements to help ease the public and private costs of higher education. Fourth, facilitating transfer eases the problem of overcrowding in state colleges and universities. Fifth, reducing barriers placates legislators who hold that general education courses in two-year state colleges—with their appreciably lower costs—are the equivalent of general education courses taught at four-year state colleges and universities. This opinion is illustrated by the remarks of Kentucky State Senator Tim Shaughnessy, who remarked that English 101 in one state institution is (or should be) be the equivalent of English 101 in any other state institution. Shaughnessy is the author of the Kentucky law that established a sixty-hour block transfer of general education courses.

In a review of past, present, and future transfer policies, Kintzer (1996) listed several historical trends in articulation and transfer. As state legislatures have begun to pass laws that establish policies and procedures to control articulation and transfer, one result has been more and more pressure on public institutions to codify their requirements. They are pressured to make sure that their courses are equivalent to courses offered by other state institutions, and they are forced to decide which courses are acceptable for transfer and which courses can be only electives. In addition, some state governments are ordering statewide assessment procedures for accepting transfer credits. Increasingly, state governments have shown concern about equal access to higher education by students from ethnic minorities and underrepresented groups. By methods

both direct and indirect, state governments are requiring that state colleges and universities work to increase transfer rates by improving articulation.

Dosumu (1998) evaluated the persistence and academic performance of 15,475 Colorado community college students and reached several relevant conclusions about students who completed the Colorado Community College General Education Core Transfer Program. Students who completed the Colorado core curriculum were more likely to persist until they completed the baccalaureate degree, and they earned higher GPAs than transferring students who had not completed the core. Students who completed the core also earned their baccalaureate degrees in less time than non-completers did. Overall, completion of the core curriculum was positively associated with student success at both community colleges and four-year institutions. Thus, Colorado's adoption of a core curriculum apparently facilitates students' progress toward the baccalaureate degree. The implication of Dosumu's findings seemed to be that community college students should be encouraged to complete the associate's degrees before transferring.

Choice (1998) made the point that states must do more than simply adopt a core curriculum. Another necessity is better assessment. For example, although all Illinois community colleges have adopted or are adopting the Illinois Articulation Initiative's General Education Core curriculum, very few community colleges are ready to assess the results.

Choice (1998) concluded that few community colleges were systematically assessing student outcomes. Many components of education were not being assessed at all. In addition, some assessment measures that are being used lack validity and

reliability. Most state institutions do not have programs in place to systematically assess the outcomes for general education. Many of the identified components of general education have not been assessed. Furthermore, many assessment measures appear to be inadequate and lack validity in assessing general education outcomes.

The Southern Regional Education Board (2000) agreed with Choice's conclusion that states are not adequately assessing the results of their general education curricula. Many states have not set standards for adequate performance in the areas covered by core courses. Most states do not review what students have learned after they had completed the core, and states that did test mastery did not use common assessment tools. Until such assessments have been made, it will continue to be difficult to compare the success of core curricula on any level—within institutions, among institutions in a state or region, or in student populations over time.

The Status of the Statewide Core Curriculum in the SACS States

J. Rogers, Executive Director of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, reported that SACS requires at least 15 hours of general education at two-year colleges and 30 hours of general education for four-year colleges (personal communication, February 12, 1996). These general education courses have to be drawn from these 3 categories: humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools does not require articulation agreements, but J. Rogers said that associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions should cooperate with each other to develop articulation agreements (personal communication, February 12, 1996). SACS staff members evaluate and maintain

statistics on the core curricula at all 800 SACS institutions, but they do not evaluate statewide articulation systems.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (June 2003) has encouraged reform of the articulation process. Increased mobility by students and the public's desire to avoid spending public money for duplicate courses are reasons to promote articulation reform. Many colleges and universities have taken positive action by negotiating articulation agreements, common core listings, common core curricula, and arrangements whereby course credits are automatically accepted. Proactive approaches, in which faculty members participate in the decisions, encourage articulation without state encroachment on the integrity of the institution and the coherence of its curriculum.

The Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (2003) said that by statute (ACT 94-202), Alabama has determined to develop a statewide freshman- and sophomore-level general studies curriculum for all public colleges and universities. This curriculum consists of 64 semester hours of general studies and pre-professional or pre-major studies. Secondly, the Committee has developed a statewide articulation agreement for the freshman and sophomore years. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) also examined the need for a common course numbering system, common course titles, and course descriptions, but it decided not to implement a common course numbering system.

E. French, Director of Interagency Programs for Alabama's Articulation and General Studies Committee, said in response to my Survey Question 1 that Alabama has adopted a statewide core curriculum for transfer students. This core curriculum, however, is not a requirement for all undergraduate students: it applies to transfer students but not

to students who obtain their degrees without transferring. Alabama, then, is an example of a state that uses a core curriculum primarily to facilitate transfer and only partially to promote general education courses.

A publication by the Louisiana Board of Regents (Summer 2002) said that Louisiana has partially adopted a common course numbering system. The Louisiana Community and Technical College System Board has requested common numbering, labeling, and syllabi where possible. In its Website, the Louisiana Board of Regents has also published a matrix to help reduce articulation problems.

Bender (1990) noted that Florida is considered by many authorities to have the most comprehensive transfer and articulation policies of any state. Even though its 9 state universities are governed by a state board of regents, while its 28 community colleges are governed by local boards, transfer operates under a single unified system. The Florida legislature has made statutory provisions for various transfer and articulation matters, resulting in statewide implementation. Articulation policy in Florida has been established not by the schools but by the legislature. As Bender noted, Florida is an example of a top-to-bottom authority power configuration.

An article by the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (January 1997) reported that the goal of Florida legislation on higher education is to provide strong articulation between community colleges and state universities. State policies address the acceptance of course work done in community colleges and the admission to four-year institutions of students who have received Associate of Arts degrees. The Florida legislature has promoted efficient progress through the education system by removing barriers to articulation, by discouraging students from accumulating excessive credits and

encouraging their speedy progress toward the degree, and by employing educational benchmarks and tests to ensure that students receive a quality education.

An article published by the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (January 1997) summarized specific actions that Florida has taken in accordance with a 1995 law designated Chapter 95-243. First, it has established general education requirements and mandated that such requirements not exceed 36 semester hours. Second, it has designated 1,700 courses as either lower division or upper division courses. Third, it has developed common program prerequisites for each baccalaureate program. Fourth, it has limited requirements for the Associate of Arts degree to 60 semester hours and requirements for the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree to 120 semester hours (with certain stated exceptions). In addition, the Florida legislature has attempted to facilitate transfer by implementing planning for a single, statewide, computer-assisted advising and degree audit system.

Bender (1990) observed that although the Florida system seems to guarantee that transferring students will not have to repeat at the four-year institution any courses that they have mastered at the two-year level, this has not always been the case. According to Bender, the state has occasionally encountered pressure from national accrediting agencies such as the American Assembly of Colleges and Schools of Business. These agencies insist that all professional instruction be at the junior and senior levels. One result is that faculty groups working on a common course numbering system must be careful, when assigning course numbers, to make sure that community colleges offer only freshman and sophomore courses.

Florida's Statewide Course Numbering System has matured and is now in full operation. An article published by the Statewide Course Numbering System (2006) recalled that the system was created in the 1960s to facilitate transfer. Now course numbering is an essential component of Florida's system of articulation, which attempts to take students from kindergarten through 2 years of college (K-20) without problems in articulation. The state maintains a database of postsecondary courses available at public vocational-technical centers, community colleges, universities, and even some participating private institutions. In addition to facilitating the transfer of students, the uniform course numbers are intended to assist program planning, encourage educational research, and ensure equity in course offerings.

Creech (1995) reported that a large component in the changes mandated by the Florida legislature in 1995 was their intent to shorten the amount of time needed to complete a degree. The rule that all courses must clearly be designated either lower level (freshman-sophomore) or upper level (junior-senior) was a way of marking the separate responsibilities of two-year colleges. The rule that each discipline area must have common prerequisite courses and the rule that general education requirements may not exceed 36 semester hours were intended to eliminate courses that did not contribute to a degree. The Florida legislature ordered that, except with prior approval from the Board of Regents, associate's programs may not require more than 60 semester hours and bachelor's programs not more than 120 semester hours. These changes not only facilitate transfer but in many cases shorten the time required to receive a degree.

The Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (January 1997) summarized the key elements to State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024, which

established the philosophy of Florida's statewide core curriculum. First, each university president and each community college board of trustees was told to implement articulated programs so that students could proceed toward their educational goals as rapidly as possible. Second, each university and community college was to establish a general education curriculum that did not exceed 36 semester hours for students working on a baccalaureate degree. Third, all universities and community colleges were to recognize and accept the general education curricula of other institutions. Finally, the Associate of Arts degree was to be considered the basic transfer degree, the primary basis for admission of students transferring from community colleges to upper division study in Florida's state university system.

P. Dallet, Deputy Executive of the Florida Council for Education Policy Research, reported that a statewide core curriculum has been established by code (Chapter 95-243 Laws of Florida) in Florida (personal communication, October 10, 1995). Dallet noted that the State Board of Education, in accordance with Rule 6A-10.024, governs articulation between universities, community colleges, and school districts. This rule contains a requirement that each state university and community college establish a general education core curriculum.

The state code goes on to mandate acceptance of an institution's core curriculum even when a degree has not been awarded. In Florida, once a state university or community college has published its general education core curriculum, other public universities and community colleges must recognize and accept it as adequate for transfer. Once a student has been certified on the official transcript as having satisfactorily completed the prescribed general education core curriculum, no other state

university or community college to which he or she may transfer is allowed to require any additional general education courses. This is true whether or not the student has received the associate degree. However, Florida students who have not completed the general education core at their first college or university must meet the requirements of the general education core at the institutions to which they are transferring.

Florida legislation gives Florida community college students strong incentives to complete the associate's program. First, completing an associate's degree guarantees that the student will not have to complete any further lower level general education courses after transferring. Second, completion of an associate's degree guarantees the student admission to a state university. Palinchak (1988) praises the Florida system of articulation because it does not just list courses suitable for transfer, but deals with all aspects of education, including facilities and resources, data gathering, and a statewide philosophy of higher education.

Florida employs the 2+2 concept of higher education, in which community colleges concentrate on general education and most freshmen and sophomores attend community colleges. The state universities concentrate on upperclassmen, graduate students, and research. Originally only Florida State, the University of Florida, and Florida A & M University were expected to teach their own freshmen and sophomores. Although the 2+2 plan has not been fully implemented, Florida's community colleges still educate a higher percentage of freshmen and sophomores than most states.

It is true that some Florida institutions and their faculties resent their loss of autonomy. Nevertheless, the Florida system certainly seems efficient in enabling large numbers of students to receive their bachelor's degrees.

Palinchak (1988) said that Florida's Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, the governor, and legislature value a philosophy of education that incorporates a focused view of education. Consequently, they have implemented a systems approach to higher education in which each part has its assigned role, functions are not duplicated, and each component is joined to the others. Palinchak also praised Florida's system for being responsive to student needs. All students who graduate from a community college in Florida are guaranteed admission to a state university. (They are not guaranteed the university or program of their choice.) Florida does not force transferring students to negotiate their own acceptance on a course by course basis. Instead, they become part of a smoothly functioning educational system.

An article published by the Florida Department of Education Statewide Course Numbering System (April 2006) pointed out that Florida's common course numbering system, mandated by state law, helps students in higher education to make a smooth transition from institution to institution. Common course numbering helps registrars in assigning credits to students transferring from lower division colleges to the upper division of universities, or to students changing institutions at other times or for other reasons. The common course numbering system is not just a bureaucratic procedure. It is part of a pedagogical philosophy that holds that students must be able to transfer efficiently to achieve success in their educational endeavors.

Florida's common course numbering system provides a framework for each subject matter, within which courses are categorized (Florida Department of Education Statewide Course Numbering System, 2006). The law requires that all state-supported postsecondary institutions use the same framework. Faculty at universities and

community colleges are responsible for reading detailed course descriptions or course syllabuses in order to determine course equivalencies. The common course numbering system is a collaborative undertaking of universities and community colleges, but a state agency has been established to manage the system and to facilitate communication between its parts. The state agency develops statewide course descriptions for schools to use in determining equivalencies, and it maintains inventories of every course taught in Florida colleges and universities so it can identify equivalent courses.

According to an article published by the Florida Department of Education Statewide Course Numbering System (2006), Florida's common course numbering system has made the evaluation of student transcripts much easier and quicker. Yet that is not its only accomplishment. The guaranteed transfer of courses that have been judged equivalent by faculty discipline committees has reduced the time required to complete a degree. This means substantial savings for students and taxpayers. So Florida's higher education system is not only educationally efficient but economically efficient.

An article published by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (2006) reported that the Georgia Board of Regents adopted its core curriculum in 1967. Each institution within the university system was instructed to develop its core within the broad context of the state-approved core plan. The Board of Regents also implemented additional directives that have made a significant difference to students transferring within Georgia. The first directive says that transcripts of transferring students are to be evaluated by the registrar at the receiving institution according to the core of their former college. The second says that transferring students may be required to complete

additional hours to fulfill core requirements, but—always excepting remedial courses—they may not be required to complete more hours than native students do.

An article published by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (July 2004) reported that Kentucky does not now have a general education core curriculum and it does not plan to adopt one. However, Kentucky does have a general education core transfer component. The state does not mandate transfer policies. Instead, it assumes that Kentucky institutions are willing to recognize the validity of academic work done by students at other state institutions. Educational officials believe there is sufficient commonality in the lower division portion of the basic general education requirements at all Kentucky universities to develop a common general education transfer component that can be used as a block transfer to all institutions. It is expected that each institution will be willing to accept the general education transfer component, whether or not it is part of an associate's degree. In Kentucky, experience suggests that institutions are willing to accept the general education core transfer component.

Despite variations, each institution's lower division general education requirements sufficiently resemble the general education transfer component to make transfer easy. Of course, acceptance of a general education transfer component does not rule out upper level general education requirements imposed by the receiving institution. The content of the general education transfer component depends on the program into which the student is transferring. For example, a four-year state-supported institution may accept the core of a transferring community college student, but require an upper level English composition course before awarding the baccalaureate. Similarly, college algebra and general biology may fulfill the math and science requirement of a student transferring

into a liberal arts program, but a student transferring into an engineering program may need courses in calculus and physics to fulfill the math and science requirement.

An article published by the Louisiana Board of Regents (1994) reported that in 1986, Louisiana adopted a required statewide core curriculum consisting of 39 hours in 6 areas. Previously, Louisiana had considered a core curriculum of 50 hours in the same 6 areas. The suggested curriculum would have added a third course in literature, a laboratory requirement in the natural sciences, and a six-hour course in the history of Western civilization. In the end, the required courses totaled only 39 credit hours.

According to the Louisiana Board of Regents (Summer 2002) Louisiana now has dual sets of general education requirements. One is for the associate’s degree program and the other is for the baccalaureate degree program:

TABLE 6: LOUISIANA’S REQUIRED GENERAL EDUCATION COURSEWORK FOR THE ASSOCIATE OF ARTS AND BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE PROGRAMS*

Subject Area	Credit Hours for Associate’s Degree**	Credit Hours for Bachelor’s Degree
English	6	6
Mathematics	3	6
Natural Sciences	6	9
Social Sciences	6	6
Humanities	3	9
Fine Arts	3	3
Computer Literacy	determined by institution	determined by institution
Total required credits	27 + computer course	39 + computer course

* Regents' policy allows institutions some flexibility regarding general education requirements, so students are told to check requirements with their institution.

**The Louisiana Board of Regents also has mandated the required courses for the Associate in Science program. It differs from the Associate in Arts degree only in requiring 6 hours of math and 3 hours of social sciences. The total number is the same.

W. Stonecypher, Associate Executive Director for Programs for Mississippi State Institutions of Higher Learning, reported that Mississippi does not have a statewide core curriculum (personal communication, September 22, 2001). Each Mississippi university establishes its own core, which consists of 41 to 51 semester hours, depending on a student's chosen major and the educational philosophy of the individual university. There is some commonality to these university core curricula, however. All 8 of Mississippi's state-supported universities require 6 hours of English composition, 3 hours of college level algebra, 6 hours of a laboratory science, and 9 hours in the humanities and fine arts. On those 24 credit hours, the Mississippi universities are in agreement.

The Mississippi Board of State Institutions of Higher Learning (April 2006) also reported that Mississippi's community colleges do not have a core curriculum. Instead, Mississippi's public colleges and universities have an articulation agreement with the community colleges. It includes a list of required courses that are accepted at each of the campuses for specific majors. Mississippi has not seen a need to impose mandatory state requirements, since annual reviews have shown that this collaborative agreement is functioning well.

An article published by the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning and Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (April 2006) noted that Mississippi's articulation agreement contains 194 programs of courses appropriate for transfer by community college students to the 8 Mississippi public universities. All 8 universities are required to accept these courses without the loss of credit. However, the statewide articulation agreement is to be used as minimum program

of transfer and does not replace any individual articulation agreement that a university may have with a community college.

Mississippi's articulation agreement allows students some choice in what courses to take, but their choice is limited. For example, there is an articulation agreement for a student who is transferring from a community college to one of Mississippi's state universities in order to obtain a bachelor's degree in economics. This articulation agreement consists of 63 semester hours. Except for a choice between 2 sequences of history and a choice of any laboratory science, the student planning to major in economics must follow a fixed curriculum. If the courses are to transfer successfully, the student must decide early to major in economics and take only the courses required for the major in economics.

No doubt Mississippi's approach works well for a student who before enrolling in a community college had already chosen a major and the university to which he or she wishes to transfer. Clearly, it would not work as well for a student who was undecided. Such a student might, before deciding upon a major, take courses that would not transfer to the preferred university in the preferred major.

J. Creech, who is Executive Director of Educational Policies for the Southern Regional Education Board, discussed with me the status of a statewide core curriculum in North Carolina (personal communication, November 22, 1995). Chapter 287, House Bill 739 directs the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the State Board of Community Colleges to develop a plan for transferring credits from one community college to another community college and from a community college to institutions that make up the University of North Carolina. Chapter 288, House Bill 740

repealed the enrollment limits on community college transfer programs. It also directed the State Board of Community Colleges to develop college transfer criteria and standards that met SACS standards and to disclose these terms to students pre-registered for college transfer courses. This act also requires the State Board of Community Colleges to report to the state legislature the academic performance of each college's transfer students, and to decide what action should be taken if a particular college's transfer students are not academically successful after transfer.

M. Cain, Acting Associate Director for Academic Affairs, University of North Carolina General Administration, stated that the University of North Carolina system does not have a common core curriculum for its 16 constituent institutions (personal communication, January 11, 2000). However, it has agreed to accept a core of 44 semester hours, distributed among specific disciplines, and chosen from a list of approved transfer courses. This set of courses will meet the freshman and sophomore general education requirements at all University of North Carolina institutions for students who transfer from a North Carolina community college. North Carolina's 58 community colleges all offer this transfer core.

It should be noted, however, that completion of the 44-hour core does not guarantee either admission to any of the University of North Carolina institutions or admission to any particular program of study (concentration). In addition, completion of the Associate in Applied Science degree is not covered by North Carolina's articulation agreement.

North Carolina, unlike Florida, does not guarantee admission to a state university to graduates of its community colleges. Moreover, as Bender (1990) noted, in Florida,

articulation is mandated by the state legislature. In North Carolina, articulation is based on inter-institutional cooperation. In this way, North Carolina resembles the northern states of Michigan and Illinois, both states with extensive public university systems that rely on inter-institutional cooperation to resolve articulation problems.

W. Little, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs for the University of North Carolina, pointed to a great increase in both the number of articulation agreements and the number of students transferring from community colleges to four-year institutions in North Carolina (personal communication, October 3, 2001). Articulation agreements between community colleges and state universities increased from 48 in the academic year 1988-1989 to 235 in 1995-1996. The number of articulation agreements increased 390% in this period of only 7 years.

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors (2004) said that the number of students transferring from North Carolina community colleges to an institution of the 16-member University of North Carolina system increased from 5,949 (1993-1994) to 6,877 (2002-2003), a 16% increase. The Board of Governors remarked that the success of the articulation agreements with North Carolina community colleges has meant considerable growth in University of North Carolina enrollments.

An article published by the University of North Carolina (May 2005) said that the University of North Carolina has simplified its articulation agreements with individual institutions by adopting 29 articulation agreements that apply for all community colleges. In addition to the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement that applies to all community college students, the University has 20 articulation agreements for students who have earned an Associate in Arts degree and nine articulation agreements for students who

have earned an Associate of Science degree. Each articulation agreement consists of the 44-semester-hour core plus 20 or 21 semester hours in pre-major electives. In addition to fulfilling the articulation agreement, students may be required to complete the receiving institution's foreign language and/or physical education requirements prior to or after transfer. Besides these general agreements, institutions are still allowed to have bilateral articulation agreements.

Students in North Carolina who earn the Associate in Applied Sciences are not covered by the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement. However, any course that the student has completed with a grade of C or better is given credit if it is among the 170 courses that are designated for transfer (general education, elective, or pre-major). Associate in Applied Sciences graduates are covered by bilateral articulation agreements. The Transfer Advisory Committee maintains a current inventory of bilateral articulation agreements for programs that award the Associate in Applied Sciences degree.

An article published by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (2006) stated that South Carolina does not have a statewide core curriculum. However, South Carolina in 1996 adopted a number of articulation agreements, linking state technical colleges with public four-year institutions. In 1996, South Carolina established 74 courses that are automatically accepted for transfer to public senior institutions for either general education credit or for elective credit. (According to the responses to Survey Questions 1, 15, and 18, there were 86 of these courses as of October 2006.) In addition, South Carolina has adopted 6 transfer blocks that meet the needs of students who have chosen a concentration while in the state technical colleges. A transfer block for students majoring in humanities, arts, or social sciences requires 46-48 semester

hours. Business majors have a block of 46-51 semester hours. Engineering majors must take specific courses that total 33 semester hours. Majors in sciences and mathematics have a block of 48-51 semester hours. Education majors take a block of 38-39 semester hours. Students majoring in nursing have the most extensive requirements, a block of 60 semester hours.

South Carolina also has adopted a statewide policy document that outlines the transfer policies that South Carolina's public institutions of higher education should follow. This policy document begins by stating what is meant by terms like transfer student and requirements for admission. It establishes standards for acceptance of credit based on standardized examinations. It establishes procedures for calculating an applicant's GPA (grade point average). It lists the technical college courses that will be accepted for transfer credit. It lists all previously established articulation agreements. It lists the transfer officers at all of South Carolina's two-year and four-year institutions. It lists the residency requirements for all four-year institutions. This policy document also states that students who have earned an Associate of Arts or an Associate of Science degree and are accepted for transfer should be guaranteed junior status—including not only academic status but also priority status for residence hall housing, registration, parking, and tickets to athletic events. All of these policies refer to schools in the public postsecondary system. In addition, the South Carolina policy document includes the names of 9 independent four-year institutions in South Carolina that participate in the statewide transfer agreement.

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (2006) also publishes statistics on transfer. These statistics demonstrate the complexity of articulation, showing

that transfer occurs at a number of levels. In the fall semester of 1998, there was considerable movement among technical college students in South Carolina, with 674 students transferring from one technical college to another technical college. A total of 1,444 students from public two-year technical colleges transferred to public four-year institutions. An additional 62 students transferred from technical colleges to one of the 5 two-year campuses of the University of South Carolina. Also, 277 students transferred from technical colleges to private four-year institutions. Eighteen students transferred from public two-year technical colleges to private two-year colleges.

Looking at South Carolina public four-year public institutions in statistics on transfer published by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (2006), one sees that 652 students from public four-year institutions transferred to other public four-year institutions. Thirty-five students transferred from public four-year institutions to a two-year campus of the University of South Carolina, and 927 students transferred from public four-year institutions to two-year technical colleges. There also was movement to private institutions: 114 students from public four-year institutions transferred to private four-year institutions, and 18 transferred to private two-year institutions.

Traditional transfer, which is also called *vertical transfer*, means transfer from a two-year institution to a four-year institution. Overall, looking at vertical transfer shows that 1,444 South Carolina students transferred from two-year public institutions to four-year institutions in the fall semester of 1998.

Horizontal transfer is transfer from a two-year institution to another two-year institution or from a four-year institution to another four-year institution. In the fall of 2004, 1,263 South Carolina students transferred from two-year public institutions to other

two-year public institutions. At the same time, 828 students transferred from a four-year public institution to another four-year public institution.

Reverse transfer is transfer from a four-year institution to a two-year institution. In the fall semester of 2004, 1,445 South Carolina students made a reverse transfer. All told, traditional vertical transfer from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions accounted for only 46% of all transfers in South Carolina during the period under consideration. Clearly, it is necessary for transfer policies to cover not only vertical transfers but horizontal transfers, reverse transfers, and multiple transfers as well.

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (2006) reported that some technical colleges in South Carolina have articulation agreements with private colleges in South Carolina and with out-of-state private and public four-year institutions as well. For example, Greenville Technical College has articulation agreements with 10 private four-year colleges in South Carolina and with 3 four-year public institutions outside of South Carolina.

J. Leidig, Director of Instructional Programs, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, said that the Texas legislature mandated a statewide core curriculum in an advisory committee report on recommendations for the core curriculum. Proposed rules to implement the recommendations were presented to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in April 1998 (personal communication, September 30, 1999). Texas institutions were required to put their core curricula into effect by the fall semester of 1999.

The Degree of Choice Allowed in Statewide Core Curricula of SACS States

Brinkman (1994) found a great measure of uniformity in general education requirements for community colleges. Brinkman found in his study of general education requirements that 98% of community colleges require courses in social studies, with 34% requiring United States History and 26% requiring United States Government. Ninety-seven percent require courses in English composition and in math, 88% require courses in the humanities, and 94% require courses in natural sciences. Brinkman concluded that general education requirements are often standardized within states. Indeed, the more community colleges a state has, the more standardized the general education requirements will be. Even when states have standard general education requirements for community colleges, however, students still have a good degree of flexibility in choosing subjects to satisfy their general education requirements.

P. Dallet, Deputy Executive Director of Florida's Council for Education Policy Research and Improvement, reported that Florida State Board of Education's Rule 6A-10.024 3 (a) and (b) allows some leeway to institutions in setting up a general education core curriculum (personal communication, October 10, 1995). However, Florida requires each institution to set up a core of at least 36 semester hours, and it requires every state institution to accept the general education core curriculum of every other state institution as fulfilling its own core.

Palinchak (1988) praised State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024 for establishing formal articulation agreements among Florida universities, community colleges, and school districts (beginning in 1973). Palinchak noted that this rule has prompted changes not just in educational practice but in educational philosophy. The

original mandate was simply that transfer be facilitated between colleges and universities. Implementing that rule, however, necessitated written procedures, rules for accelerating time to degree, and several creative stratagems. Administrators, faculty, students, and others exchanged ideas, and the net result included an improvement in programs of general education.

The Louisiana Board of Regents (1994) indicated that in Louisiana, students at state postsecondary institutions can make some course choices within strict requirements. For example, students are required to take 9 hours in the natural sciences, but they are allowed to choose which science they wish to study. In the arts, students are required to complete a 3-hour course, but they are allowed to choose from music, art, dance, and theater courses. In the humanities, students are allowed to choose 9 hours from foreign languages, philosophy, religious studies, history, speech communication, and literature. Choice is most limited in mathematics. Students are required to take 6 hours of math, beginning at a level no lower than college level algebra.

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (July 2004) reported that Kentucky's general education transfer component allows some latitude. The English component is fixed, but the humanities, behavioral and social sciences, natural sciences, and mathematics components allow for a rather wide range of choices. For example, in the behavioral and social sciences, students are allowed to choose 9 hours from any one of 7 disciplines or to take interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary courses.

J. Leidig, Director of Instructional Programs, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, reported that the Coordinating Board chooses the objectives,

content, and component areas of the core curriculum. Each institution chooses the specific courses that make up its core (personal communication, September 30, 1999).

Problems in Adopting and Administering the Core Curricula

Bender (1990) discussed the difficulties that states commonly face in mandating articulation and transfer policies. To a large extent, resolving transfer and articulation issues requires commitment and cooperation from people at the institutional level. Members of the faculty and administration within an institution have to trust each other enough to work together for the good of the institution. They have to respect each other's abilities. They have to communicate their ideas and listen to other people's ideas. After that, they have to work with the faculty and administration at other institutions in the same way. For example, a key problem in articulation has been the skepticism of officials at four-year institutions regarding the quality of work done at two-year institutions. Another recurrent problem is a natural resistance to change. Communication and cooperation are required to deal with these barriers to articulation.

In order to persuade four-year institutions to treat transferring students on the same basis as native students, practical changes are necessary. First, said Bender (1990), work has to be done to make the quality of general education at two-year institutions equivalent to the quality of general education at four-year institutions. Second, officials at four-year institutions must be persuaded that the quality of general education at two-year colleges really is comparable to the quality of general education at four-year colleges. In other words, general education at two-year and four-year institutions must be both equal in quality and recognized as equal in quality.

In her response to my survey, E. French, Director of the Interagency Programs, Articulation and General Studies Committee of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, stated that using technology was an initial concern in implementing Alabama's core curriculum. Another key issue was improving communication among faculty and staff involved with counseling students. (See Appendix A.)

A document published by the Florida Department of Education (1994) reported that in State Code 6A-10.024 (1), Florida has addressed problems of articulation. This section of Florida law sets up an Articulation Coordinating Committee, comprising 13 members chosen by the Commissioner of Education, 3 members from state universities, and 3 members from community colleges. The Articulation Coordinating Committee administers the general education core curriculum and establishes articulation accountability measures.

J. Leidig, Director of Instructional Programs for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, stated that Texas schools have encountered some problems reconciling core curriculum requirements with requirements for specific majors. It is even possible that some institutions have deliberately increased their requirements for specific majors in order to circumvent the rule about transfer of core curriculum courses from another institution. For example, the core may require college algebra as its math requirement, but the receiving institution may arbitrarily require calculus to fulfill its core requirement (personal communication, September 30, 1999). However, this charge has not yet been substantiated. It seems unlikely, in part because an artificially difficult core requirement would affect native students just as much as it would affect transferring students. However, it could be true that an institution or a department might institute an

artificially high core requirement simply to make it easier to choose from a large number of applicants to that institution or program.

Reasons that SACS States Have Adopted Core Curricula

An article published by Florida Department of Education (1994) cited Florida State Code 6A-10.024 (1)(c), which stated Florida's legally mandated goal for its general education core curriculum. That goal was multiple. The Florida legislature required personnel in the state institutions of higher education to encourage interaction between and among the colleges and universities, to facilitate transfer, and to accelerate students' progress toward their degrees. They looked for and required the most efficient possible use of faculty, equipment, and facilities at state institutions.

An article published by the Florida Department of Education (1994) observed that the state's action was prompted by transfer problems experienced by students and institutions. In the late 1960s, registrars and advisors at Florida's public institutions of higher education were encountering problems in deciding how to assign course credits to students transferring from lower division colleges to the upper level division of universities, or to students changing institutions laterally. This concern led to the 1971 Articulation Agreement and other legislative changes, such as the state codes that established general education requirements.

An article published by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (2006) reported that Georgia has stated its major reasons for adopting a core curriculum. First, Georgia seeks, in the face of technical majors and narrowing disciplinary specialties, to establish the principle that general education is the foundation of all baccalaureate degree programs. Second, Georgia intends to encourage each institution to

reflect its mission by developing a superior program of general education. Last, Georgia wants to promote the concept that courses satisfactorily completed at one institution will be accepted by other public institutions in the state. This reciprocity is a way of ensuring the integrity of credit offered anywhere in Georgia's university system. Thus, Georgia's core curriculum not only facilitates the efficient transfer of core courses but explicitly affirms the importance of general education on the undergraduate level.

J. Leidig, Director of Instructional Programs for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, reported that Texas adopted a statewide core curriculum to facilitate transfer from a community college to a university and also transfer between universities. The legislature was especially concerned to guarantee that receiving institutions would not arbitrarily require students to repeat courses already taken—and already subsidized by the state (personal communication, September 30, 1999). From the standpoint of state legislatures, the core curriculum is not so much a pedagogical system as a tool of fiscal efficiency.

Obstacles that SACS States Have Overcome to Adopt Core Curricula

M. Virkler of the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Missouri reported that the University of Missouri administration presented a proposed core curriculum to the faculty senate in 1997. Despite a glowing and optimistic assessment of the University of Missouri's innovative core curriculum by both the administration and outside observers, the proposal to institute this core curriculum was eventually voted down by the faculty (personal communication, January 16, 2001). This proposed change never received the required two-thirds vote of support from the faculty. Despite careful

and politic planning, the University of Missouri was ultimately unable to implement its new core curriculum.

The rejection of a core curriculum by faculty at the University of Missouri is just one example of the difficulties involved in establishing a statewide core curriculum. Schmidt (1997) said that college officials and professors reacted with overt hostility when Kentucky State Senator Tim Shaughnessy tried to change transfer policies in 1992. Despite being part of a state system of higher education, each institution considered its own needs and requirements unique. Campus administrators and faculty members resented the attempts of a state legislator to tell them what curricula they should adopt.

Schmidt (1997) also quoted North Dakota State Senator Dan Wogsland, who accused four-year institutions of deliberately complicating the transfer process to boost state funding, which is based on enrollment. Making students repeat courses would inflate enrollment figures. Even if Wogsland's criticism of higher education is inaccurate, it does reflect the thinking of many citizens and elected officials. Since taxpayers provide a large percentage of the cost of educating students, their elected officials are likely to consider they have a duty to prevent duplication of courses.

J. Mingle, Executive Director of the State Higher Education Executive Officers, disagreed with Senator Wogsland on the acceptance of transfer credit (Schmidt, 1997). Mingle contended that the automatic transfer of unexamined credits threatens the coherence and integrity of the curricula of four-year colleges. The movement to ensure easy transfers is based on a skewed understanding of education, a view that focuses on the acquisition of specific skills and settles for adequate training instead of striving for an excellent education.

Robertson and Frier (1998) discussed how competition for students interferes with an efficient system of higher education, both in boom times and in difficult times. When enrollment is high, four-year institutions may erect unneeded barriers against transfer students. When there is a shortage of applicants, four-year institutions may compete with two-year institutions for students who would be better off beginning their education in community colleges.

Such competition between institutions can be harmful for students. Robertson and Frier (1998) suggested that states can nullify much of the destructive competition for students by developing admissions standards that accurately reflect the distinct missions of each educational institution. No single institution can match the needs of every student. Instead, each institution should communicate and enforce its own educational strengths and requirements. Clear and consistent admission standards can limit program duplication, help to contain costs, and suit the student to the institution. In short, students should be able to attend the postsecondary institutions best fitted to meet their individual needs. As their needs change, they should be able to transfer without losing ground in their progress toward the degree.

The Mechanisms by which SACS States Have Adopted Core Curricula

Alabama and Florida adopted core curricula by legislative and administrative mandate. Alabama Commission on Higher Education (1999) noted that Alabama adopted its statewide core curriculum for transferring students by statute (Act 94-202). P. Dallet, Deputy Executive Director of Florida's Council for Education Policy Research and Improvement, said (personal communication, October 10, 1995) that Florida established its general education core by statute (Chapter 95-243) and by a State Board of Education

rule (State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024, FAC, Articulation Between Universities, Community Colleges, and School Districts).

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (July 2004) said that the then-named Kentucky Council on Higher Education began work on its general education transfer component in 1994 and implemented it in the spring semester of 1996. The proposal began with the Council and relied on voluntary compliance from state institutions. The transfer component was revised in 2004, and the revised policy took effect in the spring semester of 2005.

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (2004) pointed to an apparent contradiction between allowing institutions to determine their own general education requirements and simultaneously setting up a general education transfer component that must be accepted by all institutions. Kentucky resolved this possible conflict by agreeing that the competencies developed in general education programs are of more importance than individual courses and by emphasizing the concept of *whole to whole transfer*. The result of this effort was adoption of a 60-hour general education core transfer block. The Kentucky Council has followed the principle that articulation should be a joint project between institutions, not a unilateral fiat imposed on a community college by a university. The ultimate goal of Kentucky's articulation as a joint project is that competencies in various general education courses are similar to one another.

Kentucky students can facilitate their own articulation in several ways. First, students can complete part of the 33-hour general education core and receive credit for transfer or category certification. Second, they can complete the entire 33-hour general education core for core certification. Third, they can complete the entire 33-hour general

education core plus an additional 15 hours in general education to complete a general education block of 48 hours. Students who complete the 48-hour general education block are fully general education certified. Finally, students in Kentucky can complete an associate's degree, which allows them to transfer 60 semester hours to a state-supported university. Students in Kentucky can choose any of these ways to avoid articulation difficulties when they transfer to four-year institutions.

G. Killebrew, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs for the Louisiana Board of Regents, said that the Louisiana Board of Regents adopted Statewide General Education Requirements for Associate and Baccalaureate Programs in 1986, and then revised them in 1994 (personal communication, October 20, 1999).

North Carolina has dealt with transfer issues partly through voluntary cooperation among educational institutions and partly through state action. University of North Carolina's Comprehensive Articulation Agreement Between The University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Community College System (May 2005) showed that North Carolina's Comprehensive Articulation Agreement was instituted to be a part of the implementation of the provisions of House Bill 739 and Senate Bill 1161, 1995 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly.

Robertson and Frier (1998) cited North Carolina and South Carolina as examples of states offering productive voluntary transfer and articulation activities. Articulation in North Carolina progressed without legislative involvement. In North Carolina, the Joint Committee on College Transfer Students is a 12-member committee that publishes guidelines for transfers. In South Carolina, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education has brought together universities and technical colleges to develop an

agreement for four-year institutions to grant general education credit to graduates of two-year institutions. These voluntary agreements have meant that the postsecondary institutions of North Carolina and South Carolina have been less subject to legislative intervention than some other states.

R. Kelley, Program Manager of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, wrote in response to Survey Question 2 that South Carolina has empowered the state's Commission on Higher Education to establish procedures for the transferability of courses at the undergraduate level between two-year and four-year institutions or schools. This articulation mandate is a statute passed by the South Carolina legislature (Section 59-103-45).

J. Leidig, Director of Instructional Programs, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, said that after the Texas legislature adopted its statewide core curriculum by statute in 1997, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board set up a 24-member advisory committee (with 12 representatives from universities and 12 representatives from community colleges) to implement the Texas core (personal communication, September 30, 1999). The committee's recommendations were brought to the Coordinating Board. The Coordinating Board modified these recommendations and approved a final version in the summer of 1998.

The Content of Core Curricula in the SACS States

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education (1999) has mandated general education requirements in 4 areas: 6 semester hours of written composition; 12 semester hours in humanities and the fine arts; 11 semester hours in mathematics and the natural sciences; and 12 semester hours in history, social sciences, and behavioral sciences.

These required courses total 41 semester hours. Alabama also requires 19-23 semester hours in Pre-Professional Studies, Pre-Major Studies, and Electives. As a result, general education requirements require about two-thirds of a student's freshman and sophomore years.

P. Dallet, Deputy Executive Director of the Council for Education Policy Research and Improvement, reported that Florida's core, in conformity with State Code 6A-10.024, consists of at least 36 semester hours, although institutions are granted latitude as to what to include in their cores (personal communication, October 10, 1995). Nevertheless, institutions have no latitude about accepting this core from transferring students who have completed the core requirement of their original institutions.

Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (2006) reported that Georgia has a 60-semester-hour core curriculum. Georgia's core offers a fairly wide degree of choice to both institutions and students. The first requirement is 9 hours in essential skills. The second requirement is 4 or 5 hours of global issues, oral communication, information technology, critical thinking, wellness, geography, and foreign languages. Each institution establishes its own courses in those areas. The third requirement is 6 hours in the humanities. In the area of science, mathematics, and technology, Georgia's core curriculum has established separate tracks, one for science majors and the other for non-majors, in which students take 10-11 hours. (It should be noted, however, that proponents of a strict core strongly oppose allowing credit for any core requirement that does not count toward a major.) The social science component is met by 12 hours chosen from a wide variety of courses. Finally, the core curriculum allows a choice of 18 hours in courses related to the program of study—that is, lower

division courses related to the discipline(s) of the program of study and courses which are prerequisite to the major courses at higher levels.

Georgia's Board of Regents has established a few other principles in its core curriculum. Students are guaranteed full credit when transferring, provided they complete the core and do not change their majors. If they change majors, they may have to take additional math or science courses. Moreover, institutions can set conditions for acceptance of the core courses. For example, a university may refuse core credit if a student has below a C grade in a course, so long as both native and transfer students are required to meet the same criteria. Georgia Tech is unique in requiring that students transferring there must complete a course in calculus in addition to the math core requirements, but the requirement applies to native students as well.

