



**PARTICIPATION IN THE FLORIDA  
STATEWIDE COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM**

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**Report and Recommendations of the  
Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission**

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**DECEMBER 1997**

## POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PLANNING COMMISSION

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The Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, initially created by executive order in 1980, given statutory authority in 1981 (SS 240.145 and 240.147, Florida Statutes), and reauthorized by the 1991 Legislature, serves as a citizen board to coordinate the efforts of postsecondary institutions and provide independent policy analyses and recommendations to the State Board of Education and the Legislature. The Commission is composed of 11 members of the general public and one full-time student registered at a postsecondary education institution in Florida. Members are appointed by the Governor with the approval of three members of the State Board of Education and subject to confirmation by the Senate.

A major responsibility of the Commission is preparing and updating every five years a master plan for postsecondary education. The enabling legislation provides that the Plan "shall include consideration of the promotion of quality, fundamental educational goals, programmatic access, needs for remedial education, regional and state economic development, international education programs, demographic patterns, student demand for programs, needs of particular subgroups of the population, implementation of innovative educational techniques and technology, and the requirements of the labor market. The capacity of existing programs, in both public and independent institutions, to respond to identified needs shall be evaluated and a plan shall be developed to respond efficiently to unmet needs."

Other responsibilities include recommending to the State Board of Education program contracts with independent institutions; advising the State Board regarding the need for and location of new programs, branch campuses and centers of public postsecondary education institutions; periodically reviewing the accountability processes and reports of the public and independent postsecondary sectors; reviewing public postsecondary education budget requests for compliance with the State Master Plan; and periodically conducting special studies, analyses, and evaluations related to specific postsecondary education issues and programs.

Further information about the Commission, its publications, meetings and other activities may be obtained from the Commission office, 224 Collins Building, Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida, 32399-0400; telephone (850) 488-7894; FAX (850) 922-5388.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Specific Appropriations 166 through 171A of the 1997 General Appropriations Act, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission is directed to:

*examine the feasibility of expanding participation in common-course numbering to include postsecondary institutions in addition to those that are regionally accredited. The study should address standards for participating in the system, the statutory-required acceptance of credit for transfer, the impact of the required acceptance of credit for transfer on the receiving institution's accreditation, and costs of participating in the common course numbering system. A report and recommendations related to participation in the common course numbering system by postsecondary institutions shall be submitted to the Legislature no later than January 1, 1998.*

The Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) was established to facilitate the transfer of postsecondary education students, to improve program planning and to increase communication among community colleges and universities. The SCNS is a classification system or taxonomy based on academic course content. The System is used at all public institutions of higher education, as well as two participating independent postsecondary institutions and includes a complete inventory of the postsecondary course offerings at these institutions. Fundamentally, SCNS-member institutions that accept transfer students from other participating institutions must award credit for successfully completed courses that are equivalent to the courses they offer.

The Postsecondary Education Planning Commission received considerable testimony on the Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) and examined the feasibility of expanding participation in the SCNS, reviewed standards for participation and addressed the transferability of academic course credits from one SCNS-member institution to another. As a result of testimony from administrators of the state's public and independent postsecondary institutions and sector boards and the Department of Education, issues are identified and recommendations are proposed in each of these areas.

### **State-level Coordination of the Course Numbering System**

The Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education Coordination (OPEC) is responsible for maintaining the inventory of courses in the SCNS, processing requests for course additions, deletions and changes, coordinating faculty discipline committee work and providing technical assistance to institutions. The SCNS staff report that constant contact with the 78 institution coordinators and chairpersons for the 164 faculty discipline committees is required to maintain accuracy. An average of 720 course additions and course changes are processed monthly.

In 1994, following budget reductions, the SCNS Unit was reduced to one professional staff. Since that year, the staff has been gradually increased, albeit with time-limited staff. With additional funding support by the 1997 Legislature, the SCNS Unit currently has five professional staff, including a Director and three program specialists.

As independent postsecondary institutions increase their participation in the SCNS, there should be a corresponding review of the staff resources in the DOE Office of Postsecondary Coordination that are needed to effectively coordinate the System and support all faculty discipline committees and participating institutions.

***Recommendations:***

- 1. The Office of Postsecondary Coordination should develop a Work Plan for submission to the Commissioner of Education that identifies the staff and other resources needed to support the increased participation of nonpublic institutions in the Statewide Course Numbering System. As part of this Plan, fees that have been established for nonpublic institutions should be reviewed and revised to ensure that they cover all costs associated with participation in the System.***
- 2. As institutional participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System increases, the Department of Education should ensure that the resources available to the Office of Postsecondary Coordination for administration of the System are both stable and sufficient to maintain the quality and level of service.***

**Participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System**

In its examination, the Commission identified two distinct issues regarding an independent (nonpublic) institution's participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System: (1) the eligibility of an independent institution to participate in the SCNS, and (2) the transferability of academic course credits from one SCNS-member institution to another.

**Eligibility for Participation in the SCNS**

Participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System, as stated in Section 246.013, Florida Statutes, is permitted for independent postsecondary institutions *that have been issued a regular license and that are fully accredited by a member of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and accredited nonpublic postsecondary colleges that are exempt from state licensure pursuant to s. 246.085(1)(a)*. While the current statute permits participation in the system by a wide range of independent institutions, this statute, along with s. 240.115, need clarification so that they accurately reflect eligibility requirements.

