Bridging the Gap – Using Technology and Collaboration to Increase Course Articulation Rules

With more than 3,000 new transfer students per year and over 10,000 active students with prior learning credit, the Undergraduate Admissions Office uses technology to bridge the gap between faculty and staff to establish course articulation rules. The presenter will discuss how Undergraduate Admissions facilitates course reviews using the implementation of the Course Substitution Request System (CSRS) in collaboration with the Prior Learning Assessment office.

Lindsay Bolt, Assistant Director for Transfer Admission
Michele Rice, Director, Prior Learning Assessment

The Pennsylvania State University
Bridging the Gap

Using Technology and Collaboration to Increase Course Articulation Rules
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What is your institution type?

a) 2 year- Private
b) 2 year – Public
c) 4 year – Private
d) 4 year - Public
Who handles “Transfer” at your institution?

a) Undergraduate Admissions Office  
b) Registrar 

c) Transfer Center 

d) Other
Who handles “Transfer Credit” at your institution?

a) Admissions Transfer Staff
b) Registrar
c) Faculty
d) Transfer Center
e) Other
How long have you been working in Transfer?

a) 0-5 years  
b) 5-10 years  
c) 10-20 years  
d) 20+
### About Transfer at Penn State 2019/2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 Campuses, World Campus (Online)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10,000 Transfer Applications</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6,800 Offers</td>
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<tr>
<td>3,800 (14%) Transfer Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>62% Transfer Graduation Rate</td>
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**10,000 students with active prior learning credit**
Agenda

1. CSRS
2. Collaboration with Prior Learning Assessment
3. Course Rules and Student Records
Opportunity Knocks: New Student System

• Increase direct equivalency course rules
  • Develop Discipline Specific Faculty Review Committees
  • Develop Prior Learning Assessment Office
  • Require Syllabus for review – course descriptions are not enough
  • Course Review System
### Legacy System Statistics

- **413,951 Historical Entries**
- **87% General Equivalency**
- **13% Direct Equivalency**
- **Feeder schools from Last 5 years**
  - **17,939 Direct Equivalency**
  - **20,686 Non-Transferable**

**Archived 375,326 rules in 2016**
Course Substitution and Request System

- Courses enter CSRS when XFRPEN and articulated to student record
- XFRPEN – Transfer Pending Review
- Allows Undergraduate Admissions to review and forward syllabus to appropriate review committee
- Houses the committee decision and review documents
- Lists students attached courses
- Updates rule in student system (LionPath) and student records
Course Substitution and Request System (CSRS)

Bidirectional Interface

LionPATH TRN XFRPEN

CSRS Syllabus, Review Committee

Use for LionPath
Awaiting My Review

- Currently used on substitution Side
- Admissions Reviews from Students –
  - Student Portal
Admissions

• Courses with XFRPEN as their evaluation
• XFRPEN articulated to student record
• Waiting for syllabus

crediteval@psu.edu
- New to Penn State
- Courses articulated

preapproval@psu.edu
- Applicant/Current Student
- Courses have not been articulated
Admissions

- Support Staff review syllabus
  - Name of Institution
  - Credit hours
  - Course Description
  - Topics
  - Grading Criteria
  - Textbooks
- Upload syllabus to repository
- Upload syllabus to CSRS
- Select Committee
Under Review

- Syllabus uploaded and sent to committee
- Faculty committees have 14 days to review the course
Prior Learning Assessment
Michele Rice
Director
Prior Learning Assessment

• Opened in 2014
• Follows CAEL guidelines and includes transfer in PLA
• Created 200 discipline committees in CSRS
• Committees staffed with faculty selected by colleges/campuses
Faculty

• Initial training – Basic
• Developed short videos
• Have two weeks

• In the event of a tie/disagreement, PLA mediates
• PLA keeps reports of activity and sends weekly check ins for committees with double digit syllabi
• PLA also will monthly email all committees to keep things clear—our job: build relationships with faculty and keep the evaluation process moving
Faculty decisions

• Thoughtful work
• Senate decision—PSU courses should be 80% in common
• So...transfer courses with an 80% equivalency earn direct Penn State course credit
• Other options for credit still benefit the students
  • 100/200/300/400 level in the discipline
  • General Education (with or without a level)
  • General credits given in the discipline, not generic
Course Rules and Student Records
LionPath Entry

- Review is complete or expires (after 14 days)
- Transfer Input Specialists review decision and comments
LionPath Entry > Supporting Info

- Transfer Input Specialists
- Review recommendations and compare with catalog
- “Use for LionPath”
- Bidirectional Interface
UAO Completed

- Repository for rules
- Reference Comments
- Reference Syllabus
- Reference Dates of review
- Evaluations stand for 5 years
Things to Consider

• Student Self-Service Portal
• Applicant Self-Service Portal
• A syllabus is not always available
  • XFRPEN to XFRGEN flip
  • TRN XFRGEN Course Substitution
  • Academic Adviser
• Effective dates
### Current Course Rule Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Equivalency</td>
<td>90,262</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject GEN</td>
<td>23,639</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>34,275</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education/Level</td>
<td>39,386</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Course Evaluations</strong></td>
<td>173,477</td>
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</tbody>
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**CSRS Reviews:** 86,512  
**March 2016 to January 2021**
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