A report by the Louisiana Board of Regents (1994) said that Louisiana has tried using both a required and a suggested core curriculum. The required core curriculum consisted of 39 semester hours in 7 areas. The suggested core curriculum consisted of 50 semester hours in 7 areas. The suggested core would have increased the English requirement from 6 to 9 hours, the natural science requirement from 9 to 11 hours, and the humanities requirement from 9 to 15 hours. The suggested core would have required 6 credit hours in the History of Western Civilization and recommended a foreign language requirement. Louisiana has now dropped its suggested core.

Louisiana requires its graduates to have computer literacy (knowledge about the usage and potential of computers), but it does not mandate a course in the use of computers. Computer literacy can be demonstrated by a test or other means. The Louisiana Board of Regents allows each institution the right to adopt policies and

procedures to ensure that each baccalaureate graduate has achieved basic computer literacy.

A publication by the University of North Carolina (May 2005) showed that the University of North Carolina system has simple, specific requirements that apply to all its members: 6 semester hours in English composition, 12 semester hours in humanities and the fine arts, 6 semester hours in mathematics, and 8 semester hours in the natural sciences. This is a total of 44 semester hours.

Completing an associate's degree in North Carolina can help a student gain admission to a state university. Students who complete the associate's degree are credited with fulfilling the state's Minimum Admission Requirements. Students who transfer without completing the associate's degree are required to meet the Minimum Admission Requirements at their new institution. Students who have completed the associate's degree are not required to take or retake the SAT. Therefore, community college students in North Carolina have strong incentives to complete the associate's degree before transferring. With a few exceptions (foreign language and physical education), completion of the 44-semester hour general education core in North Carolina completes all general education requirements. In some cases, students may be required to complete courses in physical education or foreign languages after transferring.

J. Leidig, Director of Instructional Programs for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, pointed out that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has made its statewide core curriculum available on its Website (personal communication, September 30, 1999). All institutions require a total of 36 hours, in categories specially created for the Texas core: 6 semester hours in communication (English rhetoric and

composition); 3 hours in mathematics (logic, college algebra); 6 hours in natural sciences; 6 hours in humanities and visual and performing arts (with at least half in visual or performing arts); and 15 hours in social and behavioral sciences (6 hours of United States history, 6 hours of political science, and 3 additional hours in a social science).

In addition, Texas institutions are required to choose 6 additional hours to complete the 42-semester-hour statewide core curriculum. The additional hours can come from the following areas: communication (up to 6 hours); mathematics (up to 3 hours); natural sciences (up to 3 hours); humanities and visual and performing arts (up to 3 hours); social and behavioral sciences (up to 3 hours); and an institutionally designated option (up to 3 hours). This rather complicated core curriculum allows students some leeway in choosing courses and faculty some leeway in offering them.

Moreover, with approval of the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board, an institution can add an additional 6 hours to its core, bringing its total requirements to 48 semester hours. The statewide core curriculum of Texas is unusual in that it has both a required component and optional components. In addition, even the required component allows for some choice.

In a study of both independent and state-supported two-year and four-year institutions, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1995) concluded that these institutions had tightened general education requirements. Institutions have reduced the number of courses qualifying to fulfill (general education) requirements, and at the same time they have made the requirements more intellectually defensible.

An article by State Council of Higher Education (July 20, 1999) reported on general education requirements in Virginia's community colleges. Virginia's 22

community colleges require 37-48 semester hours, depending on the student's major. For 15 public four-year institutions in Virginia, general education requirements ranged in 1999 from 33 semester hours at Longwood University to 52 semester hours at Clinch Valley College (now University of Virginia at Wise). In addition, students who lacked prerequisites could be required to take anywhere from 41 to 70 semester hours to fulfill their general education requirements.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1995) stated the assumptions of Virginia's transfer policy. First, every senior institution should take significant responsibility for enrolling community college students. Second, transfer of students is a joint responsibility of community colleges and senior institutions. Third, both transfer students and non-transfer students should receive equitable treatment from senior college and universities. Specifically, students who transfer should not have to repeat coursework they have completed at a community college.

Senior institutions in Virginia are considered to be in compliance with the State Policy on Transfer when they meet a couple of required criteria. First, the senior institute must accept the modular credits in partial or complete fulfillment of general education requirements. (The 35 credit hours in general education must be distributed as specified in the module and carry a grade of C or higher.) Second, the senior institute must publish transfer module equivalencies in its catalog or transfer guide, stating explicitly whether a course is accepted for either general education credit or transfer elective credit, and listing any additional general education requirements beyond transfer module courses (State Council of Higher Education, 1995).

How SACS States Have Handled Articulation Problems

In its response to Survey Question 38, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education said that the biggest difficulty in implementing its core would be technology issues. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education also noted a need for improved communication among the faculty and staff members who counsel students about transfer procedures. However, this is no longer the case. Alabama has improved its technology to implement better transfer procedures. As evidence of this success, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (2006) reported that in 2005, over 67,000 persons accessed the state's transfer guide at <http://www.troy.edu>. In solving its technology issues problem, making information immediately accessible, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education has also taken a large step towards improving communication among the teachers and administrators who provide students with advice about transfer.

In Alabama, the responsibility for resolving transfer issues was assigned to the Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee, which was required to develop a statewide freshman- and sophomore-level general studies curriculum by September 1, 1999. Creech (1995) reported that Florida has established an Articulation Coordinating Committee, which included representatives from the university system, the community college system, area vocational centers, and the public schools. The Committee has several functions. It reviews student admission and transfer difficulties. It hears appeals. It monitors the effectiveness of the transfer process. Based on its findings, it recommends policies and procedures to improve articulation.

Florida's Articulation Agreement, adopted in 1993, has placed mandates on both students and institutions. It requires a general education core of at least 36 semester hours

for students seeking a baccalaureate degree. It guarantees junior year status to transferring students who have completed an associate's degree. It prohibits four-year institutions from imposing additional lower level general education requirements on students who transfer with an associate's degree. It establishes a common course numbering system and a common academic calendar. It requires students to pass the College Level Academic Skills Test to receive either an associate's or bachelor's degree.

Creech (1995) said that the state of Florida has the most formal and comprehensive set of transfer processes. Florida's transfer process is not like North Carolina's voluntary guidelines for transfer. Instead, the state of Florida mandates transfer policies for its public institutions. The two differ not so much in the content of policies but in how the policies are developed and implemented.

Palinchak (1988) described the work of Florida's Articulation Coordinating Committee, established by statute in 1982. The 12-member committee is appointed by the Florida Commissioner of Education, with 3 members from the state university system, 3 from the community college system, 3 from the public schools, and 1 member from vocational schools, one from the commissioner's staff, and one additional member. The Articulation Coordinating Committee reviews general education courses, introductory courses, first courses, and general survey courses. It distinguishes upper level courses from lower level courses. It also reviews general education requirements. Review by the Articulation Coordinating Committee gives Florida's policies consistency and cohesion.

Board of Regents, The University System of Georgia (1999) reported that it publishes a handbook (*The Core Curriculum Handbook*) to inform state community colleges and universities of the Board of Regents' core curriculum policy. Georgia's

Board of Regents has found it necessary to make the usual compromise between local rights and state authority: It has concluded that although general autonomy of individual institutions is desirable, there must be a centralized policy in some areas.

G. Killebrew, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs for the Louisiana Board of Regents, stated that the Louisiana Board of Regents created a Statewide Task Force in 1997 to address articulation problems with both general education requirements and other course offerings (personal communication, October 20, 1999). Killebrew said that general education courses are now articulated between institutions to the fullest possible extent. Any disputes that arise between campuses regarding transferability of equivalent coursework are handled through negotiation with the Task Force. However, Louisiana's Task Force can not compel an institution to grant credit, because every institution has the responsibility to maintain and protect its own academic standards.

Board of Regents, The University System of Georgia (1999) reported that disputes over transferability are to be handled by the receiving institution. If this fails, then the registrar of the receiving institution should consult with the president of the sending institution. If this fails, the president of the sending institution can appeal to the Chancellor, who can refer the matter to the Administrative Committee on Transfer of Credit. Finally, the Chancellor can act on recommendations by the Administrative Committee on Transfer of Credit.

An article published by the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions and Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (1994) describes the state's articulation agreements for the 165 majors (194 as of April 2006) offered at Mississippi's 8 public universities. This articulation agreement spells out in detail the complicated

system by which changes can be made. First, any proposed change in course offerings or transfer hours must be approved by the chief academic officer at each university that offers the program involved. Second, the proposed change must be communicated to the Articulation Committee Chairman for the University Chief Academic Officers Association—before May 1, for any changes to be implemented in the fall semester of the year. During the first week of May, the proposal must be considered by the Articulation Committees (universities/community colleges). Later in May, the proposed change must be considered for approval by the university chief academic officers and community college academic deans. Finally, proposals must be communicated to presidents and academic deans of community colleges by the first day of July. Changes approved by this hierarchy in the spring can be implemented in the fall semester of the same year.

Creech (1995) said that the North Carolina Joint Committee on College Transfer Students provides a continuing forum for resolution of transfer problems. The North Carolina Joint Committee on College Transfer Students also publishes recommendations for transfer. Its guidelines address a variety of issues: admission requirements; transferability of credits; transferability of credits earned in non-traditional ways; availability of transcripts; and general education requirements. The North Carolina Joint Committee on College Transfer Students also compiles and publishes the transfer requirements of all four-year institutions and maintains a Transfer Counselor Network. It hears any appeals from students and in general monitors the effectiveness of transfer guidelines and processes.

An article published by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (1996) has made several recommendations on reducing articulation barriers and developing articulation between all appropriate public and independent institutions. It has recommended that two-year institutions invite nearby universities to join them in on-campus transfer activities. Community colleges should develop blocks of courses for students transferring with less than an associate degree. For example, the Arts and Sciences certificate at Cleveland State Community College could be articulated with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Institutions should encourage students to plan ahead when choosing courses, considering transfer options and possible careers. It has recommended institutions develop inverted 2+2 programs and expand articulation agreements that include the Associate of Applied Science degree. In addition it recommended that four-year institutions provide feedback to two-year institutions on the transfer process and on the success of transfer students at the new institution.

Tennessee Higher Education Commission (1996) noted that some transfer issues arise because of misunderstandings about general education. It has recommended that both junior and senior institutions review differences in general education expectations. Academic officers, especially transfer counselors, must be aware of differences that cause problems for students who transfer. Governing boards and institutions should investigate any differences in the total number of hours required in general education, in the content and hours required in distribution categories, in the level at which core courses are offered, and in granting credit for external assessments like College Level Examination Program examinations. Finally, both senior and junior institutions should develop a generic definition of general education, so that students and the greater public understand

what general education is, how it relates to the major, and how it contributes to the overall education of the student.

Creech (1995) wrote that the recommendations developed by the University of Tennessee System and the Tennessee Board of Regents were prompted by a directive from Tennessee's state legislature. The legislature made these requests of state-funded colleges and universities: that they reduce the wide variation in general education requirements imposed by colleges and universities; that they use technology to facilitate transfer; and that they develop statewide agreements between two- and four-year colleges.

J. Leidig (personal communication, September 30, 1999), Director of Instructional Programs for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, said that in Texas, institutions are asked to work out transfer disputes between themselves as thoroughly as possible before bring a complaint to the Coordinating Board. In Texas, the statewide core curriculum became effective in the fall semester of 1999. According to the response to Survey Question 7, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board had concluded that by 2001 that transfer was efficient.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (June 2001) cited the fact that most credit transfers as proof that transfer is efficient. The Board said that in Texas, most rejected hours are denied with cause. Remedial courses, courses in which the student receives a low grade, and technical courses that do not apply to an academic major are the 3 major reasons for denying transfer credit.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1996) said that transfer from Virginia's community colleges to state-supported four-year institutions had never been

easier. The only exception to easy transfer is Virginia Military Institute, which has a unique military mission. In 1996, all of Virginia's four-year public institutions were in full compliance with the State Policy on Transfer.

Graduates of Virginia's community colleges are not guaranteed acceptance to four-year public institutions. However, if students are accepted by a public four-year institution, the general education component of the associate's degree they hold must be accepted. With the exception of the Virginia Military Institute, all of Virginia's public four-year colleges and universities accept all 35 credit hours of the transfer module in complete or partial fulfillment of their lower level general education requirements.

A directive by State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1996) noted that before community college students register at a four-year institution, they should receive a formal evaluation of their transfer credits from the four-year institution. SCHEV recommends that transferring students who encounter difficulty consult the chief transfer officer (CTO) at their four-year institution. Every state college and state university in Virginia has a chief transfer officer.

How SACS States Have Evaluated the Success of their Core Curricula

Florida has implemented an extensive system of articulation to encourage transfer. P. Dallet, Deputy Executive Director of the Council for Education Policy Research and Improvement, stated that Florida, by State Board of Education rule (Rule 6A-10.024 FAC), has recommended that research be undertaken by the Divisions of Community Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools to follow the progress of transfer students and to develop procedures to improve articulation (personal communication, October 10, 1995).

Palinchak (1988) said that Florida's core curriculum comprises 36 semester hours out of the 60 hours required for an Associate in Arts degree. Florida employs the College Level Academic Skills Program and the College Level Academic Skills Test to ensure coordination of testing and score reporting. At the time Palinchak wrote, sophomores had to pass the College Level Academic Skills Test in order to receive an Associate of Arts degree or to become a junior at a state university. Palinchak said that requiring the College Level Academic Skills Test has been effective in elevating Florida's academic standards.

According to the Florida Department of Education Assessment and Evaluation Services (1998), the College Level Academic Skills Test is part of Florida's system of educational accountability. The College Level Academic Skills Test is an achievement test; it measures how well students have attained the college-level communication and mathematics skills that have been identified by faculties of community colleges and state universities as critical skills. The College Level Academic Skills Test includes an essay and tests in reading, objectively tested writing skills, and mathematics.

The Florida legislature in 1984 required passing scores in the College Level Academic Skills Test for graduation from community college with an Associate in Arts degree and for admission to the junior year in a state university. However, in 1995, the legislature allowed students to be exempt from the College Level Academic Skills Test if they had demonstrated achievement of college-level skills via alternative methods (e.g. a 2.5 GPA in the subject area).

An article published by the Florida Department of Education Office of Assessment and Evaluation Services (1997) reported that of community college students

who had completed 60 or more credit hours, 71.8% passed all 4 sections of the College Level Academic Skills Test for the academic year 1995-1996, while 66.2% passed the College Level Academic Skills Test for the academic year 1996-1997. Overall, about 50% of community college students were tested; the rest were exempted. This means that about 85% of all of Florida's community college students were able to pass the examination requirements for admission to junior class status.

The Florida Department of Education Office of Assessment and Evaluation Services (1997) article also has broken down the overall passing rates by race and ethnicity. The passing rate for the academic year 1996-1997 for White community college students who had completed 60 or more semester hours was 76.2%. Among community college students who had completed 60 or more semester hours and were of Hispanic descent—a significant group in Florida—the passing rate was 63.7%. African American community college students who had completed 60 or more semester hours had a passing rate of 41.7%.

Like Florida, Georgia requires rising-junior examinations. The requirement that students take this standardized examination before beginning their third (junior) year applies both to transfer students and to native students who are continuing their education in a four-year institution.

An article published by the Louisiana Board of Regents (1994) stressed the point that a strategy of adopting a core curriculum and mandating new courses does not guarantee the desired results. Consequently, it urged Louisiana colleges and university to assess both required and suggested course offerings to ascertain whether some existing courses should be restructured or replaced to accomplish the goals of general education.

An article published by the Southern Regional Education Board (1995) reported that Tennessee has established 10 categories to evaluate the performance of its public universities, community colleges, and technical institutes. Each category is worth up to 10 points, so the maximum possible score for a postsecondary institution is 100 points. One of the sections concerns objective measurement of general education outcomes.

An article published by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (1999) said that Tennessee does want to have an objective measure of general education outcomes. Tennessee measures the quality of general education by the performance in mean score (either by comparison to national norms or to previous performance) of an institution's students. The national norms will be applied to this standard. For two-year institutions, the national norm will be drawn from all two-year institutions using the particular instrument chosen by the institution.

For both two-year and four-year institutions in Tennessee, two norms will be applied: one for institutions whose entering ACT average is below the national entering ACT score average and one for institutions whose ACT average is above the national average. The method is to subtract the national mean average score from the institutional mean score and divide the result by the standard error of the national mean.

Up to 10 points can be awarded in this area. If the result is 10 or more, then the institution receives 10 points. If the result is between -2.5 and -2.0, then the institution receives 1 point. Institutions can choose either the ACT COMP or College BASE examination. The test is to be given over 5 years. For institutions whose students average below the national average, results will be measured against previous classes at their

institution. Currently, ACT COMP average scores are slightly (0.7) below the national norm. BASE average scores continue to exceed the national norm.

In evaluating the performance of its two-year and four-year institutions, then, Tennessee bases 10% of an institution's grade on the performance of students in tests that measure mastery of general education. I find this to be strong evidence of the high importance Tennessee gives to its general education requirements.

An article published by the State Council of Higher Education of Virginia (1999) reported that in 1987, it asked the state's public colleges and universities to evaluate the success of their core curricula. SCHEV reports. Many institutions struggled in their initial efforts to comply, and many used nationally normed examinations. After a trial period, most institutions determined that those examinations did not adequately reflect what the institutions taught in their general education programs, did not provide data that could be used for improvement of the programs, and/or were very costly. Consequently, many Virginia institutions have moved away from using nationally normed examinations to evaluate the success of their core curricula.

Instead, Virginia institutions have adopted several different methods of evaluation. According to the article by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1999), the methods used by Virginia colleges and universities to assess general education include both nationally developed programmatic methods and locally developed programmatic methods. Some schools consider course grades and course-specific methods. Others survey students, alumni, and employers to determine their perception of students' preparedness. Some institutions require and evaluate student portfolios. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia reported that standardized

examinations (nationally developed programmatic measures) are available and have proved useful in areas such as mathematics and foreign languages. However, such tests are not widely available to assess many aspects of the general education curriculum—for example, global or international issues.

Several Virginia community colleges have switched from the Academic Profile, a nationally developed examination, to a locally developed examination, the Schoch-Tucker Assessment of General Education . This change was due to the high cost of the Academic Profile. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1999) has concluded that the Schoch-Tucker Assessment of General Education examination is a valid measuring device.

An article published by the State Council on Higher Education in Virginia (1999) listed several examples of the national assessment tests used by different educational institutions in Virginia. Longwood University plans to use the ACT COMPASS examination tests of writing, reading, and mathematics as sophomore exit-tests for general education. Clinch Valley College (now the University of Virginia at Wise) uses the ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey, 5 community colleges use the Academic Profile Test, 4 community colleges use the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency , 2 community colleges use the Student Experiences Questionnaire, and a community college is considering using the Watson-Glasser Critical Thinking Appraisal. Washington and Lee University, an independent liberal arts university, uses results on Graduate Record Examinations or entrance into law, medical, and other graduate schools to assess the quality of its general education. Additional assessment measures used in Virginia

include student and course portfolios, capstone courses, and course-specific methods like specific assessment questions included in final examinations.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1999) has provided some examples of the ways in which Virginia institutions of higher learning use the results of their assessment measures. Christopher Newport College obtained writing samples from a random group of graduating seniors and concluded that they lacked expected proficiency levels. In response, the college increased the amount of writing required for all students by adding writing-intensive course requirements, revising the freshman English program, and developing a common final examination for its principal writing course. Radford University uses the results of assessment on an almost daily basis. Assessment data have been used to make curricular changes, change course sequencing and prerequisites, and make other changes, most of which required that assessment findings be integrated into the university's planning and budgeting processes. Mountain Empire Community College, after finding that students scored poorly in international and global knowledge on its locally developed general education test, initiated a broad-based international/cultural arts program.

Clearly, Virginia uses a wide range of assessment measures to evaluate the quality of general education. Unfortunately, lack of a common assessment tool makes it impossible to compare institutions. This may be contrasted with Tennessee's use of the ACT COMP or the College BASE examinations to evaluate all students in higher education. The use of a rising-junior exam by Florida and Georgia is another example of a statewide assessment of student mastery of the general education curriculum. A rising-junior exam is more than just an assessment of student mastery of the general

education; it also provides a powerful incentive for students to master the general education curriculum.

Actions SACS States Have Taken to Promote their Core Curricula

Creech (1999) has suggested several ways in which states can promote their general education core curricula. Community colleges can make sure that they offer at least half of the required hours for bachelor's programs, with exceptions allowed by the Board of Regents. Senior colleges can award junior (third-year) status to students who earn associate degrees. All postsecondary institutions can appoint transfer coordinators to advise students transferring in or out. State education authorities can form statewide transfer committees to evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and to recommend improvements.

In addition, Creech (1999) has recommended that computer technology can make transfer easier for both students and institutions. Institutions can plan a single, computer-assisted student advising and degree audit system. They can use technology to give students a computer report that shows how their credits will count at any public institution before they enroll. Use of computer technology accelerates the exchange of transcripts and other information important to students.

An article published by the Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (2006) reported that Alabama sponsors a Website at <http://www.stars.troy.edu> to promote its statewide core curriculum. The Website provides a wide range of information on transfer and articulation issues. It makes general information about transfer immediately accessible to students.

Another means by which states can disseminate information about transfer is through printed materials. In 1988, Florida began publication of a magazine, *Articulation*, as a means of providing information about postsecondary course information statewide. Palinchak (1988) noted that the information available includes comparative statistics: For example, grade point averages indicated for each university by major field or college can be used as a means of comparison. In general, this summary of institutional academic standing is well received, respected, and well read.

Palinchak (1988) wrote that Florida has taken other steps to promote articulation. A 1987 bill introduced several changes in Florida policy. It provided special funds for dual enrollment. Dual enrollment is simultaneous enrollment in separate educational institutions, usually a high school and a community college, or a community college and a four-year college, with course credit toward the degree awarded in both institutions. In Florida, students who are dually enrolled are exempted from some fees and are given certain free instructional materials. The 1987 bill also allows community colleges to offer credit by examination. Perhaps most importantly, it directs community college presidents to establish articulation agreements.

An article published by the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (January 1997) said that the Florida legislature's has adopted a plan for a single, computer-assisted student advising and degree audit system. This system would not only help community college students attempting to transfer to state universities, but would also serve the needs of middle and high school students, prospective returning students, college students, and college graduates making decisions about graduate school

and continuing education. The goal of the system would be to ensure ease in access, consistency, and accuracy across the 38 public institutions.

Robertson and Frier (1998) reported that Florida has adopted the Student On-Line Advisement and Registration System. This system is an information system. Its purpose is to provide community college students with an academic plan appropriate to the major that they have selected and the upper division institution to which they are planning to apply. Because it is online, it is available at any time, from any computer with Internet access.

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (November 2006) stated that it operates a Website (<http://www.cpe.state.ky.us>) to publicize its core curriculum. This Website is typical of the ones increasingly available for the SACS states. It lists Kentucky's 8 state universities and 14 community colleges and provides institutional contacts for each of them. It contains information on the Baccalaureate Program Transfer Program—defining the first 60 hours of collegiate education for transfer students. It presents both general transfer frameworks and the specific transfer frameworks for every major offered by Kentucky's universities. Each of these transfer frameworks includes a General Transfer Component of 48 semester hours and a specialty transfer framework of 12 hours. An example of a specialty transfer framework is the Economics Transfer Framework, which includes 6 hours in introductory economics, 3 hours of calculus, and 3 hours of statistics. Finally, the Website has information on the General Transfer Committee, whose job is to develop the transfer of general education courses, as required by the Kentucky state legislature, which adopted SJR 36 Final Report to implement block transfer from community colleges to state universities.

In North Carolina, two-year institutions and state four-year institutions have collaborated on transfer policy. Creech (1995) reported that the University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Community College System were (at that time) jointly developing a comprehensive articulation agreement. This agreement requires that graduates of two-year degree programs who have completed the general education transfer core be exempted from all lower division general education requirements of the senior institution to which they transfer. It sets up procedures for the acceptance of transfer credit by students who have completed applied science programs. It establishes a comprehensive transfer information system that will provide—in both print and electronic format—information on admissions, prerequisites, transferability of courses, and electronic transcripts. Finally, it requires the issuing of an annual report on the transfer rate of each community college and the performance of students who have transferred.

M. Cain, Acting Associate Director for Academic Affairs, University of North Carolina General Administration, noted that North Carolina operates a Website to provide information on their state's articulation agreements. These agreements cover the 16 University of North Carolina institutions and the 58 North Carolina community colleges (personal communication, January 11, 2000).

Creech (1999) reported that in response to legislation enacted in 1995, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education established transfer blocks for students transferring from two-year technical colleges to four-year colleges and universities in the following 6 areas: business administration; arts, social sciences, and humanities; science and mathematics; engineering and engineering technology; teacher education; and

nursing. The South Carolina system, then, has transfer policies in place even for students with the specialized concentrations offered in technical schools. These policies not only make transfer easier but also encourage students still in the first 2 years of their postsecondary education to plan ahead for a major in their baccalaureate studies. This is likely to mean a more efficient use of resources.

Creech (1999) said that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the University of Tennessee, and the Tennessee Board of Regents have taken several steps in response to legislation enacted in 1995. They have developed statewide articulation agreements. They have reduced the wide variations in the general education requirements of institutions and disciplines. Recognizing the possibilities available in electronic resources, they have recommended the use of technology to reduce problems that students encounter when transferring.

A brochure published by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (1996) made 14 specific recommendations of ways in which educational institutions and the state can improve communication regarding articulation and transfer issues. Four recommendations concern advisement. First, academic advisors must be given complete and accurate information about transferring. Second, academic advisors should use electronic mail (e-mail) to share transfer information with students and to answer their questions. Third, transfer information should be made available in electronic form accessible from any computer, even off-campus and outside office hours. Fourth, each campus should have a person or office whose specific job is to help students with transfer questions or problems.

Another 3 recommendations concern course offerings. First, institutions should identify general education courses that are offered by both two-year and four-year institutions. Second, institutions should simplify course equivalency tables for evaluating transcripts so that they are more easily understood and applied. Third, institutions should clearly state their transfer policies and procedures for transfer of course credit in catalogs online.

An article published by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (1996) has made suggestions that focus on the student's responsibility. Students should understand the importance of early career planning and the choice of transfer options. They need to distinguish between problems that are caused by transferring and problems that are caused by changing degrees or majors.

Two suggestions concern the student after transfer. Colleges and universities should provide orientation sessions specifically for incoming transfer students. In addition, they should let transfer students know how they can appeal decisions about the transfer of credits.

Finally, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (1996) pointed out that cooperation between institutions will facilitate transfer. Two-year institutions should invite four-year institutions to provide their students with transfer information on a regular basis, and to participate in their on-campus transfer activities. Institutions should develop institutional transfer catalogs, so that students and their advisors can see which courses will transfer most efficiently between local colleges and universities. These last tactics are appropriate ones for each institution's Chief Transfer Officer and staff.

Creech (1999) reported that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has been developing comprehensive core curricula of at least 42 semester hours for all post-secondary institutions in Texas. In addition, almost all state-supported and independent institutions in Texas are developing a common course numbering system. This should greatly reduce articulation difficulties for transferring students. It will also help institutions to recognize the equivalence and transferability of lower division general education courses.

Under the auspices of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas has a Website (<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us>) to promote its core curriculum. The Website includes a wide variety of information, including the history and background of the statewide core curriculum, detailed information on how the core works, and a copy of the statute that established the core curriculum in Texas.

Creech (1999) reported that Virginia has adopted a statewide policy on transfer that specifies that graduates of associate degree programs should receive credit for meeting freshman and sophomore level general education requirements and be given junior status at senior colleges and universities. Virginia also has established transfer modules for students who decide to transfer without completing the associate's degree. The state committee includes representatives from two-year and four-year public colleges, a four-year private college, and staff from the State Council for Higher Education, the Community College System and the Department of Education. The committee is developing plans to facilitate transfer, improve data collection, and establish a statewide electronic transfer assistance program.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1996) reported that the Virginia Community College System's State Committee on Transfer publishes an annual newsletter entitled *Transfer Connection* to assist community college students wishing to transfer. Both the State Council of Higher Education and the Virginia Community College System have Web pages to help community college students desiring to transfer. Eleven of Virginia's 15 public four-year colleges and universities publish their transfer policies on the Web.

Looking at independent as well as state-supported institutions, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1999) reported that in its study of 64 state-supported and independent two-year and four-year institutions in Virginia, it was found that each of them had a mechanism for oversight and review of its general education curriculum. Moreover, every two-year and four-year public institution in Virginia has a designated chief transfer officer. The CTO's responsibilities include interpreting the State Policy on Transfer; distributing transfer information, including transfer guides; and keeping counselors up-to-date on transfer information.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1999) mentioned Virginia Polytechnic Institution and State University in particular, commending Virginia Tech because it sponsors core curriculum workshops for faculty and disseminates curriculum handbooks for students and advisors. In addition, all 23 of Virginia's community colleges report projects and activities related to faculty development in general education. If a core curriculum is to be more than a procedural success, it must have the practical and philosophical support of faculty members.

In its 1989-1991 review, the Virginia Community College System Review eliminated references to specific disciplines in favor of grouping requirements in 5 different areas: English composition; humanities and the fine arts; social and behavioral sciences; natural sciences and mathematics; and wellness. Since that review, the Virginia Community College System has defined its minimum competencies for computer skills, foreign language, and wellness.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia has made a number of specific recommendations to postsecondary institutions and their boards of visitors. SCHEV has recommended that institutions state and publish their student learning goals for general education. They should require at least 40 credit hours in general education. All students should gain competency in writing, oral communication, mathematics, natural or physical science, social science, foreign languages (through the intermediate level), humanities, and history (including U.S. history) in ways that best meet an institution's curricular rationale and purpose. Institutions also should request periodic reviews on how students meet general education requirements, and they should use multiple methods for assessing the success of their general education requirements.

Other Actions States Have Undertaken to Reduce Barriers to Transfer

Looking at a northeastern state, Mercer (1993) reported that Massachusetts has adopted a joint admissions policy for community colleges and the University of Massachusetts. A student can be guaranteed admission to a community college and to the University of Massachusetts simultaneously, through a joint admissions agreement. To transfer, the student must fulfill the terms of the joint admissions agreement. This means earning the associate's degree, achieving a specified grade-point average, and fulfilling

any additional requirements of the program in which he or she is interested. Mercer remarks that the joint admissions program helps to ease the articulation process.

Bender (1990) made several recommendations of ways in which institutions can help students adjust to transfer from a two-year postsecondary institute to a four-year college or university. Two-year institutions can appoint baccalaureate advisors to help students prepare for the transition. The institutions into which they transfer can helpfully offer admission and financial aid awards simultaneously, in the letter of admission. They can hold registration for transfer students on the community college campuses. They can provide a special orientation period for transfer students, perhaps a summer bridge program that can serve as a transitional period. They can establish mentorship programs for transfer students, in particular transfer students who are also members of a racial or ethnic minority. Although many colleges lack dormitory space for upper-class students, they should make an effort to provide space in dormitories for students transferring from two-year colleges, so that they have an opportunity to experience campus living before graduating. To facilitate future admissions, the senior institutions can provide detailed information each year to the two-year institutions on the progress of transfer students, especially minority students. Policies that ease the transfer process are likely to result in greater retention of transfer students, as well as higher numbers of transfer students who receive the baccalaureate.

CHAPTER III: STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out to what extent the 11 SACS states have adopted a statewide core curriculum and to what extent having a statewide core curriculum has reduced articulation difficulties.

Overview of the Study (Research Questions)

My overall purpose is linked to my 4 research questions:

1. What is the status of statewide core curricula in the 11 states that are members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)?
2. Why have SACS states adopted statewide core curricula?
3. What is the content of the SACS states' core curricula?
4. Has the adoption of statewide core curricula reduced articulation difficulties for transferring students?

In order to answer these 4 research questions, I prepared a 50-question survey examining the status of core curricula in the 11 SACS states. In order to increase the likelihood that state officials would complete the survey, I first examined state documents to get published statements about each state's core curriculum. Finding published answers to as many of my questions as possible enabled me to reduce the length of the survey that each official would have to answer. It allowed respondents to concentrate on the ways in which their states had been innovative or unusual.

Reducing the length of the survey was a way to increase the chances of receiving completed surveys. Also, I thought that using published statements would increase the probability of validity.

After answering the 4 research questions, I will link my findings to my overall purpose, to find out to what extent SACS states have adopted a statewide core curriculum (or its functional equivalent) and to find out to what extent having a statewide core curriculum has reduced articulation difficulties.

Answers to these 4 research questions have come from my survey of the literature, from the results of the survey that I sent to Councils of Higher Education or Boards of Regents in the 11 SACS states, and from state curriculum documents. These questions were answered using descriptive statistics. For example, “State A has a 60-semester hour statewide core curriculum, State B has a 57-semester hour statewide core curriculum, and State C has a 38-semester hour statewide core curriculum.”

As a means of answering my 4 research questions, I developed 16 hypotheses. After explaining them, I will link the answers to the 4 research questions to my overall purpose. The 4 research questions are connected to the hypotheses as follows:

1. What is the status of statewide core curricula in the 11 states that are members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools? This question is linked to Hypotheses 1, 6, 7, 11, and 12.
2. Why have SACS states adopted statewide core curricula? This question is linked to Hypotheses 13, 14, 15, and 16.
3. What is the content of the SACS states’ core curricula? This question is linked to Hypotheses 2, 3, and 8.

4. Has the adoption of statewide core curricula reduced articulation difficulties for transferring students in the 11 SACS states? This question is linked to Hypotheses 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 15, and 16.

After answering the 4 research questions, my findings will be linked to my overall purpose. The purpose of this study is to find out to what extent the 11 SACS states have adopted a statewide core curriculum and to what extent having a statewide core curriculum has reduced articulation difficulties.

Sample/Participants in the Study

Each of the 50 states has either a state governing board for higher education or an advisory board for higher education. For example, Georgia has a governing board, the Georgia Board of Regents, while South Carolina has an advisory board, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

R. Kelley, Program Manager of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, said in 2001 in response to my survey that the characterization of higher education commissions or councils as being either governing or advisory is partially subjective, since there is a continuum of power. Moreover, both are subject to the actions of their state legislatures. A state legislature can at any time either increase or decrease the power of its Higher Education Commission or Board of Regents.

Kelley went on to characterize each of the 11 SACS states' governing and advisory boards. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education is a coordinating board. Florida's Postsecondary Education Planning Commission is a governing board. The Georgia Board of Regents is a governing board. The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education used to be a coordinating board, but it has now become a governing board or a

strong coordinating board under Gordon Davies. The Louisiana Board of Regents—despite its name—is a coordinating board. Mississippi’s Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning is a coordinating board. The University of North Carolina General Administration he characterizes as being not just a governing board, but the apex of governing boards. It tells institutions what they have to do and when they have to do it. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education is a coordinating board. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission is a coordinating board. (It should be noted that both the University of Tennessee Board of Regents and the Tennessee Board of Regents—which governs all state universities except the University of Tennessee—are separate from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is indeed a coordinating board, and in recent years it has assumed a posture of really coordinating and not just being a study commission. The Texas legislature has given the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board authority for coordinating general education requirements statewide. The Commonwealth of Virginia Council of Higher Education, said Kelley, used to be a strong coordinating board under Gordon Davies, but it is now a weak coordinating board.

SREB (2006) gave a slightly different summary of governance in the 11 SACS states. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education is a coordinating board for postsecondary education with an executive director. The Florida State Board of Education is a coordinating board for all educational levels, headed by a commissioner. The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia is a governing board for public universities, four-year colleges, and two-year colleges. The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education is a coordinating board for postsecondary education and is

headed by a president. The Louisiana Board of Regents is also a coordinating board for postsecondary education, but headed by a commissioner. The Mississippi Board of Trustees for State Institutions of Higher Learning is a governing board for universities, headed by a commissioner. The Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges is a coordinating board whose executive director is responsible only for community and junior colleges in the state. The University of North Carolina of Governors is a governing board, headed by a president, for the state's multi-campus university. North Carolina's community colleges have their own governing board, the State Board of Community Colleges/North Carolina Community College System, which also is headed by a president. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education is a coordinating board for higher education with an executive director. Tennessee's Higher Education Commission is a coordinating board for postsecondary education with an executive director. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is a coordinating Board for higher education with a commissioner. In Virginia, the State Council for Higher Education for Virginia is a coordinating board with an executive director.

In summary, Kelley found 6 coordinating boards and 4 governing boards, with Kentucky being on the border of being a strong coordinating board or almost a governing board. SREB (2006) concluded that there were 9 coordinating boards and 4 governing boards in the states that are members of SACS.

Despite the differences in governance, I believe that there are enough similarities between the various governing and coordinating boards to make comparisons. Their approaches may differ, but they are all attempting to make transfer and articulation easier and more efficient.

Procedures

Having compiled a 50-question survey about transfer policy and practices, I sent copies to the governing boards or advisory boards of the 11 SACS states. I sent the survey either to the executive director or to the person whose responsibilities included academic affairs. I had telephoned earlier to learn the name of the appropriate person in each state. In several cases, the person that I initially called directed me to a different staff member.

I got the addresses and phone numbers for the advisory and governing boards from the Directory of Professional Personnel (2000 edition) published by the State Higher Education Officers. I used the telephone numbers to reach the appropriate official and obtain an assurance of cooperation. Then I emailed the survey. I followed up by telephone or e-mail to monitor response.

In the pre-notification phase of my survey, I first telephoned each respondent to discuss the nature of my study and to explain its purpose. I determined whether the person whose job description made him or her the most appropriate respondent would be willing to complete the survey. Having obtained agreement, I asked for any questions about the survey. I explained that I had made the survey as short as possible by using state documents to answer as many as possible of the 50 survey questions. I requested a response within 21 days. Finally, I said that I would follow up by phone or e-mail to ask about missing data or to inquire about any discrepancies.

Instrumentation

I developed my survey in response to issues I discovered in my survey of the literature on general education and core curricula, transfer issues, and articulation

mechanisms. These issues include the following 6 changes in postsecondary educational policy:

1. Adoption of statewide core curricula.
2. Articulation difficulties between state-supported two-year institutions and state-supported four-year institutions.
3. Attempts by states to reduce the amount of time it takes students to complete a baccalaureate degree.
4. Increased student transfer, both from two-year institutions to four-year institutions and from four-year institutions to four-year institutions.
5. The growth in capstone general education requirements.
6. The growing popularity of the Associate in Applied Sciences degree, which often means that students complete the associate's degree before they take the general education courses required to receive the baccalaureate. This process is called *upside down articulation*.

These 6 changes are characteristic of contemporary postsecondary systems.

I piloted my survey with officials from South Carolina and Virginia. Gail Morrison, Director of Academic Affairs for the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, and Donna Brodd, Associate Director for Academic Affairs for the Commonwealth of Virginia Council of Higher Education, completed surveys. Morrison made several suggestions. Morrison stated that I should clearly define clearly core curriculum and general education requirements or explain that I am using the terms interchangeably. Morrison also made suggestions about eliminating redundant questions and in other ways reducing the length of the survey. Finally, Morrison mentioned that one

alternative for conducting my survey could be to begin with a phone call, in which I would ask my most important questions, followed by a shorter survey addressing unanswered questions.

Brodd also made helpful suggestions. Brodd directed me to the following Websites: <http://www.schev.edu.html/policies>; <http://www.so.cc.va.us>; and <http://www.highereducation.org>. Brodd also said that I should send out the survey by e-mail and request a return within 2 to 3 weeks. Brodd's state, Virginia, does not have a statewide core curriculum, but does have transfer blocks, so she suggested that I add questions about transfer blocks. Finally, she said that I should relate the answers to my survey to state achievements such as improved assessment scores, reduction in the loss of academic credit by transferring students, and increased graduation rates.

As a result of the responses to my piloted surveys, I made several changes in my survey. I added questions about transfer blocks (Survey Questions 47 and 48). I added an explanation of the terms core curriculum and general education requirements, stating that I was using the terms interchangeably. I made the decision to telephone to notify the survey recipients about the nature of the survey. I decided to e-mail the survey instead of mailing it and to request that they return it within 3 weeks. In several instances, I revised my survey questions to make them clearer.

To elicit information about the effects of improved transfer and articulation, I decided to use answers to Survey Question 7 to determine whether the imposition of a statewide core curriculum reduces the number of hours students lose when they transfer. I decided to use the answers to Survey Questions 8 and 9 to analyze the economic costs and benefits of imposing a statewide core curriculum. Finally, I decided to use Survey

Questions 5 and 6 to see how adopting a statewide core curriculum has affected students' academic performance.