***Recommendations:***

- 3. Section 246,013, Florida Statutes, should be amended as follows:***

***Nonpublic college credit-granting postsecondary institutions licensed or exempt from licensure in Florida that have been issued a regular license and that are fully accredited by a national or regional accrediting agency that is recognized by the US Department of Education member of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and accredited nonpublic postsecondary colleges***

~~exempt from state licensure pursuant to s.246.085(1)(a) may participate in the common course designation and numbering system.~~

4. *Section 240.115 (1)(b), Florida Statutes, should be amended as follows:*

*Any student who transfers among nationally and/or regionally accredited institutions that participate in the common course designation and numbering system shall be awarded credit by the receiving institution for courses satisfactorily completed by the student at the previous institutions if the courses are judged by the appropriate common course designation and numbering system faculty task force to be equivalent to courses offered at the receiving institution. The award of credit may be limited to courses that are entered in the common course designation and numbering system. Credits awarded pursuant to this subsection shall satisfy institutional requirements on the same basis as credits awarded to native students.*

### **The Acceptance of Transfer Credit by SCNS-member Institutions**

In the Statewide Course Numbering System, faculty discipline committees evaluate each course submitted for entry into the system. If the faculty committee determines that a course is equivalent to the corresponding course in the system, then the same course designation will be provided for use in the SCNS. If the committee determines that a course is not equivalent, the committee will issue a discrete course number. When a student transfers among institutions that participate in the SCNS, the receiving institution must award the student academic credit for successfully completed SCNS courses that are equivalent to courses offered by the receiving institution as determined by the faculty discipline committees.

With the recommended expansion of the SCNS, there will, most likely, be an increase in the participation of Florida independent institutions in the system, although the number of institutions that will actually seek membership is unknown. Nonetheless, with the proposed broadening of participation in the SCNS by institutions that operate under various national and regional accreditation standards, the Commission believes that procedures should remain in place, both to maintain the quality and value of the receiving institution's academic degree program and to forestall the arbitrary treatment of students. A minimum faculty credential should be identified within the SCNS that will qualify faculty to teach equivalent academic courses in a discipline. The SCNS faculty committees provide the most appropriate process to determine consistent faculty credential standards for each discipline and these standards will provide an additional source of assurance for each committee's assignment of equivalent course numbers.

#### ***Recommendations:***

5. *The DOE Office of Postsecondary Coordination should ensure that independent institutions who participate in the Statewide Course Numbering System are represented on the appropriate Faculty Discipline Committees.*

6. ***The DOE Office of Postsecondary Coordination should direct each Statewide Course Numbering System Faculty Discipline Committee to identify the minimum level of faculty credential needed to teach equivalent academic courses in their discipline. The Articulation Coordinating Committee's Oversight Committee should develop a process to verify and maintain the minimum standards.***

### **Articulation Among Florida Postsecondary Institutions**

State policies, grounded by the Articulation Agreement, have established articulation as an important component of student access by providing for the smooth movement of students who seek postsecondary education from secondary school through the community college system and into the state university system. The Legislature and state educational leadership have also actively supported and promoted the progression of Florida residents through the state's independent postsecondary sector and have viewed these colleges and universities as vital resources that are crucial to the maintenance of diversity and choice in the overall educational delivery system.

The transition of students through the education system is supported by the State Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) which was established to adjudicate institutional or student conflicts regarding student transfer and admissions, to interpret and recommend amendments to the Articulation Agreement and to develop procedures to facilitate articulation. In order to further develop Florida's education system as an interdependent, seamless system among all sectors and at all levels, the membership of the ACC should be expanded to include participation by independent sector representatives, and its role as a final appeal for students with transfer conflicts should be expanded.

#### ***Recommendation:***

7. ***The Articulation Coordinating Committee should expand its membership to include two representatives of the state's independent postsecondary sector. State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024(2) should be amended accordingly.***

A Student Bill of Rights exists that was developed to express the rights of transfer students among state postsecondary institutions under the Statewide Articulation Agreement. As stated in the "bill of rights," the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) is available for state-level review of student admissions and transfer conflicts. With the expansion of the SCNS, the ACC should be the source of final appeals of student transfer and admissions difficulties for students at all institutions, public and nonpublic, that participate in the SCNS.

#### ***Recommendations:***

8. ***The Articulation Coordinating Committee should review student appeals of transfer and/or admissions conflicts among all postsecondary institutions who participate in the Statewide Course Numbering System. State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024(2)(f) should be amended accordingly.***

9. ***The Articulation Coordinating Committee should update the Florida Student Bill of Rights and ensure that all students who attend postsecondary institutions that participate in the Statewide Course Numbering System have access to the document.***

Beginning with the initial inquiry by a potential applicant for admission, all Florida postsecondary institutions should provide accurate and comprehensive printed information on programs, regulations and requirements, procedures and services, along with appeals procedures for academic decisions that may result in a delay of a student's progression toward a degree. All institution materials should be written with specificity and clarity.

***Recommendation:***

10. ***For every postsecondary institution that joins the Statewide Course Numbering System, the DOE Office of Postsecondary Coordination should review the following:***

- (1) the process that exists for a student to appeal a decision regarding his/her academic record, particularly one involving the transfer of academic credit from another institution; and***  
***(2) the institution's official catalogs, brochures, and forms to ensure that all academic standards, policies and procedures, including student appeals procedures, are expressed with accuracy, clarity and specificity.***

***The Office should maintain on file the student appeals procedures of all SCNS-member institutions for use by the Articulation Coordinating Committee.***

## CONCLUSION

For the past 25 years, the Statewide Course Numbering System has provided a process that has enhanced student access by facilitating the smooth transfer of students among the public community colleges and universities. The Commission believes that the expansion of the System to include the state's nationally or regionally accredited nonpublic institutions will ease the transfer process for a broader range of Florida students and, hopefully, will increase the number of bachelor degrees granted by Florida postsecondary institutions.

With the increase in participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System by nonpublic institutions, it is imperative that the Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Coordination has sufficient staff and other resources to enable it to effectively coordinate the System and support all faculty discipline committees and participating institutions.

