



MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education

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Memorandum

December 31, 2001

TO: Montana Board of Regents
FROM: Joyce A. Scott, Deputy Commissioner for Academic and Student Affairs
RE: Montana University System 2002 Transfer Project

Attached, please find an outline of how we will conduct the project. It addresses the mechanics and structure of execution and sets guidelines for the long-term conduct of the project. These are necessary to ensure equal treatment across disciplines and campuses over time. We have identified 7,650 MUS undergraduate courses to be considered in the articulation process. This number does not include any courses from the community, tribal, or independent colleges. We expect the total will ultimately exceed 12,000 courses.

To launch the project, we need a comprehensive information campaign: What is “transfer” and how is it conducted? People often attribute to “transfer” things that bear no relation to it. To focus fact-finding, we must be clear on what we are seeking. Broadly, transfer means two things:

- The movement of students from one college, university or other education provider to another; and
- The process by which credits representing educational experiences, courses, degrees or credentials are accepted or not accepted by a receiving institution. In this case, there are usually two steps:
 - Registrar evaluation and posting of accepted credit on a receiving institution’s transcript, and
 - Evaluation of accepted credits for applicability in meeting degree program requirements.

Thus, while many credits may transfer to an institution and be posted, they may not all be deemed applicable to the requirements of the degree that the student wishes to pursue. These judgments are made at the program level by the faculty, and reflect faculty rules and standards. We seek to address these issues in the third level of the project, via statewide disciplinary teams who can examine curricula and establish alignment of courses from one institution to another.

Finally, we need to clarify for students and the public what is involved in transfer and what are the *rules of the road*. For example, in the absence of any MUS policy, some institutions may accept D-grades in transfer while others accept only courses with C-grades. Because of such factors, we will conduct policy inquiries at all levels of the project and bring to the Board recommendations for improving policy related to transfer. As an adjunct to this internal review, I have begun collecting relevant policies from other state systems of higher education and will share them with the Steering Committee as the need arises.