Piloting my survey has given the final survey both validity and reliability. Both Donna Brodd (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia) and Gail Morrison (South Carolina Commission on Higher Education) indicated that my survey had both validity and reliability. Respondents from the 11 SACS states later agreed that my survey had both validity and reliability.

I adopted a multiple-choice form in order to save respondents time and to make their answers more quantifiable. In constructing my survey, I tried to include every possible answer. However, I also left space for the recipient to mark *Other*. I asked the recipients to explain their response if they marked *Other*.

Some of the survey questions are quite specific, such as Survey Question 22, "Does your statewide core curriculum include a foreign language requirement?" The answer to this question is usually either *yes* or *no*. In summarizing the responses to this question, I could simply list the states that required courses in foreign languages and the states that did not. When exceptions or conditions were mentioned, of course I would mention them.

Most of the questions, however, are open-ended. I have tried to categorize the answers along a continuum, looking for trends in the way the SACS states have dealt with transition problems. I have quoted the survey responses in an appendix so that the reader can assess whether my categorizations are correct. See Appendix I.

1. Procedures

As stated earlier, I decided that I would make a preliminary contact with the appropriate official in each SACS state to discuss the nature of my survey. Only after this initial contact did I e-mail the surveys. I followed up by phone, e-mail, or personal visit to address any points that were unclear. I asked that surveys be returned within 3 weeks.

In order to increase the likelihood of getting a response, I had reduced the length of the questionnaire by using printed and on-line state materials to answer as many of the survey questions as possible. Consequently, the number of questions that each state official would receive would vary, and in each case the number would be less than the number of survey questions listed in my proposal. Since I had omitted the most easily answered questions, each respondent could concentrate on the ways in which his or her states had dealt with establishing a core curriculum and the results that followed.

As I conducted my research, I found that in several states, the person whom I had originally selected was either unwilling or unable to help. In every one of those cases, I was able to find another person in the appropriate board or council to help me in completing my survey. For some states, more than one person provided useful information and figures. Their names appear in Appendix B.

2. Analysis of Data

In the body of this paper, I present a summary of the data I obtained from published sources and survey responses, using descriptive analysis. A more extensive presentation of responses to my survey appears in Appendix I. Other appendices contain analyses of data in table form, including some quantitative analysis.

3. Presentation of Findings

I will present my findings by answering the 16 hypotheses, which relate to my 4 research questions. (See Chapter IV to see how the responses from the survey were used to confirm or refute my 16 hypotheses and to answer my 4 research questions.)

The answers to these questions came from my reading of the literature, from the results of the survey sent to Councils of Higher Education and Boards of Regents in the 11 SACS states, and from state curriculum documents. These questions were answered using descriptive statistics.

I divided the states into similar categories. For example, in summarizing the status of core curricula in the 11 SACS states, I could divide the states into 3 categories regarding the degree of choice in their core. For example, I might say that States A, B, and C have rigid core curricula. States D, E, F, and G have a series of transfer blocks, and States H, I, J, and K have a series of articulation agreements.

Obviously, since the writer is setting category boundaries, these categories may be considered arbitrary. However, the data on each state's core were provided by the state agencies, so the data are objective. I asked the state agencies why their states had adopted a statewide core curriculum, and I listed the reasons given by the states and categorized their answers.

In discussing my hypotheses, I will present the data in summary form. I refer the reader to the appendices for tables that present the data in greater detail.

Each of my 16 hypotheses is linked to 1 or more of the 50 Survey Questions and then to 1 or more of the 4 research questions. Through a study of the literature and

through my survey of the 11 SACS states, I attempted to find data that would tend to confirm or refute my hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: The majority of SACS states have adopted a statewide core curriculum during the last 25 years. Survey Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 20, 21, 27, 28, 32, and 38 were used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 1 and to answer Research Question 1.

Hypothesis 2: In a majority of the SACS states, the statewide core curriculum consists mostly of survey courses that are prerequisites for upper level courses. For example, core science courses would consist of survey or introductory courses that serve as prerequisites for upper level science courses. They would not be developmental courses or courses that could not be applied toward a major in the field. Survey Questions 10, 11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, and 43 were used to confirm or disconfirm Hypothesis 2 and to answer Research Question 3.

Hypothesis 3: In the majority of SACS states, statewide core curricula allow for limited choices; they avoid both a rigid core that all students must take and a cafeteria approach that allows almost unlimited choice. In a limited-choice curriculum, for example, students may be allowed a choice of history sequences such as 2 courses in either world history or 2 courses in American history, but they are not allowed to mix sequences, taking 1 course in world history and 1 course in American history. Survey Question 1 was used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 3 and to answer Research Question 3.

Hypothesis 4: In the majority of SACS states, graduates of two-year state-supported institutions are automatically granted junior status when they transfer. Survey Question 34 was used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 4 and answer Research Question 4.

Hypothesis 5: In the majority of SACS states, there is little difference in the number of hours earned by students who transfer to a four-year institution and then graduate and native students who graduate from the four-year institutions that they entered as first-year students. (In this context, “little difference” means no more than six semester hours.) Survey Questions 7, 15, 16, and 49 were used to confirm or disconfirm Hypothesis 5 and to answer Research Question 4.

Hypothesis 6: Some SACS states use statewide assessment instruments to evaluate the performance of their core curriculum (general education curriculum), but most do not. Survey Questions 5, 6, 8, and 9 were used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 6 and to answer Research Question 1.

Hypothesis 7: Some SACS states have adopted programs to accept graduates of two-year colleges who have an Associate of Applied Sciences degree and then require them to complete their lower level general education requirements to earn their baccalaureate degree, but most do not. Survey Question 19 was used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 7 and to answer Research Question 1.

Hypothesis 8: Some SACS states (fewer than half) have rising-junior exams for both native and transferring students. Question 33 was used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 8 and to answer Research Question 3.

Hypothesis 9: Most SACS states collect statistics on the academic performance of students who transfer from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions. Survey Question 36 was used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 9 and to answer Research Question 4.

Hypothesis 10: Most SACS states have enacted a number of measures to encourage students at two-year institutions to complete the associate's degree before transferring. Survey Questions 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47, and 48 were used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 10 and to answer Research Question 4.

Hypothesis 11: Most SACS states have undertaken research at the state level to measure the effectiveness of their statewide core curricula. Survey Questions 5, 6, 7, and 27 were used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 11 and to answer Research Question 1.

Hypothesis 12: In SACS states, statewide core curricula are subject to change. Survey Questions 23 and 31 were used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 12 and to answer Research Question 1.

Hypothesis 13: In a majority of SACS states, transfer from four-year institutions to four-year institutions and transfer from two-year institutions to two-year institutions (combined) is almost as great as transfer from two-year institutions to four-year institutions. (Almost as great is arbitrarily defined as at least 75%.) Survey Question 42 was used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 13 and to answer Research Question 2.

Hypothesis 14: Most SACS states are using Websites, newsletters, and/or magazines to publicize their statewide core curricula and/or transfer policies. Questions 46 and 47 were used to evaluate Hypothesis 14 and to answer Research Questions 2 and 4.

Hypothesis 15: Most SACS states have concluded that the perceived benefits of a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education curriculum exceed the costs. Survey Questions 9, 27, and 46 were used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 15 and to answer Research Questions 2 and 4.

Hypothesis 16: Some SACS states have adopted transfer blocks to facilitate transfer from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions. Questions 47 and 48 will be used to confirm or refute Hypothesis 16 and to answer Research Questions 2 and 4.

Literature Rationale for the 16 Hypotheses

Each of my 16 hypotheses is supported by statements found in one or more of the published sources listed in my bibliography. Here is a summary of the connections between the hypotheses and the literature.

Support for Hypothesis 1: *Most SACS states have adopted a statewide core curriculum during the last 25 years.* See Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee, 2003; Bender, 1990; Choice, 1998; Colby and Hardy, 1988; Eaton, 1996; Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, January 1997; Kintzer, 1996; Robertson and Frier, 1998; Schmidt, 1997; Wangen, 1985; J. Rogers, personal communication, February 12, 1996; and P. Dallet, personal communication, October 10, 1995.

Support for Hypothesis 2: *In a majority of the SACS states, the statewide core curriculum consists mostly of survey courses that are prerequisites for upper level courses.* For example, core science courses would consist of survey or introductory courses that serve as prerequisites for upper level science courses. They would not be developmental courses, or special science courses that could not be applied toward a major in the field. See Bender, 1990; Creech, 1995; Florida Postsecondary Planning Commission, January 1997; Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2004;

University of North Carolina, May 2005; and P. Dallet, personal communication, October 10, 1995.

Support for Hypothesis 3: *In the majority of SACS states, statewide core curricula allow for limited choices; they avoid both a rigid core that all students must take and a cafeteria approach that allows almost unlimited choice.* See Brinkman, 1994; Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2004; Louisiana Board of Regents, 1994; Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions and Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, 1994; and J. Leidig, personal communication, September 30, 1999.

Support for Hypothesis 4: *In the majority of SACS states, graduates of two-year state-supported institutions are automatically granted junior status when they transfer.* See Creech, 1997.

Support for Hypothesis 5: *In the majority of SACS states, there is little difference in the number of hours earned by students who transfer to a four-year institution and then graduate and native students who graduate from the four-year institutions that they entered as freshmen.* See Florida Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges, April 1999.

Support for Hypothesis 6: *Some SACS states use statewide assessment instruments to evaluate the performance of their core curriculum (general education curriculum), but most do not.* See Choice, 1998; Florida Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges, April 1999; Eaton, 1996; State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1996; Florida Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges, April 1999.

Support for Hypothesis 7: *Some SACS states have adopted programs to accept graduates of two-year colleges who have an Associate of Applied Sciences degree and then require them to complete their lower level general education requirements to earn their baccalaureate degree, but most do not.* See Creech, 1995; Higher Education Commission, 1996; Eaton, 1996; State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1996.

Support for Hypothesis 8: *Some SACS states (fewer than half) have rising-junior exams for both native and transferring students.* See Choice, 1998; Florida Department of Education Assessment and Evaluation Services, 1998; Louisiana Board of Regents, April 1994; and Southern Regional Education Board, 2000.

Support for Hypothesis 9: *Most SACS states collect statistics on the academic performance of students who transfer from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions.* See Choice, 1998; Florida Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges, April 1999; Dosumu, 1998; Southern Regional Education Board, 2000; and State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1996.

Support for Hypothesis 10: *Most SACS states have enacted a number of measures to encourage students at two-year institutions to complete their associate's degree before transferring.* See Creech, 1995; Creech, 1997; and Wangen, 1985.

Support for Hypothesis 11: *Most SACS states have undertaken research at the state level to measure the effectiveness of their statewide core curricula.* See Choice, 1998; State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1996; Creech, 1997; Dosumu, 1998; Eaton, 1996; Florida Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges, April 1999; Kintzer, 1996; and State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1996.

Support for Hypothesis 12: *In SACS states, statewide core curricula are subject to change.* See Bender, 1990; Colby and Hardy, 1988; Kintzer, 1996; Robertson and Frier, 1998; Schmidt, 1997; Wangen, 1985; and J. Leidig, personal communication, September 30, 1999.

Support for Hypothesis 13: *In a majority of SACS states, transfer from four-year institutions to four-year institutions and transfer from two-year institutions to two-year institutions (combined) is almost as great (arbitrarily defined) as transfer from two-year institutions to four-year institutions.* (Almost as great is defined as at least 75%.) See Bender, 1990; Brinkman, 1994; Creech, 1995; South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, 1999; and J. D. Creech, personal communication, November 22, 1995.

Support for Hypothesis 14: *Most SACS states are using Websites and/or newsletters and/or magazines to publicize their statewide core curricula and/or transfer.* See Creech, 1997; Florida Department of Education, 1994.

Support for Hypothesis 15: *Most SACS states have concluded that the perceived benefits of a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education curriculum exceed the costs.* See Bender, 1990; Brinkman, 1994; Creech, 1997; Kintzer, 1996; Robertson and Frier, 1998; Schmidt, 1997; State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 1996; Wangen, 1985.

Support for Hypothesis 16: *Some SACS states have adopted transfer blocks to facilitate transfer from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions.* See Choice, 1998; Creech, 1997; Dosumu, 1998; Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2004; South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, 1999; Wangen, 1985.

The purpose of the 16 hypotheses is to answer my 4 research questions. I use responses from my 50-question survey to support or refute the 16 hypotheses. The 4 research questions are connected to the 16 hypotheses and the 50 survey questions in the following manner:

Research Question 1: *What is the status of statewide core curricula in the 11 states that are members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools?* This question is correlated with Hypotheses 1, 6, 7, 11, and 12. It is answered by responses to Survey Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 19, 20, 21, 27, 28, 31, and 38.

Research Question 2: *Why have SACS states adopted statewide core curricula?* This question is correlated with Hypotheses 13, 14, 15, and 16. It is answered by responses to Survey Questions 9, 27, 36, 41, 42, and 46.

Research Question 3: *What is the content of the SACS states' core curricula?* This question is correlated with Hypotheses 2, 3, and 8. It is answered by responses to Survey Questions 1, 10, 11, 12, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 33, 43, and 50.

Research Question 4: *Has the adoption of statewide core curricula reduced articulation difficulties for transferring students?* This question is correlated with Hypotheses 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 15, and 16. It is answered by responses to Survey Questions 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 27, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, and 49.

After answering the 4 research questions, my findings will be linked to my overall purpose, “to find out to what extent SACS states have adopted a statewide core curriculum and to what extent having a statewide core curriculum has reduced articulation difficulties.”

CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA:
THE 50 SURVEY QUESTIONS AND 16 HYPOTHESES

Overview of the Chapter

Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of my 50-question survey regarding the status of statewide core curriculum in the 11 SACS states.

Linkage of Research Questions. I have linked my findings to the 16 hypotheses, which were then linked to the 4 research questions. Finally, the 4 research questions were linked to the overall research question.

Instrument Reliability. I believe that my survey has instrument reliability. I communicated with each respondent several times by phone, mail, and e-mail. In several instances, I read the questionnaire over the phone while recording the answers. This gave me the opportunity to clarify any questions that might have been ambiguous. If some responses were unclear or incomplete, I called back to verify the accuracy of their responses. In addition, I gave the respondents the opportunity to answer Other if none of the blanks seemed to fit. When the respondent answered Other, I asked for amplification and explanation.

Description of the Sample. The sample includes the 11 states that belong to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. For a list of survey recipients, with titles and contact information, see Appendix B.

Following is a summary of responses to my 50-question survey as they relate to my 4 research questions. As shown in the previous chapter, all of the 16 hypotheses are linked directly or indirectly to my review of the literature.

Research Question 1: What is the status of statewide core curricula in the 11 states that are members of the Southern Association of Colleges and School?

My answer to this question is based on evidence that confirms or refutes Hypotheses 1, 6, 7, 11, and 12.

Hypothesis 1: The majority of SACS states have adopted a statewide core curriculum during the last 25 years (answer based on Survey Questions 1, 2, 4, 20, 27, 28, 32, and 38).

Responses to Survey Question 1 indicated that all 11 SACS states have adopted either a statewide core curriculum or some equivalent, such as transfer blocks or a statewide system of articulation agreements.

Responses to Survey Question 2 indicated that 6 SACS states adopted their statewide curriculum or transfer blocks through legislation. The other 5 adopted their statewide curriculum or transfer blocks through action of a governing board.

Nine responses to Survey Question 2 indicated that SACS states adopted their statewide core curricula mostly in the decade of the 1990s. One state acted in the 1960s and one in the 1980s. Eight states acted in 1990-1999. The remaining state (Tennessee) acted in 2000-2004.

Responses to Survey Question 20 indicated that no SACS state has considered adopting a statewide core curriculum and then rejected the idea.

Responses to Survey Question 27 indicated that in Florida, a state with an active junior college system, transferring students who complete their baccalaureate earn on average only 3.1 semester hours more than native students do. (In 2006, that figure was 2.7 credit hours.) At one time, students who transferred with the Associate of Arts degree had earned an average of 80 semester hours. Florida officials say that their goal was to decrease this number to an average of 72 semester hours for transfer students.

Responses to Survey Question 28 indicated that in the SACS states, the range of the statewide cores is from 33 to 60 semester hours. The median is 42, and the mean is 44.727. The standard deviation is 9.26. See Appendix G for further details.

Responses to Survey Question 32 indicated that most transfer disputes can be handled at the institution level by the chief transfer officer, or if that fails, by the respective deans at the sending and receiving institutions. In addition, six states have set up committees at the state level to handle transfer disputes.

Responses to Survey Question 38 indicated that 9 states have passed legislation since 1990 dealing with transfer and articulation. Alabama, North Carolina, and Texas set up their statewide core curricula through legislation.

In conclusion, the responses to my survey indicated that during the past 25 years, 6 SACS states have adopted statewide core curricula, and 3 states (Kentucky, South Carolina, and Virginia) have adopted transfer blocks. As of April 2006, Mississippi had adopted a comprehensive series of 194 articulation agreements that link all state-supported two-year and four-year institutions. Georgia established its core in 1967. This finding tends to confirm Hypothesis 1. See Appendix F for a summary of how and when the SACS states adopted their core curricula or transfer blocks.

All 11 SACS states (100%) gave the reduction of transfer problems as a reason for adopting a statewide core curriculum. Two states (18%) also stated that the core curriculum was a way to improve the quality of general education.

Hypothesis 6: Some SACS states use statewide assessment instruments to evaluate the performance of their core curriculum or general education curriculum, but most do not (answer based on Survey Questions 5, 6, 8, and 33).

According to the responses to Survey Question 5, 2 states use national standardized tests to evaluate students' performance in general education. Florida uses the College- Level Academic Skills Test, and Tennessee uses the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, College BASE, and the ETS Academic Profile. Georgia uses its own Regents exam. The other states leave assessment to the institutions.

Responses to Survey Question 6 indicated that SACS states have not done research to determine whether the imposition of a statewide core curriculum has improved student achievement. Texas noted that it is very difficult to take any aspect of a student's career and attribute it to a core curriculum. General education provides a solid basis for advanced study. I have concluded that most states have assumed that the imposition of a statewide core curriculum has improved student achievement

Responses to Question 38 showed that in the 1990s, the North Carolina legislature passed a bill (House Bill 740) that required the State Board of Community Colleges to report to the legislature on the academic performance of each college's transfer students . and to determine corrective action in the event that a college's transfer students are not performing adequately at four-year colleges.

According to the responses to Survey Question 8, none of the SACS states has developed a standard of what constitutes cultural literacy, although Texas has established the 6 defining characteristics of intellectual competencies, or 6 skills that college students should develop. The first is reading, specifically the ability to read at the college level. The second is writing competency. The third is speaking, defined as the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience. The fourth competency is listening, the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communications at the college level. The fifth is critical thinking, a term that indicates methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Finally, there is computer literacy, the ability to use computer technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information.

In conclusion, the survey responses indicated that only 3 states (Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee) use statewide assessment measures. These findings tend to confirm Hypothesis 6. For a summary of assessment measures, see Appendix H.

Hypothesis 7: Some SACS states have adopted programs to accept graduates of two-year colleges who have an Associate of Applied Sciences degree and then require them to complete their lower level general education requirements to earn their baccalaureate degree, but most do not (answer based on Survey Question 19).

According to the responses to Survey Question 19, the following 8 states accept Associate in Applied Sciences graduates and then require them to complete the general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree: Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

In conclusion, responses to my survey showed that 8 states have adopted programs to accept graduates of two-year colleges who have an Associate of Applied Sciences degree and then require them to complete their lower level general education requirements to earn their baccalaureate degree. My research tends to refute Hypothesis 7. It should be noted, however, that several states report having only a few Associate in Applied Sciences programs. Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas has adopted a baccalaureate degree that is specially designed for students who have completed the Associate in Applied Sciences degree.

Hypothesis 11: Most of the SACS states have undertaken research at the state level to measure the effectiveness of their statewide core curricula (answer based on Survey Questions 5, 6).

According to the responses to Survey Question 5, Florida requires the College Level Academic Skills Test of some transfer students. Students with less than a 2.5 average in a subject must pass the College Level Academic Skills Test in order to transfer from a community college to a state university. The state of Georgia requires that rising juniors pass a examination, and the state of Tennessee uses standardized tests to assess student achievement.

According to the responses to Survey Question 6, no SACS state has undertaken research to see if and how imposition of a statewide core curriculum has improved student achievement. However, most (if not all) SACS states assume that the adoption of a core curriculum has improved student performance.

In conclusion, the responses to the survey indicated that SACS states have assumed that the institution of a statewide core curriculum will improve student

achievement. Some evidence may exist to support this belief, but the SACS states have not conducted research to verify their assumption.

Hypothesis 12: In SACS states, statewide core curricula are subject to change (answer based on Survey Question 23).

According to the responses to Survey Question 23, all 11 SACS states have set up mechanisms for changing their statewide core curricula. See Appendix C for details.

In my survey of the SACS states, all 11 states indicated that their state had already established a mechanism by which their core could be modified. The method for changing the statewide core curriculum differs from state to state. My research tends to confirm Hypothesis 12.

Only 1 state (9%) reported that changes in the core curriculum were left up to the colleges and universities themselves. The other 10 states (91%) reported that changes were made by a state governing agency or committee. For more details, see Appendix C.

Findings Related to Research Question 1

All 11 states that belong to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools have adopted some form of a statewide core curriculum. However, these statewide core curricula vary greatly. Some apply only to two-year state-supported institutions, and some apply to both two-year and four-year institutions. Moreover, some states do not even use the term core curriculum. They refer instead to transfer blocks and transfer modules or articulation agreements. However, I consider transfer blocks, transfer modules, and articulation agreements to be the functional equivalent of core curricula. Except for Georgia, all SACS states have adopted their core curricula or transfer blocks during the past 25 years.

Requirements within the cores vary greatly. Transfer blocks vary from a low of 33 semester hours in South Carolina to 60 semester hours in Alabama. Core requirements vary from 36 semester hours in Florida to 48 semester hours in Texas.

Articulation is an ongoing issue in SACS states, and the issue has been made more critical by increased enrollments among students of all ages. Legislatures in 9 SACS states have enacted laws governing articulation since 1990.

Currently, only 3 SACS states (Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee) have statewide assessment measures. Only 2 states (Georgia and North Carolina) have conducted research to determine whether the institution of a statewide core curriculum has improved student achievement. However, 5 states conduct research at the local level to assess the impact of statewide core curricula on student achievement.

The 11 SACS states vary in their rationale for adopting a statewide core curriculum. The most popular reason stated for having a statewide core curriculum is to facilitate transfer. All 11 SACS states reported that their major motivation in adopting a core curriculum or transfer blocks was to facilitate transfer. A secondary reason was to assure educational quality.

Eight states (Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia) have adopted articulation procedures whereby students who have earned an Associate in Applied Sciences degree can receive the baccalaureate after completing core requirements at a four-year state-supported institution (upside-down articulation). These states recognize that transfer has become more complicated than it was when the receiving institutions needed to consider only students with the traditional Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees.

Ten of the 11 SACS states have instituted mechanisms for modifying statewide core curricula. The method of change varies greatly from state to state.

Conclusions Related to Research Question 1

American higher education is decentralized, both between states and within each of the 50 states. Statewide core curricula in the SACS states show the effects of this decentralization. Although they have moved individually, at different paces and in different ways, however, all 11 SACS states have moved in the direction of statewide core curricula. The differences are to be found in the content of their core curricula, their coverage (whether the cores apply only to two-year institutions or both two-year and four-year institutions), and the methods of administration.

How the SACS states administer their core curricula depends upon how centralized educational authority is in each state. Administration of core curricula varies widely. Florida clearly is the most prominent example of centralization. Although it employs a different hierarchy, North Carolina is another example of centralized administration. Virginia is an example of decentralization, at least when it comes to assessment. Virginia uses multiple assessment tools while Georgia uses one, a rising-junior exam.

In each of the 11 SACS states, state legislatures have played a prominent role in the move toward statewide core curricula or transfer blocks, either by initiating change or by approving change.

The survey responses showed that little assessment has been done on how core curricula affect student learning. Probably more states should consider a move in the direction of statewide assessment of student achievement in the core curriculum, perhaps

by establishing rising-junior exams. The results would be a tool for ensuring educational quality. Currently, only Florida and Georgia have rising-junior exams.

In the future, postsecondary institutions will have to pay additional attention to upside-down articulation, facilitating transfer by students who have completed an Associate in Applied Sciences degree. The health-care industry and technology industries have made the Associate in Applied Sciences an increasingly popular degree.

Findings Related to Research Question 2

Why have SACS states adopted statewide core curricula? My answers are based on evidence that refutes or confirms Hypotheses 13, 15, and 16, from responses to Survey Questions 9, 27, 36, 41, 42, 46, 47, and 48.

Hypothesis 13: In a majority of SACS states, transfer from four-year institutions to four-year institutions and transfer from two-year institutions to two-year institutions (combined) is almost as great as transfer from two-year institutions to four-year institutions. (Almost as great is defined as at least 75%.) My answer is based on Survey Question 42.

In their responses to Survey Question 42, only 6 states said that they collected statistics on all 4 types of transfer. Non-traditional transfers totaled more than 35% of total transfer in all 6 states. For the 6 states that collected transfer data, I found that traditional (two-year school to four-year school) transfers made 89% of the total in Louisiana, 60% in South Carolina, 56% in Tennessee, 58% in Georgia, 47% in Alabama, and 43% in North Carolina.

In conclusion, the data tend to confirm Hypothesis 13. However, only 6 of the SACS states supplied data.

Hypothesis 15: Most SACS states have concluded that the perceived benefits of a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education curriculum exceed the costs (answer based on Survey Questions 46 and 47).

Responses to Survey Question 46 revealed that none of the 11 SACS states had conducted research to measure the benefits of a statewide core curriculum in saving time, money, and other resources. North Carolina and Tennessee stated that they assumed that the benefits of a statewide core curriculum exceeded the costs.

According to the responses to Survey Question 47, all 11 SACS states have transfer blocks or their functional equivalent.

In conclusion, all 11 SACS states have assumed or concluded from informal observation that the benefits of a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education curriculum exceed the costs. My research tends to confirm Hypothesis 15.

Hypothesis 16: Some SACS states have adopted transfer blocks to facilitate transfer from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions (answer based on Survey Questions 9, 27, and 47).

In responses to Survey Question 9, all 11 SACS states cited the desire to facilitate transfer as their major goal in instituting a statewide core curriculum. Two states (Georgia and Louisiana) cited a secondary goal of improving the quality of general education. See Appendix D for a fuller explanation.

In a response to Survey Question 27, Florida noted that at one time the average student transferring with an associate's degree had earned 80 semester hours. The state set a goal of decreasing this number to 72 semester hours. Florida concluded that their system of transfer blocks did indeed facilitate transfer from state-supported two-year

institutions to state-supported four-year institutions. In response to Survey Questions 1, 7, 38, and 49, Florida noted another reason for the decrease in excess hours earned by graduating students: a legislative decision that students who have earned more than 115% of the hours required for their graduation will have to pay a tuition surcharge.

Answers to Survey Question 47 showed that all 11 SACS states have adopted transfer blocks (or the functional equivalent) to facilitate transfer. Six states adopted their statewide core through legislation. North Carolina's core curriculum was adopted through a combination of legislation and action by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina System. Virginia's transfer component was adopted by the State Commission of Higher Education's Joint Committee on Transfer.

In conclusion, my survey results indicated that although details differ, all 11 SACS states have adopted some form of transfer blocks (transfer modules, articulation agreements, core curricula) to facilitate transfer between two-year and four-year state-supported institutions. All 11 SACS states have implemented a statewide core curriculum or a statewide series of transfer blocks or articulation agreements. The method of adoption has varied from state to state.

My research tends to confirm Hypothesis 16. See Appendix F to see details of the date and method of adoption of statewide core curricula/transfer blocks in each state.

In looking at the responses relevant to Research Question 2, it is important to remember that transfer from state-supported two-year institutions to state-supported four-year institutions is merely a part of total transfer. In the 6 SACS states that reported on the level of transfer, traditional transfer (from two-year institutions to four-year institutions) made up from 14% to 61% of all transfers. Statewide core curricula can help

all transferring students in dealing with all articulation problems, not just students making a traditional transfer.

All 11 SACS states have assumed or concluded that adopting statewide core curricula or transfer blocks would yield benefits to their states in improved efficiency and educational quality. Florida Statewide Course Numbering System (1994), Board of Regents University System of Georgia (1999), and Leidig (personal communication, September 30, 1999) state explicitly that their states adopted a general education core to ease articulation difficulties of transferring students. That may be considered one sort of improvement in educational quality.

The manner of adoption of statewide core curricula and transfer blocks has varied from state to state. In 6 states, adoption was by the state legislature. In the other 5 states, adoption was by a combination of actions by the state legislature and their state's Council on Higher Education, Board of Regents, or similar body.

In order to complement and support its common core curriculum, Florida has adopted a common course numbering system. Florida Department of Education Statewide Course Numbering System (April 2006) reports that Florida's common course numbering system makes the evaluation of student transcripts much easier and quicker. The rule of guaranteed transfer of courses deemed equivalent by faculty discipline committees has reduced the time required to complete a degree. Reducing the loss of transfer credit will mean substantial savings for students and taxpayers.

Responses relevant to Research Question 2 show that a desire for equity and efficiency has driven the 11 SACS states to adopt statewide core curricula or transfer

blocks. The content, manner of adoption, and method of administration have differed from state to state. However, the reasons for adoption are basically the same.

SACS states have decided that the growth in parallel transfer (from two-year institutions to other two-year institutions and from four-year institutions to other four-year institutions), reverse transfer (from four-year institutions to two-year institutions), and upside-down articulation (Associate in Applied Sciences graduates completing their general education requirements at four-year institutions) has increased the need for statewide core curricula and transfer blocks. Their efforts have improved articulation for students who transfer from and to state (if not private) colleges and universities.

A statewide core curriculum must take into account these various types of transfer if it is to reduce articulation difficulties.

Findings Related to Research Question 3

What is the content of the SACS states' core curricula? My answer is based on evidence that confirms or refutes Hypotheses 2, 3, and 8.

Hypothesis 2: In a majority of the SACS states, the statewide core curriculum consists mostly of survey courses that are prerequisites for upper level courses (answer based on Survey Questions 10, 11, 12, 22, 24, 25, 29, 30, 43, and 50).

According to the responses to Survey Question 10, all statewide core curricula requirements are lower level general education survey courses.

Responses to Survey Question 11 indicated that, with only a few exceptions, all core courses should count toward a major. The chief exception is that in some states the math requirement for the core curriculum does not count toward a major in math or fulfill

the math requirement for science or engineering majors. Georgia's core includes science core requirements for non-majors, but here Georgia is the exception and not the rule.

According to the responses to Survey Question 12, in all SACS states, the required social science courses are survey courses. All of them are courses that count toward a major, not courses intended as an introduction to the subject for non-majors. This sort of intellectual rigor is one mark of a true core course.

According to the responses to Survey Question 22, in 9 SACS states, foreign languages are included as an option under the statewide core curriculum. In Florida and Kentucky, four-year state universities now require students to have completed 2 years of a foreign language in high school. As a result, students in two-year colleges who have not taken 2 or more years of a foreign language must take a foreign language in a two-year college in order to transfer. Tennessee requires students to complete the equivalent of 1 year of a foreign language to earn an associate's degree and 2 years of a foreign language to earn a bachelor's degree. According to the responses to Survey Question 50, most institutions in the study now require entering freshmen to have completed 2 years of a foreign language in high school.

According to the responses to Survey Question 24, 6 states allow students to take interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary courses to fulfill their core requirements. On the other hand, no state requires students to take them to fulfill their core requirements. In the public colleges and universities of the SACS states, interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary courses are occasionally an option, but they are never a requirement.

Responses to Survey Question 25 showed that in at least 9 SACS states, colleges and departments have the right to exempt students from core requirements based on their

achievement test scores. They may or may not require students to take an upper level course in the same field.

Responses to Survey Question 29 showed that none of the 11 statewide core curricula requires capstone courses. Capstone courses are generally considered more appropriate for upper level courses.

According to the responses to Survey Question 30, Florida is unique among SACS states in having a writing requirement as part of its the core curriculum. Part of the state's *Gordon Rule* requires that students at both two-year and four-year state-supported institutions complete a total of 24,000 words during their first 2 years of enrollment. Each institution designates courses that will fulfill that requirement.

According to the responses to Survey Question 43, some institutions have honors core curricula, but no SACS state has a statewide honors core curriculum.

According to the responses to my survey, most core courses include only survey courses. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission noted that individual departments may require capstone courses, but there is no statewide requirement. Six states (Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Texas) include interdisciplinary courses as an option. However, these interdisciplinary courses are not required and make up only a small percentage of core courses. These findings tend to confirm Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3: In the majority of SACS states, statewide core curricula allow for limited choices within a spectrum of disciplines. On the one hand, they avoid a short, rigid list of courses that all students must take. On the other hand, they avoid a cafeteria approach that would allow students almost unlimited choice (answer based on Survey Questions 1, 11, and 12).

According to the responses to Survey Question 11, most core courses in the 11 SACS states would count toward a major in that subject, with only two exceptions. In many states, the core math course would not count toward a major in mathematics, but only as elective credit. The other exception is that Georgia's core includes science courses for non-science majors.

According to the responses to Survey Question 12, all social science core courses in the 11 SACS states would count toward a major in one of the social sciences. This is one mark of a true core.

According to the responses to Survey Question 50, most of the 33 institutions surveyed now require entering freshmen to have completed 2 years of a foreign language. Most of these institutions require that entering students have successfully completed 4 years of English, 3 years of math, 3 years of natural science, and 3 years of social sciences in high school. These SACS institutions also encourage students to take additional academic electives. This finding leads me to conclude that institutions in the SACS states have entrance requirements that emphasize study of core curriculum courses in high school in order to prepare students for a more rigorous core at the college and university levels.

Three states have a general education curriculum. Four states have a core curriculum. Three states have a set of transfer blocks. One state has a series of specific articulation agreements. None of the states has a cafeteria approach to general education. For the most part, core courses are survey courses that would count toward a major in that field. Most core curricula do not include either interdisciplinary or capstone courses. My research tends to confirm Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 8: Some SACS states (fewer than half) have rising-junior exams for both native and transferring students (answer based on Survey Questions 5 and 33).

The responses to Survey Question 33 indicated that only 2 of the 11 SACS states have rising-junior exams.

Responses to Survey Question 5 indicated that different SACS states employ different assessment measures, including standardized tests like ACT COMPASS, the Academic Profile Test, and the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency. However, these tests are not universally required within the state.

According to my survey results, only Florida and Georgia have rising-junior exams. My research tends to confirm Hypothesis 8.

Survey results relevant to Research Question 3 indicate that statewide core curricula requirements are almost always lower level general education requirements that are prerequisites for upper level courses in the same field. Capstone, upper level, and interdisciplinary requirements are the rare exception.

Only one state (Florida) includes a specific writing requirements in their core curricula. Florida's Gordon Rule requires students at all two-year and four-year state institutions to complete 24,000 words of writing assignments during their first 2 years of enrollment. These essays are evaluated on both content and grammar.

Seven states require entering freshmen who are exempt from core requirements to take upper level courses for which the core course was a prerequisite.

Only 2 states (Florida and Georgia) have rising-junior exams.

Eight states have introduced measures to reduce articulation difficulties for students who have earned an Associate in Applied Sciences degree.

States vary in their administration of core curricula. In Florida, the core curriculum can be changed only by the state legislature. In other states, changes can be made by the Board of Regents (or Council on Higher Education or similar body). In other states, changes require the cooperation of two or more institutions or governing bodies.

Statewide social science core requirements vary greatly in the SACS states. At one extreme is Mississippi, whose statewide core does not require social science courses, although state-supported universities in Mississippi in their university core curricula do require additional core courses, which may include the social sciences. At the other extreme is Texas, which has a statewide requirement of 15-18 semester hours in the social sciences.

The results of my survey showed that first of all that only 1 state includes specific writing requirements in its core curriculum (Florida). Florida requires students at both two-year and four-year state-supported institutions to complete writing assignments totaling 24,000 words (about 100 typed pages) during their first 2 years of enrollment.

As employers are placing greater emphasis on written skills, I think that other states may want to move in the direction of a uniform writing requirement for all students. Once again, Florida's centralized administration of its core curriculum has made it possible to establish and administer a statewide writing requirement.

Second, as more and more students earn credit for core courses by passing advanced placement tests, states and institutions will be forced to decide whether those students will be entirely exempt from core requirements in that area. I would suggest that students be given credit but also be required to take a course for which the exempted course was a prerequisite. I think that imposing this requirement would help to ensure

student mastery in that particular field without forcing them to repeat work they have already done. It would also answer the objections of those who feel that taking a test is no substitute for taking a course.

Third, I favor the establishment of honors core curricula to provide motivated students an opportunity to take courses that are academically challenging. I think that creation of a honors core curriculum would be particularly important in states in which most undergraduate candidates for the baccalaureate begin in two-year state institutions.

Fourth, I suggest that states consider the possibility of establishing a state standard of cultural literacy. Presently, no SACS state has a statewide standard of cultural literacy, although Texas has established a statewide standard for defining characteristics of basic intellectual competencies.

Fifth, although all of the SACS states have moved in the direction of a statewide core curriculum, they differ in many ways, starting with the term used for the core (transfer blocks, series of articulation agreements, etc.). Some states' core curricula cover all public institutions, while others cover only two-year institutions. The states vary in means of adoption, the content of the core, administration of the core, and the degree of choice in courses. Assessment of the results in these different states should provide clues about which policies function most effectively.

Findings Related to Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked this: Has the adoption of statewide core curricula reduced articulation difficulties for transferring students in the 11 SACS states?

My answer is based on evidence that confirms or refutes Hypotheses 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 15, and 16. Evidence comes from responses to Survey Questions 15, 16, 34, and 49.

Hypothesis 4: In the majority of SACS states, graduates of two-year state-supported institutions are automatically granted junior status when they transfer (answer based on Survey Question 34).

Responses to Survey Question 34 showed that 7 SACS states automatically grant junior status to graduates of two-year state-supported institutions when they transfer to state-supported four-year institutions. They are Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Conclusion: According to the responses to my survey, 7 states automatically grant junior status to graduates of two-year state-supported institutions when they transfer to state-supported four-year institutions. My research tends to confirm Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5: In the majority of SACS states, there is little difference in the number of hours earned by students who transfer to a four-year institution and then graduate and the number of hours earned by native students, who graduate from the four-year institutions that they entered as freshmen (answer based on Survey Question 49).

Responses to Survey Question 49 indicated that in the academic year 2004-2005, native university students who completed their baccalaureate degrees in Florida earned an average of 134.3 semester hours, while transfer students who first earned an associate's and then a bachelor's degree took an average of 137.0 hours. This difference is only 2.7 semester hours. Florida sees this small difference is evidence that transfer in Florida is efficient.

According to the responses to my survey, only 1 state (Florida) has conducted research to compare the number of hours that transferring students earned in completing their baccalaureate degree compared to native students. Florida has found that the

average difference is less than a single course. Since state law fixes the maximum requirement for graduation at 120 credit hours, 3.2 hours (the average before 1999) or 2.7 hours (in 2004-2005) represents a small fraction of the total course work. I think this finding is a strong indication that Florida's state-mandated core curriculum has reduced articulation problems. However, since other states did not compute how many credit hours were lost in transfer in their states, there is not enough evidence to confirm Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 9: Most SACS states collect statistics on the academic performance of students who transfer from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions (answer based on Survey Question 36).

Responses to Survey Question 36 indicated that 9 of the 11 SACS states collect statistics on the academic performance of transferring students.

Nine of the 11 SACS states have collected statistics on the academic performance of transferring students. Only Alabama and Louisiana have not. The research tends to confirm Hypothesis 9.

Hypothesis 10: Most SACS states have enacted a number of measures to encourage students at two-year institutions to complete their associate's degree before transferring (answer based on Survey Questions 13, 14, 17, 34, 35, 38, and 48).

According to the responses to Survey Question 13, North Carolina does not require state universities to accept the general education component for transferring students who have not completed the associate's degree. Students are strongly encouraged to graduate before transferring. The receiving institution is not required to grant credit for transferring students who have not completed the associate's degree.

Students who complete the associate's degree are exempt from having to fulfill the State's Minimum Requirements and from having to take or retake the SAT.