The role of the faculty in the determination of faculty credentials to deliver equivalent academic courses, as well as the assignment of course numbers and equivalencies, is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the System. Recommendations in this report provide for a course numbering system that will broaden participation and enhance the student transfer process, while maintaining the quality and value of the receiving institution's academic degree. Accordingly, recommendations one through six must be implemented together in a coordinated plan to increase the participation of nonpublic institutions in the System.



## I. INTRODUCTION

### Legislative Charge

The 1997 Legislature, in Specific Appropriations 166 through 171A, directed the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission to:

*examine the feasibility of expanding participation in common-course numbering to include postsecondary institutions in addition to those that are regionally accredited. The study should address standards for participating in the system, the statutory-required acceptance of credit for transfer, the impact of the required acceptance of credit for transfer on the receiving institution's accreditation, and costs of participating in the common course numbering system. A report and recommendations related to participation in the common course numbering system by postsecondary institutions shall be submitted to the Legislature no later than January 1, 1998.*

### Background Information

State policies in Florida have established articulation as a fundamental component of student access by providing for and promoting the smooth transition of students from one education level to the next, from high schools to community colleges to universities.

The Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) was established to facilitate the transfer of postsecondary education students, to improve program planning and to increase communication among community colleges and universities. Participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System for Florida independent (nonpublic) postsecondary institutions is prescribed in Florida law. Section 246.013, Florida Statutes, states that:

*Nonpublic colleges and schools that have been issued a regular license and that are fully accredited by a member of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and accredited nonpublic postsecondary colleges exempt from state licensure pursuant to s.246.085(1)(a) may participate in the common course designation and numbering system .....*

The statute as currently stated was amended by the 1994 Legislature. Prior to 1994, eligibility was expressed for nonpublic institutions, based on a 1986 amendment to the statute, that stated that institutions may participate in the SCNS if they were accredited by a member of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

The SCNS is a classification system or taxonomy based on academic course content. The System is used at all public institutions of higher education, as well as two participating independent postsecondary institutions and includes a complete inventory of the postsecondary course offerings at these institutions. Fundamentally, SCNS-member institutions that accept transfer students from other participating institutions must award credit for successfully completed courses that are equivalent to the courses they offer.

All courses in the System are designated by a prefix, level code and three-digit identifier. The course prefix and three-digit identifier and, when appropriate, a laboratory suffix, denote a course equivalency. There are 164 subject matter areas, each with its own faculty discipline committee. For the universities, community colleges, area technical centers and two private colleges, there are over 120,000 courses on file in the system.

The SCNS acts as a repository of academic course information for the state and provides assistance to high school and college counselors when advising students about which courses are transferable. The system has facilitated the evaluation of students' transcripts and it is believed that the transferability of credits has reduced the time required to complete a degree, resulting in a substantial savings for students and taxpayers. Since the system has established a common language for facilitating communications among the education sectors, articulation has been more easily accomplished.

The Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education Coordination (OPEC) is responsible for maintaining the inventory of courses in the SCNS, processing requests for course additions, deletions and changes, coordinating faculty discipline committee work and providing technical assistance to institutions. The SCNS Unit reports that it processes over 19,000 requests for additions, deletions, reassignment of courses to different course numbers, or changes in titles, credit hours or levels each year.

### **Florida's Independent Postsecondary Sector**

Florida's independent colleges and universities represent a significant component of the state's postsecondary education delivery system. These institutions offer certificates, diplomas and associate, bachelor, masters and doctoral degrees in a vast array of academic disciplines, vocations and professions. There are two separate state boards charged with licensure and oversight of the independent institutions: the State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities (SBICU) and the State Board of Independent Postsecondary Vocational, Technical, Trade and Business Schools (SBIPVTBS). Both state boards were established in the early 1970s in response to concern for protecting Florida citizens from unscrupulous educational entrepreneurs.

**State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities (SBICU)** The SBICU was established "to encourage privately supported higher education and to protect the integrity of degrees and diplomas conferred by privately supported colleges." All nonpublic universities, colleges and degree-granting institutions in Florida must apply for licensure or exemption from the licensing requirements. Institutions may become exempt from licensure on the basis of their accreditation status or their religious or vocational nature. The SBICU has nearly 200 institutions under its purview, 54 (26%) of which are licensed.

The SBICU prescribes and recommends to the State Board of Education minimum standards and rules for the operation and establishment of nonpublic institutions, including out-of-state institutions offering programs in Florida. SBICU rules also define academic degree length and requirements. Legal requirements are in place, and are monitored by the board, to protect

individuals from deceptive, fraudulent, or substandard education, protect non-public colleges, and protect the value of diplomas and degrees awarded to the citizens of Florida.

State Board of Independent Postsecondary Vocational, Technical, Trade and Business Schools (SBIPVTTBS) The SBIPVTTBS was established to provide protection for the citizens of Florida from "deceptive, fraudulent or substandard education" in independent postsecondary vocational, technical, trade and business schools. The SBIPVTTBS issues licenses to institutions that primarily offer certificates and diplomas in specific vocational fields. Minimum standards for licensure and for the operation of the school are expressed in the Florida Statutes. There are over 450 schools licensed by the board with an enrollment of over 70,000 students. Of the licensed schools, 144 schools (31%) are accredited by one or more of the regional or national accrediting agencies. The board reports that in 1997 there were 37,502 graduates, 77 percent of whom were directly placed in jobs for which they were trained, continued their education at the postsecondary level or joined the military.

Nonpublic institutions that offer both postsecondary degrees and certificate/diploma programs are licensed by both the SBICU and the SBIPVTTBS, or are licensed by SBIPVTTBS and are exempt by SBICU.

Voluntary Associations for Florida Independent Institutions There are three voluntary associations in Florida that exist primarily to provide a voice for independent postsecondary institutions in the State. The Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) represents 23 four-year, degree-granting colleges and universities accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The Florida Association of Postsecondary Schools and Colleges (FAPSC) includes accredited and non-accredited independent colleges and universities, vocational, trade, technical and business schools, and has over 150 institutions and 100,000 students in its membership. The Florida Association of Colleges and Universities (FACU) was organized to promote cooperation and understanding among all institutions of higher education, so that they may be unified and develop broad support for higher education. The FACU is open to all public and private Florida postsecondary institutions.

The associations and their members work primarily to enhance independent postsecondary education in Florida through the development and promotion of legislative action.

### **Past Commission Report and State-level Reviews**

In its 1984 study: *Proprietary Postsecondary Education in Florida*, the Commission recognized the importance of the acceptance of transfer credit so that Florida citizens do not unnecessarily repeat courses or programs for which competencies have been achieved through studies at proprietary institutions. In this study, the Commission outlined ten variables that must be considered in determining the acceptance of transfer credit, including: the educational and/or occupational objectives of students, the characteristics of the receiving institution and the institution awarding the credit, the characteristics of credit reported on the transcript, the diversity and mission of the postsecondary institutions, institutional autonomy, inconsistencies in credit reporting methods, misunderstandings associated with credit for admission and credit for

degree, fairness to native and transfer students, and the volume of students from all types of postsecondary institutions.

The Commission recommended that *"the Statewide Course Numbering System should be expanded to include courses offered by licensed, accredited proprietary postsecondary institutions on a voluntary basis."* As a result, the 1986 Legislature amended Section 246,013, F.S., Participation in the common course designation and numbering system. The Commission also recommended the adoption of *"competency-based procedures to evaluate and award transfer credit to students from proprietary and other vocational institutions whenever possible and appropriate to supplement local articulation agreements."*

In the early 1990s, the State Office of the Auditor General performed a series of audits on different aspects of the SCNS. The performance audit, as reviewed in the 1992 report: *Participation of Private Postsecondary Institutions in the Statewide Course Numbering System*, found that 143 private postsecondary institutions were eligible for participation in the SCNS, but only two chose to participate. The report cited three primary reasons why private institutions were not participating in the SCNS in 1992: (1) the expense and time needed for schools to renumber their courses to be compatible with the SCNS, (2) the perception that participating in the SCNS would not guarantee that courses with common course numbers would be accepted for transfer credit by public colleges and universities, and (3) that the system is too rigid and inflexible, and might impinge on institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The report also found that the Department of Education had made little effort to encourage private institution participation in the SCNS and surmised that the Office of Postsecondary Education Coordination would not be able to handle the additional workload with existing staff.

The auditor general's report recommended that the Department of Education take steps to increase participation in the private sector by communicating with eligible private institutions about the benefits and costs of participation and initially targeting 'two-year degree granting institutions since these schools may have students who wish to continue their education in state universities. The report also recommended that the Department of Education establish entry and maintenance fees for private institutions to pay for administrative costs.

### **Commission Study Activities**

To direct this study, the Commission Chairman appointed a Program/Planning Committee under the leadership of Mrs. Karen Plunkett that included Commission members Dr. Rick Alterman, Mrs. Inez Bailey, Dr. Thomas Haynes, Mr. Clyde Hobby and Mr. Edgar Tolle. Six public meetings of the Committee were held between July 1997 and December 1997 and included considerable testimony from representatives of public and independent postsecondary institutions and the Department of Education. During two of the meetings, panel discussions occurred with faculty discipline committee members in the Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) and with public and nonpublic institution administrators who work directly with the student transfer process. Through this testimony, issues were identified and recommendations made that focus on standards for participation in SCNS and the transferability of academic course credits from one SCNS-member institution to another.

## II. THE FLORIDA STATEWIDE COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM

### Early Development

In the late 1960s, there was increasing concern regarding the difficulties encountered in assigning course credits to students transferring from lower-division colleges to the upper-division universities or to other institutions. A common course numbering system was developed in the early 1970s to facilitate the transfer of credit for equivalent courses among the state's colleges and universities and to reduce the amount of unnecessary repetition of courses by transfer students. In the 1971 Articulation Agreement, the Legislature established the procedures for the transfer of courses among institutions that participate in the common course designation and numbering system.

The Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) was designed to provide a framework for each subject matter area to categorize courses that could be used for all institutions. Its primary purposes were to establish course inventories listing all courses offered in Florida, identify course equivalencies, and develop statewide course descriptions to be used in determining equivalencies. Development of the system was coordinated by the state community colleges and universities and responsibility for determining course equivalencies was placed with faculty.

### Structure of the SCNS

The Statewide Course Numbering System is a subject matter classification that allows the categorization of courses according to the academic content only, regardless of the administrative units that courses are assigned at individual institutions. The SCNS uses a course designation which consists of a three-letter prefix and a four-digit number and, when necessary, a one-letter laboratory or lecture suffix. The first digit of the four digit number is assigned by the institution and indicates the level at which the course is offered. This digit does not affect the equivalency. The example in Figure 1 below displays ENC 1101, English Composition, in the subclassification area of English Composition, taught at the freshman level.