According to the responses to Survey Question 14, no SACS state has a statewide policy that actually requires students to complete the associate's degree before transferring to a state-supported four-year institution. In Florida, however, four-year institutions are not required to accept the general education component of students who transfer before earning an associate's degree. They are required to accept the general education component of students transferring with an associate's degree.

According to the responses to Survey Question 17, four-year state-supported institutions in Florida and Georgia give preference for admission to transferring students who have completed the associate's degree.

Survey Question 34 asked, "Are graduates of two-year state-supported institutions exempted from all lower level division general education requirements after transferring?" The responses indicated that most SACS states do exempt graduates from additional lower level requirements. Eight states (72%) do exempt graduates. Three states (27%) do not.

Survey Question 35 asked whether students in two-year institutions are required to complete their general education requirements in order for course credits to transfer automatically. The results were decidedly in the negative. Ten states (91%) said no; only 1 state (9%) said yes. Only in Florida are all students required to complete all lower level general education requirements before being granted junior status.

According to the responses to Survey Question 48, in only 1 state (North Carolina) are students required to complete the associate's degree for the transfer block to

transfer automatically. In 9 other states, if a student completes a transfer block, then it transfers completely. Mississippi is a different case. In Mississippi, students are required to complete the associate's degree in order to satisfy their articulation agreement. In Kentucky, students have either to complete the transfer block or earn an associate's degree for the transfer block to transfer automatically.

My research indicated that only 5 SACS states have enacted measures that directly or indirectly encourage students at two-year institutions to complete the associate's degree before transferring. The research tends to refute Hypothesis 10.

Hypothesis 14: Most SACS states are using Websites and/or newsletters and/or magazines to publicize their statewide core curricula and/or transfer (answer based on Survey Questions 44 and 45).

According to the responses to Survey Question 44, all 11 SACS states have Websites to promote or explain their statewide core curricula and transfer regulations.

According to the responses to Survey Question 45, 6 SACS states have publications promoting transfer.

All 11 SACS states use Websites to promote their core curriculum or transfer blocks. Six states have publications to promote transfer. This finding tends to confirm Hypothesis 14.

Hypothesis 15: Most SACS states have concluded that the perceived benefits of a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education curriculum exceed the costs (answer based on Survey Questions 9, 27, and 46).

According to the responses to Survey Question 9, all 11 SACS states considered adopting a statewide core curriculum or its functional equivalent a means of reducing

articulation difficulties. They considered a statewide core curriculum more effective than localized core curricula.

Responding to Survey Question 27, Florida said that its adoption of a statewide core curriculum had helped to reduce the number of hours that transferring students had earned from 80 semester hours to 72 semester hours.

Responding to Survey Question 46, North Carolina and Tennessee stated that it was one of their assumptions that the benefits of having a statewide core curriculum exceeded the cost.

All 11 SACS states have either assumed or concluded through informal observation that the benefits of a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education curriculum (transfer blocks) exceed the costs. This finding tends to confirm Hypothesis 15.

Hypothesis 16: Some SACS states have adopted transfer blocks to facilitate transfer from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions (answer based on Survey Questions 47 and 48).

According to the responses to Survey Question 47, all 11 SACS states have adopted either transfer blocks or a functional equivalent.

Responding to Survey Question 48, Florida has stipulated that if transferring students have not completed the transfer block (general education requirements) of their community college, then they are bound by the core of the institution to which they are transferring. This regulation is an additional incentive for students to complete their general education requirements before transferring.

According to my survey results, all 11 SACS states have adopted transfer blocks (or their functional equivalent) to facilitate transfer between two-year and four-year state-supported institutions. These findings tend to confirm Hypothesis 16.

Results from responses relevant to Research Question 4 indicate that in 9 of the 11 SACS states, state legislatures have approved legislation regulating articulation since 1990. Three states (Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina) have provided state-funded services for transferring students. Five states (Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Virginia) have adopted expectations for transfer activity.

Only a single state (Florida) requires transferring students to complete their general education requirements before transferring to a four-year state institution in order for these credits to transfer automatically. Only 2 states require students to earn the associate's degree before courses transfer automatically.

None of the SACS states requires transferring students to earn their associate's degrees before transferring to a state-supported four-year institution. However, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, and Virginia give preference to transferring students who have completed their associate's degrees.

Seven states (Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia) have a common course numbering system, in some cases only for two-year state institutions and in others for all state-supported institutions. Louisiana's system is on a "where possible" basis.

Eight SACS states use transfer blocks.

All 11 SACS states use a Website to promote their core curricula. Seven states publish a newspaper or magazine to promote transfer.

No state has conducted research to measure the benefits and costs of its statewide core curriculum. However, Florida's Time to Degree legislation, coupled with a statewide core curriculum, has changed graduation requirements for the associate's degree to 60 semester hours. Florida's goal is for students to graduate from community colleges with under 72 semester hours. Students used to graduate from community colleges with more than 80 semester hours. Moreover, Florida reported that transferring students who earn a baccalaureate degree earn an average of only 3.2 semester hours more than non-transfer students. This finding is evidence that Florida's core has reduced articulation difficulties for transferring students.

State Council on Higher Education in Virginia (June 2003) has concluded that even the adoption of its transfer module has not eliminated the problem of community college students earning excess hours. The median number of hours earned by students in the Virginia Community College System exceeds the number required for the associate degree by 4 to 11 credits.

The findings recapitulated above lead to several conclusions. First, it appears that students transfer to four-year schools more successfully when they have already earned the associate's degree from a four-year institution. There are a number of steps that SACS states could take to encourage students to finish the associate's degree before transferring. For example, a state could mandate the automatic transferability of core courses and automatic admission to a state university if and only if a student had completed the associate's degree. In addition, a state could offer scholarships to transferring students only if they had completed the associate's degree.

Currently, all SACS states provide assistance to transferring students on the institutional level. Only Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina provide state-funded assistance directed specifically to transferring students. Other states might consider implementing similar statewide assistance. One way to assist transferring students would be to provide a special orientation session for transferring students.

State legislatures have been active in promoting transfer and statewide core curricula. Most states are using technology (Websites and toll-free phone numbers) and producing publications to promote core curricula and transfer.

The data showed that SACS states assume that core curricula and transfer blocks have improved efficiency and equity. This assumption is based on experience with transfer students and is probably valid, but it has not been adequately examined through studies that would quantify results.

It seems clear that Florida has come closer to seamless transfer than any other SACS state. Florida has had great success in reducing the time it takes undergraduates to complete a baccalaureate degree through its core curriculum and its state-mandated Time to Degree regulations.

Overall Conclusion

My overall conclusion is that the adoption of statewide core curricula by SACS states has indeed reduced articulation difficulties. As I have researched the issue of statewide core curricula or transfer blocks, I have been impressed by both the *variety* and the *similarity* of approaches in the SACS states. Although each state has its own approach and its own terminology, each is moving in the general direction of seamless transfer.

This variety and diversity are typical of American education, which is not a national system but a series of state systems working with regional systems (accrediting agencies). Americans appreciate efficiency, however, and as enrollment continues to grow in higher education, I predict that students, legislators, and taxpayers will see seamless transfer as a right to which they are entitled.

I also predict that the demands of employers and taxpayers for quality will impact the move to statewide core curricula. Statewide core curricula provide one way to ensure educational quality and uniformity.

The purpose of the 16 hypotheses and the 50 survey questions is to answer my 4 research questions, which I used to meet my overall purpose. As stated above, the purpose of this study is to determine to what extent each of the SACS states has adopted a statewide core curriculum and to what extent having a statewide core curriculum has reduced articulation difficulties. In order to determine that, I have linked my findings to my 4 research questions.

Correlation of my Findings with the 4 Research Questions

My research has led me to 22 separate conclusions about the SACS states' implementation of core curricula. I have linked the following 22 conclusions to my 4 research questions.

I have drawn 11 conclusions from research relevant to Research Question 1: What is the status of statewide core curricula in the 11 states that are members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)? My research showed that SACS states have taken significant steps.

Conclusion 1. The SACS states have eased obstacles to transfer, moving in the direction of seamless transfer between state-supported institutions. All 11 SACS states cited reduction of articulation difficulties as their major purpose in instituting a statewide core curriculum or its functional equivalent. All the data suggest that the institution of a statewide core curriculum has been successful in reducing articulation difficulties.

Conclusion 2. The SACS states have developed a core of general education courses that meet the academic degree requirements of both two-year and four-year institutions. SACS states have introduced statewide core curricula that for the most part consist of introductory survey courses that would count toward a major in that field. SACS states have not adopted either a rigid core or a cafeteria approach.

Conclusion 3. The SACS states have recently improved academic planning and advising for students at two-year state-supported institutions. One example of improved academic advising is the appointment of chief transfer officers at all state-supported institutions. Students in these states can resolve their transfer problems through a single person or office on campus.

Conclusion 4. The SACS states have established procedures to publicize their statewide core curricula (or transfer blocks or statewide articulation agreements) through articulation guides and magazines that encourage transfer.

Conclusion 5. All 11 SACS states have established Websites to promote their core curricula. Websites can be used to notify students quickly about any changes in a state's core curriculum.

Conclusion 6. The SACS states have moved to facilitate transfer between state-supported two-year institutions and independent four-year institutions (South Carolina) and even out-of-state four-year institutions (South Carolina and Tennessee). The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) also cooperates with independent institutions on a voluntary basis.

Conclusion 7. The SACS states have appointed chief transfer officers at most state-supported two-year and four-year institutions. Six states have also set up statewide transfer committees to assist the chief transfer officers.

Conclusion 8. The SACS states have adopted technology to provide information about transfer. For example, by placing a phone call, a student can learn his or her current grade point average. Computers are also used to make statistical analyses, such as tracking the grade point average of transfer students or determining the average number of course hours required for graduation after transfer.

Conclusion 9. The SACS states have recognized that transfer is an issue of social justice, especially for low-income and minority students. As the numbers of African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, female, and older students have increased, especially at two-year institutions, articulation issues have become critical. The move toward a seamless transfer system would benefit these groups in particular.

Conclusion 10. The SACS states have recognized that transfer involves not just vertical transfer, but also horizontal transfer, reverse transfer, and upside-down articulation. Nontraditional transfer has become common. The authorities responsible for the statewide core curricula in the 11 SACS states have increasingly recognized the

importance of nontraditional transfer. They have devised ways to deal with it and to plan for it.

Conclusion 11. The SACS states have set up procedures for modifying their statewide core curricula. Even the best-designed core curriculum is subject to change over time. For example, changes in high school curricula that require students in college preparatory programs to take more courses in foreign languages, computer technology, or other courses will affect statewide core curricula. Some states may want to offer core curricula via the Internet.

Conclusions listed above have made it clear that the evidence suggests that core curricula help to ease transfer. Responses relevant to Research Question 2 showed that the SACS states have additional reasons for adopting core curricula. I have listed these reasons in Conclusions 12 and 13.

Conclusion 12. The SACS states have recognized that well-thought-out transfer policies can help them to document educational attainment. Using a core curriculum means that courses at different institutions are similar enough that the achievements of their students can be compared. Some states have used standardized tests like the College Level Academic Skills Test and rising-junior exams to determine success. However, comparison among states, or even within states, is difficult. Although the courses may be similar enough to compare, few states use uniform assessment measures to determine how much students have learned while taking them at different institutions. Even when individual colleges and universities do employ ways of measuring accomplishment, comparison is difficult when different institutions use different assessment measures.

Conclusion 13. The SACS states have recognized that establishing statewide core curricula will reduce the time it takes students to earn a baccalaureate, saving both students and taxpayers money. Florida Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges. (1999, April) said that a well-established statewide core curriculum has meant that graduating transfer students earn only 3.2 semester hours more than graduating native students. For the academic year 2004-2005, the difference was only 2.7 hours (Florida Department of Education Statewide Course Numbering System, April 2006). Statistics like these support Florida's contention that transfer in their state is efficient.

Of course, simply allowing students to transfer all the hours that they have earned is not a solution to all the inequities that they may experience. Moreover, reducing articulation difficulties is only one goal that the SACS states have attempted to reach through establishing core curricula. Their other goal is to ensure the quality of education. Core curricula use survey courses to introduce students to a wide variety of academic disciplines. They encourage a rational approach to education rather than a random approach, a cafeteria approach, or selection based on trivial factors such as the hours at which the course is offered. By encouraging students to learn something of several disciplines, the core curricula improve the quality of their education. At their best, they not help students get their degrees more efficiently but open their minds to learning.

Research Question 3 asked, What is the content of the SACS states' core curricula? My research indicated that the SACS states have, to the best of their ability, used their core curricula for a dual purpose: to establish requirements for a multidisciplinary undergraduate education and to make sure that those requirements will

encourage the intellectual growth of students in their states' institutions of higher learning.

Conclusion 14. The SACS states have instituted a variety of measures to ensure academic quality. Examples include Florida's 24,000-word writing requirement, the Georgia Regents' Rising Junior Exam, Florida's College Level Academic Skills Test exam for rising juniors, and Virginia's variety of assessment measures. Given the multitude of different approaches, however, it is unfortunate that there is no uniform way of assessing student achievement in general education. Only Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee have a uniform statewide test to measure student achievement, enabling comparison of student accomplishments in general education.

Conclusion 15. The SACS states have instituted statewide core curricula that consist for the most part of lower level survey courses that count for credit toward a major if the student transfers.

Research Question 4 asked: Has the adoption of these statewide core curricula reduced articulation difficulties for transferring students? The results of my research relevant to this question indicated that SACS states have adopted several tactics to reduce articulation difficulties. I list them in Conclusions 16-22.

Conclusion 16. At least one of the SACS states, Texas, has tied state funding for four-year institutions to their compliance to transfer standards. Tying state funding for four-year institutions to their compliance to transfer standards provides a financial incentive for institutions to implement their state's core curriculum

Conclusion 17. Seven SACS states have granted automatic junior status to transferring students who have completed the associate's degree. The granting of junior

status to students who have an Associate's degree provides a wide range of benefits to the students. Transfer students will have the same registration priority as native students, thereby helping them to get the classes they need to graduate. Some non-academic benefits include having the same priority as native students for parking, housing, and tickets to athletic events. Granting automatic junior status to transfer students who have earned their associate's degrees is another step toward seamless transfer.

Conclusion 18. The SACS states have adopted a variety of measures to encourage students to complete their general education requirements before transferring. Dosumu (1998) showed that students who transferred after completing their general education requirements were more likely to persist until they obtained their baccalaureate. As a result of my research, I agree that encouraging students to complete their general education requirements or the associate's degree before transfer is likely to increase the chances of their success.

Conclusion 19. Some of the SACS states have reduced the amount of time and academic hours required to earn the baccalaureate. Florida's Time to Degree legislation and core curriculum set graduation requirements for the associate's degree at 60 semester hours. At one time, community college students averaged more than 80 semester hours before graduating. Florida has reduced that number to under 72 semester hours. Florida's reforms have also reduced the number of hours that it takes transferring students to earn the bachelor's degrees. In 2004-2004, graduating transfer students in Florida earned an average of only 2.7 more semester hours than graduating native students (Florida Department of Education Statewide Course Numbering System, April 2006).

Conclusion 20. The SACS states have increased their collection of data on transfer. Educators need data on transfer to determine whether their general education curriculum is succeeding or failing. Necessary data include grade point averages of transfer and native students, number of course hours lost in transfer, average number of hours needed by transferring and native students to earn a baccalaureate degree, and performance on rising-junior exams and standardized tests.

Conclusion 21. The SACS states have improved counseling and advising in order to promote transfer. Improved counseling and advising is important, because core curricula are not self-enforcing. Students need to know the rules of the game if they are to transfer successfully.

Conclusion 22. The SACS states have assumed that the institution of statewide core curricula has resulted in savings to both students and taxpayers. Although there is a lack of research in this area, I think the assumption that core curricula have fiscal benefits is well founded, based on research from Florida and Texas, which showed that adoption of core curricula has led to a reduction in the number of semester hours lost by transferring students. The question is a complicated one, however, since postsecondary institutions also have had to spend faculty and administrative hours in establishing general education requirements. Most or all colleges and universities have hired transfer officers and established Websites and other outreach programs. The economic effect of core curricula is a topic that deserves further study.

In sum, the 22 conclusions based on my research indicate that the introduction of core curricula or transfer blocks has reduced articulation difficulties. On the statewide level, it appears also to have improved the quality of general education.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall purpose of this study was to find out to what extent the 11 SACS states have adopted a statewide core curriculum and to what extent having a statewide core curriculum has reduced articulation difficulties.

Correlation of the Literature and My Research Findings

I have concluded that all 11 SACS states have adopted some form of statewide core curriculum. My conclusion is shared by the Southern Regional Education Board, which works with 15 Southern states. All 11 SACS states are included in the area served by SREB. An article published by SREB (2000) noted that most Southern states have recognized the necessity of reviewing state policies and transfer procedures. During the 1990s, most Southern states developed a core of freshman- and sophomore-level courses intended to meet academic degree requirements at any public two-year or four-year college. Most have put in place academic planning and counseling for transferring students. Most Southern states have established procedures to make transfers easier for students and institutions.

Creech (1997) encouraged states to develop common core requirements to facilitate transfer. Creech made specific recommendations as to how states can improve transfer. First, the states should establish general education requirements for both two-year institutions and four-year institutions in such a way that courses taken at any public institution are accepted by all public colleges and universities within the state. Second,

the states should require that four-year institutions award third-year (junior) status to transferring students who have earned the associate's degree. Third, computer technology should be used to inform students about the statewide core curriculum. Fourth, the states should establish statewide transfer committees to evaluate the effectiveness of current transfer policies and to recommend how the transfer process can be improved. Finally, colleges and universities should use transfer coordinators to advise all transferring students. Although each is moving at its own pace and in its own way, my research showed that the 11 SACS states are implementing Creech's suggestions.

My research showed that all 11 SACS states have established general education requirements for both two-year and four-year institutions that are accepted by all public colleges and universities in that state. Seven SACS states automatically grant junior status to all transferring students who have earned an associate's degree. In the other 4 states, that decision is up to the institution. All SACS states use Websites to advise students on their statewide core curricula. Six SACS states have established statewide transfer committees to evaluate the effectiveness of current transfer process and to recommend how the transfer process can be improved. All the SACS states have designated chief transfer officers at all two-year and four-year institutions to advise students transferring to both two-year and four-year state-supported institutions.

Townsend (1999) emphasized that because there are multiple transfer patterns, articulation must include more than just traditional or vertical transfer. Townsend said that only 52% of transferring students take the traditional route, transferring from two-year institutions to four-year institutions. Therefore, a well-designed core curriculum will deal with horizontal transfer, reverse transfer, and upside-down articulation. In my

research, I have found that statewide core curricula in SACS states are designed to assist both traditional transfer and non-traditional transfer. As a result of my research, I have concluded that core curricula and transfer blocks in SACS states have reduced transfer problems not only for traditional transfer students but for non-traditional transfer students as well.

Dosumu (1998) examined 15,475 Colorado community college students who had completed the Colorado Community College General Education Core Transfer Program. Dosumu's research showed that students who completed the Colorado core were more likely to persist to complete the baccalaureate degree. On average, core completers earned higher GPAs than transferring students who had not completed the core. Moreover, they earned the baccalaureate degree in less time than non-completers. Overall, completion of the core curriculum was positively associated with student success at both the community college and the four-year institution.

My research indicated that some, but not all, SACS states have taken steps to encourage students to complete their general education requirements or to graduate with an associate's degree before transferring to a four-year institution. Florida, Louisiana, and North Carolina require transferring students to complete the four-year institution's core curriculum unless they have completed the core curriculum at their state-supported two-year institution. This regulation encourages students to complete the core curriculum before transferring. Mississippi requires that a student either complete the general education core or graduate with an associate's degree before transferring to a state university if the student had not met requirements for an entering freshman. In Florida and Georgia, community college graduates are given preference in admission to state

universities compared to other transferring students. These procedural regulations encourage students to complete their general education requirements or to graduate with an associate's degree before transferring, since doing so saves them time, money, and aggravation.

I approve of state actions that encourage students to complete either their general education component or an associate's degree before transferring. This policy is supported by Dosumu's (1998) conclusions that transferring students who have completed their general education requirements earn higher grade point averages and are more likely to persist to earn a baccalaureate degree.

Choice (1998) stressed the need for better assessment. Speaking of Illinois community colleges, which do have a core curriculum, Choice noted that unfortunately many of the identified components of general education have been left out of the assessment process. Some of the assessment efforts in place appeared to be inadequate as valid and reliable methods of assessing the general education.

Based on Choice's observations and my survey results, I believe that the biggest potential area for improvement in core curricula in SACS states is the adoption of statewide assessment measures to measure student mastery of general education. Uniform assessment measures like Florida's College Level Academic Skills Test allow a state to measure student achievement both within institutions and compared to a national norm. Georgia's Rising Junior Exam allows the state to compare the performance of students by institutions but does not allow comparison to a national norm.

Bender (1990) noted that Florida is considered by many authorities to have the most comprehensive transfer and articulation policies of any state. Florida has a single,

unified system, even though its 9 state universities are governed by a state board of regents and its 28 community colleges are governed by local boards. The Florida legislature has made statutory provisions for various transfer and articulation matters, resulting in statewide implementation. Bender observed that Florida is an example of a top-to-bottom authority power. Bender's observations are a reminder that governance varies greatly from one SACS state to another SACS state.

Bender's observations have helped me to realize that even when all SACS states share the same goals when it comes to statewide core curricula/transfer blocks, the methods of adoption of statewide core curricula, nomenclature, and administration vary from state to state. While Florida is a model for any state that wishes to establish a seamless transfer system, some states consider that change should originate not in the legislature but in the educational system.

In Florida, every community college sets its own core curriculum, but every university in Florida has to accept that core for every transferring student who has completed it. In Mississippi, by contrast, there are 194 separate articulation agreements (as of April 2006) that universities are bound to accept. Students who change their majors may have to take additional courses to qualify under the new articulation agreement in Mississippi. The Florida system is simpler but less elastic.

The content and coverage of their core curricula also vary, but all 11 SACS states have moved in the same general direction regarding core curricula. The movement toward a statewide core curriculum is almost 40 years old, beginning with Georgia's adoption of a statewide core in 1967. Every SACS state has adopted a core or its functional equivalent (transfer blocks, transfer modules, articulation agreements).

The motivation for adopting statewide cores was simple. States wanted to reduce articulation difficulties. The growth of community college enrollment and the changing patterns of transfer necessitated some movement toward statewide core curricula.

Striplin (1999) said that one way to increase the rate of transfer for first generation community college students would be to clarify transfer agreements, so as to ease transfer from two-year colleges to four-year colleges. Striplin also called for improved counseling and advising. SACS states have done that. The institution of core curricula, the designation of chief transfer officers at all state-supported two-year and four-year institutions, and the use of Websites and publications to promote transfer are evidence that the SACS states are reducing articulation difficulties. Based on my research, I have concluded that SACS states have adopted most of Striplin's recommendations.

My research indicated that SACS states have made 3 important steps recommended by Creech (1997). They have developed effective transfer policies, they have developed flexible core programs, and they have developed means of assessing student performance. Creech said that these steps will make the transfer process more predictable, increase the number and percentage of students who complete two-year and four-year degrees, and provide a base for assessing student learning and performance.

First, SACS states have developed logical and consistent transfer policies, in which students who receive good advice find that transfer difficulties are minimized. The best example of the benefits of logical and consistent transfer policies is Florida, where transferring students who go on to earn a baccalaureate earn less than 3 semester hours more than native students who earn a baccalaureate. Texas is another example. According

to the reply to Survey Question 7, Texas has found that most courses transfer successfully for students transferring from two-year and four-year state-supported institutions to other state-supported institutions.

Texas colleges and universities can refuse credits from another institution for both controversial reasons and non-controversial reasons. Non-controversial reasons for refusing to accept a student's course credits include low grades (less than a C), repeated courses, developmental courses, technical or occupational courses, exceeding the maximum of transfer hours allowed, a change in major concentration, and the lack of an equivalent course. Students who plan their transfers in advance can avoid most of these problems.

Students in Texas in 2001 transferring from two-year state-supported institutions to state universities lost only 6.12% of their credit hours due to controversial reasons. Thus, the average community college student transferring with 60 semester credit hours will lose only about 4 semester hours for unexpected reasons. By contrast, university students who transfer lose less than 1% of their semester credit hours for controversial reasons. The typical university student transferring 60 semester hours would lose on average less than half of a credit hour for controversial reasons. Core curricula and articulation agreements reduce the numbers of refused course credits.

The second accomplishment of the SACS states is the development of flexible core programs. In SACS states, most statewide core curricula (or transfer blocks or articulation agreements) allow for a degree of flexibility in the student's choice of courses, while at the same time avoiding a cafeteria approach, which allows indiscriminate choice from a wide variety of courses.

The third significant accomplishment of the SACS states is the development of means of assessing student performance. These means vary greatly. Florida and Georgia use rising-junior exams. Florida and Tennessee use standardized tests. North Carolina tracks performance after transfer. Florida has instituted a statewide writing requirement, the results of which can be assessed. Virginia employs a wide range of assessment tools.

One problem with evaluating the success of statewide core curricula in improving general education is that most of the SACS states have simply assumed that their adoption of core curricula has improved articulation. These states have not conducted research to prove that the adoption of core curricula has improved articulation. Most educators, administrators, and students view their state's core curricula as being a positive step toward improving articulation. Their approval may be based on logic or on anecdotal experience. Proof would be difficult, as it is unsound practice to attribute all improvement to a single factor like adoption of a statewide core curriculum.

Clearly, however, SACS states do need to assess the outcomes of their general education curricula (or core curricula or transfer blocks). I agree with SREB's (2000) conclusions that Southern states are not assessing the outcomes of their general education. SREB charges that most Southern states have not established standards of adequate student performance on their higher education indicators. Too few states report what entering college students or rising juniors know and can do based on a common assessment used by all institutions. Although individual colleges and universities periodically review courses and programs, most states have not made a systematic effort to judge how much students know and can do after they have completed the core curriculum as freshmen and sophomores.

Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (January 1997) said that the Florida legislature took as its goals removing barriers to transfer and promoting strong articulation between community colleges and state universities. In Florida, state policies address acceptance of course work and admission of students with the associate's degree. To assure the preservation of educational quality, they used educational benchmarks and assessment instruments.

Creech (1995) reported that Florida took comprehensive action to facilitate the speedy awarding of degrees after a 1995 legislative mandate that the amount of time needed to complete a bachelor's degree be shortened. First, Florida ordered that general education requirements were not to exceed 36 semester hours. It limited associate's degree requirements to 60 semester hours and baccalaureate requirements to 120 semester hours (with certain exceptions). It then developed common program prerequisites for each baccalaureate program. As part of its strategy, it designated 1,700 courses as being lower division or upper division courses. Finally, it implemented planning for a single computer-assisted advising and degree audit system. By implementing these measures, Florida has gone a long way towards accomplishing its overall goal of reducing articulation difficulties for transferring students.

Bender (1990) noted that a common course numbering system facilitates transfer. He added that educators must be careful when assigning course numbers, so that community colleges offer only lower division courses. I agree with Bender's conclusions, and I think that SACS states should consider the possibility of adopting a common course numbering system.

According to Florida Department of Education Statewide Course Numbering System (April 2006), Florida's common course numbering system makes the evaluation of student transcripts much easier and quicker. In addition, the rule of guaranteed transfer of courses deemed equivalent has reduced the time required to complete a degree. Common course numbering seems to produce substantial savings for students and taxpayers.

My research supports the belief that implementation of a statewide core curriculum can reduce the amount of time it takes to complete a baccalaureate degree. I agree with both Bender (1990) and Florida Department of Education Statewide Course Numbering System (2006) in their conclusions that the institution of Florida's core curriculum—and other measures, such as Florida's common course numbering system—have reduced the amount of time that it takes students to earn a baccalaureate, thereby producing substantial savings for both students and taxpayers.

Palinchak (1988) praises the Florida system of articulation, saying that it “goes far beyond courses for transfer, dealing as it does with all aspects of education, including facilities, data gathering, resources, and system wide philosophy of higher education.” Florida employs the 2+2 concept of higher education, in which community colleges concentrate on general education. Most students attend community colleges for the first half of their postsecondary education. The state's public universities concentrate on upperclassmen, graduate students, and research.

I agree with Palinchak's comments about Florida's system of articulation. I think that states need to have a coherent philosophy of the purpose of their core curricula if

they are to succeed in reducing articulation barriers and ensuring educational quality.

Florida is a prime example of a state whose core curriculum has a clear purpose.

Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (January 1997) said that there were 4 key elements to State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024, which established the philosophy of Florida's statewide core curriculum. First, each university president and each community college board of trustees was to plan and adopt policies and procedures to improve articulation so that students can proceed toward their educational goals as rapidly as their circumstances permit. Second, each university and community college was to establish a general education curriculum that did not exceed 36 semester hours for students working on a baccalaureate degree. Third, each university and community college was to recognize the integrity of the general education curriculum of other institutions. Fourth, the Associate of Arts degree was to be considered the basic transfer degree and would be the primary basis for admission of transfer students from community colleges to upper division study in the state university. These elements summarize the strengths of Florida's core curriculum.

P. Dallet, Deputy Executive Director of Florida's Council for Education Policy Research and Improvement, said that the Council has, along with the governor and legislature of Florida, imposed upon the state's system of higher education a philosophical view of education as focused on achieving goals and a systems approach in which each component of the educational system is connected to and dependent upon the others (personal communication, October 10, 1995). This systems approach has made Florida's state institutions function more efficiently.

Palinchak (1988) praised Florida's system for being responsive to student needs. Florida does not force transferring students to negotiate acceptance for themselves, course by course. Instead, Florida has crafted an articulation system to respond to students' needs. Moreover, students who graduate from a community college in Florida are guaranteed admission to a state university—though not necessarily the university or program or major of their choice. Palinchak concluded that students are the clear winners in Florida's broadly applied articulation concepts. Without doubt, a statewide articulation system is easier for students than negotiating transfer on a case by case basis.

The evidence I have seen suggests that the adoption of statewide core curricula (or transfer blocks and statewide articulation agreements) has reduced articulation difficulties for all forms of transfer, not just traditional transfer, but also horizontal transfer, reverse transfer, and upside-down articulation.

I have also reached a conclusion about the SACS states' use of assessment tools. All 11 SACS states listed reducing articulation difficulties as the major goal of their statewide core curricula. A secondary goal is to improve the quality of general education. It is difficult to say whether the adoption of statewide core curricula has improved the quality of general education, since most SACS states (with the exception of Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee) do not use standardized tests to measure students' mastery of general education. Even the performance of students in Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee—the states that do use standardized tests—cannot be usefully compared with each other, since these states use different tests to evaluate the performance of their students. Using a standardized test or a rising-junior examination would allow a state to assess student mastery of the core curriculum. In addition, the use of a rising-junior exam

would enable a state to compare the level of achievement of students in two-year and four-year institutions, and also to compare achievement on an institution-by-institution basis. In my opinion, the use of standardized tests would be a worthwhile assessment.

American higher education is decentralized. Decentralization of education may be more widespread in the South, with its heritage of states' rights. Decentralization has a number of advantages; it allows flexibility and innovation. However, the explosion in enrollment in higher education enrollment, and in particular the proliferation of community colleges, has produced a number of difficulties for students wishing to transfer. A degree of centralization has proved helpful in dealing with these problems.

Currently, transfer is more complicated than it once was. Students often transfer more than once in their academic careers. They also transfer in a variety of ways, not just from a two-year institution to a four-year institution, but from two-year institutions to other two-year institutions, from four-year institutions to four-year institutions, and from four-year institutions to two-year institutions. Students want to minimize the loss of academic credit when they transfer. Taxpayers want to decrease the cost of higher education, and colleges and universities want to maintain the quality of their curricula.

Institution of a core curriculum (transfer blocks) is one method to enable students, taxpayers, and colleges and universities to achieve their objectives. All 11 SACS states have instituted either a statewide core curriculum or a series of transfer blocks or statewide articulation agreements that serve much the same purpose.

These core curricula vary in a number of ways. From the student's standpoint, they differ in content, in which courses are required and how many. They also differ in the degree of choice offered to students within the required core. On the administrative

level, they are adopted in different ways and are administered by different agencies.

Moreover, some core curricula cover all students in state-supported institutions of higher education, while others cover only students in two-year institutions.

Nevertheless, the core curricula all have one thing in common. They all attempt to move in the direction of seamless transfer between state-supported institutions, as a way of improving the quality and efficiency of higher education.

In doing my research, I was impressed that all 11 SACS states had recognized the need to facilitate transfer at about the same time. In addition, despite their differences, all the SACS states implemented similar plans. This unanimity probably happened because they were all responding to the same social needs and all attempting to act in the best interests of their students.

Recommendations Based on the Research

My chief recommendation to the SACS states is that they conduct research to prove the effectiveness of their core curricula. My research leads me to make 12 specific recommendations, as shown as follows:.

Recommendation 1. I recommend that the SACS states measure students' performance in core areas on pre-tests and post-tests. They may want to emulate Tennessee. According to Tennessee's response to Survey Question 5, "Tennessee institutions must use the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, College BASE, or the ETS-Academic Profile to measure performance for this indicator. If an institution elects to use the College BASE or the ETS-Academic Profile, they may select either the long or short version of the test. An institution can earn up to 15 points (out of 100 possible points) toward performance-based funding. This bonus could be as much as 5.45% over

and above their annual formula-generated appropriations based on exemplary performance levels. If an institution's current test is at or above the 60th percentile for four-year institutions or the 55th percentile for two-year institutions compared to the national norm score, then the institution is awarded the full 15 points.”

Currently, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida are the only members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to have statewide assessment of their general education programs. In contrast, Virginia's institutions have a wide range of assessment tools, which makes it difficult to compare institutions on their performance in general education. See State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (1999).

Recommendation 2. I recommend that SACS states determine whether the imposition of statewide core curricula (or transfer blocks) has reduced instructional costs and the number of hours it takes transferring students to earn a baccalaureate compared to native students. Florida has reported that imposing a statewide core curriculum and limiting (by law) the number of hours needed for graduation has greatly reduced the number of hours it takes students to graduate. Florida is the most advanced SACS state when it comes to articulation. In Florida, the number of hours that it takes transferring students to earn a baccalaureate is only about 3 more than it takes native students. At one time, it took Florida students over 80 course hours to earn an associate's degree. With Florida's core curriculum, Florida officials hope to reduce the number to 72. See responses to Survey Question 27.

Recommendation 3. I recommend that the other 10 SACS states conduct research to measure the impact of their core curricula (or transfer blocks or articulation agreements) in reducing the number of hours it takes students to earn a baccalaureate.

Although there seems to be a consensus that statewide core curricula have improved efficiency and reduced the loss of credit for transferring students, there is very little quantitative support for this contention.

I would recommend further study in a number of areas. I would suggest that states conduct pre-tests and post-tests of their students in an attempt to measure student mastery of the core curriculum. I would also suggest research on the desirability of a standardized statewide or preferably region-wide test to assess the quality of the states' core curricula. This requirement would ensure coordination of testing and score reporting.

Recommendation 4. I recommend that SACS states determine whether imposition of statewide core curricula or transfer blocks has resulted in an increase of students transferring and continuing to the baccalaureate. Admittedly, verifying this assumption might be difficult to measure. Over time, the number of students who transfer from state-supported two-year institutions to state-supported four-year institutions will change. It may be difficult to attribute increases in transfer solely to the institution of a statewide core curriculum or transfer block. However, I believe that inferences can be made.

Recommendation 5. I recommend that the SACS states examine the results of Georgia's and Florida's rising-junior exams to study the effectiveness of core curricula in those states. The high pass rate in Florida appears to indicate that their core curriculum is effective. It demonstrates, at least, that the quality of instruction in two-year and four-year institutions is comparable. The differing pass rates for whites, African Americans, and Hispanic Americans who take the exams provide both motivation and information for

educators to improve education. See Florida Department of Education Office of Assessment and Evaluation Services (1997).

Recommendation 6. I recommend that the SACS states evaluate the effectiveness of their processes for handling disputes regarding credit transfer. States basically have only a couple of mechanisms for resolving disputes over transfer. One is allowing the receiving institution alone or the receiving institution and the sending institution together to resolve disputes. The other approach is a statewide committee. (See responses to Survey Question 32.)

Another option is to reduce disputes by building protections into the system by law or policy. For example, in Florida, if a student has completed the associate's degree, all core courses transfer automatically. (See Florida's response to Survey Question 1.)

Recommendation 7. I recommend that SACS states evaluate the effectiveness of articulation agreements between state-supported two-year institutions and independent and out-of-state public four-year institutions.

Technical colleges in South Carolina have established articulation agreements with both in-state and out-of-state public and private institutions. Tennessee borders on 8 other states, and Tennessee residents are particularly likely to attend schools in other states. For that reason, Tennessee institutions (both two-year and four-year) have made a point of establishing articulation agreements with out-of-state institutions. (In 1996, 15% of Tennessee's first-time freshmen migrated from the state to attend out-of-state institutions. However, this outflow was more than balanced by the 21% of Tennessee's students who were first-time freshmen who emigrated from outside Tennessee. In 1996,

for example, 2,339 more first-time freshmen came to Tennessee than Tennessee lost to other states.) See Tennessee's and South Carolina's responses to Survey Question 18.

Recommendation 8. I recommend that the SACS states evaluate the effectiveness of encouraging students to complete the associate's degree or general education requirements before transferring. By building incentives into the transfer process, states can encourage students to complete the associate's degree. One reason that the graduation rate at community colleges is so low is that often many of the better students transfer before graduating. The low graduation rate at community colleges can be remedied by law. According to Florida's response to Survey Question 13, the transfer component does not transfer automatically in Florida unless the student completes the entire transfer component. Therefore students have an incentive to complete at least the general education component before transferring. Since the general education component accounts for 36 of the 60 hours required to graduate with an associate's degree, students in Florida are more likely to graduate from a community college before transferring to a state university than they would be without this provision.

Recommendation 9. I recommend that the SACS states evaluate the effectiveness of their advising programs for transferring students. I have examined the Websites for Kentucky and South Carolina thoroughly, and I have been impressed with the quality of their Websites. I am also impressed with everything that I have heard and read about Florida's advising programs.

Recommendation 10. I recommend that the SACS states examine the need for common course titles, a common course numbering system, and informative course descriptions (like the ones that Florida and Texas have adopted). The use of a common

course numbering system would mark all courses as being upper division or lower division courses. Common course titles, a common course numbering system, and informative course descriptions could help to clear up transfer difficulties.

Recommendation 11. I recommend that the SACS states resolve problems in the administration and interpretation of articulation agreements or the general studies curriculum. For example, the Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (2003) said that Alabama by statute (ACT 94-202) determined to establish a statewide freshman- and sophomore-level general studies curriculum for all public colleges and universities, consisting of 64 semester hours of general studies and pre-professional or pre-major studies, to develop a statewide articulation agreement for the freshman and sophomore years, and to examine the need for a common course numbering system, common course titles, and course descriptions. They also decided how to resolve problems in the administration and interpretation of articulation agreements or the general studies curriculum. Such provisions are important. No statewide core curriculum or set of transfer blocks, no matter how carefully designed, is self-correcting.

Recommendation 12. I recommend that the SACS states examine the need for discipline committees at a statewide level to resolve articulation and transfer disputes. For example, the Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (2003) said that Alabama by statute (ACT 94-202) agreed to establish 19 discipline committees and an interdisciplinary studies committee to resolve articulation and transfer disputes. If a state does not have a statewide transfer committee, then the transferring student is dependent solely on the receiving institution to evaluate his or her transcript and to decide whether to grant credit.

I have stressed the need for further studies to validate the perceived success of core curricula. Since both students' needs and educational institutions change over time, I suggest that further study is needed in several additional areas. Over time, a state's core curriculum or transfer may require changes, deletions, or additions. Changes in high school requirements will inevitably affect statewide core curricula. For example, several states are now requiring high school students to take 2 years of a foreign language; these changes will affect language requirements on the college level. Clearly, changes in computer technology will affect core curricula. States may find that they need more or fewer courses in computer technology in their core. They may decide to offer core curriculum courses electronically, through the Internet. States may make changes in the status of capstone courses; they may decide to mandate writing requirements or other proficiencies in their core curricula. In addition, the increasing numbers of students who are earning an Associate in Applied Sciences degree will require states to pay attention to upside-down articulation.

The issue of transfer is one of equity, efficiency, and quality. As enrollment in higher education has grown, a greater number of older, minority, and disadvantaged students have begun their collegiate studies. Many of them are the first members of their families to enroll in postsecondary education. For students like that, who lack experience with the educational system and may be prone to discouragement, a seamless transfer system is vital. A statewide core curriculum (or transfer blocks) can help students to achieve their educational and vocational objectives.