**Figure 1**

#### STATEWIDE COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM COURSE ID for ENGLISH 1101

ENC	1	101	---
Subject Matter Prefix	Assigned by Institution	Places the course to appropriate subcategory	Laboratory Suffix

The course *prefix* designates the subject matter area and each prefix is divided into ten major content categories called *centuries*. Each century is further divided into ten subcategories called *decades* for courses with related content. As an example, see the taxonomy for *English Composition* in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2**

**STATEWIDE COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM  
Current Taxonomy Report**

***ENGLISH COMPOSITION***

<b>PREFIX</b>	<b>RANGE</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
ENC		English Composition
0	000-099	Developmental English
08	080-089	Developmental English Courses: Grammar And Sentence Building
084		Grammar And Paragraph Review
085		Grammar And Paragraph Review
09	090-099	Clast Review Courses
090		Clast Review
091		Individualized College Level Academic Skills Essay Test Review
092		Individual Communication Skills Clast Review II
093		Individual Communication Skills Clast Review III
1	100-199	Freshman Composition
10	100-109	Freshman Composition Skills
101		Freshman Composition Skills I
101		Freshman Composition Skills I Lab
102		Freshman Composition Skills II
103		Directed Independent Study
104		Clast Review: Essay Skills
105		Clast Review: English Language Skills
108		Writing For CLEP Students/Gordon Rule
12	120-129	Freshman Composition: Honors
121		Freshman Composition I: Honors
122		Freshman Composition II: Honors
127		Grammar And Composition
13	130-139	Special Topics In Freshman Composition
130		Special Topics In Freshman Composition
131		Writing Skills Review
132		Freshman Composition: Expository Writing
133		Library Research And Writing
134		Writing About Mythology (Non-Gordon)
135		Argument And Persuasion (Non-Gordon)
136		Writing About Fiction (Non-Gordon)
137		Writing About Poetry & Drama (Non-Gordon)
138		Comp.: Creative Writing (Non-Gordon)
139		Special Topics In Composition

Source: SCNS Unit  
DOE Office of Postsecondary Coordination

All courses assigned the same SCNS course identifier-prefix, same last three digit number and suffix have been judged to be equivalent and should have guaranteed transfer. Additionally, certain categories of courses are identified as exceptions and transfer is not guaranteed for these courses, even if they have the same prefixes and numbers. These exceptions include college preparatory and vocational courses; performance courses in theater, dance, music and studio art; clinical courses in health-related areas; and courses classified as special topics, internships,

practica and study abroad. The receiving institution, however, is never precluded from accepting non-equivalent courses for satisfying certain degree requirements.

### **Faculty Discipline Committees**

Responsibilities for implementing the SCNS are shared by faculty committees and participating institutions. The system is currently maintained by 164 faculty discipline committees, with 78 institutional coordinators. Faculty committees develop course categorization schemes, analyze course descriptions, assign numbers to courses, and approve statewide course-equivalency profiles. Committees have been established by subject area and consist of faculty representatives from various universities, community colleges and school districts, with one member serving as faculty discipline coordinator. Committees meet formally, at varying intervals, to review course placements, taxonomies and course-equivalency profiles. Guidelines that faculty committees use for determining course equivalencies include attention to prerequisites, intended students, level of complexity, content, depth and detail with which content is treated in a course, and outcomes. Instructional delivery methods are not a consideration and remain the prerogative of the individual professor.

Each participating institution designates a contact person who helps institution personnel select course prefixes and numbers, notifies registrars and catalog editors when course requests have been processed and approved and recommends faculty for appointment to faculty committees. An example of a Committee's work appears in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3**

#### **STATEWIDE COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM**

##### **Display Profile Description**

DISC: 163    PREFIX: ENC    NUMBER: 101 LAB  
TITLE: FRESHMAN COMPOSITION SKILLS I  
DESCRIPTORS:

1. THE PROCESS OF WRITING
2. GRAMMAR MECHANICS
3. ANALYSIS OF SAMPLE ESSAYS
4. DESCRIPTION
5. NARRATION
6. EXPOSITION
7. ARGUMENTATION

- REQUIREMENTS:
1. DEVELOPING THESES
  2. DEVELOPING COMPLETE AND LOGICAL OUTLINES
  3. WRITING ESSAYS THAT INCLUDE INTRODUCTIONS, CLEAR PARAGRAPHS, LOGICAL AND COMPLETE TRANSITIONS, AND APPROPRIATE CONCLUSIONS
  4. DEVELOPING FACILITY WITH THE ENGLISH GRAMMAR

The SCNS currently has course information and identifying prefixes and numbers for more than 120,000 courses and is used by all public higher education institutions in Florida, including 38

state-supported area technical education centers, the 28 community colleges, the 10 state universities, and two independent postsecondary institutions.

The SCNS provides a data base for a complete and accurate inventory of all postsecondary programs and courses at participating institutions for research and student advisement. Because course inventories are statewide, information on the SCNS file that identifies transferable courses and institutions offering the courses is regularly used by high school counselors and college/admissions officers, registrars, and career counselors. Comparison' reports produced by the SCNS Office that provide information on the courses that will have guaranteed transfer to a selected institution are regularly used to assist students considering or planning institution transfer. In addition, faculty who plan new courses can receive copies of descriptions of existing courses, both original course descriptions and statewide course equivalency profiles.



### III. ACADEMIC COURSE NUMBERING: NATIONAL AND FLORIDA SURVEYS

#### Survey of State Higher Education Executive Officer (SHEEO) States

The Commission conducted an electronic survey of member states of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) regarding academic course numbering policies and procedures. The survey requested information regarding: (1) the categories and numbers of postsecondary institutions that participate in the system, (2) state standards for participation, (3) the process for classification of courses, (4) related statutes, rules, or policies, (5) identification of the state office that maintains the system, and (6) the fee structure or costs to participate in the system.

Twenty-six states responded to the survey and most states replied that they do not have a statewide course numbering system. The survey identified a few states that use common course numbering in a limited fashion; with a small number of institutions (South Dakota and Idaho), or only within one particular higher education sector (the Virginia community college system or the South Carolina technical college system). These states do not require fees for participation in their statewide course numbering systems. A few states, Oregon, Texas and Oklahoma, have established systems that are similar in some fashion to Florida's Statewide Course Numbering System and the surveys provide useful information about the operation of these systems. Alaska and Minnesota reported that they are considering the development of a common course numbering system.

Oregon has a common course numbering system for lower division transfer courses between their seven public baccalaureate-granting institutions and their 17 community colleges. The *Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer Degree* is a block transfer degree similar to the 2+2 system in Florida. The common course system is jointly administered by the Chancellor's Office of the Oregon State System of Higher Education and the Office of Community College Services. An inter-sector group known as the Joint Boards Articulation Commission is charged with policy oversight. There is no "fee structure" involved for institutions to participate in Oregon's common course numbering system.

Texas has a common course numbering system which includes every public institution, both universities and community colleges, and many private institutions (110 institutions in all). It functions as a cooperative effort among community colleges and universities to facilitate transfer of freshman- and sophomore-level general academic coursework. Participation in the system is voluntary and the system is not managed by the state. The governing board of the system consists of six members appointed by three organizations. Each member is appointed for a three-year term and the board chair position rotates each year between university and community college representatives.

Oklahoma has a common course numbering system that is most similar to Florida's system. It includes two comprehensive universities, 10 four-year institutions, 12 two-year institutions, two technical branches. All member institutions are public and regionally accredited. The State Regents' Articulation Policy states that college credit from regionally accredited private institutions may be accepted. However, college credit from non-regionally accredited institutions may also be accepted on a course-by-course basis.

The Oklahoma system utilizes Faculty Transfer Curriculum Committees, representing all public institutions, to generate course equivalency information. In 1995, 11 faculty committees established equivalencies for 1,594 courses and, in 1996, 20 faculty committees nearly doubled that amount with 2,875 courses. An updated and expanded set of course equivalency matrices is developed each year. These matrices are distributed to system institutions and placed on the Internet. No fees are charged for institutional participation and institutional costs for faculty time and travel are not calculated. The administrative costs for State Regents include approximately \$800 for the annual meeting and one full-time staff member's salary.

### **Survey of Florida Independent Postsecondary Institutions**

The Commission conducted a survey of nationally and/or regionally accredited independent postsecondary institutions in Florida. Sixty surveys were returned and provided usable responses regarding accreditation status (regional and national), state licensure, credentials offered and level of interest in participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System. Twenty institutions who are members of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) association returned surveys. While all ICUF institutions are SACS-accredited, all 20 institutions reported that they do not participate in the SCNS. Twenty-two institutions that are licensed by the State Board of Independent Postsecondary Vocational Technical, Trade and Business Schools (SBIPVTTBS) also responded to the survey. They are non-degree-granting institutions and were not included in the survey analysis.

Institutions that are regionally accredited (SACS) and eligible to participate in the SCNS were asked to provide reasons why they do not choose to participate. Of the 27 eligible institutions, 20 reported that the primary reason they do not participate is due to the success of existing student articulation/transfer policies and procedures.

**Table 1**

**PARTICIPATION IN THE STATEWIDE COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM**

**Florida Independent Postsecondary Institutions**

<b>Institution Membership and Accreditation status</b>	<b># of Inst. responses</b>	<b>If currently authorized to participate, do you?</b>	<b>If not authorized, but new legislation permitted participation, would you participate?</b>
<b>ICUF (SACS accredited)</b>	20	Yes (0) No (20)	N/A
<b>SBICU (SACS accredited)</b>	6	Yes (0) No (6)	N/A
<b>SBICU (National accred.)*</b>	7	Not currently authorized	Yes (6) No (1)
<b>SBICU &amp; SBIPVTTBS (SACS accredited)</b>	1	Yes (0) No (1)	N/A
<b>SBICU &amp; SBIPVTTBS (National accred.)*</b>	4	Not currently authorized	Yes (4) No (0)

\* National accreditation: Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges & Schools  
Accrediting Commission for Career Schools & Colleges of Technology

**Notes:** ICUF = Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida  
SBICU = State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities  
SBIPVTTBS = State Board of Independent Postsecondary Vocational, Technical, Trade and Business Schools

Institutions that are not regionally accredited were asked if they would choose to participate if legislation was amended to encourage participation. Of the 11 institutions in this category who responded to the survey, seven are licensed by the State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities (SBICU) and four institutions are licensed by both SBICU and SBIPVTTBS. Ten of the 11 institutions licensed by SBICU reported that they would be interested in participation in the SCNS. The institution that reported that it would not participate cited unknown or unclear benefits as the primary reason.

#### IV. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Postsecondary Education Planning Commission received considerable testimony on the Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) and examined the feasibility of expanding participation in the SCNS, reviewed standards for participation and addressed the transferability of academic course credits from one SCNS-member institution to another. As a result of testimony from administrators of the state's public and independent postsecondary institutions and sector boards and the Department of Education, issues are identified and recommendations are proposed in each of these areas.

##### A. State-level Coordination of the Course Numbering System

The Statewide Course Numbering System is administered in Tallahassee by the Office of Postsecondary Coordination of the Department of Education. This Office and its SCNS Unit is currently housed in the Division of Public Schools' Bureau of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

SCNS staff are responsible for (1) developing and maintaining an inventory of courses available in state universities, community colleges and other participating public and independent institutions; (2) processing requests for course additions, deletions and changes; providing technical assistance to institutions concerning the SCNS; (3) coordinating and conducting faculty discipline committee meetings; and (4) making presentations and maintaining publications on the SCNS. The SCNS staff report that constant contact with the 78 institution coordinators and chairpersons for the 164 faculty discipline committees is required to maintain accuracy. Training is provided for all new SCNS institution coordinators and chairpersons and an annual workshop for SCNS institution coordinators is conducted to provide technical support and training. The staff process an average of 720 course additions and course changes monthly.