For legislators and citizens, efficiency in higher education is essential for economic reasons. Conserving the time of students, the money of taxpayers, and the

resources of our educational institutions is a worthwhile goal. A statewide core curriculum is one way to achieve efficiency.

Educational quality is important to students, legislators, citizens, and educators. A statewide core curriculum is one way to ensure quality across institutions. In recent years, the 11 states of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools have adopted core curricula as a means of promoting equity, efficiency, and quality in higher education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE COVER LETTER

This is a sample of the cover letter I sent to Councils on Higher Education regarding the status of statewide core curricula or statewide general education requirements in states that are members of SACS.

John S. Virkler
1809 Enoree Avenue
Columbia, SC 29205
(803) 212-6242 (O)
jsv1946@yahoo.com
November 15, 2000

Dr. Donna Brodd
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Brodd:

I have completed all my course requirements for a Ph.D. in Social Science Education at Auburn University. I am conducting a study entitled "The Status of Statewide Core Curriculum in the 11 States Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)." One purpose of this study is to see if imposition of a statewide core curriculum has reduced articulation difficulties. This study would enable the reader to compare the status of statewide core curriculum in the 11 states that belong to SACS.

I am now piloting my survey. I am seeking feedback to ascertain validity and reliability. I also want to see if any additional questions should be included. I am enclosing a survey concerning your state's position on statewide core curriculum. I would be very grateful if someone at the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia would fill out this survey. I will be calling you later this week to discuss this with you. My committee chair is Dr. Andrew Weaver, Professor and Head of the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Auburn University.

Your participation is vital. Since the study is focused on only 11 states, it is critical that I receive a response from all 11 states. After I finish the dissertation, I will give your commission a copy. I think that the completed dissertation could prove to be useful to your Commission. Please write, call, or e-mail if you have any questions about the survey. Once again, I thank you for your consideration. If possible, I would like for you to return the survey within 21 days.

Sincerely,

John S. Virkler

APPENDIX B: RECIPIENTS OF THE SURVEY ON STATEWIDE CORE CURRICULA

Having devised a preliminary version of the survey, I field-tested it by sending copies to the South Carolina Higher Education Commission and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, asking Dr. Brodd and Dr. Morrison for their advice on how best to revise ambiguous questions. Both provided helpful suggestions, which I incorporated before sending the questionnaires to the appropriate officers in each state.

I sent the revised survey along with a cover letter (see Appendix A) to the 11 states' Commissions on Higher Education, Boards of Regents, or similar governing bodies. I followed up by calling the appropriate representative of each governing body. If I received no response after writing and calling, I called or wrote other officials in the state to get answers to the survey questions.

Survey Question 41 was answered by the Southern Regional Education Board.

Here are the names and addresses for SREB:

Southern Regional Education Board
592 10th Street N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30318
(404) 875-9211
<http://www.sreb.org>

Dave Spence, President
dave.spence@sreb.org

Jeffrey Grove, Research Associate
jeffrey.grove@sreb.org

Survey Question 50 was answered by checking the Websites of a number of state-supported state universities in the SACS states to find information on minimum freshman admission requirements. Here are the relevant Website addresses:

Alabama State University, Montgomery, Alabama
<http://www.alasu.edu/Admissions>

Albany State University, Albany, Georgia
<http://asuweb.asurams.edu/asu/admissions/fr.htm>

Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama
<http://www.auburn.edu/admissions/faqs/admissions.html#admissionsstandards>

Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina
<http://www.clemson.edu/attend/undgrd/academic/hsrequirements.html>

Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University, Tallahassee, Florida
<http://www.famu.edu/index.cfm?a=admissions>

Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida
<http://www.fsu.edu/students/prospective/admissions/requirements/froshreq.html>

Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia
http://www.admiss.gatech.edu/images/pdf/quick_facts_print.pdf

Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi
<http://www.jsu.edu/jsuoim/admissions/freshman.htm>

Kentucky State University, Frankfort, Kentucky
www.kysu.edu/admissions/admission_requirements/freshmen.cfm

Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
[http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/enrollweb.nsf/\\$Content/Admission+Requirements+for+High+School+Students?OpenDocument](http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/enrollweb.nsf/$Content/Admission+Requirements+for+High+School+Students?OpenDocument)

Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, Louisiana
www.latech.edu/admissions/admission-requirements-frosh.shtml

Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi
www.admissions.msstate.edu/freshman/requirements.php

Norfolk State University, Norfolk, Virginia
www.nsu.edu/admissions/generalrequirements.html

South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, South Carolina
www.scsu.edu/admissions/entrancerequirements/newfreshman.aspx

Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
www.subr.edu/admissions/admissionrequire.htm

Tennessee State University, Nashville, Tennessee
www.tnstate.edu/interior.asp?mid=809&ptid=1

Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville, Tennessee
www.tntech.edu/admissions/fresh_require.html

Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas
http://admissions.tamu.edu/freshmen/hs_course.aspx

Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas
http://em.tsu.edu/catalog/05catalog/12_admissions.pdf

University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama
gobama.ua.edu/steps/freshmanreq.html

University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida
<http://www.admissions.ufl.edu/ugrad/frqualify.html>

University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia
www.bulletin.uga.edu/bulletin/adm/index.html

University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky
www.uky.edu/Registrar/bull0405/bulladmi.htm
University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky
admissions.louisville.edu/apply/req-fr.html
University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi
www.olemiss.edu/admissions/fap.html#prep
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and all North Carolina state universities
www.northcarolina.edu/content.php/assessment/reports/student_info/mcr.htm
University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina
www.sc.edu/admissions/freshman.htm
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee
<http://admissions.utk.edu/undergraduate/freshman.shtml>
University of Texas, Austin, Texas
<http://bealonghorn.utexas.edu/freshmen/admission/hs-courses/index.html>
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia
www.virginia.edu/undergradadmission/admission.html
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, Virginia
www.admiss.vt.edu/apply/freshman/what_do_we_look_for.php

For each of the 11 SACS states, I have listed the executive director for each state and the person designated as having responsibility for academic affairs. In some cases, I consulted with both the current and former holder of each office. I also have listed Website addresses for each state.

Alabama

Alabama Commission on Higher Education
Henry Hector, [former] Executive Director
Gregory Fitch, [current] Executive Director
Elizabeth French, [former] Director of Interagency Programs
Articulation and General Studies Committee
[current] Director Institutional Effectiveness and Planning
P. O. Box 30200
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2000
(334) 242-2123
E-mail: efrench@ache.state.al.us
Website: <http://www.ache.state.al.us>

Florida

Florida Department of Education
Debra Austin, Chancellor
Pat Windham, Articulation and Education Services

pat.windham@fldoe.org
Sara Harmon, Articulation and Education Services
sara.harmon@fldoe.org
Division of Colleges and Universities
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1950
E-mail: debra.austin@fldoe.org
Website: <http://www.fldcu.org>

Florida Community Colleges and Workforce Education
J. David Armstrong, Chancellor
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1950
(850) 245-0407
E-mail: david.armstrong@fldoe.org
Website: <http://www.fldcu.org>

Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission
Dr. William Proctor, Executive Director (850) 488-0555 ext. 132
Dr. Tom Furlong, Deputy Executive Director (850) 488-0555 ext. 172
Florida Community College System
325 West Gaines Street, Turlington Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
(850) 488-0555 ext. 132
E-mail: proctob@mail.doe.state.fl.us
Website: Council for Education Policy Research and Improvement
<http://www.cepri.state.fl.us>

Council for Education Policy, Research and Improvement, for the Florida Legislature
Patrick Dallet, Executive Director
850-488-7703
dallet.pat@oppaga.fl.gov

Georgia

Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia
Stephen Portch, Former Chancellor
Erroll Davis, Current Chancellor
Kathleen Burk, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Regents Testing
270 Washington Street SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
(404) 656-9234
E-mail: chancellor@usg.edu
Website: <http://http://www.usg.edu>

Kentucky

Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
Gordon Davies, Former President
Tom Layzell, Current President
Patrick Kelly, Former Senior Associate for Information and Research
James Applegate, Current Vice President for Academic Affairs
1024 Capital Center Drive, Suite 320
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601-8204
(502) 573-1555 ext. 351
E-mail: tom.layzell@gov
Website: <http://www.cpe.state.ky.us>

Louisiana

Louisiana Board of Regents
E. Joseph Savoie, Commissioner
Gerard Killebrew, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs
1201 N. Third Street, Suite 6-200
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-3677
(225) 342-4253
E-mail: commish@regents.state.la.us
Website: <http://www.regents.state.la.us>

Mississippi

Mississippi State Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning
Thomas Layzell, [former] Commissioner
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211-6453
Website: <http://www.ihl.state.ms.us>

Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges
Wayne Stonecypher
Associate Executive Director for Programs
Mississippi State Institutions of Higher Education
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211
(601) 432-6524
E-mail: scypher@sbcjc.cc.ms.us
Website: <http://www.sbcjc.cc.ms.us>

Christian Pruett
Senior Research and Statistical Analyst
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning

3825 Ridgewood Road, 8th Floor Tower
Jackson, MS 39211
Phone: (601) 432-6445
E-mail: cpruett@ihl.state.ms.us

North Carolina

University of North Carolina General Administration
Molly Corbett Broad, [former] President
Erskine Bowles, [current] President
W. F. Little, [former] Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Robert Kanoy, [current] Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
P. O. Box 2688
Chapel Hill, NC 27514-2688
(919) 962-4907
E-mail: [Robert Kanoy kanoy@northcarolina.edu](mailto:Robert.Kanoy@northcarolina.edu)
Website: <http://www.northcarolina.edu>

North Carolina Community College System
M. Martin Lancaster
200 W. Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27693-1379
E-mail: lancaster@nccs.cc.nc.us

South Carolina

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
Rayburn Barton, [former] Executive Director
Gail Morrison, [current] Interim Executive Director
GMORRISON@CHESC.GOV
R. L. Kelley, Assistant Director Academic Affairs
1333 Main Street Suite 200
Columbia, SC 29201
Website: <http://www.che400.state.sc.us>

Tennessee

Board of Regents, University of Tennessee
Bob Levy, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee
Website: <http://www.tbr.state.tn.us>

Tennessee Board of Regents
1415 Murfreesboro Road Suite 324

Nashville, Tennessee 37217
(615) 366-4411
Kay Clark, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
E-mail: kclark@tbr.state.tn.us
George Malo, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Assessment
E-mail: gmalo@tbr.state.tn.us

Tennessee Higher Education Commission
Richard Roda, Executive Director
Parkway Towers, Suite 1900
404 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243
(615) 741-7561
E-mail: richard.roda@state.tn.us
Website: <http://www.state.tn.us/thec>

Texas

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Don W. Brown, [former] Commissioner
Raymond Paredes, [current] Commissioner
E-mail: raymund.paredes@thecb.state.tx.us
(512) 427-6101
Dr. Catherine Parsonneault, Program Director
E-mail: catherine.parsonneault@thecb.state.tx.us
(512)427-6214
Dr. Julie Leidig, Director of Instructional Programs
E-mail: Julie.Leidig@thecb.state.tx.us
(512) 427-6443
P. O. Box 12788 Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 427-6214
Website: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us>

Virginia

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
Phyllis Palmiero, [former] Director
Daniel LaVista, [current] Director
E-mail: daniellavista@schev.edu
Donna R. Brodd, [former] Associate Director Academic Affairs
Ophelia Robinson, Senior Associate for Policy Research
OpheliaRobinson@schev.edu
(804) 225-2642
Angela Detlev, Senior Associate for Policy Research

angela.detlev@schev.edu
(804) 225-2815
101 North 14th Street
James Monroe Bldg.
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 225-2611, 225-2600
Website: <http://www.schev.edu>

APPENDIX C: STATES' MECHANISMS FOR CHANGING CORE CURRICULA

TABLE 7: MECHANISMS FOR CHANGING CORE CURRICULA
IN THE SACS STATES

State	Mechanism for Changing the Core Curriculum
Alabama	Action by Alabama Commission on Higher Education
Florida	Florida Board of Education
Georgia	Regents System Level
Kentucky	Board Policy
Louisiana	State Board of Regents
Mississippi	State Board of Regents
North Carolina	Joint Transfer Advisory Committee
South Carolina	Commission on Higher Education
Tennessee	State Board of Regents
Texas	Institution
Virginia	State Council on Transfer and the Instructional Program Advisory Committee (Senior Academic Officers of all four-year state institutions, the Virginia Community College System, and 3 Community College Deans)

APPENDIX D: RATIONALE FOR ADOPTION OF STATEWIDE CORE CURRICULA

TABLE 8: RATIONALE FOR ADOPTION OF STATEWIDE CORE CURRICULA IN THE SACS STATES

Alabama	The legislature passed this legislation to make sure that students enrolled in 2-year institutions could have course work accepted at state-supported four-year institutions.
Florida	To reduce the loss of transfer credit and to make it easier for students to transfer, while maintaining the quality of instruction.
Georgia	Georgia adopted a core curriculum for 3 reasons: to establish the principle that general education is the foundation of all baccalaureate degree programs; to encourage each institution to reflect its mission by developing a superior program of general education; and to promote the concept that “full credit courses satisfactorily completed at one institution will be accepted by other System institutions—thereby affirming the integrity of credit offered throughout the University system.”
Kentucky	To increase the efficiency of transfer across the system, especially for students transferring from two-year institutions, and from two-year institutions to four-year institutions.
Louisiana	Louisiana’s Board of Regents accepts fully the commonly accepted premise that graduates of similar undergraduate degree programs should attain a broad-based common educational experience. The most appropriate method to ensure that such occurs among students at state colleges and universities is through mandated statewide general education requirements.
Mississippi	The rationale for development was to reduce transfer problems and to establish consistency of transfer requirements.
North Carolina	Our core system was instituted in an attempt to get more cooperation and more collaboration between the community college system and the UNC system. It was a concerted effort to get institutions working together in the direction of a seamless K-16 system.

(continued on next page)

South Carolina	To facilitate transfer between two-year institutions and four-year institutions.
Tennessee	Passed because the legislature had complaints from constituents about transfer and needed more work.
Texas	Texas adopted its core to continue its statewide focus on facilitating the transfer of lower division courses among public colleges and universities around the state. One of its provisions allows the transfer student to use a successfully completed group of lower division core curriculum courses and/or a successfully completed group of lower division “field of study” courses to substitute for similar groups of courses at the college or university to which they transfer.
Virginia	Virginia adopted transfer modules because the state thought that it should be made as easy as possible for graduates of community colleges to transfer to senior institutions and get full credit for work that they have done. This was done to assure fair access to a four-year education and reasonable credit toward a bachelor’s degree for their community college courses and programs. Transfer should be easy and orderly.

APPENDIX E: RATES OF TRANSFER IN THE SACS STATES

This chart shows the numbers of students who transferred from one institution of higher education to another in the states belonging to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). It gives an idea of the numbers involved and also shows the several varieties of transfer. In the column headings, 2 and 4 refer to the number of years offered by each educational institution. The last 2 columns contrast traditional transfer rates with the rates for non-traditional transfer.

TABLE 9: RATES OF TRANSFER IN THE SACS STATES

State	2-2	2-4	4-4	4-2	Total	% 2-4	% Other
Alabama Fall 2005	1,486	4,512	1,334	1,295	8,527	53	47
Florida 2003-2004	18,400	37,350	5,860	NA	NA	NA	NA
Georgia Fall 2004*	NA	NA	NA	NA	15,347**	NA*	NA*
Kentucky Summer and Fall 2005	NA	2,482	938	NA	NA	NA	NA
Louisiana 2003-2004	163	298	1,264	998	2,722	11	89
Mississippi 2004 - 2005	NA	4,227	1,488	NA	NA	NA	NA
North Carolina Fall 2005	1,292	5,938	2,305	915	10,450	57	43
South Carolina Fall 2004	1,263	2,295	828	1,445	5,731	40**	60**
Tennessee Fall 2003	2,481	4,357	1,224	1,924	9,986	44	56
Texas Fall 2003	NA	92,068	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Virginia Fall 2005	NA	4,017	1,444	NA	NA	NA	NA

See the notes for this chart on the following page.

Explanation of column headings for Table 9: Rates of Transfer in the SACS States:

2-2: number of students who transferred from two-year state-supported institutions to other two-year state-supported institutions, all in-state (horizontal transfer)

2-4: number of students who transferred from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions, all in-state (conventional or vertical transfer)

4-4: number of students who transferred from four-year state-supported institutions to other four-year state-supported institutions (horizontal transfer)

4-2: number of students who transferred from four-year state-supported institutions to two-year state-supported institutions, all in-state (reverse transfer)

Total: total number of students who transferred in that state

% 2-4: percentage of total transfers that involved transfers from two-year institutions to four-year institutions (traditional transfer)

% Other: percentage of total transfers that involved horizontal or reverse transfer (non-traditional transfer)

NA = Not Available

* The University of Georgia system published only the number of transfers to two-year and four-year state-supported institutions, and it did not break down the number of transfers by the previous institution attended. For the fall semester 2004, 11,532 students (both in-state and out-of-state students) transferred to four-year institutions. A total of 3,815 students transferred to two-year institutions. Since all transfers to two-year institutions were either reverse or horizontal transfer, one could safely say that at least 25% of all transfer to state-supported institutions in Georgia was non-traditional (i.e. horizontal and reverse), but the number and percentage actually were higher.

In 2004-2005, 16,146 students transferred from one state-supported Georgia institution to another state-supported institution. Of that number, 9,248 transferred from a state-supported four-year institution *either* to another state-supported four-year institution *or* to a state-supported two-year institution. Another 6,898 students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution *either* to a four-year institution *or* to another state-supported two-year institution. One can conclude safely that no more than 42% of all transfer was traditional transfer, and probably more than 58% of all transfer was non-traditional.

**These figures include students transferring from private institutions within the state and all out-of-state institutions.

APPENDIX F: YEAR AND METHOD OF ADOPTION OF
STATEWIDE CORE CURRICULA

TABLE 10: YEAR AND METHOD OF ADOPTION OF STATEWIDE CORE
CURRICULA IN THE SACS STATES

State	Adopted?	Year Adopted	Method of Adoption
Alabama	Yes	1994	Legislation
Florida	Yes	1995	Legislation
Georgia	Yes	1967	Legislation
Kentucky	Yes*	1996	Legislation
Louisiana	Yes	1986	Board of Regents
Mississippi	Yes**	1991	Agreement
North Carolina	Yes	1995	University of North Carolina General Administration
South Carolina	Yes	1995	Legislation
Tennessee	Yes	2000	Legislation
Texas	Yes	1997	Legislation
Virginia	Yes***	1990	Joint Committee on Transfer

* Kentucky does not have a core curriculum, but it does have transfer blocks that serve much the same purposes as a statewide core curriculum.

** Mississippi's junior colleges do not have a common core curriculum, but (as of 2006) they have 194 articulation agreements with Mississippi's 8 state universities. These articulation agreements fulfill many of the functions of a statewide core curriculum. Mississippi adds or deletes articulation agreements on an annual basis.

*** Virginia does not have a statewide core curriculum, but it does have transfer modules that serve much the same purposes as a statewide core curriculum.

TABLE 11: SUMMARY OF METHODS OF CORE ADOPTION
IN THE SACS STATES

Method of Adoption	Number of States	Percentage
Legislation	7	63%
Board or Regents or Committee	3	27%
Agreement among institutions	1	9%

APPENDIX G: NUMBER OF HOURS IN THE SACS STATES' CORE CURRICULA

TABLE 12: NUMBER OF HOURS IN THE CORE CURRICULA IN THE SACS STATES

As this chart shows, the number of required hours in each core curriculum (or its functional equivalent) varies from state to state.

State	Number of Hours in its Core Curriculum
Alabama	60
Florida	36
Georgia	60
Kentucky	48
Louisiana	39
Mississippi	54
North Carolina	44
South Carolina	33-60
Tennessee	41 plus foreign language* for Tennessee Board of Regents Universities and two-year colleges and University of Tennessee
Texas	42
Virginia	35

*In Tennessee, students must finish the equivalent of 1 year of a foreign language to earn an associate's degree and the equivalent of 2 years of a foreign language to earn a baccalaureate. This is in addition to completing the basic core of 41 semester hours.

TABLE 13: SUMMARY OF HOURS IN STATEWIDE CORE CURRICULA IN THE SACS STATES

Range of core hours	33-60
Median number of core hours	42
Mean number of core hours	44.727
Standard deviation	9.26

APPENDIX H: ASSESSMENT MEASURES OF STATEWIDE CORE CURRICULA

TABLE 14: ASSESSMENT MEASURES OF STATEWIDE CORE CURRICULA
IN THE SACS STATES

State	Type of Assessment
Alabama	Institutional*
Florida	College-Level Academic Skills Test
Georgia	Regents
Kentucky	None
Louisiana	Institutional*
Mississippi	(Regents) Institutions of Higher Learning Board
North Carolina	None
South Carolina	None
Tennessee	California Critical Thinking Skills Test, College BASE, and ETS-Academic Profile
Texas	Institutional*
Virginia	Multiple

*Institutional Assessment is determined by the individual college or university and may be of multiple types.

APPENDIX I: RESPONSES TO THE SURVEY

On the following pages, each of the 50 questions in my survey is listed as it appeared in the survey. Following each question are the responses of the representatives of the 11 states in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). (Their names appear in Appendix A.) For ease of comparison, the states are listed in alphabetical order. Responses have been edited to avoid repetition.

Survey Question 1: Does your state have a statewide core curriculum or a statewide general education curriculum?

- Yes, for both two-year colleges and four-year institutions.
- Yes, but for four-year institutions only.
- Yes, but for two-year institutions only.
- Yes, but separate programs for two-year institutions and another for four-year institutions.
- No.
- Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

Please include a copy of your statewide core/general education curriculum. If you have printed materials that give the reasons that your state adopted a statewide core curriculum (statewide general education curriculum) please send me a copy of that publication.

If your state has a statewide core curriculum only for two-year institutions or only for four-year institutions, or if it has separate core curricula for two-year and four-year institutions, please provide details on an attached sheet.

ALABAMA—Alabama has developed a statewide freshman- and sophomore-level general studies curriculum for all public colleges and universities. This curriculum consists of 64 semester hours of general studies and pre-professional/pre-major studies. The requirement applies to all transferring students, but it does not apply to native students at four-year institutions.

According to State Code 16-5-8, all applicable credits transferred from a two-year state institution to a four-year state institution shall fulfill degree requirements at the four-year institution as if they were earned at the four-year institution.

FLORIDA—Florida has taken the following steps to establish its statewide core curriculum:

1. Designated 1,700 courses as being lower division or upper division courses.
2. Developed program prerequisites for each baccalaureate program.
3. Limited Associate of Arts requirements to 60 semester hours and Bachelor of Arts and

Bachelor of Science requirements to 120 semester hours (with certain specific exceptions).

4. Implemented planning for a single computer-assisted advising and degree audit system.
5. Guaranteed students who complete the Associate of Arts degree that all 36 hours of general education courses will transfer, and that these 36 hours will fulfill all lower level general education requirements. If a student has completed the Associate of Sciences degree, all 18 hours of general education courses will transfer, but the student will have to take 18 additional general education courses to graduate.
6. Guaranteed Associate of Arts graduates of a community college admission to one of Florida's state universities. However, the graduate is not guaranteed admission to the university or program of his or her choice.
7. Imposed a surcharge on students who take courses in excess of 115% of graduation requirements. For example, if graduation requirements are 120 semester hours, a student will be subject to a surcharge for taking courses in excess of 138 semester hours. This is meant to discourage students from taking excess hours.

State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024 said that the 2+2 articulation agreement states that the Associate of Arts graduates of a state-approved Florida community college must be admitted to any state university as juniors as long as the university has space, money, and the curriculum to meet their needs.

GEORGIA—The Georgia Board adopted the Georgia Core Curriculum in 1967. Each institution was asked to develop its core “within the broad context of the approved Core plan.” Transcripts of transferring students are to be evaluated by the Registrar at the receiving institution according to the core of the students’ former college. Transferring students may be required to complete additional hours, but they may not be required to complete more hours than native students do. As of 2006, this core is still in effect.

KENTUCKY— As of 2006, Kentucky does not have a core curriculum, but the Kentucky legislature has mandated that all public four-year institutions accept either a 33-hour block or a 48-hour block of general education courses for students transferring from state-supported community colleges. In addition, students take a 12-hour specialty component based on their intended major.

The content of the general education block depends on the program into which the student is transferring. For example, college algebra and general biology may fulfill the math and science component for someone transferring into a liberal arts program, but someone transferring into an engineering program may need to take additional math and science courses like calculus and physics.

LOUISIANA—Louisiana used to have 2 core curricula. The state adopted a required statewide core curriculum in 1986 consisting of 39 semester hours in 6 areas. However, the Louisiana Board of Regents also had a recommended core consisting of 50 hours in the same 6 areas. The suggested core would add a third course in Literature, a laboratory requirement in the natural sciences, and a 6-hour course in the History of Western Civilization. Recently, Louisiana has dropped its recommended core. The present core for

the baccalaureate degree consists of 39 semester hours; however, institutions have the flexibility to add to that core.

The core for the associate's degree as of 2006 consists of 27 semester hours.

MISSISSIPPI—Each Mississippi state university establishes its own core. Community colleges do not have a common core curriculum. However, “Mississippi has an articulation agreement with the Community Colleges which includes a list of required courses accepted at each of the campuses for particular majors. This collaborative agreement is reviewed annually and appears to be working well.”

As of 2006, Mississippi's articulation agreement contains 194 programs of courses appropriate for transfer from community colleges to the 8 Mississippi public universities. All 8 universities are required to accept these courses without the loss of credit. However, the statewide articulation agreement is to be used as a minimum program of transfer and does not replace any individual articulation agreement that a university may have with a community college.

The degree of choice is limited. For example, a community college student wishing to transfer to one of the 4 state universities offering a bachelor's degree in economics has to complete a 62 semester-hour program. The only choices allowed are a choice between 2 sequences of history, a year-long literature survey, and a choice of any laboratory science.

Although Mississippi's 8 universities do not have a common core curriculum, all its universities require the following: 6 hours of English composition, 3 hours of college-level algebra, 6 hours of laboratory science, and 9 hours in humanities and the fine arts.

NORTH CAROLINA—North Carolina's legislature authorized the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina “to develop a plan of the transfer of credits from one community college to another and from a community college to the constituent institutions of the University.”

As a result, the University of North Carolina system does not have a common core curriculum for its 16 constituent institutions. However, it has adopted a program where all 16 universities have agreed to accept 44 semester hours of courses distributed among core disciplines. As of 2006, this set of courses will meet the freshman and sophomore general education requirements for any student transferring from one of the 58 North Carolina community colleges.

Successful completion of the core at a North Carolina community college does not guarantee admission to a state university.

SOUTH CAROLINA—South Carolina does not have a statewide core curriculum, but it does have transfer articulations. All two-year and all four-year institutions develop their own core curricula, and in larger institutions, the core curriculum varies from college to college. (For example, the College of Engineering core curriculum is very different from the College of Education's core curriculum.) As of 2006, the state has transfer articulations for 86 courses. The senior institutions have agreed to accept these 86 courses for transfer credit.

South Carolina does not maintain a record of the individual institutions' core curricula. This could be obtained from their college catalogs.

South Carolina has adopted 5 transfer blocks that are accepted by all state-supported universities: one for majors in the arts, humanities and social sciences (46-48 semester hours), one for business majors (46-51 hours), one for engineering majors (33 semester hours), one for sciences and mathematics majors (48-53 hours), one for nursing majors (60 hours), and one for majors in early childhood education, elementary education, or special education (38-39 hours).

TENNESSEE— Each institution is required to appoint or assign a chief transfer officer, who serves as a contact point for students with articulation or transfer questions or problems. The CTO reports to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

Tennessee has 2 systems of higher education, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and the University of Tennessee System (UT). There are clear differences in the operation of general education between the 2 systems. TBR has implemented a new common general education distribution effective in the fall semester in 2004. This distribution consists of 41 hours spread through 6 subject categories: communications (9 semester hours), humanities (9 hours), social science (6 hours), history (5 hours), natural science (8 hours, and mathematics (3 semester hours). Students also need to complete 6 hours of a foreign language to earn an associate's degree and 12 hours to earn a B.A.

Courses that institutions identify as general education may vary, but there are common learning outcomes established for each subject category. Blocks of courses in the 6 categories are guaranteed to transfer among TBR universities. This proposal was approved by the Board in December 2002. The 3 institutions comprising the University of Tennessee System all have different schemes of general education. At the current time, discussion is ongoing relative to reciprocity of honoring general requirements for students who transfer among institutions in the 2 systems.

In 1996, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a joint resolution that required TBR and UT to study their operations in addressing specific issues identified by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission in light of the resolution. In 1999, the General Assembly passed legislation that required the UT and TBR systems to devise a system of 60 hours at the lower division that would be fully transferable among TBR and UT systems.

Subsequently, a transfer module was developed that incorporated the differing general education requirements among the 2 systems. Finally, the Legislature passed a transfer core of 41 semester hours that took effect in the fall semester of 2004.

TEXAS—Senate Bill 148, which was passed in 1997 by the Texas legislature, established a group of lower division core curriculum courses for students at two-year state-supported institutions to substitute for general education at four-year state-supported institutions. The 42-semester hour core itself was adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. If a student successfully completes this core, it must be accepted for the receiving institution's core curriculum.

Institutions can increase the core requirement to 48 semester hours, but the core must contain at least 42 hours.

VIRGINIA—“No, but we do have transfer blocks.” Virginia’s community colleges require cores of anywhere from 37 to 48 semester hours. Virginia’s four-year institutions require from 33 to 52 semester hours to complete their general education requirements.

State-supported four-year institutions in Virginia are required to accept a transfer module of 35 semester hours as either a partial or complete fulfillment of general education requirements. Even if a transfer student has completed the 35 hour transfer module, that student may have to complete up to 17 additional hours of general education courses in order to satisfy the senior institution’s general education requirements.

Survey Question 2: In what year did your state adopt a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements? _____

If your state has a statewide core curriculum only for two-year institutions or only for four-year institutions, or if it has separate core curricula for two-year and four-year institutions, please provide details on an attached sheet.

ALABAMA—Alabama’s legislature adopted in 1994 a statewide freshman- and sophomore-level general studies curriculum (ACT 94-202).

FLORIDA—in 1995, by statute (Chapter 95-243).

GEORGIA—in 1967, by the Georgia Board of Regents. Georgia made a major revision in its core curriculum in 1996, when it shifted from a quarter system to a semester system.

KENTUCKY—The Kentucky legislature passed a law in 1996 that required all state-supported four-year institutions to accept a 60-hour transfer block for students transferring from state-supported community colleges. In 2004, this was revised to require all state-supported institutions to accept either a 33-hour or a 48-hour block of general education courses or the entire 60-hour associate degree.

LOUISIANA—The Louisiana Board of Regents adopted statewide general education requirements for associate and baccalaureate programs in 1986. They revised these requirements in 1994. In 2002, Louisiana adopted statewide general education requirements for two-year institutions.

MISSISSIPPI—Mississippi’s first statewide articulation agreement was approved by the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges on October 17, 1991. The statewide articulation agreement is reviewed annually. The Institutions of Higher Learning Board approved its core at its April 1984 Board meeting. The number of articulation agreements is subject to change on a yearly basis. As of 2006, Mississippi had 194 statewide articulation agreements.

NORTH CAROLINA—The University of North Carolina General Administration established its core in 1995 as a part of the implementation of the provisions of House Bill 739 and Senate Bill 1161.

SOUTH CAROLINA—In 1995, the South Carolina General Assembly passed Act 137, which directed the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education to promote transfer between two-year and four-year state-supported institutions. South Carolina adopted a system of transfer blocks in 1996. As of 2006, North Carolina has a 44-semester-hour transfer core for students transferring from community colleges to one of the 16 state universities.

TENNESSEE—This is a tricky question for Tennessee, because under the current system, it has 2 separate governing boards. They are the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees and the Board of Regents. Coordination is done through the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. However, a new core was adopted effective fall semester 2004 for all two-year and four-year institutions.

Effective fall 2001, there was an agreement between all 3 groups based on a 2000 state law designed to promote seamless transfers for all students who have 60 or more hours and follow a specified curriculum. Otherwise, prior to 2004, there was no single transfer policy, but individual articulation agreements between institutions.

The new statewide core curriculum (for TBR institutions and two-year colleges) took effect during the fall semester in the academic year 2004-2005.

TEXAS—in January 1997, by the passage of Senate Bill 148. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board determined the content of the core.

VIRGINIA—Virginia does not have a core curriculum; however, it does have transfer modules (blocks). This is an ongoing process that was begun by the Joint Committee on Transfer in October 1990. The Joint Committee on Transfer was established by the State Council of Higher Education and the State Board for Community Colleges.

Virginia's state transfer policy does not mandate admission standards, guaranteed admissions, or a common general education core. Virginia's transfer policy directs only that lower division general education requirements should be waived for associate-degree graduates of university-parallel degree programs who are granted admission to a four-year state college or university.

The transfer module provides an option for students who have not completed the associate's degree to transfer a block of courses that should be applied as partial fulfillment of the lower division general education requirements at public colleges and universities, but it does not define a core of required courses for all students. That is, even if all the transfer module is accepted, a transferring student may have to complete additional general education courses. However, the transfer student does not have to complete more general education hours than native students are required to complete.

Survey Question 3: How did your state adopt its statewide core curriculum or general education requirements for its public institutions? *Please check all that apply.*

- _____ By an act of the legislature.
- _____ By executive order by the governor.
- _____ By a court order.
- _____ By imposition by some state education governing body, such as the Board of Regents or Commission on Higher Education.
- _____ Agreement among university and college presidents.
- _____ Articulation agreements.
- _____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

If your state has a statewide core curriculum only for two-year institutions or only for four-year institutions, or if it has separate core curricula for two-year and four-year institutions, please provide details on an attached sheet.

ALABAMA—The legislature adopted a statewide freshman- and sophomore-level general studies curriculum in 1994 (ACT 94-202).

FLORIDA—The legislature adopted its general requirements by statute in 1995 (Chapter 95-243). Another piece of legislation, SBE Rule 6A-10.024, stated that Associate in Arts graduates of a state-approved Florida community college must be admitted with junior status to any state university, as long as the university has the space, the money, and the curriculum to met the students' needs.

GEORGIA—Georgia's core curriculum was adopted in 1967 by the Board of Regents, but it was revised in 1996, when the state system replaced the quarter system with a semester system.

KENTUCKY—by legislation (1996). The legislation stated that joint programming and articulation of vocational-technical education non-degree programs with associate-degree programs should be pursued between the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and other postsecondary institutions when feasible.

This tranfer agreement was revised in 2004.

LOUISIANA—The Louisiana Board of Regents first adopted a core in 1986, and then it revised its core in 1996. The state legislature commanded the Board of Regents to cause the postsecondary boards to adopt and implement, no later than fall term 2000, in the institutions under their jurisdiction, common core courses that articulate from any institution of public higher education to any other such institution, taking into consideration the accreditation criteria of the institution receiving the credit.

The core for the baccalaureate degree is 39 semester hours. The core for the associate degree is 27 hours.

MISSISSIPPI—Agreement among the institutions of higher learning, chief academic officers, and the community and junior college academic deans.

NORTH CAROLINA—In 1995, the North Carolina legislature (H.B. 739 and S.B. 1161) authorized the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina system to develop a plan of the transfer of credits from one community college to another community college and from a community college to the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina. Thus, articulation policy is based on inter-institutional cooperation, rather than being mandated by the state legislature.

The goal was to expand access to higher education, for both traditional and nontraditional students, in 3 ways: through “uniform policies for the transfer of credit from community colleges to constituent institutions,” through “development of electronic information systems on transfer policies,” and through “increased collaboration with other education sectors.”

SOUTH CAROLINA—South Carolina does not have a core curriculum, but it has transfer blocks, which were instituted in 1996 as a collaborative effort between the state legislature and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

TENNESSEE—State law and institutional agreements. The Tennessee Code requires “The Commission (Tennessee Higher Education Commission) to establish and ensure that all postsecondary institutions in Tennessee cooperatively provide for an integrated system of postsecondary education. The commission shall guard against inappropriate and unnecessary conflict and duplication of credits” and facilitate “easy access of information among institutions.”

Tennessee’s new 41-semester-hour core for all two-year and four-year state-supported institutions took effect in the fall semester of 2004.

TEXAS—January 1997, by the passage of Senate Bill 148. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board determined the content of the core.

The Texas Education Code said, “If a student successfully completes the 42-hour core curriculum at any institution of higher education, that block of courses may be transferred to any other institution of higher education, and must be substituted for the receiving institution’s core.”

VIRGINIA—Virginia does not have a core curriculum, but transfer modules (transfer blocks). The Joint Committee on Transfer began this process in October 1990.

The State Policy of Transfer (transfer blocks or transfer modules) was authorized by the state legislature. “In developing upper level undergraduate educational programs, the boards shall consider articulation and course offerings at area community colleges to ensure the appropriate breadth and availability of course work.” Virginia’s policy on transfer requires that our public four-year institutions accept as meeting their general education requirements the core courses included in an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science from one of the state’s public two-year colleges, with some exceptions.

Survey Question 4: How many hours are included in your statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements? *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document that lists the number of hours required.*

If your state has a statewide core curriculum only for two-year institutions or only for four-year institutions, or if it has separate core curricula for two-year and four-year institutions, please provide details on an attached sheet.

ALABAMA—As of 2005, the core consists of 5 areas: written composition (10 quarter hours or 6 semester hours), humanities and the fine arts (20 quarter hours or 12 semester hours), natural sciences and mathematics (15 quarter hours or 11 semester hours), history, social science, and behavioral science (20 quarter hours or 12 semester hours), and pre-professional or pre-major courses and electives (31 quarter hours or 19-23 semester hours)—for a total of 96 quarter hours or 60-64 semester hours. Thus, General Studies constitute approximately two-thirds of the freshman and sophomore years, and pre-professional or pre-major studies make up the remaining one-third.

FLORIDA—As of 2006, general education requirements are limited to 36 semester hours for all students, at both two-year and four-year state-supported institutions.

GEORGIA—As of 2006, Georgia's core consists of 60 semester hours, including the following areas of concentration:

Area A. Essential Skills—9 semester hours in English Composition and College algebra or Mathematical Modeling

Area B. Institutional Options—4 to 5 semester hours chosen from these areas: global issues, oral communication, information technology, critical thinking, wellness, geography, and foreign languages.

Area C. Humanities and Fine Arts—6 hours

Area D. Science, Mathematics, and Technology—10 to 11 semester hours (with Option I for non-science majors and Option II for science majors).

Area E. Social Sciences—12 semester hours

Area F. Courses Related to the Program of Study—18 semester hours. While courses in Areas A-E are required of all students, Area F core requirements are specific to each major.

KENTUCKY—As of 2006, Kentucky's General Transfer Component requires 48 semester hours of courses. The General Transfer Component consists of 2 categories. The first category includes 33 hours that are accepted by all state universities. The second category includes 15 hours, acceptance of which may differ from university to university. Students must earn at least a 2.0 grade point average before courses can transfer. Some universities do not accept a D in a transfer course, even if a student has an overall 2.0 GPA.

In addition, there is a third component of 15 semester hours of courses based on the intended major. Students can complete 1, 2, or all 3 components. A student who completed all 3 components would be able to transfer 60 semester hours.

This table shows the areas of which the core consists, and the number of credit hours required for each:

TABLE 15: KENTUCKY’S GENERAL TRANSFER COMPONENT

Course of Study	Credit Hours
Communication	9
Humanities	6
Behavioral Sciences / Social Sciences	9
Natural Sciences	6
Mathematics	3
General Education Specialty Block	15
Total Credit Hours	48

LOUISIANA—As of 2006, Louisiana’s required General Education Coursework for Baccalaureate Degree Program includes 6 semester hours in English, 6 semester hours in mathematics, 9 semester hours in natural sciences, 3 semester hours in arts, 9 semester hours in humanities, 6 semester hours in social sciences, and a number of semester hours in computer literacy to be determined by each campus. The total must be at least 39 hours. The core for the associate degree is 27 semester hours. The core for the associate degree requires 27 semester hours.

MISSISSIPPI—As of 2006, each of the 194 articulation agreements has slightly different requirements. They range from 60 to 62 semester hours for most majors up to 66 semester hours for ceramic engineering and aviation management.

NORTH CAROLINA—As of 2006, 44 hours. North Carolina’s core includes 6 semester hours in English composition, 9-12 semester hours in humanities and fine arts, 9-12 semester hours in social and behavioral sciences, 14-20 semester hours in mathematics and the natural sciences.