In 1994, following budget reductions, the SCNS Unit was reduced to one professional staff. Since that year, the staff has been gradually increased, albeit with time-limited staff. With additional funding support by the 1997 Legislature, the SCNS Unit currently has five professional staff, including a Director and three program specialists. The 1998 Department of Education legislative budget request includes a request for one additional specialist and two support staff.

In its 1997 report: *Review of Postsecondary Articulation Policy Issues*, the Commission examined state-level policy and administrative support for articulation. The Commission confirmed that funding and staffing for the SCNS Unit of the Office of Postsecondary Coordination had been reduced in recent years, and concluded that the Statewide Course Numbering System was critical to the success of meeting the intent of the state Articulation Agreement and the 1995 "Time-to-Degree" legislation. The Commission recommended that *"the Statewide Course Numbering System should be a recognized priority of the Department of Education."*

Addressing the participation of nonpublic postsecondary institutions, Section 246.013, Florida Statutes, states that:

*Participating colleges and schools shall bear the costs associated with inclusion in the system and shall meet the terms and conditions for institutional participation in the system. The department shall adopt a fee schedule that includes the expenses incurred through data processing, faculty task force travel and per diem, and staff and clerical support time. Such fee schedule may differentiate between the costs associated with initial course inclusion in the system and costs associated with subsequent course maintenance in the system..... Fees associated for participation in the common course designation and numbering system pursuant to the provisions in this section shall be deposited in the Institutional Assessment Trust Fund created by s. 246.31.*

As independent postsecondary institutions increase their participation in the SCNS, there should be a corresponding review of the staff resources in the DOE Office of Postsecondary Coordination that are needed to effectively coordinate the System and support all faculty discipline committees and participating institutions.

***Recommendations:***

- 1. The Office of Postsecondary Coordination should develop a Work Plan for submission to the Commissioner of Education that identifies the staff and other resources needed to support the increased participation of nonpublic institutions in the Statewide Course Numbering System. As part of this Plan, fees that have been established for nonpublic institutions should be reviewed and revised to ensure that they cover all costs associated with participation in the System.***
  
- 2. As institutional participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System increases, the Department of Education should ensure that the resources available to the Office of Postsecondary Coordination for administration of the System are both stable and sufficient to maintain the quality and level of service.***

**B. Participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System**

Participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System, as stated in Section 246.013, Florida Statutes, is permitted for independent postsecondary institutions *that have been issued a regular license and that are fully accredited by a member of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and accredited nonpublic postsecondary colleges that are exempt from state licensure pursuant to s. 246.085(1)(a).*

In its examination, the Commission identified two distinct issues regarding an independent institution's participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System: (1) the eligibility of an independent institution to participate in the SCNS, and (2) the transferability of academic course credits from one SCNS-member institution to another.

## **1. Eligibility for Participation in the SCNS**

The Florida Association of Postsecondary Schools and Colleges (FAPSC) is leading the current movement to amend the existing statute. The membership of FAPSC believes that participation in the statewide course numbering system should be expanded to all accredited institutions that are licensed or exempt. This view is grounded on the evidence that there are students attending nonregionally-accredited institutions in Florida that have completed courses that are equivalent to public college or university courses, but are unable to receive credit for the courses upon transfer to a public postsecondary institution. The FAPSC further states that when students are forced to repeat coursework that has already been taken, the duration of academic and vocational programs is increased, and an already overcrowded system of postsecondary education becomes more overburdened. Nonpublic institutions have also expressed the views that participation in the SCNS would enhance their ability to attract new students and their potential eligibility for participation in State financial aid programs.

Proponents of the existing statute believe that the SCNS was established by the Legislature to enhance articulation among the public community colleges and universities and that the accreditation standards employed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges are of sufficient rigor to provide assurances of educational program quality. Community college administrators have reported that local articulation agreements with nonpublic colleges in their region have proven successful and have allowed for the smooth transfer of students from one institution to another. Similarly, state university administrators have stated that students are able to transfer academic credits to their institution from a nonpublic Florida institution and that each transfer request and transcript evaluation is handled on a case-by-case basis, often with input from individual academic department faculty and administrators.

As reported in Chapter III, the Commission surveyed nationally and/or regionally accredited independent institutions in Florida regarding level of interest in participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System. Ten of the 11 institutions licensed by the SBICU responded that they would be interested in participating in the SCNS if the institutions were granted eligibility to participate in the system. Survey analysis also revealed that the 20 ICUF-member institutions who responded to the survey (all respondents are SACS-accredited, and therefore eligible to participate in the SCNS) have chosen not to participate in the system. The primary reason expressed by the ICUF respondents was that their existing articulation/transfer policies and procedures are successful.

Institutional accreditation and its impact on eligibility to participate in the SCNS and the process whereby transfer credit is reviewed and accepted were the primary issues in the Commission's deliberations.

### **Accreditation**

In most other countries, the establishment and maintenance of educational standards is the responsibility of a central government. In the United States, however, the regulation of education is constitutionally reserved to the states. The system of voluntary non-governmental

evaluation, called accreditation, has evolved to promote both regional and national approaches to the determination of educational quality.

There are two types of accreditation and accrediting associations: institutional and specialized or programmatic accreditation. Institutional accreditation is carried out by associations which are regional or national in scope and focuses on the review of a college or university as a total institution, including its academic programs, organization and administration, financial and physical resources, faculty and staff and personnel policies, student personnel services and other elements pertaining to the total educational program at the institution.