SOUTH CAROLINA—As of 2006, South Carolina has 5 transfer blocks. These blocks include a core of 33 to 60 semester hours.

TENNESSEE—Adopted effective fall semester 2004, 41 semester hours for students at both two-year and four-year state-supported institutions. The core covers several areas: 9 semester hours in communication (English and Speech), 9 semester hours in humanities and/or fine arts, with at least 1 course in literature, 9 semester hours in social or behavioral sciences, 6 semester hours in history, 8 semester hours in natural sciences, and 3 semester hours in mathematics. In addition, students must complete the equivalent of one year of a foreign language to earn an associate’s degree and the equivalent of 2 years of a foreign language to earn a bachelor’s degree.

TEXAS—As of 2006, the Texas Core requires 6-12 semester hours in communication (English), 3-6 semester hours in mathematics, 6-9 semester hours in natural sciences, 6-9 semester hours in humanities and visual arts (including 3 hours in visual arts), 15-18 semester hours in social and behavioral sciences (including 6 hours of U. S. history and 6

hours of political science), and up to 3 semester hours of institutional options like computer literacy. The total is 42 semester hours, to a maximum of 48 semester hours.

VIRGINIA—As of 2006, 35 semester hours.

Survey Question 5: What instrument(s) does your state use to assess the performance of your statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements? *If possible, please include a copy of this instrument. Also, please provide information about the instrument or instruments that your state uses on an attached sheet and/or in an attached document.*

If your state has a statewide core curriculum only for two-year institutions or only for four-year institutions, or if it has separate core curricula for two-year and four-year institutions, please provide details on an attached sheet.

ALABAMA—Assessment is up to each institution.

FLORIDA—Beginning in 1984, Florida employed the College-Level Academic Skills Test to ensure coordination of testing and score reporting. At one time, all sophomores had to pass the College Level Academic Skills Test in order to receive an Associate in Arts degree or to become a junior at a state university in Florida.

However, the Florida legislature in 1995 allowed students to be exempt from the College Level Academic Skills Test if they demonstrated “achievement of college-level skills via alternative methods (for example, a 2.5 GPA in the subject area).” As of 2006, Florida still required the College Level Academic Skills Test test. Students could be exempted from taking the College Level Academic Skills Test by having a score of 500 or better on the SAT verbal portion and by score of 500 or better on the math portion.

The College Level Academic Skills Test has four parts: an essay; a test of English language skills; a test of reading skills; and a mathematics test.

GEORGIA—Regents Testing Program for all two-year and four-year institutions. The Regents Test has 2 sections—Reading Comprehension and Writing. As of 2006, students could be exempted from taking the Regents Testing Exam if they have high enough SAT scores.

KENTUCKY—No, we have talked about finding an appropriate instrument, but we have not yet found a suitable instrument.

LOUISIANA—No. We have no uniform procedure, but we are moving in that direction.

MISSISSIPPI—The State Board for Community and Junior Colleges uses data from the Institutions of Higher Learning Board, which governs four-year institutions.

NORTH CAROLINA—They set up comprehensive articulation agreements. Community colleges offered core courses on a quarter system, while the state universities offered core courses on a semester system. Faculty from both community colleges and the university

system came together to form a common core library. Then both faculties looked at the four-year core and developed a common set that would transfer intact if you completed your associate degree. All core courses would automatically transfer if a student got a C. If a student graduated without a degree, courses might or might not transfer on a campus-by-campus basis. Students must finish the two-year degree to get the courses accepted automatically.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No. We do not use a statewide assessment instrument.

TENNESSEE—Tennessee institutions must use the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, College BASE, or the ETS-Academic Profile to measure performance for this indicator. If an institution elects to use the College BASE or the ETS-Academic Profile, they may select either the long or short version of the test. An institution can earn up to 15 points (out of 100 possible points) toward performance-based funding. This bonus could be as much as 5.45% over and above their annual formula-generated appropriations, based on exemplary performance levels.

If a Tennessee institution’s current test is at or above the 60th percentile for four-year institutions, or the 55th percentile for two-year institutions, compared to the national norm score, then the institution is awarded the full 15 points.

For the 1999-2000 academic year, we have the following results for Tennessee Board of Regents universities (excluding the University of Tennessee) and our two-year colleges:

TABLE 16: TEST RESULTS FOR TENNESSEE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, EXCLUDING THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, FOR 1999-2000

Type of Institution	Number Tested	Number at or above National Average	Percent at or above National Average
University	8,226	3,863	47%
Two-year college	5,068	2,164	45%

TEXAS—This is left up to individual institutions. We receive reports from individual institutions. None of them use standardized tests. However, there is no significant difference between the GPA of transferring students at the receiving institution compared to the grade point average of native students.

VIRGINIA—Virginia uses a wide range of assessment measures, including the following: nationally developed programmatic methods, locally developed programmatic methods, course-specific methods, course grades, student-perception methods, alumni-perception surveys, employer-perception surveys, and student portfolios.

Survey Question 6: Has your state done research to see if the imposition of a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements has improved student achievement?

_____ Yes. *Please include a copy of your findings.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

If your state has a statewide core curriculum only for two-year institutions or only for four-year institutions, or if it has separate core curricula for two-year and four-year institutions, please provide details on an attached sheet.

ALABAMA—No assessment so far.

FLORIDA—Tom Furlong, Deputy Executive Director for Educational Services, Florida Community College System, (850) 488-0555, ext. 132, or 325 West Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida, 32399-0400, reported that although no research has been done over the last 3 years, the performance of every student is tracked on a number of measures.

GEORGIA—Regents exams since 1972, but the institutions assess student achievement. However, the Board of Regents conducts research to compare the GPA of transferring students with native students.

KENTUCKY—No, we have not done research in that area.

LOUISIANA—No, we have not done research to see if the imposition of a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements has improved student achievement.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—We keep data on all community college transfer students and how they compare to the native student performance in persistence, GPA, time to degree, and how they perform after transfer compared to native students. We produce reports annually.

For the 2004-2005 academic year, there were 5,046 transfers from the community college system to the 15 state-supported universities and the North Carolina School of Arts. The mean GPA of transfers was 2.69.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—It's difficult to attribute progress to just one factor.

TEXAS—It is very difficult to take any aspect of a student's career and attribute it to core curriculum. It is difficult to get quantifiable data. General education provides a solid basis for advanced study.

VIRGINIA—No, we have not researched the difference.

Survey Question 7: Has your state done research to see if imposition of a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements has reduced the number of hours that students lose when they transfer? (For example, has your state done research to see how many hours it takes native students at state universities to graduate compared to the number of hours it takes students who have transferred in from two-year colleges to graduate?)

_____ Yes. *Please include a copy of your study.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

If your state has a statewide core curriculum only for two-year institutions or only for four-year institutions, or if it has separate core curricula for two-year and four-year institutions, please provide details on an attached sheet.

ALABAMA—Yes. In 2001, Alabama was “in the discussion stage” about methods for determining whether it had reduced the number of hours that students lose when they transfer. By 2006, Alabama had concluded that its statewide freshman and sophomore studies curriculum was efficient in reducing the loss of transfer credit.

FLORIDA—Yes. An article by the Florida Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges (April 1999) reported that students who transfer from community colleges to state universities and afterwards graduate earn an average of 139.3 semester hours. Graduating native students earn an average of 136.1 semester hours. The difference is 3.2 hours, or about 1 course.

For the academic year 2004-2005 (summer, fall, and winter terms), native university students who completed their baccalaureate degrees in Florida earned an average of 134.3 semester hours. Transfer students who had earned an associate of arts degree took an average of 137.0 hours to earn their baccalaureate degree, or a difference of only 2.7 semester hours. These figures have led Florida education authorities to conclude that transfer in Florida is efficient.

For the academic year 2004-2005, 86.1% of all students who had earned an associate’s degree who then went on to earn the baccalaureate from a state-supported university earned their degree within 115% of the minimum required number of hours. That is, 86.1% of Associate in Arts graduates who went on to earn a baccalaureate degree did so with 138 semester hours or fewer (unless the major required more than the minimum of 120 semester hours). (The minimum number of hours required for a baccalaureate degree in Florida is 120 semester hours, with a few exceptions like electrical engineering, a major allowed to require additional hours.) This economy in credit hours is one indication that transfer in Florida is efficient.

GEORGIA—Yes, when we changed to a semester core system, we reviewed all degree programs and limited most baccalaureate programs to 120 semester hours and most two-year programs to 60 hours, with a few exceptions.

KENTUCKY—No, we have not yet determined if our general transfer component has helped to reduce the number of hours it takes a student to complete a four-year degree. We have done some research on Time to Degree, and we found that the more students transfer within an institution (changing majors) or across institutions (two-year institution to two-year institution or two-year institution to four-year institution), the longer it takes the student to earn a degree.

LOUISIANA—No. We make sure our core does not inhibit what institutions can require. However, individual institutions, the four management systems, and the board of regents have all instituted limits.

MISSISSIPPI—We have assumed that it has.

NORTH CAROLINA—No. During the late 80s, however, the General Assembly instituted a maximum number of hours for a 4-year degree. With certain exceptions (like engineering), graduation requirements could be no more than 128 hours. If a student takes more than 128 hours, then he/she is charged a surcharge for hours in excess of 128. This did a lot to reduce time to degree. This has had the major impact.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—No. We do think that it has reduced the loss of transfer credit. These changes will not save anybody money.

TEXAS—Possibly; it is one of our assumptions. Texas has found that most courses transfer for students transferring from both two-year and four-year state-supported institutions, although the four-year students fare better. In 2001, for transfer students from two-year colleges, 83% of total semester hours were accepted. Of the semester hours rejected, 64% were for non-controversial reasons. For transfer students from universities, 91% of total semester hours were accepted. Of the semester hours rejected, 92% were for non-controversial reasons.

Non-controversial reasons for rejection of courses include low grades (less than a C), repeated courses, developmental courses, technical or occupational courses, course quality, a change in major concentration, lack of an equivalent course, and exceeding the maximum of transfer hours allowed.

In 2001, the THECB (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board) concluded that in Texas transfer was efficient.

VIRGINIA—No, but Virginia would have the ability to do so if the student had taken all of his or her courses in Virginia since 1993. However, we have found that graduating community college students have earned a median of 4 to 11 excess credits that can not be used to satisfy baccalaureate requirements. The answer to this problem is better advising and better planning by students. Another reason is that Virginia Community Colleges typically require 62 semester hours for graduation and only 60 semester hours are transferable.

Survey Question 8: If your state has implemented a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements, has your state adopted standards as to what constitutes expected outcomes for all graduates of four-year state-supported institutions?

_____ Yes. *Please include a copy of what outcomes your state expects, and a report on the results that your state has received.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

If your state has a statewide core curriculum only for two-year institutions or only for four-year institutions, or if it has separate core curricula for two-year and four-year institutions, please provide details on an attached sheet.

ALABAMA—No, we have not adopted statewide standards for graduates of state-supported four-year colleges. This was still true in 2006.

FLORIDA—No.

GEORGIA—No.

KENTUCKY—No.

LOUISIANA—No.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—No.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—No, each campus has its own definition of cultural literacy. However, the adopted core has general education outcomes for each area of general education. For example, as of 2006, Tennessee has 7 expected outcomes for Natural Sciences. One expected outcome is that students will “Use basic scientific language and processes, and be able to distinguish between scientific and non-scientific explanations.” Note that these expected outcomes have to do with skills, rather than specific content.

TEXAS—Texas does not have a standard of cultural literacy. However, Texas has listed 6 defining characteristics of basic intellectual competencies:

1. Reading—the ability to read at college level and analyze printed material and the subject matter of disciplines.
2. Writing—Competency in writing is the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience.
3. Speaking—The ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience.

4. Listening—The ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication at the college level.
5. Critical Thinking—Critical thinking embraces the methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies.
6. Computer Literacy—Computer literacy at the college level means the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information.

VIRGINIA—“Virginia has established standards in Writing Competency and Computer Competency.”

Survey Question 9: If your state has adopted a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements, would you please share the major reasons for doing so? *Please give details on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—The legislature passed this legislation to make sure that students enrolled in two-year institutions could have course work accepted at state-supported four-year institutions.

FLORIDA—To reduce the loss of transfer credit and to make it easier for students to transfer, while maintaining the quality of instruction.

GEORGIA—Georgia adopted a core curriculum for 3 reasons. The first is to establish the principle that general education is the foundation of all baccalaureate degree programs. The second is to encourage each institution to reflect its mission by developing a superior program of general education. The third is to promote the concept that “full credit courses satisfactorily completed at one institution will be accepted by other system institutions—thereby affirming the integrity of credit offered throughout the University system.”

KENTUCKY—To increase the efficiency of transfer across the system, especially for students transferring from two-year institutions, and from two-year institutions to four-year institutions.

LOUISIANA—Louisiana’s Board of Regents accepts fully the commonly accepted premise that graduates of similar undergraduate degree programs should attain a broad-based common educational experience. The most appropriate method to ensure that such occurs among students at state colleges and universities is through mandated statewide general education requirements.

MISSISSIPPI—The rationale for development was to reduce transfer problems and to establish consistency of transfer requirements.

NORTH CAROLINA—Our core system was instituted in an attempt to get more cooperation and more collaboration between the community college system and the UNC

system. It was a concerted effort to get institutions working together in the direction of a seamless K-16 system.

SOUTH CAROLINA—To facilitate transfer between two-year institutions and four-year institutions.

TENNESSEE—It passed because the legislature had complaints from constituents about transfer (articulation).

TEXAS—Texas adopted its core to continue its statewide focus on facilitating the transfer of lower division credit among public colleges and universities around the state. One of its provisions allows the transfer student to use a successfully completed group of lower division core curriculum courses and/or a successfully completed group of lower division “field of study” courses to substitute for similar groups of courses at the college or university to which they transfer.

VIRGINIA—Virginia adopted transfer modules because the state thought that it should be made as easy as possible for graduates of community colleges to transfer to senior institutions and get full credit for work that they have done. This was done to assure fair access to a four-year education and reasonable credit toward a bachelor’s degree for their community college courses and programs. Transfer should be easy and orderly.

Survey Question 10: If your state has adopted a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements, does it include upper level or capstone requirements?

Yes.

No.

Other. *Please explain on a separate sheet.*

If your state has a statewide core curriculum or general education requirements, please include (on an attached sheet or in an attached document) information on these requirements, such as a list of courses and course descriptions and the number of hours they carry, etc.

ALABAMA—No. Alabama’s core is for two-year institutions, and therefore it does not mandate capstone requirements.

FLORIDA—No. Florida’s core is for two-year institutions and does not mandate capstone requirements.

GEORGIA—No. Georgia does not mandate capstone requirements.

KENTUCKY—No. Kentucky does not mandate capstone requirements.

LOUISIANA—No. Louisiana does not mandate capstone requirements.

MISSISSIPPI—No. Mississippi’s series of articulation agreements applies only to two-year institutions, and therefore it does not mandate capstone requirements. However, any of the 8 state universities is free to establish capstone requirements.

NORTH CAROLINA—No. North Carolina’s general education requirements apply only to two-year institutions, so it does not mandate capstone requirements.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No. South Carolina has a series of transfer blocks for students transferring from two-year institutions to four-year institutions, so it does not have capstone requirements.

TENNESSEE—The University of Tennessee has a wide variety of capstone requirements by departments, but there is no statewide requirement.

TEXAS—In Texas, the core is for lower level general education courses only.

VIRGINIA—Virginia does not have capstone requirements. However, individual institutions may impose capstone requirements. Community college students have to complete 2 courses in English composition. Some four-year institutions require 2 courses in English composition, however 1 of the 2 composition courses has to be an upper level course. Thus transferring students have to complete 1 additional composition course.

Survey Question 11: Of your state’s statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements in your state, how many of these courses would be considered to be survey or introductory courses—that is, courses that would count for credit toward a major in that field—or are some for non-majors, e.g. math for non-math majors, science for non-science majors, etc.? _____ [number] *Please list the courses on an attached sheet and/or an attach an appropriate document.*

If your state has a statewide core curriculum only for two-year institutions or only for four-year institutions, or if it has separate core curricula for two-year and four-year institutions, please provide details on an attached sheet.

ALABAMA—This depends on the rules at the four-year institution.

FLORIDA—All 36-semester credit hours would count for transfer, and they would count toward a major in a state university just as a comparable course at a state university would count.

GEORGIA—Georgia’s core has 2 options in the Science, Mathematics, and Technology area. One option is for non-science majors, which allows for either 2 4-hour laboratory courses or a 4-hour laboratory course plus a 3-hour laboratory course. The science requirement for science majors requires 2 4-hour laboratory courses.

KENTUCKY—General education courses are a part of most, if not all, majors, depending on the institution.

LOUISIANA—This is difficult to answer. We do not state what course relates to fulfilling a requirement. This is left up to the institution. A survey course may count for either general education credit or for a major, or for both.

MISSISSIPPI—Each course in the 194 articulation agreements would count toward a major in that discipline.

NORTH CAROLINA—General education core and pre-major courses covered in articulation agreements could mostly (if not all) be applied toward specific majors.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Yes, provided the four-year major requires that many credit hours in that field.

TENNESSEE—There was a 32-semester-hour core in 5 areas for students at two-year institutions that constituted their minimum graduation requirements, but most institutions had more requirements. Students would not usually repeat courses, even if the courses differed from institution to institution. If a student were forced to repeat a course to be counted toward a major, it would still count for elective credit. For example, a math course that might not count toward a math major would still count for elective credit.

The new statewide core curriculum, that took effect in the fall semester of 2004, consists of 41 semester hours, and will apply to all students at both state-supported two-year and four-year institutions.

TEXAS—The core courses count toward a core, and most would count toward a major. For example, a math course that might fulfill the general education requirement might be insufficient to fulfill an introductory engineering or mathematics requirement.

VIRGINIA—Most, if not all, would be considered to be survey or introductory courses.

Survey Question 12: Concerning the social science component of the statewide core curriculum, how many of the statewide core curriculum or statewide general requirements in this area would be considered to be either survey or introductory courses—that is, courses that would count for credit toward a major in one of the social sciences? _____ [number]. *Please list the courses on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

If your state has a statewide core curriculum only for two-year institutions or only for four-year institutions, or if it has separate core curricula for two-year and four-year institutions, please provide details on an attached sheet.

ALABAMA—12 semester hours out of 41 semester hours

FLORIDA—All courses would count.

GEORGIA—As of 2006, 9 to 15 semester hours out of a 33-semester-hour transfer core component would be social sciences courses. The reason for this range is that students are

required to take 9 semester hours in behavioral sciences, but they are allowed to take up to 6 semester hours in history under their humanities requirements.

KENTUCKY—Our core requires 9 semester hours of social science or behavioral science courses.

LOUISIANA—A general education course may count toward general education credit or a major or both. The core for the baccalaureate degree requires 6 semester hours of social sciences. The core for the Associate of Arts degree requires 6 semester hours of social sciences. The core for the Associate of Science degree requires 3 semester hours of social sciences.

MISSISSIPPI—The statewide core curriculum for Mississippi's state universities consists of 24 semester hours. It includes no social science requirements. However, the humanities and fine arts component requires 9 semester hours, and history is included in the humanities. Each of the 194 articulation agreements varies in its requirements. Each Mississippi state university establishes its own cores, ranging from 41 to 51 semester hours, depending upon the student's major and university requirements.

NORTH CAROLINA—As of 2005, all 9-12 semester hours, out of the 44-semester-hour core.

SOUTH CAROLINA—South Carolina uses transfer blocks. The social science component of the transfer blocks depends upon the major. The arts, humanities, and social sciences major requires 46-48 hours, of which 9 are in the social sciences. The transfer block for science majors and math majors requires 51-53 hours, 6 of them in the social sciences. The transfer block for business majors requires 9 hours in the social sciences, out of 48-51 hours required for the major. The engineering block has a total of 33 hours, 3 of them in the social sciences. Majoring in early childhood education, elementary education, or special education requires 41-42 hours of course work, 9 of them in the social sciences.

Transfer students who have majored in nursing at a two-year institution are in a special situation. South Carolina grants 60 semester hours of credit to anyone who has completed an Associate Degree in Nursing (A.D.N.). This degree does not require any courses in the social sciences. Theoretically, then, a nursing major could transfer with no credits in the social sciences. This would, however, be unusual. Most A.D.N. degree-holders take social sciences courses as electives.

TENNESSEE—As of 2004, all will count. The new core includes 6 semester hours of social/behavioral sciences and 6 semester hours of history out of a 41-semester-hour core.

TEXAS—15 to 18 semester hours out of a 42-semester-hour core. Students are required to take 6 hours of U.S. history, 6 hours of political science, plus 3 hours of another social science. With the approval of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, institutions can increase the core from 42 hours to 48 hours.

VIRGINIA—Virginia requires 6 semester hours in history and 6 semester hours in another social science, for a total of 12 hours out of the required 35 semester hours.

Survey Question 13: Are students from two-year state-supported colleges in your state required to complete their general education requirements in order to transfer to a four-year state-supported institution?

_____ Yes.

_____ No, but they are strongly encouraged to complete their general education requirements before transferring. *Please indicate how students are encouraged to complete their general education requirements before transferring.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, students can transfer before completing general education requirements.

FLORIDA—The state code said that state universities are required to accept the general education core curriculum of any transferring community college student who has completed the core regardless of whether or not the student has received an Associate in Arts degree. However, if the transferring student has not completed the community college's general education core curriculum, then that student is bound by the core of the institution he/she is transferring to. Thus transferring students have a big incentive to complete their general education core curriculum.

Students who complete their Associate of Arts degree will receive priority for admission to a state-supported university. Other prospective transfer students are considered on a space available basis.

It is strongly recommended that a student complete the Associate in Arts degree prior to transferring. If this is not possible, students are encouraged to at least complete the 36-hour general education block at their initial institution.

Florida encourages students to complete the associate's degree before transferring to a state university. In the fall of 1994, 39% of community college students who transferred to state universities had not completed the associate's degree. This number dropped to 29% in the fall of 2000.

GEORGIA—No. As long as one has completed any area of the core, then that whole area transfers automatically.

KENTUCKY—No.

LOUISIANA—If a student does not complete the general education requirements, then the decision is up to the four-year institution.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—The four-year institution is not required to accept hours if the student has not earned a degree. Students are strongly encouraged to graduate before transferring. The receiving institution may or may not accept transferring courses.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No, they can transfer before completing general education requirements. However, if they do not complete all core requirements of an area, then courses are evaluated on an individual basis. So students have an incentive to complete the associate's degrees, or at least the 41-semester-hour core, to facilitate their own articulation.

TENNESSEE—No. If a student completes the associate's degree, then the entire 41-semester-hour core will transfer. If the student has not completed the associate's degree, then every completed area will transfer. If a category of that core (for example, all 8 hours of natural sciences) has not been completed, then courses will be evaluated on a course-by-course basis. So students have an incentive to complete the associate degree or at least complete whole categories of the core.

TEXAS—No. Any completed core course will count for transfer.

VIRGINIA—No, they can transfer at their own discretion. There is no statewide requirement that they complete general education requirements first. In an average year, about 30% of transferring students have completed their associate's degrees.

However, institutions may adopt policies that encourage students to complete the associate's degree. In Virginia, James Madison University has signed an agreement with Blue Ridge Community College that guaranteed admission to students who had completed an associate degree and met the course and GPA requirements of JMU. In 2005, 44% of transferring students to JMU had completed the associate's degrees, compared to the statewide average of 28%.

SCHEV has recommended (2003) that senior institutions require transferring community college students who had not earned the associate's degree "to demonstrate ability through additional assessments of general education skills and knowledge (e.g. competency assessments, SATs) for admission to baccalaureate degree programs."

Survey Question 14: Are students from two-year state-supported colleges in your state required to complete their associate's degree before becoming eligible for admission to a state-supported four-year institution?

_____ Yes.

_____ No, but they are strongly encouraged to complete their associate's degree before transferring. *Please explain on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, they are not required to finish their associate’s degree before being admitted to a state-supported four-year institution.

FLORIDA—No, but the state university can ignore your general education courses, if a student transfers without completing the Associate in Arts degree. It is strongly recommended that students complete the Associate in Arts degree before transferring. If this is not possible, students are encouraged to at least complete the 36-hour general education block at their initial institution.

As of 2006, students who have completed their Associate of Arts degree will receive priority for admission to a state-supported university.

GEORGIA—No.

KENTUCKY—No, we do not require students to finish the associate’s degree before being admitted to a state-supported four-year institution.

LOUISIANA—No.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—There is no statewide policy on this matter.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—No.

TEXAS—No, transfer students are not required to finish the associate’s degree before being admitted to a state-supported four-year college or university.

VIRGINIA—No. However, we encourage students to complete the associate’s degree before transferring. For the academic year 2002-2003, only 28.6% of students who transferred to four-year institutions (N=1,201) had completed their associate’s degrees, compared to 71.4% (N=3,003), who had not completed their associate’s degrees.

In SCHEV’s *State Policy on Transfer* (October 1, 2004), we state, “Transfer admissions priority should be given to students who have completed an associate’s degree over those who have not.” We also stated, “Each student who satisfactorily completes a transfer-degree program at a community college should be assured the opportunity to transfer to a state-supported baccalaureate institution. . . . Student performance in a transfer-degree program is a strong indicator of success in senior institutions and therefore, should count heavily in the evaluation of transfer applicants.”

Survey Question 15: Are students who have graduated from state-supported two-year colleges in your state exempted from all lower division general education requirements when they transfer to a state-supported four-year institution?

_____ Yes.

_____ Yes, with a few exceptions. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document on an attached sheet.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, students are not automatically exempted from lower division general education requirements.

FLORIDA—Yes.

GEORGIA—Students who complete an area of the core curriculum are guaranteed full credit for that area in transfer if they do not change their intended majors or programs of study. In areas C (humanities) and E (social sciences), students completing the sending institution's core are guaranteed full transfer credit regardless of changes in intended majors or programs of study.

For students who transfer after completing the core curriculum at a system institution, receiving institutions may require that these students complete requirements as specified for native students. However, the total number of hours required of the transfer student for the baccalaureate degree shall not exceed the number of hours required of native students for the same major field.

KENTUCKY—Students are guaranteed that the entire 48-hour package will be applied to the degree program by any university that offers that degree program. Each transfer framework is geared to a specific major, however.

LOUISIANA—If a student has completed all 39 hours of the core, then all of those courses are accepted. However, according to their general education matrix, students may have to take more courses. The 39-hour core is only a minimum, and four-year institutions may require additional hours.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—Community college graduates who have completed their general education transfer core requirements are exempt from all lower division general education requirements when they transfer to a state university.

SOUTH CAROLINA—South Carolina accepts statewide 86 courses and 6 transfer blocks by discipline. So all the courses are accepted if the student has completed the appropriate transfer block. For further information on this topic, see www.che400.state.sc.us.

TENNESSEE—No, students who graduate from state-supported two-year colleges are not exempted from all lower division general education requirements unless the four-year institution agrees to do so.

TEXAS—Yes, unless the college or university has a larger core. The larger core would apply to both transfer and native students.

VIRGINIA—Yes, but only for graduates of transfer-oriented programs. All lower level general education requirements are waived for graduates, however, four-year institutions can still require upper level general education requirements. However, some problems may occur. A community college may require 2 courses in composition. A four-year institution, however, may require a freshman year course in composition and an upper level course in composition, which would require a transferring student to complete an additional course in composition.

Survey Question 16: Are four-year state-supported institutions required to grant credit for two-year college core curriculum (general education) courses to students transferring from state-supported two-year colleges?

Yes, by law.

Yes, by articulation agreements.

Yes, by other means. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

Yes, with a few exceptions. *Please specify.*

No.

Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—If a student meets all other requirements, then the institution is required to accept core courses taken at a state-supported two-year college.

FLORIDA—Yes. Also, 26 independent colleges and universities have signed an articulation agreement that ensures Associate of Arts graduates 60 semester hours of credit and credit for completing the 36-semester-hour core curriculum.

GEORGIA—Yes, unless the student changes majors.

KENTUCKY—Legislation requires that students who complete all the requirements are guaranteed that the entire 48-hour package will be applied to the degree program by any university that offers that degree program. This means that they will not have to retake a course with similar content.

LOUISIANA—Yes, but a state university may refuse to grant credit for any course in which the student has earned less than a C.

MISSISSIPPI—Not necessarily. For community or junior college students to transfer, they must fulfill any of 3 conditions. The first is that they were qualified for admission to a state university before beginning the freshman year at a community or junior college. The second is that they have completed the core curriculum. The third alternative is that they have earned the associate's degree.

NORTH CAROLINA—Yes. Completion of the 44-semester-hour core fulfills all freshman and sophomore general education requirements.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Yes, if the student has completed the appropriate transfer block.

TENNESSEE—If the student takes the right components and takes the right 41 hours and finishes them, then all 41 semester hours will transfer. However, the student must take the right courses for his or her intended major. For example, if a student takes a course in geology to fulfill a science general education requirement and then changes to a major in biology, the geology course will count for elective credit only.

TEXAS—Yes. If a student successfully completed the 42-hour core curriculum, then that block of courses will transfer, and the student will not be required to take any additional core curriculum courses unless that institution has a larger core. If the student has not completed the entire 42-hour core, the receiving institution must grant credit for all completed core requirements.

VIRGINIA—Students must earn a grade of C or better in each course if they wish to transfer the set as a module. This package should be acceptable at all senior institutions throughout the state as complete or partial fulfillment of their general education requirements. Senior institutions should specify and publish those courses or distribution requirements that they consider equivalent to this module.

There are certain exceptions. The State Policy on Transfer also allows professional schools (engineering, fine arts, pharmacy, etc.) to determine whether the transfer module is congruent with lower division requirements. If the module is not congruent, the professional school may negotiate a separate articulation agreement with the Virginia Community College System, indicating how a more appropriate lower division general education program may be followed by prospective transfer students.

Survey Question 17: Are students in your state who have graduated from state-supported two-year colleges given preference for admission to state-supported four-year institutions, compared to students from two-year colleges who have not completed their associate's degree?

_____ Yes, they are guaranteed admission to a state-supported four-year institution.

_____ Yes, they are given preference for admission to a state-supported four-year institution. *Please give details on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please explain on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, those with the associate's degree are not given preference. At some institutions, they may be required to have completed certain core courses and have a specified grade point average. (This was true both in 2001 and in 2006.)

FLORIDA—Yes, students who have graduated from state-supported two-year colleges are given preference for admission to state-supported four-year institutions over non-graduates. Other prospective students are considered on a space-available basis.

GEORGIA—Usually there is space in four-year institutions for all students in two-year institutions desiring to transfer, but admission is competitive. In a competitive situation, a student with a two-year degree would have an advantage.

KENTUCKY—Students are encouraged to complete an Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degree prior to transfer. Universities will recognize the completion of an approved Associate in Arts/Associate in Science transfer degree by admitting students to junior standing and accepting the general education credits as meeting institution-wide lower division general education requirements.

Core courses are accepted regardless of whether students have completed the associate's degree. However, students are required to complete—in addition to the 33-semester hour general transfer component—at least 3 additional hours in natural sciences or mathematics (at a level higher than college algebra) and at least 9 additional hours in the general education transfer component.

Students who transfer without completing the associate's degree must request a general education audit from the sending institution so the institutions can verify which lower division general requirements have been met.

LOUISIANA—This is up to the four-year institution.

MISSISSIPPI—No. Students who have graduated from Mississippi's state-supported two-year colleges are not automatically given preference for admission to state-supported four-year institutions.

NORTH CAROLINA—There is no system-wide policy.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—No, there is no statewide policy by which students who have completed the associate's degree are given preference in transferring.

TEXAS—In Senate Bill 1227, Section 58, the 2005 Texas legislature has empowered the Coordinating Board to perform a feasibility study regarding automatic transfer for any community college student who has passed 30 semester hours. This study is due for the interim legislative session in October 2006.

VIRGINIA— Transfer priority is given to those who have completed a degree.

Survey Question 18: Whether your state has or does not have a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements, please send me information on an attached

sheet and/or attach an appropriate document or documents on the status of articulation agreements in your state.

ALABAMA—No articulation agreements.

FLORIDA—The status of articulation is set by the Statewide Articulation Agreement. The 36-hour requirement is a part of the big agreement. Other matters such as common course numbering, common course titles, and common course descriptions are also covered in the Statewide Articulation Agreement. There is also articulation course by course, department to department, and institution to institution.

GEORGIA—No, just for a very few programs. Not really needed for 99% of students. Students who complete the core curriculum in an institution in the University System of Georgia are guaranteed full credit in transfer at all public two-year and four-year institutions if they do not change majors or programs of study.

KENTUCKY—Some universities have developed articulation agreements with two-year state-supported institutions in their service region. The CPE does not maintain a list of those agreements. Statewide articulation agreements developed several years ago have not been maintained. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (responsible for multiple community and technical colleges throughout the state) is working to develop articulation agreements acceptable by multiple universities.

LOUISIANA—Yes, we have both articulation between state universities and individual articulation agreements by both major and by institution, in addition to the core agreement. The Louisiana Community and Technical College Board “has requested common course numbering, labeling, and syllabi where possible.”

MISSISSIPPI—Mississippi has an articulation program that links each community college to every state-supported university offering a degree in that major. This program also links every state university with every other state university offering a degree in that major. As of April 2006, Mississippi had a total of 194 articulation agreements.

Each Mississippi state university will accept courses as listed on the particular transfer program without loss of credit toward the conclusion of the four-year degree. It is intended that this articulation agreement be a minimum program transfer for all students moving from the community/junior college to the university system, as well as moving between universities in the system, acting as a “safety net” for transfer students.

The statewide articulation agreement is not intended to replace any individual articulation agreement between a particular community/junior college and a university, which would allow additional courses to transfer into a particular program of study.

NORTH CAROLINA—As of May 2005, there were a total of 20 separate statewide articulation agreements for students who had earned an Associate of Arts. There were also 5 articulation agreements for students who had earned an Associate of Science degree. Students who have earned the Associate in Applied Sciences (A.A.S.) degree are

covered by bilateral articulation agreements. Also, UNC institutions are free to make bilateral articulation agreements with community colleges. A.A.S. core requirements are 26 semester hours.

As of October 2006, North Carolina has established an articulation agreement for students in the North Carolina Community College System with 22 independent colleges and universities in North Carolina.

SOUTH CAROLINA—As of October 2006, South Carolina’s Statewide Articulation Agreement had established 86 courses that transfer automatically from all two-year state-supported institutions to all four-year state-supported institutions.

South Carolina has also established 6 transfer blocks that apply for all state-supported two-year and four-year institutions. The 6 transfer blocks cover 6 disciplines. Majors in the arts, humanities, and social sciences have a transfer block of 46-48 semester hours in specified courses. Business majors have a block of 51 semester hours. Engineering majors have a transfer block of 33 semester hours. Science and mathematics majors have a block of 51-53 semester hours. Education majors have a block of 38-39 semester hours. Nursing majors can transfer a block of 60 semester hours.

South Carolina has articulation agreements with both in-state private institutions and with several out-of-state public institutions. In addition, as of the 2005-2006 academic year, 10 private colleges and universities in South Carolina accept transfer blocks from public colleges in South Carolina.

Each two-year and four-year state institution has a chief transfer officer.

TENNESSEE—A number of institutions have their own bilateral articulation agreements, which are more specific in certain areas. For example, the University of Memphis has 16 separate articulation agreements with Southwest Tennessee Community College. A number of community colleges have articulation agreements with both private four-year institutions and with state universities in neighboring states. Tennessee borders on 8 states, so interstate transfer is a major issue for us.

For example, in 1996, 15% of Tennessee’s first-time freshmen attended out-of-state institutions, and 21% of Tennessee’s first-time freshmen were from out of state. There was a net in-migration of 2,339 students.

TEXAS—There are many articulation agreements that were in place long before core and field of study regulations were passed. They are still important. Core is not intended to replace articulation agreements. The core is a floor. It should be noticed that the core also helps “4-to-4” transfers.

As of 2002, the Coordinating Board has also developed “field of study” curricula to facilitate transfer of courses within high-demand disciplines; such agreements are now in place for 38 disciplines and majors. There are no statewide requirements for joint admission or guaranteed transfer, but these are encouraged, and several institutions have instituted these 2 policies.

All Texas state postsecondary institutions are statutorily mandated to have an institutionally defined core curriculum of 42-48 semester hours.

VIRGINIA—Articulation agreements exist primarily in discipline-specific areas. They are institutional agreements. SCHEV does not maintain a list of them.

James Madison University has signed an agreement with Blue Ridge Community College stipulating that a student who completed an associate's degree and met grade point average (GPA) and curricular requirements would be guaranteed admission. This gives students a strong incentive to complete the associate's degree.

As of 2006, 10 system-wide guaranteed admission agreements have been signed that will afford VCCS (Virginia Community College System) students increased access to baccalaureate programs. The transfer rate has progressively increased since 2002, with the 2004-2005 transfer rate of 52.1%. This number is expected to increase over the next few years.

SCHEV has a long history of working towards improving transfer between two-year colleges and four-year private colleges. Private institutions are in a unique position to offer seats to students seeking certain majors where competition for transfer is fierce. For example in 2005, SCHEV, the Virginia Community College System and a private college (Mary Baldwin College) sponsored a conference entitled "Advancing Transfer in the Commonwealth: A Summit for Public 2-Year and Private 4-Year Colleges." So SCHEV helps to facilitate transfer between state-supported two-year institutions and independent four-year institutions.

Many agreements are for either (1) programs that have very specific lower level prerequisites or (2) programs that are not considered transfer-oriented but from which a number of students actually transfer.

Survey Question 19: Do any of your state-supported four-year institutions accept graduates of two-year colleges with an Associate of Applied Sciences degree and then require them to complete their lower level general education requirements in order to earn the baccalaureate degree?

_____ Yes. *Please provide information on an attached sheet and/or attach a document or documents about the institutions that accept graduates with an Associate of Applied Sciences degree and then requires them to complete their lower level general education requirements in order to graduate*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—As of 2005, two-year colleges in Alabama offered the Associate in Applied Sciences in a number of areas, including Child Development, Culinary Arts, Medical Assisting, Networking Technology, Nursing, Process Technology, and Visual Communication.

As of 2006, Associate in Applied Sciences curricula range up to a maximum of 76 semester hours. To obtain the Associate in Applied Sciences degree in a public Alabama college, a student must take 3-6 semester hours in written composition, 3-6 hours in humanities and the fine arts, 9-11 hours in the natural sciences and mathematics, 3-6 hours in history, social sciences, and behavioral sciences, and 47-56 semester hours in general education, the technical concentration, and electives.

FLORIDA—Until 2000, Florida had only Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degrees. The state went to 3 degrees, adding the Associate in Applied Sciences. The Associate of Science has 18 hours of general education guaranteed. For the Associate in Applied Sciences graduate, most of their program is guaranteed to transfer, but not all. For the A.A.S., the transfer of credit is not guaranteed as it is for the Associate in Arts and Associate in Science degree-holders.

The Associate in Applied Sciences is not designed to be a transfer degree. However, special arrangements between the community college system and the university system may make transfer possible. As of 2006, the Associate in Applied Sciences core consists of at least 15 semester hours in these areas: communication, mathematics, humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and the natural sciences.

GEORGIA—Georgia offers Bachelor of Applied Sciences degrees at a few institutions. As of 2006, two-year colleges offer a wide range of Associate of Applied Sciences curricula. The Associate of Applied Sciences is considered a terminal degree, and courses transfer only on a course-to-course basis.

In Georgia, the Associate in Applied Sciences core consists of a minimum of 21 semester hours: 6 semester hours in written and oral communication, 4 hours in the natural sciences, 3-4 hours in mathematics, 2-4 hours in computer literacy, and 6 hours in the social sciences.

In Georgia, students who wish to transfer must also pass the Regents' Exam.

KENTUCKY—Kentucky does not have statewide upside-down articulation agreements in which students with the Associate in Applied Sciences would transfer to state universities and then complete their general education requirements. A report from students transferring at the beginning of the summer semester 2005 and the fall semester 2005 showed that 27 students transferred from our community and technical college system to Kentucky's state universities. The number of students transferring from our community and technical system with either an Associate in Arts or Associate in Science was 588. So Associate in Applied Sciences graduates who transfer to our state universities comprise less than 5% of all community and technical college graduates who transfer with an associate's degree. As of 2006, Associate in Applied Sciences core requirements vary from program to program, but generally they total about 25 semester hours.

LOUISIANA—Yes, some of our state-supported four-year institutions accept graduates of two-year colleges with an Associate of Applied Sciences degree and then require them to complete their lower level general education requirements before they earn the baccalaureate. As of 2006, the statewide core requirement for the Associate in Applied Sciences was 15 semester hours in the fields of English, math, natural sciences, humanities, and the social sciences. In addition, Associate in Applied Sciences students must satisfy the institutional requirements for computer literacy.

MISSISSIPPI—Yes. (1) There is a Construction Education Program at the University of Southern Mississippi. (2) The Forestry Program at Mississippi State University and

others will accept certain technical courses. (3) The transfer of technical credit is on a program-by-program basis.

NORTH CAROLINA— Associate in Applied Sciences core requirements are about 26 semester hours.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Yes, nursing. By statewide agreement, at least 60 semester hours will be accepted by any public four-year institution toward the baccalaureate completion program (B.S.N.) from graduates of any South Carolina public associate-degree program in nursing (A.D.N.), provided the program is accredited by the National League of Nursing and that the graduate has successfully passed the National Licensure Examination (NCLEX) and is a currently licensed Registered Nurse. As of 2006, our only Associate in Applied Sciences degree is actually an Associate Degree in Nursing (A.D.N.). State regulations allow A.D.N. recipients to transfer 60 semester hours. About 32 hours (including 12 semester hours in biology) would be considered to be core classes or general education.

TENNESSEE—There are four-year institutions in Tennessee that transfer Associate in Applied Sciences degrees, such as University of Tennessee at Martin, but it depends on what you major in and where you transfer to. There are lots of RN to BSN (Nursing) programs that look like an inverted 2+2 program.

More and more, we are seeing agreements involving the Associate in Applied Sciences. Austin Peay University has a B.S. in Professional Studies, and East Tennessee State University has a B.S. in Applied Sciences. These degrees are usually in management and technical areas. The University is starting an online Bachelor of Professional Studies. The Associate in Applied Sciences core as of 2006 was 25-26 semester hours out of 60 required hours.

See <http://www.tbr.state.tn.us>. Students who complete their Associate of Applied Science program are credited with 15-16 semester hours of general education credit when transferring.

TEXAS— Associate in Applied Sciences degrees as a rule do not have a lot of hours that transfer into the core (approximately 15 semester hours). The Bachelor of Applied Sciences students can transfer with an Associate in Applied Sciences and then complete general education courses. The THECB has concluded that transfer students who have earned the A.A.S degree perform as well after transferring as transfer students who have earned either the Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degree.

Community colleges and occupational schools in Texas can offer the Associate in Applied Sciences or Associate of Applied Arts. These degrees require 60 to 72 semester hours, and at least 15 semester hours must be in general education. Students must take at least one course in the humanities or fine arts, social or behavioral sciences, and math or natural sciences. Each program must contain math, computer, and communication competencies. General education courses must not be technical in nature (for example, Business English), and must be of a general nature.

VIRGINIA—Other. Graduates of occupational technical programs have as few as 18 hours of general education credit and therefore must complete the 4-year institutional requirement of the institution that they transfer to as a requirement of their bachelor's degree. Transfer from occupational technical programs (nursing, engineering technology, restaurant management, etc.) will continue to be worked out through articulation agreements or on a case-by-case basis.

SCHEV published a report in June, 2003 that said, "The Associate of Applied Sciences (A.A.S.) is not intended to be a transfer curriculum. It is viewed as job training rather than being an academically challenging program. A.A.S. programs are technically oriented and often lack a broad-based general education core or theoretical courses in mathematics and sciences. Virginia's state policy encourages articulation of applied degree programs with appropriate baccalaureate professional degrees, but offers no guarantees for students who transfer from applied programs."

SCHEV in another report (October 1, 2004) stated, "Some occupational-technical programs (the Associate of Applied Science and the Associate of Applied Arts) have counterparts in senior institutions (e.g. nursing, engineering technology, hotel and restaurant management). Senior institutions and community colleges should look for ways to facilitate student transfer into these programs. Transfer from occupational-technical programs will continue to be worked out through articulation agreements or on a case-by-case basis."

Old Dominion University, a large urban university in Norfolk, did a study of students who had earned the Associate in Applied Sciences before transferring to ODU. The study looked at a total of 2,627 A.A.S. graduates who transferred to Old Dominion University during the period from academic year 1990-1991 to academic year 2000-2001. (About 18.7% of all transfer students to ODU had received the A.A.S.) The study showed that these A.A.S. transfers were capable students. Transfers who were A.A.S. graduates earned a GPA of 2.68 during their first semester at ODU. By contrast, Associate in Arts and Associate in Science graduates who transferred earned a GPA of 2.61. Students who transferred without completing their associate's degrees had a GPA of 2.32.

On the other hand, A.A.S. graduates were less likely to earn a baccalaureate degree at ODU. Only 47% of transfer students who earned an A.A.S. went on to receive a bachelor's degree, compared with 67% of students who had received the Associate in Arts or Associate in Science and 55% who had not earned an associate's degree before transferring.

Associate in Applied Sciences graduates who did receive baccalaureate degrees earned them in four areas: business management, criminal justice, engineering technology, and the health professions.

Survey Question 20: If your state does not have a statewide core curriculum or statewide general requirements, did your state ever reject a statewide core curriculum or general education requirements?

_____ Yes. *Please provide details on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, Alabama has never rejected a statewide core curriculum or general education requirements.

FLORIDA—No. We had it since 1975.

GEORGIA—No.

KENTUCKY—No.

LOUISIANA—No.

MISSISSIPPI—No. We do have a core curriculum, whereby a student who does not meet our Institutions of Higher Learning requirements must take and pass a 24-semester-hour core at a community or junior college.

NORTH CAROLINA—No.

SOUTH CAROLINA-No, because the success of their articulation agreements and transfer blocks has in their opinion reduced the necessity of a state-mandated core curriculum.

TENNESSEE—No.

TEXAS—No.

VIRGINIA—No, our state legislature has not rejected a statewide core curriculum or general education requirements.

Survey Question 21: If your state does not now have a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements, is your state now considering adopting a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education requirements?

_____ Our state already has a statewide core curriculum (statewide general education requirements)

_____ Yes, our state is considering adopting a statewide core curriculum or general education requirements. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

_____ No, our state does not have a statewide core curriculum and has no plans to adopt one.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, Alabama is not now considering adopting a statewide core curriculum.

FLORIDA—No.

GEORGIA—No. We adopted the new core in 1996.

KENTUCKY—No.

LOUISIANA—No.

MISSISSIPPI—Mississippi has a statewide core curriculum for Institutions of Higher Learning that our community and junior college transfer students must follow. The core curriculum varies by institution.

NORTH CAROLINA—No. Our transfer advisory committee is constantly reviewing minor changes on a case-by-case basis.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—Tennessee's statewide core curriculum was adopted in 2000, but it did not take effect until the fall semester in 2004.

TEXAS—Not applicable.

VIRGINIA—No, and our state has no plans to adopt a statewide core curriculum.

Survey Question 22: Does your statewide core curriculum include a foreign language requirement?

_____ Yes, for both two-year and four-year institutions.

_____ Yes, but only for four-year institutions.

_____ Yes, but only for two-year institutions.

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

(If your statewide core curriculum includes a foreign language requirement, please include a copy of that requirement.)

ALABAMA—There are provisions for a foreign language elective in Area 5.

FLORIDA—Two years of high school foreign language are required to enter a state university. Community college students are not required to take a foreign language, but if they transfer to a state university, they are required to take a foreign language unless they have taken 2 years of a foreign language in high school.

GEORGIA—In Georgia’s core, students are allowed to take a foreign language in order to earn 4-5 hours credit in fulfilling their Institutional Options requirement, or for 3 hours in the Essential Skills Area, or 3 hours in the Humanities Core Area. However, students are not required to take a foreign language.

KENTUCKY—Allowed but not required. Most four-year programs, but not all, require a foreign language. Starting in 2004, entering students are required to have 2 years of a foreign language in high school to be admitted to a state university.

LOUISIANA—In the humanities area of Louisiana’s core, students are allowed to choose 9 hours from foreign languages, philosophy, religious studies, history, speech communication, and literature.

MISSISSIPPI—Each of Mississippi’s 194 articulation agreements links students in state-supported two-year institutions with state-supported universities. Therefore some articulation agreements include a foreign language requirement, and some do not.

For example, Mississippi’s Economics articulation agreement does not require a foreign language, while Mississippi’s English articulation agreement requires 12 hours of a foreign language.

NORTH CAROLINA—Yes, as an option but not as a requirement. However, the University of North Carolina changed its minimum course requirements as of the fall semester of 2004. The UNC system now requires 2 years of the same foreign language for entering freshmen. This may affect students transferring from two-year colleges, since many two-year colleges require only 1 year of a foreign language.

SOUTH CAROLINA—First-year French, German, and Spanish are included as options that students can choose from.

TENNESSEE—Effective Fall Semester 2004, to earn an associate’s degree, a student must complete the 41-semester-hour core plus the equivalent of 1 year of a foreign language. To earn a baccalaureate, a student must complete the 41-semester-hour core plus the equivalent of 2 years of a foreign language.

TEXAS—Students can receive up to 6 semester hours of credit in the Communication component of the core curriculum for studying a foreign language.

VIRGINIA—No; however, SCHEV [State Council of Higher Education for Virginia] encourages students in community colleges to begin studying a foreign language if they intend to transfer to a university that requires a foreign language.

Survey Question 23: What provisions are mandated for changing your statewide core curriculum? *Please check as many as are applicable.*

_____ Legislation.

_____ Your state’s Council on Higher Education (Board of Regents, etc.).

_____ State Core Oversight Committee.

_____ Other

Whatever your answer is, please provide details on an attached sheet of paper and/or attach an appropriate document or documents.

ALABAMA—Changes are made by ACHE (Alabama Commission on Higher Education).

FLORIDA—The local board could change its local general education requirements. The 36-hour general requirement is now required by statute. It would require action by the legislature to change that requirement. Also, the Board of Regents and the State Board of Community Colleges would recommend changes to the state legislature.

GEORGIA—Board of Regents.

KENTUCKY—Changes would have to be adopted by the Council.

LOUISIANA—The Louisiana Constitution of 1974 has vested in the Board of Regents the responsibility to approve, disapprove, or modify all existing and proposed degree programs and administrative units in Louisiana’s public colleges and universities. These responsibilities have been delegated to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, which is advised by its staff.

MISSISSIPPI— A change would require agreement between IHL Chief Academic Officers and community and junior college academic deans. [IHL refers to Mississippi’s Institutions of Higher Learning.]

NORTH CAROLINA—For substantive change, the Chancellor Advisory Committee would go to the Board of Governors and the State Board of Community Colleges. Both boards would have to approve of any significant change.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Any “unique” academic program not specifically or by extension covered by one of the statewide transfer blocks/agreements listed by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education must either create its own transfer block of 35 or more credit hours with the approval of CHE staff or adopt either the “Arts, Humanities and Social” or the “Science and Mathematics” block. The institution at which such a program is located will inform the staff of CHE and every institutional president and vice president for academic affairs about this decision.

TENNESSEE—“We are not working in a cat food factory; we are working at a university. The goal is not to graduate students as quickly as possible, but to ensure that they receive a quality education.”

THEC [Tennessee Higher Education Commission] gets the two boards [Tennessee Board of Regents and the University Board of Regents] together to make changes, but the legislature can always change this.

TEXAS—House Bill 2183, which set up the core curriculum in Texas, allows the Coordinating Board to convene advisory committees to recommend the content, component areas, and objectives of the core curriculum to the board, and to offer other assistance in the implementation of the law.

The Core Curriculum Advisory Committee has 24 members, who are appointed for a two-year term. A majority hold faculty appointments, but admissions, advising, registrar, and undergraduate general administrative staff also are represented.

VIRGINIA—There would be a policy consultation with the State Committee on Transfer and the Instructional Program Advisory Committee (composed of the Senior Academic Officer from all four-year public institutions, Richard Bland College, and the Virginia Community College System, plus 3 deans from community colleges). These two groups and the Council Staff would make a recommendation to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and then the State Board of Community Colleges, and then the 2 staffs would work out the details. Once the transfer was adopted by the SCHEV and State Board for Community Colleges, both groups would need to adopt any changes.

Survey Question 24: Does your statewide core curriculum include interdisciplinary courses?

Yes, for both two-year and four-year institutions.

Yes, but only for four-year institutions.

Yes, but only for two-year institutions.

No.

Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document or documents.*

If your statewide core curriculum includes interdisciplinary courses, please provide further information on these courses, including the number of interdisciplinary courses, their titles, and the number of hours required.

ALABAMA—No.

FLORIDA—The core can include interdisciplinary courses.

GEORGIA—Georgia's core allows for but does not require science, social science, and humanities/fine arts interdisciplinary courses.

KENTUCKY—In the general education transfer component of Kentucky's Behavioral/Social Science component, students are allowed to take interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary courses.

LOUISIANA—Interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary courses are permitted but not required.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—No.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—Tennessee’s core allows students to take up to 6 hours of interdisciplinary courses or international courses. This is not mandatory, but it is an option for students who choose it.

TEXAS—Texas allows for but does not require 3 hours of interdisciplinary courses.

VIRGINIA—No, our transfer blocks do not include interdisciplinary courses.

Survey Question 25: Do either departments or colleges and universities have the power to exempt entering or transferring students from required general education courses? *Check as many as necessary.*

Departments, if students pass a departmental test.

Departments, based on their own criteria. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

Colleges and universities, based on students’ Achievement Test scores, e.g. CLEP

Colleges and universities, based on other criteria. *Please state the criteria.*

No.

Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—It all depends on the institution. For example, as of 2006, theoretically Auburn University allows students to earn up to 84 semester hours of credit in 20 areas through high scores on the Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) or the College Level Examination Program (CLEP).

The 84 semester hours exceed the total core requirement, because students can earn credit in 3 science sequences—biology, chemistry, and physics—and in 3 different history sequences.

Students can earn up to 46 semester hours in 7 subject areas by achieving a high score on the International Baccalaureate (IB) exam.

FLORIDA—Yes, institutions have the power to exempt entering or transferring students from required general education courses. According to legislation passed in 2001 that took effect during the 2002-2003 academic year, students could reduce the 120 hours required for the baccalaureate by 5 courses by taking and passing the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Advanced Placement, or the International Baccalaureate Program.

GEORGIA—Institutions have the right to give credit by examination or to put in a higher-level course.

KENTUCKY—Yes.

LOUISIANA—Yes.

MISSISSIPPI—Local community and junior colleges set their own requirements.

NORTH CAROLINA—This decision is up to each campus.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Yes, based on Advanced Placement credits and CLEP exam and departmental exam.

TENNESSEE—No, institutions do not have the power to exempt entering or transferring students from required general education courses.

TEXAS—This decision is left up to the institution. If this course is accepted, it transfers as a core course.

VIRGINIA—Institutions handle this in various ways. SCHEV does not require that they handle this in same way.

Survey Question 26: If universities and colleges in your state have the right to exempt students from taking core requirements, are these students then required to take courses for which these core courses are required? (For example, if students are exempted from taking 6 hours of Introductory Economics, are they then required to complete 6 hours of upper level economics courses in order to fulfill their core requirements?)

_____ Yes, four-year institutions only.

_____ Yes, two-year institutions only.

_____ Yes, both two-year and four-year institutions.

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—Yes, if they are exempted by Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses taken in high school, they have to take a higher-level course if exempted, although this varies by universities.

FLORIDA—No.

GEORGIA—This decision is up to each institution.

KENTUCKY—The CPE does not track these decisions.

LOUISIANA—No.

MISSISSIPPI—If a community or junior college exempts a student, Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) institutions could and should require them to take additional courses in the exempted area.

NORTH CAROLINA—This decision is up to each institution.

SOUTH CAROLINA—This depends on the general education requirements of the institution.

TENNESSEE—No.

TEXAS—Generally not. Texas law requires no laundry list at the state level. Each institution can select its core. We can select a framework. There is no single common core!

VIRGINIA—In the community college system, for certain designated courses, students would get 3 credits for passing the CLEP exam. Students may chose to take a higher course, but they do not have to. Most senior institutions would accept “CLEPed” courses. They do not have to, but most do. Students are not required to take upper level courses in the areas that they CLEPed, but most do. Even though many students enter college with as many as 30 semester hours of credit, most do not choose to graduate early, but choose to take additional hours.

Survey Question 27: Has your state conducted research to see if the imposition of a statewide core curriculum has increased or decreased instructional costs in your state?

_____ Yes. *Please include results on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, Alabama has not conducted research to see if the imposition of a statewide core curriculum has increased or decreased instructional costs in our state. (This was true both in 2001 and in 2006.)

FLORIDA—The number of hours that it takes transferring students to earn a baccalaureate is only about 2 more than it takes native students. Also, the number of hours that it took students to earn an associate’s degree once exceeded 80. With our core curriculum, we hope to reduce the number to 72.

GEORGIA—Georgia has had a core since 1967.

KENTUCKY—No research in this area.

LOUISIANA—No.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—No

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—No.

TEXAS—No.

VIRGINIA—Virginia has not done research to determine whether the imposition of transfer blocks has increased or decreased instructional costs in our state.

Survey Question 28: In your statewide core curriculum or general education requirements, core courses comprise _____ semester hours or _____ quarter hours.

ALABAMA—96 quarter hours or 60-64 semester hours.

FLORIDA—36 semester hours.

GEORGIA—60 hours.

KENTUCKY—48 semester hours.

LOUISIANA—39 semester hours.

MISSISSIPPI—Mississippi does not have a statewide core but a series of articulation agreements, which vary in their content. Articulation agreements range from 62 or 63 hours for many articulation agreements to 66 semester hours for Ceramic Engineering and Aviation Management. The core requirement for Mississippi's state universities includes 6 semester hours of English composition, 3 semester hours of college-level algebra, 6 semester hours of a laboratory science, and 9 semester hours in humanities and fine arts. The total is 24 semester hours.

NORTH CAROLINA—44 semester hours.

SOUTH CAROLINA—South Carolina has 5 transfer blocks ranging from a low of 33 semester hours to a high of 51 semester hours.

TENNESSEE—41 semester hours for students at both two-year and four-year state-supported institutions.

TEXAS—42 to 51 semester hours.

VIRGINIA—Virginia's transfer modules (blocks) consist of 35 semester hours.

Survey Question 29: Does your statewide core curriculum or general education requirements include any capstone courses?

_____ Yes. *Please provide details on an attached sheet and/or attached document.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No.

FLORIDA—No.

GEORGIA—No.

KENTUCKY—No

LOUISIANA—No.

MISSISSIPPI—No. Mississippi's state universities have a statewide core requirement of 24 semester hours: 6 in English composition, 3 in college-level algebra, 6 in a laboratory science, and 9 in humanities and fine arts. The total is 24 semester hours. Each university chooses additional courses to require.

NORTH CAROLINA—No.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—No.

TEXAS—No.

VIRGINIA—No, our transfer blocks do not include capstone courses. However, senior institutions may require 2 courses in English composition, with 1 being a lower division course and the other an upper level course. So even if a student had completed 2 lower level English composition courses, he or she would still have to complete an additional English composition course. The second English composition course taken at a community college would count for credit as an elective and not for fulfilling the English composition requirement.

Survey Question 30: Does your statewide core curriculum or general education requirements include any specific writing requirements?

_____ Yes. *Please provide a summary on an attached sheet and/or attached document.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, we do not have specific writing requirements. However, transferring community college students must earn a C or better in English I (or the equivalent) in order for the course to transfer toward completing their English requirement, if the

institution that they are transferring to requires a grade of C or better. (This was true both in 2001 and in 2006.)

FLORIDA—As of 2006, Florida requires a total of 24,000 words for writing assignments during the first 2 years of enrollment. This is required by the Gordon Rule, which refers to a Florida state rule requiring a grade of C or better in college general education mathematics, English, humanities, and in some general education courses. The Gordon Rule also requires students to write a total of 24,000 words in these courses during the first 2 years of enrollment.

GEORGIA—No, we have the Regents Test. The Regents has its own writing requirement, which a student can satisfy by passing the Regents Exam or earning a high enough score on an appropriate ACT test or SAT test.

KENTUCKY—This is up to individual institutions.

LOUISIANA—Individual institutions have their own writing requirements.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—No.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Course requirements only.

TENNESSEE—No.

TEXAS—No, Texas does not have specific statewide writing requirements.

VIRGINIA—Writing requirements vary from institution to institution.

Survey Question 31: If your state wanted to change its statewide core curriculum, what mechanism(s) would your state use? *Check as many as are applicable.*

Legislation.

Executive order by your state's governor.

Action by your state's Department of Education.

Action by a statewide Core Curriculum Committee or Commission.

Action by a state Board of Regents (Council on Higher Education).

Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—Action by ACHE (Alabama Commission on Higher Education).

FLORIDA—Any change would have to go through a two-step process. Changes would be considered by the Articulation Coordinating Committee of the State of Florida's

Department of Education. Then any recommended change would have to be approved by the Florida Board of Education.

GEORGIA—Regents system level.

KENTUCKY—Legislature and the Council.

LOUISIANA—Board policy

MISSISSIPPI—Action by the State Board of Regents.

NORTH CAROLINA—The Joint Transfer Advisory Committee would recommend the change. If the change were significant, it might require approval of both governing boards.

SOUTH CAROLINA—The process would involve reconvening groups of institutional representatives to make recommendations to the Commission on Higher Education. If the Commission agrees on the changes, then those changes are immediately implemented.

TENNESSEE—This could be changed by the Board of Regents. The legislature could always pass a law that could change transfer and general education requirements.

TEXAS—Each institution sets its own core, but the law requires a framework for a transferable core. Each institution can change its core (can add 1 hour here and take 1 hour there) but must inform the staff. Changes can also be made by the legislature.

VIRGINIA—Joint action by the State Council on Higher Education.

Survey Question 32: In your state, how are problems concerning the transferability of courses handled?

Collaboration between the sending institution and the receiving institution.

Statewide Commission or Board that handles transfer issues.

State Council on Higher Education (Board of Regents, etc.).

Other.

No mechanism has been established to settle transfer issues.

Regardless of what answer you checked, please provide a summary on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document on how your state has handled transfer issues in implementing your statewide core curriculum.

ALABAMA—Each institution has a chief transfer officer. The Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee meets regularly to resolve articulation difficulties and to establish policy.

FLORIDA—As of 2006, Florida's Articulation Coordinating Committee hears appeals and reviews student admission and transfer difficulties, monitors the effectiveness of the

transfer process, and recommends policies and procedures to improve articulation. Students should try to resolve their transfer disputes at the local level, but if that is not successful, they should contact this office:

Florida Department of Education
Office of Articulation
325 W. Gaines St., Room 1401
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

The Office of Articulation and the Articulation Committee would handle any dispute that could not be settled at the institutional level.

GEORGIA—Disputes over transferability are handled by the receiving institution. If this fails, then the registrar of the receiving institution consults with the president of the sending institution. If this fails, the president of the sending institution can appeal to the Chancellor, who can refer the matter to the Administrative Committee on Transfer of Credit. Finally, the Chancellor can act on the recommendations of the Administrative Committee on Transfer of Credit.

KENTUCKY—Kentucky has institutional transfer contacts (chief transfer officers) at every state-supported two-year and four-year institution. Kentucky guarantees every student, “If you complete all the requirements, you are guaranteed that the entire 48-hour package will be applied to the degree program by any university that offers that degree program. This means that you will not have to retake a course with similar content.” Students have to earn a 2.0 in the transfer component.

LOUISIANA—The dean and department heads of receiving institutions or a centralized admissions office are responsible for determining course equivalencies of transfer credits. Courses described in catalogs of respective colleges are compared and assessed. Where it is unclear, the respective colleges and universities are contacted to request information about the content of the courses in question.

MISSISSIPPI—Dispute resolution on transfer problems is handled informally between local colleges and the university. If the problem can’t be handled at that level, the chief academic officers and academic deans work out the problem.

Mississippi’s articulation agreements are quite specific, and transfer is not difficult for students who plan ahead.

The state encourages students who wish to transfer to plan ahead and to determine for themselves the best way to meet the requirements for transfer. These are Mississippi’s recommendations to students who plan to transfer:

1. Choose a major as early as possible.
2. Select the college or university that you want to transfer to as soon as possible.
3. Contact the chairperson of the division or department of that college or university as soon as possible.
4. Follow the articulation guidelines and specific advice given for the college or university that you wish to transfer to.
5. Request all program advice in writing.

NORTH CAROLINA—The North Carolina Joint Committee on College Transfer hears appeals from students and monitors the effectiveness of transfer guidelines and process. The Comprehensive Articulation Agreement Manual contains an appendix that explains in detail how a student can file a grievance.

SOUTH CAROLINA—South Carolina handles articulation problems primarily through collaboration between the sending institution and the receiving institution and secondarily through the State Council on Higher Education.

TENNESSEE—chief transfer officer at each campus. Rarely is there a dispute over transfer credit. However, there is a THEC transfer committee to adjudicate transfer disputes.

TEXAS—The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has appointed a Subcommittee on Transfer Dispute Resolution to resolve transfer difficulties. Each institution has a chief transfer officer. Institutions suffer a loss of portion of their state appropriations if they unfairly deny transferring students academic credit.

VIRGINIA—Virginia’s State Committee on Transfer recommends that if transferring students encounter difficulty, they should consult the chief transfer officer (CTO) at their four-year institution. Before community college students register at a four-year state-supported institution, they receive a formal evaluation of their transfer credits from that institution. For information, see <http://www.schev.edu/html/academic/transfrintro/html>.

The chief transfer officers on each campus generally handle problem resolution.

Survey Question 33: Does your state have a rising-junior exam that either native students or students transferring from two-year colleges to four-year institutions (or both) are required to pass before being admitted to junior status at a four-year institution?

_____ Yes, for students at both two-year and four-year institutions.

_____ Yes, but only for students at four-year institutions.

_____ Yes, but only for students at two-year institutions.

_____ Yes, but only for some institutions.

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, both in 2001 and in 2006.

FLORIDA—Yes, the College Level Academic Skills Test.

GEORGIA—Regents Test is required for everyone. If they fail, they have to take remediation until they pass. The test consists of 2 parts, a reading test and an essay test. About 73% of students pass on their first try. As of 2006, students could exempt sections of the Regents Test by having high SAT scores.

The purpose of the Regents Test is twofold: first, to provide system-wide information on the status of student competence in the areas of reading and writing; and

second, to provide a uniform means of identifying those students who fail to attain the minimum levels of competence in the areas of reading and writing.

According to Regents' policy, students must take the test in the semester after they have completed 30 semester credit hours. Students who have earned 45 semester credit hours and have not passed both parts of the test must enroll in remedial courses until they pass both parts.

KENTUCKY—No.

LOUISIANA—This is not mandated by the state, but some institutions do.

MISSISSIPPI—No, but this issue has been discussed.

NORTH CAROLINA—No. However, Fayetteville State University has a rising-junior exam that students have to pass in order to be admitted unconditionally to their junior exam. The test used is The College Basic Academic Subject Examination (CBASE). The test consists of an English subsection, a mathematics subsection, and 3 cross-disciplinary sections that test reasoning.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No, South Carolina does not have a rising-junior exam.

TENNESSEE—No.

TEXAS—No. Texas has discussed adopting a rising-junior exam, but we have not adopted one. We think that there is no real point in adopting one. Texas A&M University, however, has a rising junior exam, which if students pass, they are exempted from taking an additional composition course. Students who do not pass the rising-junior exam are required to take English 3301 (a course designed to help students achieve a professional level of writing). Students must take English 3301 until they earn a C or better.

VIRGINIA—No, we do not have a statewide rising-junior exam.

Survey Question 34: Are graduates of two-year state-supported institutions in your state automatically granted junior status when they transfer to state-supported four-year institutions?

- Yes, both for academic status and for non-academic privileges like housing, parking, and tickets to athletic events.
- Yes, but only academically.
- Yes, but only non-academic privileges like housing, parking, and tickets to events.
- Yes, but with exceptions. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*
- No.
- Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—This is an institutional policy. On the state level, class standing and other academic and non-academic privileges are never automatic.

FLORIDA—Yes, for all institutions.

GEORGIA—Yes, unless they change their major.

KENTUCKY—Students who complete Kentucky's General Education Component and the Specialty Component and go on to earn an associate's degree will be guaranteed 60 semester hours of credit.

LOUISIANA—It's up to the individual institution. For example, a student may transfer with an Associate in Applied Sciences, but not all 60 hours may count toward graduation. So an A.A.S. graduate who transfers to a university may have to complete some additional hours before gaining junior status.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—Yes, but foreign language and physical education courses may be required prior to transfer or after transfer.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Yes, provided students complete their Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degree. Junior status applies only to campus activities such as priority in registration for courses, residence hall assignments, parking, athletic event tickets, etc., and not in calculating academic degree credits.

TENNESSEE—Yes, does not mean that much except for parking.

TEXAS—Up to each institution.

VIRGINIA—Yes, for transfer-oriented programs. No, for occupational or technical programs. In theory, every community college graduate of a transfer program should be given junior status. However, four-year institutions differ in the way that they define junior status or treat advanced standing credits that did not originate at the two-year college (credit by exam, distance education credits, Advanced Placement credits). For example, some institutions will accept D grades when transferred as part of a degree; others will not award credit for anything below a C. This makes a difference in calculating a student's class status.

However, for the academic year 2002-2003, the vast majority (78%) of associate degree graduates were classified as juniors (72.2%) or seniors (5.8%). The easiest way for a transfer student to have junior or senior status upon transferring is through joint enrollment.

Survey Question 35: Are students in your state required to complete all lower level required general education requirements before admission to junior status?

- _____ Yes, for all students enrolled four-year institutions and all students transferring from two-year institutions.
- _____ Yes, but only for students enrolled in four-year institutions.
- _____ Yes, but only for students transferring from two-year institutions.
- _____ Yes, but only for some students in some state-supported four-year institutions.
- _____ Yes, but only for some students in some state-supported two-year institutions.
- _____ No, but they are strongly encouraged to do so. *Please provide a summary on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*
- _____ No.
- _____ Other. *Please explain.*

If only some students are required to complete all lower level required general education requirements before being granted junior status, please specify which students and why.

ALABAMA—No, students in Alabama are not required to complete all lower level required general education requirements before admission to junior status.

FLORIDA—Yes, for both transferring and native students.

GEORGIA—No.

KENTUCKY—No.

LOUISIANA—No.

MISSISSIPPI—No, we do not require students in our state to complete all lower level required general education requirements before admission to junior status.

NORTH CAROLINA—Some students stretch out general education requirements over 4 years.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—No.

TEXAS—No.

VIRGINIA—No, students can become juniors on the basis of credit hours before completing lower level required general education requirements.

Survey Question 36: Does your state collect statistics on the academic performance of students who transfer from state-supported two-year colleges to state-supported four-year colleges and universities, or from four-year institutions to other four-year institutions? *Check as many as apply.*

- _____ Yes, for students transferring from one state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution.

- _____ Yes, for students transferring from two-year institutions to four-year institutions.
- _____ Yes, for students transferring from two-year institutions to two-year institutions.
- _____ Yes, for students transferring from four-year institutions to two-year institutions.
- _____ No.
- _____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—The Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education collect transfer data annually. (This was true both in 2001 and in 2006.)

FLORIDA—Yes, transfer data is collected each fall. The *Articulation Report* of the Department of Education State Board of Community Colleges (April 1999) stated that in Florida, most community college students who transfer earn grade point averages of 2.50 or higher in state universities. For the fall semester of 1996, 68.5% of transferring students earned grade point averages of 2.50 or higher. Overall, 87.1% of transferring community college students in Florida have earned a grade point of 2.0 or higher in Florida’s state-supported universities.

GEORGIA—Yes. For the academic year 2003-2004, this is what we found:

TABLE 17: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF TRANSFER STUDENTS
IN GEORGIA, 2003-2004

Type of Institution	Number of Transfers from Two-Year Colleges	Average GPA Before Transfer	Average GPA After Transfer
Research Universities	1,891	2.63	2.85 (+0.13)
Regional Universities	1,629	2.47	2.63 (+0.15)
State Universities	3,817	2.62	2.77 (+0.15)
State Colleges	652	2.84	2.87 (+0.03)
Two-Year Colleges	7,472	2.92	2.91 (-0.01)

The data showed that there was no appreciable transfer shock for students transferring from two-year colleges in Georgia. In each category except for students transferring from one two-year college to another, the average GPA actually increased. For students transferring to two-year colleges, there was only a slight decrease in GPA (-0.01).

KENTUCKY—Transfer data is reported each term to The Council on Postsecondary Education. We track the number of students who transfer and their graduation rates but not their GPA. We do track on 5-year graduation rate on all students who transfer with 30 or more hours. The 5-year graduation rate varies from about 35.3 % at one state university to a high of about 62.4% at another state university. Transfer Data is reported each term to the Council on Postsecondary Education.

LOUISIANA—Yes, periodically tracked through the Louisiana student data system.

MISSISSIPPI—Student transfer data is reported each term to the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. For the fall semester of 1999, the 6,571 community and junior college transfer students earned a term GPA of 2.85, compared to a term GPA of 2.36 for 25,201 students at the 8 state-supported universities. This was statistically significant.

NORTH CAROLINA—Yes. North Carolina collects data annually on the academic performance of all students, including transfer students. Here are the data for the 2004-2005 academic year:

TABLE 18: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF TRANSFER STUDENTS IN NORTH CAROLINA, ACADEMIC YEAR 2004-2005

Graduates of the North Carolina Community College System who were enrolled in the college transfer program and then transferred to a UNC institution	5,046
Mean Grade Point Average (GPA) of Transfer Students	2.69
Mean number of hours earned first semester at a UNC institution	12.8
Percent of transfer students earning a GPA of 2.0 or better at UNC institutions	70.8%

SOUTH CAROLINA—“The State Technical Colleges do this in conjunction with the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and four-year institutions.”

TENNESSEE—Yes, only native students, to look at GPA and persistence.

TEXAS—Yes. Universities are required to report back to any community colleges the performance of transfer students if 5 or more students have transferred from that institution. In Texas, there is no significant difference in the quality of student performance at the receiving institutions (as measured by grade point averages earned at

the receiving universities) among college and university students who transfer to universities after completing at least 30 semester hours at their prior institutions and students with at least 30 semester hours who began and remained at their initial universities.

There is little transfer shock in Texas for transferring students who have earned 30 or more semester hours according to a 2004 THECB report. Transfer shock varies from 0.0 to -0.29 grade points.

Texas maintains detailed records on a number of measures for transfer students, including student retention, progress, and graduation.

VIRGINIA—Yes, data is reported annually to the State Council of Higher Education. In 1997, the State Committee on Transfer reported that students transferring from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year institutions experienced transfer shock in their first semester at a four-year institution. However, transfer shock is not a lasting phenomenon. Transfer shock resulted in drops of 0.3 to 1.0 in grade point averages, but in Virginia transferring students recovered and later earned grades that were equivalent to their performance at community college.

“SCHEV’s database allows great flexibility in what we report.” We are able to track students transferring from one state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution, students transferring from one state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution, students transferring from one state-supported two-year institution to another state-supported two-year institution, and students transferring from one state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution.

A later SCHEV report in March 2003 found different results. This report studied 2,965 transfer students who entered a community college for the first-time in fall 1993 and transferred to a four-year institution within four years. The average grade point average for all coursework during the first year at a VCCS college was 2.84 compared to 2.73 GPA for all coursework attempted during the first year after transfer to a four-year institution. The transfer shock was only -0.11. As might be expected, students who transferred to institutions with more selective admission policies (for example, the College of William and Mary, the University of Virginia, and Virginia Tech) suffered greater transfer shocks (-0.26 to -1.02).

SCHEV monitors the academic performance of transfer students by race so that they can assist minority students in their transition to four-year institutions.

Survey Question 37: Does your state fund any specialized services for transferring students?

- Yes, our state provides specialized services. *Please provide details on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*
- Yes, individual institutions provide specialized services. *Please provide details on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*
- No.
- Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document on an attached sheet.*

ALABAMA—No, our state does not fund specialized services to transferring students.

FLORIDA—Some universities do. They all have articulation officers.

GEORGIA—Yes, but this is up to institutions. We have not mandated any statewide specialized services for transferring students.

KENTUCKY—No, our state does not fund specialized services to transferring students.

LOUISIANA—There are no line-item appropriations for this purpose.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—Special transfer orientation sessions may be combined with freshman orientation. All services are open to every student.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—There is no budget line item for assisting transfer students, but each institution has a chief transfer officer (CTO).

TEXAS—No, our state does not fund specialized services to transferring students.

VIRGINIA—Other. See our Web page with information for transferring students, located at www.schev.edu/html/academic/transferintro.html. Institutions get a lump sum, and they spend their funds as they see fit.

In a report issued in June 2003, SCHEV made 3 major recommendations. The first was that the legislature provide more money per Full Time Equivalent student, based on the percentage increase in the number of transfers enrolled. The second was an increase in financial aid for transfer students targeted for associate graduates. The third was dual admission programs for qualified undergraduates, in order to guarantee access for those transfer students best prepared to move into a baccalaureate degree program.

SCHEV policy states, “Transfer students to senior institutions should have, to the extent possible, the same opportunities as native students of comparable standing in such matters as course selection, registration, access to campus housing, and financial aid.”

Survey Question 38: Has your state legislature passed any legislation regarding transfer and articulation since 1990?

_____ Yes. *Please provide a summary on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—In 1994, the Alabama legislature passed ACT 94-202, which established a statewide freshman- and sophomore-level general studies curriculum. This bill had four primary goals. The first was to develop a statewide general studies curriculum by 1998. The second was to develop and adopt an articulation agreement by 1999. The third was to examine the need for a uniform course numbering system, uniform course titles, and uniform course descriptions. The fourth goal was to resolve problems in the interpretation and application of the articulation agreement. The biggest problem seemed to be resolving technology issues in implementing our core.

There were no major changes in this policy in 2000-2006.

FLORIDA—Time to Degree Legislation in 1995. In its 1997-1998 General Appropriations Act, the Florida legislature imposed a surcharge of 50% on hours in excess of 115% of graduation requirements (including hours failed and dropped). There are several exceptions—students seeking a double major, internships, ROTC, personal hardship, etc. This was done in an attempt to reduce the amount of time it takes students to graduate.

In 2000, the Florida legislature passed Senate Bill 1162, which took effect for the academic year 2002-2003. This bill would require students seeking the Bright Futures Award to take at least 5 examinations for college credit through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), the Advanced Placement Program, or International Baccalaureate Program. Credit earned would apply toward the 120 hours required for a bachelor's degree.

Florida's legislature has established the Articulation Coordinating Committee to oversee articulation and transfer policies. It is chaired by the deputy commissioner of education and includes administrators representing community colleges, technical colleges, and four-year public and independent institutions. This group monitors adherence to articulation policies and adjudicates disputers.

There were no major changes to this policy in 2000-2006.

GEORGIA—[no response]

KENTUCKY—In 1997, legislation reorganizing the Council on Postsecondary Education retained its emphasis on transfer. The Kentucky legislature legislated that articulation should be pursued between the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and other postsecondary institutions whenever feasible.

Kentucky's transfer policy was revised by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education in 2004. In that year, CPE required all state universities to develop "completer degree" programs that will enable transfer students to complete the baccalaureate degree without taking excess hours. Among the degrees in the completer degree program are the B.A. in Liberal Studies, B.A. in General Studies, B.A. in University Studies, and B.S. in Occupational Theory and Development.

All of Kentucky's state universities have begun to offer Presidential Scholarships for transfer students. In some cases, the requirements are minimal. In other cases, students need to have a high grade-point average.

Possible plans for additional improvement include joint admission to two-year and four-year institutions, improved distance-learning programs, and improved feedback on transfer.

LOUISIANA—Louisiana passed legislation that required the Postsecondary and Management Boards to adopt and implement, in the institutions under their jurisdiction, no later than fall 2000, common core courses that articulate from any institution of public higher education to any other such institution, taking into consideration the accreditation criteria of the institution receiving the credit.

MISSISSIPPI—No, Mississippi has not passed legislation in regard to articulation since 1990.

NORTH CAROLINA—Yes. House Bill 739 directed the University of North Carolina and the State Board of Community Colleges to develop a plan of transferring credits from one community college to another community college or from a community college to the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina.

House Bill 740 repealed the enrollment limits on community college transfer. It also directed the State Board of Community Colleges to develop college transfer criteria and standards that met SACS standards and to disclose these terms to students pre-registered for college transfer.

House Bill 740 also required the State Board of Community Colleges to report to the legislature on “the academic performance of each college’s transfer students . . . [and to] determine corrective action in the event that a college’s transfer students are not performing adequately at four-year colleges.”

The goal was to “expand access to higher education for both traditional and nontraditional students through uniform policies for the transfer of credit from community colleges to [UNC institutions] . . . development of electronic information systems on transfer policies . . . [and] increased collaboration with other education sectors.”

The North Carolina legislature appropriated \$2,000,000 to help develop a statewide program of 2+2 degree completion programs (2 years in community college plus 2 years in a state university). The agreement includes pre-major articulation agreements for a series of majors, including education. Each pre-major has its own list of required and recommended courses. The agreement does not guarantee admission to a University of North Carolina institution, or to a particular major or program within those institutions.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Yes. In 1996, the South Carolina legislature charged the South Commission on Higher Education to improve transfer and gave the Commission the authority to oversee transfer.

TENNESSEE—Yes. Tennessee’s new statewide core curriculum for Tennessee Board of Regents Universities (excluding the University of Tennessee) and two-year state-supported colleges took effect for the fall semester of 2004. The core consists of 41

semester hours plus 6 hours of a foreign language for students seeking an associate's degree and 12 hours of a foreign language for students seeking a B.A. The new core agreement took effect fall semester 2004.

TEXAS—Yes. Senate Bill 148 was enacted in 1997. It required the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt rules that included “a statement of the content, component areas, and objectives of the core curriculum which each institution is to fulfill by its own selection of courses.”

VIRGINIA—In 2004, Virginia passed HB 9890, which calls for the identification of general education courses at public two-year colleges that public four-year colleges and universities will accept for credit for student admission as juniors. Both House Bill 989 and Senate Bill 338 call for the development of agreements that allow the transfer of credit among public and private two-year and four-year colleges and universities.

Also in 2004, Virginia enacted legislation that allowed Tennessee students who lived within 50 miles of the University of Virginia's college at Wise to pay reduced tuition if Tennessee allows a reciprocal arrangement to Virginia students. Virginia already has a similar agreement with Kentucky.

In 2006, Virginia enacted legislation (H.B. 57) saying that if a student declares an intention to transfer credit from an institution within the Virginia Community College System to a four-year public institution, the articulation agreement in force at the time of the student's declaration will determine those credits that may be transferred, provided that the student (a) completes an associate's degree within 4 years of submitting a written declaration of intent to transfer to a four-year public institution of high education in Virginia and (b) enrolls in such institution within 18 months of completing an associate's degree.

In 2006, (S. B. 538) Virginia passed legislation that required all four-year public institutions to develop articulation, transfer, and dual enrollment and admissions agreements, including dual admissions programs for qualified students to be simultaneously accepted by a community college and, contingent upon the successful completion of an acceptable associate degree program from the community college, by a four-year public institution of higher education. The State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) must include in its guidelines for these agreements conditions required to establish dual admissions programs that set forth the obligations of the students accepted in the programs, including grade point average requirements, acceptable associate degree programs, completion timetables, and the students' access to the privileges of enrollment in both institutions while attending either institution.

Survey Question 39: Does your state have a statewide common course numbering system?

- Yes, for both two-year institutions and four-year institutions.
- Yes, but only for four-year institutions.
- Yes, but only for two-year institutions.
- Yes, our state has a common course numbering system, although not every institution uses it.

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document on an attached sheet.*

If you answered yes, please include an explanation on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.

ALABAMA—The Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee has studied the feasibility of a uniform course numbering system, course titles, and course descriptions, but in 2003 we decided not to adopt a common course numbering system.

FLORIDA—Yes, for both two-year and four-year-institutions. As of April 2006, Florida’s policy is this: “Transfer of successfully completed courses from one institution to another is guaranteed in cases where the course is equivalent to one offered by the receiving institution. Equivalencies are established by the same prefix and the last 2 digits and comparable faculty credentials at both institutions (as established by the Florida Statewide Course Numbering System).” There are only a few exceptions to this rule.

GEORGIA—As of 2006, for the common courses we have common numbering system.

KENTUCKY—Kentucky does not have a common course numbering system. However, it has a matrix that shows how community college courses transfer and the numbers that these courses carry at Kentucky’s 9 universities. We considered adopting a common course numbering system in the early 1990s, but we quickly decided that a common course numbering system would not be sufficient to reduce articulation difficulties. Therefore we adopted our transfer program

LOUISIANA—The Louisiana Community and Technical College System has requested common course numbering, labeling, and syllabi where possible.

MISSISSIPPI—Yes, but only for two-year institutions. Mississippi adopted its common course numbering system for community and junior colleges in 1971.

NORTH CAROLINA—Community colleges have a common numbering system, but the University of North Carolina does not.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No. However, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education has recommended that both two-year and four-year institutions adopt a common course numbering system, common course titles, and common course descriptions. This would help eliminate institutional disagreement about the transferability of much lower division course work, thus clearing a path for easier movement between technical colleges and senior institutions.

TENNESSEE—No, Tennessee does not have a statewide system of course numbering.

TEXAS—The Texas Common Course Numbering (TCCN) System is a voluntary, cooperative effort among Texas community colleges and universities to facilitate transfer of freshman- and sophomore-level general academic courses.

The TCCN System provides a shared, uniform set of course designations for students and their advisors to use in determining course equivalency and degree applicability of transfer credit on a statewide basis. When students transfer between 2 participating TCCN institutions, a course taken at the institution transfers as the course carrying, or cross-referenced with, the same TCCN designation at the receiving institution.

As of October 2006, 110 Texas colleges and universities are participating in the TCCN project. Most community colleges have actually replaced their internal course numbering with the TCCN designations.

VIRGINIA—Yes, but only for two-year institutions. See www.so.cc.va.us

Survey Question 40: In your state, has your State Department of Education, Council on Higher Education, etc. established state benchmarks or expectations of transfer activity?

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, we have not established statewide expectations of transfer activity. (This was true both in 2001 and in 2006.)

FLORIDA—We track grade point averages and graduation rates. Transferring students do almost as well as native students. In 2001, native students graduated with a 2.76 GPA, and transferring students graduated with a 2.72 GPA.

GEORGIA—No.

KENTUCKY—Kentucky has overall goals to significantly increase postsecondary enrollment and completion rates, which include transfer indicators/measures. Transfer-related measures include an increasing number of community and technical college transfers and maintaining or increasing the average number of credit hours transferred while increasing the number of students who transfer to four-year institutions.

In 2004, Kentucky conducted a series of focus groups with community and technical college students, and as a result of our findings, we have decided that we need to take two important steps:

First, deal with the barrier that students do not see a benefit of completing a baccalaureate after their completion of an associate degree. Our proposed solution is to develop a stronger transfer component and provide better information about transfer. This would be of special help to students majoring in manufacturing, retail and services industry, health professions, and computer information technology.

Second, deal with the barrier of poor communication. We decided to complete the statewide implementation of the Course Availability System (CAS) in order to provide students with online access to academic planning information.

LOUISIANA—This is included in the master plan, but in generalities only.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—No.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—Tennessee has specific benchmarks for measuring success in the promotion of transfer:

1. Each institution must provide a self-assessment plan of its efforts to improve its articulation procedures.
2. Each institution must gather data on its progress in promoting transfer.
3. Each institution must report its progress, including the overall number of transfer students, the fall-to-fall retention of transfer students, and the retention of at-risk transfer students (those with a GPA of less than 2.5 at the time of transfer).

Beginning in 1978, Tennessee has promoted performance funding. Institutions can receive up to 5.45% over their annual formula-generated appropriations based upon exemplary performance levels in selected areas. Since the institution of performance funding, Tennessee institutions have earned over \$270 million through successful achievement of measurable outcomes.

Institutions are evaluated on their performance in 10 areas. One of the areas is articulation. The maximum number of points that an institution can earn is 100. An institution can earn up to 5 points for successful promotion of articulation. Consequently, Tennessee institutions have a strong incentive to improve articulation.

Tennessee set a goal that by the year 2000, 75% of students completing university-parallel degree programs would enroll in baccalaureate degree programs at state universities. For the academic year 1998-1999, 2,088 Tennessee students completed their associate's degrees, and 1,022 (48.9%) enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program at a state university.

Tennessee set a goal that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education, along with the University of Tennessee Board of Regents and the Tennessee Board of Regents, would develop and align academic curricula, assessments, and entry and exit requirements by 2004. We think that we have achieved that goal. The key to achieving it was adopting and implementing our new 41-semester-hour statewide core curriculum.

TEXAS—Institutions that reject core courses of transferring students have their appropriations reduced. This is done to ensure that institutions accept core courses of transferring students.

VIRGINIA—Senior institutions report to community colleges on the progress of transferring students for 2 years or until the students graduate or withdraw (whichever occurs first). However, in a 2003 report, SCHEV recommended additional funding for four-year institutions that increased their admission of community college graduates.

SCHEV is pleased to report that Virginia Tech, a university with selective admissions standards, admitted a record total of 825 transfer students for the fall semester in 2006. More than half of these transferred from Virginia community colleges. This record reflects state efforts to make it easier for students from community colleges to transfer. State senior institutions are required by state mandate to ease articulation difficulties for transferring students.

Survey Question 41: (Part A) For the fall semester of 2004, 44.3% of first-time freshmen in the United States were enrolled in two-year colleges (both state-supported and independent). What percent of first-time freshmen were enrolled in two-year colleges (both state-supported and independent) in the 11 states that belong to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)?

TABLE 19: PERCENTAGE OF FIRST TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE SACS STATES, FALL SEMESTER 2004

State	Percent of First-Time Freshmen in Two-Year Colleges, Fall Semester 2004
Mississippi	65.6
Texas	61.8
Florida	52.3
Georgia	50.2
North Carolina	46.1
South Carolina	44.5
Alabama	42.9
Tennessee	38.7
Kentucky	35.5
Virginia	32.6
Louisiana	30.3

United States Average: 44.3%

SACS states range: 30.3% (Louisiana) to 65.6% (Mississippi)

SACS states median: 44.5%

SACS states unweighted average: 45.5%

Survey Question 41: (Part B) For the fall semester 2003, 46% of undergraduates in the United States were enrolled in two-year colleges. What percent of undergraduates were enrolled in two-year colleges (both state-supported and independent) in the 11 states that belong to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)?

The chart following shows the distribution of undergraduates (not just first-time freshmen) enrolled in two-year colleges in the SACS states in 2003.

TABLE 20: DISTRIBUTION OF UNDERGRADUATES ENROLLED IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE SACS STATES IN 2003

State	Percentage Enrolled in Two-Year Colleges	Total Enrollment in Two-Year Colleges
Texas	54	432,006
Florida	53	354,023
Mississippi	52	52,565
North Carolina	49	147,250
Virginia	46	130,781
South Carolina	45	61,697
Kentucky	42	49,986
Georgia	38	94,736
Alabama	38	147,587
Tennessee	36	84,226
Louisiana	27	40,095
All SACS states		1,594,952

Range: 27% (Louisiana) to 54% (Texas)

United States average: 45%

SACS states median: 45%

SACS states unweighted average: 43.6%

Survey Question 42: For the most recent year for which statistics are available,
 _____ [number] students transferred from one state-supported two-year institution to another state-supported two-year institution.
 _____ [number] students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution.
 _____ [number] students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution.
 _____ [number] students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution.

Please state the year.

ALABAMA—For the Fall Semester 2005—

— 1,486 students transferred from one state-supported two-year institution to another state-supported two-year institution.

— 4,512 students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution.

— 1,334 students transferred from one state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution.

— 1,295 students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution.

FLORIDA—For the academic year 1999-2000, the overall transfer rate for students transferring from one state-supported two-year institution to another state-supported two-year institution was 5.8%.

In 2003-2004, approximately 18,400 community college students transferred from one community college to another. This was 2.2% of Florida's total enrollment. By 2004-2005, about 32,000 (7.9%) had transferred. Approximately 37,350 students enrolled in the Florida Community College System (FCCS) in 2003-2004 had transferred to the State University System by the end of 2004-2005. These were students with 30 or more credit hours accepted for transfer.

In 2005, 14,706 students transferred from a state-supported Florida community college to a state-supported Florida college or university. In the same year, 5,860 students transferred from a state-supported Florida university or four-year college to another state-supported Florida four-year institution.

GEORGIA—In 2000, 2,458 students from two-year institutions transferred to other state-supported two-year institutions, and 10,452 transferred from state-supported two-year institutions to state-supported four-year institutions. The numbers were not broken down further.

KENTUCKY—For the summer and fall semesters of 2005,

— [number not available] students transferred from one state-supported two-year institution to another state-supported two-year institution.

— 2,402 students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution.

— 938 students transferred from one state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution.

— [number not available] students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution.

LOUISIANA—For the academic year 2003-2004,

— 163 students transferred from one state-supported two-year institution to another state-supported two-year institution.

— 298 students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution

— 1,264 students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution

— 998 students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution

MISSISSIPPI—Statistics for the academic year 2004-2005 showed the following:

— [number not available] students transferred from one state-supported two-year institution to another state-supported two-year institution.

— 4,227 students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution.

— 1,488 students transferred from one state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution.

— [number not available] students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution.

In the fall semester in 2004, there were 8,097 first-time freshmen in Mississippi's state-supported universities and 22,927 first-time freshmen in Mississippi's community and junior colleges.

NORTH CAROLINA—Statistics for the fall 2005 semester showed the following:

— 1,025 students transferred from one state-supported two-year institution to another state-supported two-year institution.

— 4,415 students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution.

— 1,918 students transferred from one state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution.

— 742 students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Statistics for the fall 2004 semester showed the following:

— 1,263 students transferred from one two-year state-supported institution to another state-supported two-year institution.

— 2,295 students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution.

— 828 students transferred from one state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution.

— 1,445 students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution.

TENNESSEE—Statistics for the fall semester of 2003 showed this:

— 2,481 students transferred from one state-supported two-year institution to another two-year state-supported institution.

— 4,357 students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution.

— 1,224 students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution.

— 1,924 students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution.

TEXAS—We don't have numbers broken out the way you are seeking them.

— [number not available] students transferred from one state-supported two-year institution to another two-year state-supported institution.

— 92,068 students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution.

— [number not available] students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution.

— [number not available] students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution.

VIRGINIA—Statistics for the 2002-2003 academic year showed that

— [number not available] students transferred from one state-supported two-year institution to another two-year state-supported institution

— 4,017 students transferred from a state-supported two-year institution to a state-supported four-year institution

— 1,374 students transferred from a state-supported four-year institution to another state-supported four-year institution

— [number not available] students from a state-supported four-year institution to a state-supported two-year institution

Survey Question 43: Does your state have an “honors core” or a suggested core that requires more courses than your statewide core requires?

_____ Yes, for both two-year and four-year institutions.

_____ Yes, but only for four-year institutions.

_____ Yes, but only for two-year institutions.

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

If you answered yes, please provide a summary on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.

ALABAMA—Some institutions have their own honors curricula. Each institution is free to set up its own honors program. For example, Auburn University selects 200 freshmen annually for admission to its Honors College. Students must have an ACT score of 29 or higher or an SAT score of 1300 or higher, and have earned a 3.5 high school GPA.

Benefits of membership in Auburn’s Honors College are special dormitories, a special orientation session, priority registration, carrel privileges, special scholarships, classes taught in small sections, and the Honors Mentors Program.

FLORIDA—By campus.

GEORGIA—Institutions only.

KENTUCKY—Kentucky does not have a statewide honors core.

LOUISIANA—Louisiana has a required core that consists of 39 semester hours in 6 core areas, but it used to have a suggested core consisting of 50 semester hours in the same 6 areas. The suggested core added a third course in literature, a laboratory requirement in the natural sciences, and a 6-hour course in the History of Western Civilization. However, the state has canceled this program.

The Louisiana Board of Regents used to award a Certificate of Excellence to graduating students who had completed the suggested education core (50 hours) with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—No.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—No statewide honors core curriculum.

TEXAS—No statewide honors core.

VIRGINIA—No, we do not have a statewide honors core.

Survey Question 44: Does your state use a Website to promote its statewide core curriculum (statewide general education curriculum) and/or transfer? Check as many as apply.

Yes, a Website (for both core curriculum and transfer).

Yes, a Website (for our statewide core curriculum only).

Yes, a Website (for transfer only).

No.

Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

If you have one, please provide your Website address.

If you have one, please provide your toll-free number.

ALABAMA—www.ache.state.al.us

No toll-free number, but admissions offices at various campuses have toll-free numbers for all prospective students.

In 2005, over 67,000 students accessed the transfer guide on STARS (Statewide Articulation & Reporting System) at www.troy.edu. Including advisors, about 75,000 people used STARS in 2005. New students in the two-year college system are now required to use STARS.

FLORIDA—www.firn.edu/pepc

GEORGIA—www.usg.edu

KENTUCKY—www.cpe.state.ky.us

LOUISIANA—www.regents.state.la.us

MISSISSIPPI—www.studentadvisorms.org

NORTH CAROLINA—www.northcarolina.edu

SOUTH CAROLINA—South Carolina posts its articulation agreements on its Website, www.che400.state.sc.us.

TENNESSEE—www.state.tn.us/thec

TEXAS—www.thecb.state.tx.us

VIRGINIA—www.schev.edu

We provide a 24-hour response time for e-mails requesting information about transfer.

Survey Question 45. Does your state have a newspaper, newsletter and/or magazine to promote transfer (articulation)? *Check as many as apply.*

Yes, a newspaper.

Yes, a newsletter.

Yes, a magazine.

No.

Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—A transfer guide is on the STARS website.

FLORIDA—An articulation agreement that is readily available promotes Associate in Arts graduates into state universities. This has been in place since the 1970s. Florida publishes a magazine in both print and Internet form entitled “Florida Trend’s NEXT: Your Future After High School in Florida.” However, this magazine is for all students and potential students and not just transferring students. Florida has a website www.FACTS.org that contains a great deal of information related to transfer.

GEORGIA—The Georgia Board of Regents publishes a brochure entitled *The Core Curriculum Handbook*. A transfer guide is distributed on campus and is available on the state Website.

KENTUCKY—Kentucky publishes a transfer guide that shows courses that transfer from community colleges to state universities. These guides are distributed by chief transfer officers at each campus. This guide is also published on the state website at <http://www.cpe.state.ky.us/>

LOUISIANA—Louisiana’s Statewide Articulation Committee produces, and the Louisiana Board of Regents publishes, an Articulation Matrix to answer questions about articulation. They are distributed on each campus.

MISSISSIPPI—Our 194 articulation agreements (as of 2006) are available on our Website.

NORTH CAROLINA—As of 2006, North Carolina has “The Comprehensive Articulation Agreement” on its Website.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No, but it does have a Website to promote transfer.

In addition, beginning in 2002, every four-year state institution was required to publish each August a detailed guide for transfer students including courses accepted for transfer, how to calculate GPA, etc.

TENNESSEE—As of 2006, our 41 semester-hour core curriculum was on our Website. Individual schools have their own publications.

TEXAS—The Lower Division Course Manual—The Community College General Academic Course Guide Manual (*ACGM*) contains the official list of general academic courses approved for transfer.

VIRGINIA—Virginia has an annual newsletter, *Transfer Connection*, to assist community college students wishing to transfer. Each Virginia institution has a transfer guide on its Website to promote transfer. The Virginia Community College website is linked to each institution’s transfer guide.

Survey Question 46: Has your state conducted research to measure the perceived benefits and costs (advantages and disadvantages) of imposing a statewide core curriculum or statewide general education curriculum?

_____ Yes. *Please send a summary of your findings on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet and/or attach an appropriate document.*

ALABAMA—No, we have not researched costs and benefits of a statewide core curriculum.

FLORIDA—No

GEORGIA—No.

KENTUCKY—No.

LOUISIANA—No.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—No; however, that it would be beneficial was one of our assumptions.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No.

TENNESSEE—No, but the legislature assumed that it would save money for the state, because it perceived that students were losing credit hours when they transferred.

TEXAS—No

VIRGINIA—No.

Survey Question 47: Does your state have transfer blocks, whereby blocks of general education (if completed satisfactorily) are automatically accepted for general education credit when students transfer from two-year state-supported institutions to four-year state-supported institutions?

_____ Yes, and they fulfill all lower general education requirements.

_____ Yes, but students may be required to take additional general education courses to fulfill their general education requirements at the four-year institution that they transfer to. *Please include specifics.*

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify on an attached sheet or include an appropriate document.*

_____ *If your state has transfer blocks, please include appropriate documents describing your state's transfer blocks and why your state adopted transfer blocks.*

ALABAMA—Yes, we have such transfer blocks.

FLORIDA—Yes, and they fulfill all lower level general education requirements.

GEORGIA—Yes, and they fulfill all lower level general education requirements.

KENTUCKY—As of 2006, Kentucky's transfer component consists of 2 parts: a 33-hour General Education Component that is acceptable at all our state universities; a 15-hour Institutional General Education Requirement that is based on the university to which the student intends to transfer; and a 12-hour specialty component based on the student's intended major.

LOUISIANA—Yes.

MISSISSIPPI—Mississippi's 194 statewide articulation agreements (as of April 2006) are the equivalent of transfer blocks.

NORTH CAROLINA—As of 2006, North Carolina has a 44-semester hour transfer block. If students complete an associate's degree, then all 44 hours automatically transfer.

SOUTH CAROLINA—"As of 2006, South Carolina has 5 transfer blocks, and they are fully accepted provided the student has completed the appropriate transfer block for his/her major at the four-year institution he/she has transferred to."

South Carolina has 5 transfer blocks. The arts, humanities, and social sciences block has 46-48 semester hours. The business block has 46-51 semester hours. Engineering majors have a block of 33 semester hours. Students who major in mathematics and the sciences have a block of 48-51 semester hours. Elementary education, early childhood education, and special education majors have a block of 38-39 semester hours.

TENNESSEE—The new 41-semester-hour core that was adopted in 2004 will apply to both two-year and four-year state-supported institutions.

TEXAS—Texas by statute requires that "each institution shall be required to accept in transfer into baccalaureate degree the number of lower division credit hours in a major allowed for [native students]." The Texas core consists of 42 to 45 semester hours. The Texas core has recently been changed so that an institution could require up to 51 semester hours. The change involved additional courses in mathematics.

VIRGINIA—Yes. As of 2006, Virginia's transfer module consists of 35 semester hours: 6 in English, 6 in humanities, 6 in social sciences, 8 in natural sciences, 6 in history, and 3 in mathematics.

Survey Question 48: If your state has transfer blocks, are students required to complete the associate's degree in order for these general education courses to transfer automatically?

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

_____ Other. *Please specify.*

ALABAMA—This decision is up to each institution.

FLORIDA—The state code said that state universities are required to accept the general education core curriculum of any transferring community college student who has completed the core, regardless of whether or not the student has received an Associate in Arts degree. However, if the transferring student has not completed the community college's general education core curriculum, then that student is bound by the core of the institution he/she is transferring to.

GEORGIA—Each area would count even if a student had not completed all core courses.

KENTUCKY—No, students are required to complete either the associate's degree or the transfer component for general education courses to transfer automatically.

LOUISIANA—No.

MISSISSIPPI—No.

NORTH CAROLINA—Yes.

SOUTH CAROLINA—No. Coursework (individual courses, transfer blocks, statewide agreements) covered within these procedures will be transferable if the student has completed the coursework with a C grade (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or above, but transfer of grades does not relieve the student of the obligation to meet any admissions requirements of the institution or program to which application has been made.

TENNESSEE—No.

TEXAS—No.

VIRGINIA—No, transfer students do not have to complete the associate's degree before transferring for their credits to count.

Survey Question 49: (Fill in the blanks.) In our state, students who graduate from the same four-year state-supported institution that they entered as freshmen have earned on average _____ semester hours credit (or _____ quarter hours credit). Students who graduate from state-supported four-year institutions after transferring from a state-supported two-year institution have earned on average _____ semester hours credit (or _____ quarter hours credit).

Note: Responses to this question were less informative than I had hoped. Wellman (August 2002) wrote that many states measure "time to degree" rather than "credit to degree." This may be a reason for the missing data for this survey question.

ALABAMA—Alabama has not conducted research in this area. (This was true both in 2001 and in 2006.)

FLORIDA—Figures for 1998 showed that graduating native students have earned an average of 136.1 semester hours, while graduating transfer students have earned 139.3 semester hours. In order to reduce the number of hours it takes takes students to graduate, in its 1997-1998 General Appropriations Act, the Florida legislature imposed a 50% surcharge for hours taken in excess of 115% of graduation requirements. There are several exceptions, for students in the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), students who seek a double major, students who experience personal hardship, and so forth. The surcharge and our articulation programs have been effective. For the 2004-2005 academic year, 86.1% of all Associate of Arts graduates who went on to transfer to a state-supported university and who later graduated did so with 115% or less of the minimum number of hours required for graduation. This means that 86.1% of Associate in Arts graduates who went on to earn their baccalaureate did so with 138 hours or less. The minimum number of hours required for graduation is 120.

Florida has performance funding that is equal to 1% of total funding for higher education. Payment is based on meeting four goals. One of these goals is the number of community college students who graduate with 72 semester hours credit or less.

As stated in Florida's response to Survey Question 7, the most recent figures available, for the academic year 2004-2005, showed that native university students who completed their baccalaureate degree averaged 134.3 semester hours. Transfer students who had earned an associate's degree and then a bachelor's degree averaged 137.0 hours. This is a difference of only 2.7 semester hours—less than a single course.

GEORGIA—No. Theoretically, there should be no difference between native students and transferring students, unless students change their majors.

KENTUCKY—Data are not available on this point. However, Kentucky is committed to increasing the number of transfers from the community and technical college system to state universities and independent colleges and universities. The state hopes to double or triple the number of transfers between 2004 and 2020. The goal for the academic year 2006-2007 is 4,900 transfers. The goal for the academic year 2020-2021 is 11,500.

Admittedly, some barriers to transfer remain. Kentucky has stated its determination to move on several fronts: to reduce financial barriers to transfer; to improve the delivery of academic services; to inform students more fully about the transfer process; and to encourage students to continue their education by transferring instead of going into full time employment after completing the two-year degree.

LOUISIANA—No response, and data not available elsewhere.

MISSISSIPPI—No research on this topic. However, this is something we may need to consider doing.

NORTH CAROLINA—Students in the community college system need to earn 64 to 65 semester hours to earn an associate degree. Since a student can transfer only 60 semester hours from a two-year institution to a four-year institution, 4 to 5 hours will be “excess hours.” Students from two-year institutions should not have to earn any excess hours unless they need to take remedial courses or earn a D in a core course, *provided they follow the instructions in the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement Manual* (emphasis in the original).

SOUTH CAROLINA—No response, and data not available elsewhere.

TENNESSEE—Basically the same. If they get good advice and do what they are told to do, then transfer is seamless, but this [need to choose courses carefully] is true for native students too.

TEXAS—There has not been an across-the-board study on this issue. Texas will not provide funding to a state institution for any hours taken by a student pursuing a baccalaureate in excess of 170.

VIRGINIA—SCHEV has found that in Virginia, students who earn the associate's degree earn a median of 4-11 excess hours. These excess hours do not count toward the completion of the baccalaureate degree. Thus, the imposition of the transfer module alone will not eliminate the problem of students' earning excess hours. It should be noted that these excess hours are in addition to remedial hours, which never transfer.

One reason that Virginia community college students earn excess hours is that in order to graduate, community college students have to earn 62 semester hours, and only 60 semester hours are transferable.

SCHEV has recommended that institutions improve their academic advising and curriculum planning. We have worked with institutions to develop articulation agreements that define appropriate lower level requisites and prerequisites which can be used to satisfy lower division general education requirements.

Survey Question 50. What are *minimum* requirements for admission as a freshman in leading universities in the states that belong to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools? Responses were taken from *Peterson's guide to four-year colleges* and from each institution's Website. For each SACS state, I have chosen 2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university.

It should be noted that all the math requirements call for courses at the level of Algebra I and higher. Except for the University of Alabama, all the foreign language requirements call for 2 years in the *same* foreign language. Clemson University calls for 3 years in the same foreign language with the possibility of an exception in extenuating circumstances. The University of Alabama requires only one year of a foreign language. In almost all states, the natural science requirements stipulate that at least 2 of the natural science courses must be laboratory sciences.

ALABAMA—Here are the requirements from 3 representative Alabama institutions (2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university).

Auburn University (2006) reported that Auburn requires the following: English, 4 units; math, 3 units; natural science, 3 units; social studies, 3 units.

University of Alabama (2006) said that these courses are required: English, 4 units; math, 3 units; natural science, 3 units; social sciences, 4 units; foreign language, 1 unit. Students are encouraged to take additional academic courses in foreign languages, computers, fine arts, and mathematics.

Alabama State University (2006) reported these requirements: English, 4 units; math, natural science, social studies, and foreign language, 10 units each.

FLORIDA—Here are the requirements from 3 Florida institutions (2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university).

The University of Florida (2005), Florida State University (2006), and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (2004), the latter popularly known as Florida A&M, reported that all 2 universities have the same prerequisites: English, 4 units; math,

3 units; natural sciences, 3 units (2 must be laboratory sciences); social sciences, 3 units; and electives, 3 units.

GEORGIA—Here are the requirements from 3 representative Georgia institutions (2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university).

University of Georgia (2006) reported the following required high school courses: English, 4 units; math, 4 units (Algebra I and II, Plane Geometry I, and Advanced Math I), natural science, 3 units; social sciences, 3 units; and foreign language, 2 units.

Georgia Institute of Technology (2006) reported that Georgia Tech has the same requirements as the University of Georgia, with slight variations in the particular courses required, depending upon the student's intended major.

Albany State University (2004) reported these requirements: English, 4 units; math, 4 units; natural sciences, 3 units (including 2 laboratory sciences); social sciences, 3 units; foreign language, 2 units. It noted, however, that students who have a deficiency can make up that deficiency during the freshman year.

KENTUCKY—Here are the requirements from 3 representative Kentucky institutions (2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university).

University of Kentucky (2006) listed these requirements: English, 4 years; math, 3 units; natural sciences, 3 years; social sciences, 3 units; foreign language, 2 years; health, 1/2 year; physical education, 1/2 year; history and visual or performing arts, 1 year; electives, 5 years.

University of Louisville (2006) showed the same requirements as the University of Kentucky, except that 1 year of computer literacy is recommended.

Kentucky State University (2006) listed these prerequisites: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; natural sciences, 3 years; foreign language, 2 years; health, 1/2 year; physical education, 1/2 year; rigorous electives, 5 years; other electives, 2 years.

LOUISIANA—Here are the requirements from 3 representative Louisiana institutions (2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university).

Louisiana State University (2006) listed these requirements for admission as a freshman to LSU: English, 4 years; math, 3 years (preferably 4); natural sciences, 3 years; social studies, 2 years; foreign language, 2 years; computers, 1/2 year.

Louisiana Tech (2006) reported these required courses: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; natural sciences, 3 years; social studies, 3 years; foreign language, 2 years; fine arts, 1 year; and computers, 1/2 year.

Southern University and A&M College (2006) said the following high school courses are required: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; natural sciences, 3 years; social studies, 3 years; fine arts, 1 year; computers, 1 year.

MISSISSIPPI—Here are the requirements from 3 Mississippi representative institutions (2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university).

University of Mississippi (2006) reported that the required high school courses are as follows: English, 4 years; math, 3 years (preferably 4); natural sciences, 3 years; social studies, 3 years; advanced electives, 2 years; computer applications, ½ year.

Mississippi State University (2006) listed the same prerequisites as the University of Mississippi, except that MSU does not recommend a fourth year in math.

Jackson State University (2006) listed these required courses: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; science, 3 years; social studies, 3 years; advanced electives, 2 years, 1 of which must be a foreign language or geography; and computer applications, ½ year.

NORTH CAROLINA—Here are the requirements for North Carolina institutions.

University of North Carolina (2006) reported that all 16 universities that are members of the University of North Carolina system have the same minimum freshman admission requirements: English, 4 years; math, 4 years (Algebra I and higher); natural sciences, 3 years; social studies, 2 years; foreign language, 2 years.

SOUTH CAROLINA—Here are the requirements from 3 representative South Carolina institutions (2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university).

University of South Carolina (2006) listed these prerequisites: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; natural science, 3 years (all laboratory sciences); social studies, 3 years; academic electives, 4 years; 1 year in computing (not just keyboarding).

Clemson University (2006) reported the same requirements as the University of South Carolina, with 2 exceptions. Clemson is unique among the universities in this study as it requires 3 years in one foreign language. However, Clemson has provisions whereby it can admit a student who has only 2 years in a foreign language, if that student's high school can present good reasons why the student was unable to take a third year in a foreign language, for example because the high school did not offer 3 years in a foreign language or because a schedule conflict make it impossible for the student to take a third year in a foreign language. In addition, Clemson does not require a course in computers.

South Carolina State University (2006) listed the following required high school courses: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; natural science, 3 years; social studies, 3 years; foreign language, 2 years; physical education or ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps), 1 year; advanced electives, 4 years.

TENNESSEE—Here are the requirements from 3 representative Tennessee institutions (2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university).

University of Tennessee (2006) listed these required high school courses: English, 4 years; math, 4 years, including one in advanced math; natural sciences, 2 years; social sciences, 2 years; foreign languages, 2 years; visual and/or performing arts, 1 year.

Tennessee Tech University (2006) listed the same prerequisites as the University of Tennessee, except that it does not require a fourth year in math.

Tennessee State University (2006) listed the following: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; natural sciences, 2 years; social sciences, 2 years; foreign language, 2 years; visual or performing arts, 1 year; academic electives, number not specified.

TEXAS—Here are the requirements from 3 representative Texas institutions (2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university).

University of Texas (2006) listed these requirements: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; natural sciences, 2 years; social studies, 2 years; foreign language, 2 years; academic elective, 1 year; theatre, art, music, or drama, 1/2 year.

Texas A&M (2006) listed these required high school courses: English, 4 years; math, 3.5 years; natural sciences, 3 years; foreign language, 2 years.

Texas Southern University (2006) said the following are required of freshman applicants: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; natural science, 2 years; social science, 2 years; academic electives, 5 years.

VIRGINIA—Here are the requirements from 3 Virginia institutions (2 large state-supported universities and 1 state-supported historically African American college or university).

University of Virginia (2006) listed the following minimum preparation: English, 4 years; math, 4 years; natural sciences, 2 years; social studies, 1 year; foreign language, 2 years; academic electives, number not specified. It noted that while students should take “the most demanding” academic programs offered by their high schools, the admissions process allows for differences in the opportunities available to high school students.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (2006) said that students seeking admission to Virginia Tech as freshmen should have taken the following courses: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; natural sciences, 2 years (must be laboratory sciences); social studies, 2 years; academic electives, 4 years.

Norfolk State University (2006) listed these required courses: English, 4 years; math, 3 years; natural sciences, 3 years; social studies, 3 years; health and physical education, 2 years; fine arts, 1 year.

GLOSSARY

A.A.: Associate of Arts degree, awarded after completion of a two-year course in a liberal arts concentration at the two-year college level.

A.A.S.: Associate in Applied Science degree, awarded after completion of a course of classes in applied science (for example, medical technology) at the two-year college level.

The Academic Model: a plan developed by the National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer (NCAAT). It encourages collaboration between two-year and four-year institutions and monitors transfer effectiveness.

ACT COMP®: an examination offered by American College Testing, the College Outcomes Measures Program Objective Test.

advisory board or coordinating board: a group formed to facilitate voluntary cooperation among state institutions in enabling students to transfer between institutions.

articulation: communication and agreements among two-year and four-year public postsecondary institutions. One goal of articulation is to make student transfer between institutions easier and more efficient.

articulation agreements: cooperation among educational institutions, so that courses taken in one institution will be given credit at another, making the transfer student's progress to the baccalaureate quicker and easier. In use, the term may refer to either state-mandated agreements or voluntary cooperation, which are radically different modes of operation.

A.S.: Associate of Science degree, awarded after completion of a two-year course in a science- or math-related program at the college level.

baccalaureate: a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree, awarded after completion of a course of study usually requiring four years.

cafeteria approach: a curriculum that allows students to choose courses at will, without requiring courses in a variety of disciplines.

capstone course: a course near the end of studies for a degree; it requires students to demonstrate both general competencies and the content and skills of their major or program.

Chief Transfer Officer: a person in the administration of an educational institute whose job is to facilitate transfer. Acronym: CTO

CLAST®: College-Level Academic Skills Test, an achievement test that measures college-level skills.

College BASE®: a criterion-referenced academic achievement examination that tests knowledge and skills in English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Completer degree: a baccalaureate degree fashioned to facilitate the graduation of transfer students from a four-year institution with little or no loss of credit. In Kentucky, the completer degree program includes the B.A. in Liberal Studies, B.A. in General Studies, B.A. in University Studies, and B.S. in Occupational Theory and Development.

core curriculum: a set of general education requirements that all undergraduates must complete in order to graduate.

credit: institutional recognition of successful completion of an instructional course or program that can be applied toward the requirements for a degree.

credit course: a course with academic requirements that, if successfully completed, can be applied toward the number of courses required for an academic degree.

credit hour: A unit of measure representing about 50 minutes of instruction over a 15-week period in a semester system or a 10-week period in a quarter system. Credit hours are applied toward the total number of hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree.

CTO: Chief Transfer Officer, a person in the administration of an educational institute whose job is to facilitate transfer.

degree: a rank given by an educational institution to a student who has successfully finished a required program of study.

developmental courses: courses that prepare a student to take college-level courses.

dual enrollment: simultaneous enrollment in two educational institutions—for example, a community college and a four-year college—with course credit toward the degree awarded in both institutions.

excess hours: hours taken beyond the maximum amount required for a particular degree. In Florida and North Carolina, additional fees are imposed on semester hours taken beyond this limit. Students transferring from two-year institutions are not allowed to transfer more than 60 semester hours of credit, so any courses taken beyond this limit are considered excess hours.

four-year state-supported institution: an educational institution supported by state funds in which a degree usually requires 4 academic years. It may be a college, a university, or an institute (for example, Virginia Military Institute).

Gordon Rule: a statewide requirement in Florida that all postsecondary students complete 24,000 words of composition and complete 2 courses (6 semester hours) of mathematics at the level of College algebra or higher.

governing board: a group that has the authority to mandate education policy for colleges and universities in its state. Cf. advisory board.

horizontal transfer: transfer from one two-year college to another two-year college or from one four-year institution to another four-year institution.

lateral transfer: transfer from one two-year institution to another two-year institution or from one four-year institution to another four-year institution.

major: a student's major field of study, the field or specialization in which the degree is awarded. Different majors have different requirements.

native students: students who graduate from the institution in which they first enrolled; the opposite of transfer students.

NCAAT: National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer.

open admission: an admission policy under which high school graduates or students with equivalency diplomas are admitted to an educational institution without regard to their academic records or test scores.

race or ethnicity: a category used to describe groups to which individuals belong, or with which they identify. The categories are social or cultural rather than scientific or anthropological. For statistical reasons, a person can be counted in only one group.

remedial courses: instructional courses designed to help students who lack the competencies necessary for a regular postsecondary curriculum to learn the skills they need to succeed academically.

reverse transfer: transfer from a 4-year institution to a 2-year institution. Transfer may be short-term, for example, for a summer-school session between the student's attendance at a university. Or it may be long-term, as when a student completes an associate's degree and then transfers back to the original four-year institution or to a different four-year institution.

SACS: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It comprises 11 states in the southern United States: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

SCHEV: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

SREB: Southern Regional Education Board. All 11 SACS states are members of SREB, plus 5 other Southern and border states (Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Arkansas).

Student Bill of Rights: a Florida document that guarantees the following to graduates of Florida community colleges: admission to a state university (except in limited-access programs), acceptance of 60 semester hours, equal treatment with native students, and the right to appeal any denial of guaranteed rights.

transfer: withdrawal from one college or institution and matriculation at another, with course credits from the first applied to the second.

transfer student: a student who attends more than one educational institution, and requests that credits earned at one be applied toward the degree at another.

transfer shock: negative effects of transfer from one institution to another—for example, a drop in grade point average.

transfer blocks or transfer modules: a group of related courses that transfer automatically. In the context of this paper, they are the functional equivalent of a statewide core curriculum.

two-year state-supported institution: an educational institution supported by state funds in which a degree usually requires 2 academic years of classes. A two-year state-supported institution may be a community college, a technical college, a junior college, or a two-year branch of a state university (e.g., University of South Carolina at Beaufort).

upside-down articulation: a situation in which students transferring with an Associate in Applied Sciences degree complete their general education requirements not before transferring but during their junior and senior years.

vertical transfer: transfer from a two-year institution to a four-year institution.