### **National Review of Accreditation Associations**

The US Department of Education is required by statute to maintain a list of nationally recognized accrediting agencies and has specific procedures and criteria for the recognition of national and regional accrediting associations. The US DOE National Advisory Committee evaluates accrediting agencies to determine "whether the agencies are reliable authorities as to the quality of education or training offered by the institutions of higher education or the higher education programs they accredit." In the review process, Committee representatives attend meetings of the agencies, participate in visits, review institutional files, interview agency accreditors, evaluate the accreditation standards of the agency and review the procedures by which the agency accredits institutions. To be listed by the US DOE as a nationally recognized accrediting agency, the agency must demonstrate that:

*it consistently applies and enforces written standards that ensure that the education or training offered by an institution or program is of sufficient quality to achieve, for the duration of any accreditation period granted by the agency, the stated objective for which it is offered.*

The US DOE uses the requirement of institutional accreditation as a qualifier for the use of its funds, typically federal financial assistance programs through Title IV of the Higher Education Amendments. The assumption of such a requirement is that accredited institutions will be accountable for the federal dollars as well as offering the quality programs and services that those dollars were intended to provide.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), a non-governmental organization, was established in 1974 to carry out the evaluation and recognition of accrediting agencies to ensure and promote quality and diversity in American postsecondary education. A new entity, the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA) was established in 1994, but was dissolved in early 1997 when a new Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) assumed the recognition function.

### **Institutional Accreditation**

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), one of six regional associations, is the recognized regional accrediting body in 11 Southern states, including Florida. The SACS Commission on Colleges

accredits degree-granting institutions that award associate, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degrees. Currently, the membership in SACS includes more than 11,000 public and private institutions, ranging from universities to early childhood centers and kindergartens, that enroll more than 11 million students. There are approximately 70 SACS-accredited colleges and universities in Florida.

Regional accrediting agencies like SACS accredit the total institution and accreditation status "signifies that the institution has a purpose appropriate to higher education and has resources, programs and services sufficient to accomplish its purpose on a continuing basis." In the evaluation of the educational quality of the institution, the process relies primarily on the self-study of the faculty and administrative staff, peer review by a visiting committee and final evaluation by the Commission.

A primary SACS standard addresses the acceptance of transfer credits and states that "Coursework transferred or accepted for credit toward an undergraduate degree must be completed at an institution accredited as degree-granting by a regional accrediting body for higher education at the time the coursework was completed." However, it has recently been reported that this standard will be modified by SACS at its upcoming annual conference in order to allow institutions to decide for themselves which credits to accept as "relevant" to the degree that the transfer student is seeking.

Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) The Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) represents an example of a national accrediting body that is recognized by the US Department of Education for determining the quality of education and training offered at institutions that it accredits. Active in Florida, the Council's accreditation activities are directed at postsecondary institutions, junior colleges and senior colleges offering educational programs, from certificates through masters degrees, designed for careers in business, management or other business-related professions. The association accredits 545 institutions who enroll nearly 300,000 students. During its accreditation process, an institution's educational quality (including outcomes), professional status among similar institutions, financial stability and operational ethics are judged by peers.

The State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities (SBICU) reported to the Commission that it conducted a comparative review of SBICU membership standards with the accreditation standards of SACS, ACICS and two religious associations: the American Association of Bible Colleges and the Transnational Association of Christian Schools. In its comprehensive review, the SBICU compared: *Purpose, Administrative Organization, Educational Program and Curricula, Admissions and Recruitment, Finances, Faculty, Library, Physical Facilities, Student Services, Records and Forms, Publications, Disclosures, Special Additional Standards, On-Site Visits and Enforcement*. The SBICU found the standards to be comparable according to most of its indices.



**Institution Standards**

A primary focus of an institutional accreditation process, typically, is on *the education program*; the total process by which the institution offers education that leads to an academic or professional degree, certificate or other recognized education credential. The Commission received testimony that a key component of the evaluation of an institution's educational programs is *the faculty credentials* that are required for the degree level of each program. Below is a comparison of the accreditation standards for *Faculty* of two institutional accreditation associations: a regional accrediting agency (SACS) and a national accrediting agency (ACICS).

**Figure 4**

**ACCREDITATION STANDARDS on *FACULTY***

<b><u>Accrediting Agency</u></b>	<b><u>Degree Level</u></b>	<b><u>Minimum Standard</u></b>
SACS	Associate Degree	Master’s Degree with 18 graduate semester hours in teaching discipline
	Bachelor’s Degree	Master’s Degree with 18 graduate semester hours in teaching discipline [at least 25 % of the discipline course hours must be taught by faculty holding the terminal degree]
ACICS	Associate Degree	50% of lower division courses taught by faculty with graduate degree, professional degree or bachelor’s plus professional certification
	Bachelor’s Degree	All upper-division courses taught by faculty with graduate degree, professional degree or bachelor’s plus professional certification.

The Commission believes that the student and his/her progression toward a degree should be at the forefront of policy deliberations regarding participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System. While the current statute, Section 246.013, F.S., permits participation in the system by a wide range of independent institutions, the statute needs clarification so that it accurately reflects eligibility requirements.

***Recommendation:***

- Section 246,013, Florida Statutes, should be amended as follows:***

***Nonpublic college credit-granting postsecondary institutions licensed or exempt from licensure in Florida that have been issued a regular license and that are fully accredited by a national or regional accrediting agency that is recognized by the US Department of Education member of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and accredited nonpublic postsecondary colleges exempt from state licensure pursuant to s.246.085(1)(a) may participate in the common course designation and numbering system.***

When the Statewide Course Numbering System was established in the early 1970s, the state's public colleges and universities were mandated to participate in the system. In Section 229.551,(1) and (f), F.S., the state commissioner of education is directed to develop and coordinate a "state system of educational accountability" and is charged with the:

*Development and coordination of a common course designation and numbering system for community colleges and the State University System, which will improve program planning, increase communication among community colleges and universities and facilitate the transfer of students*

Up to this point, all participants in the statewide course numbering system, the public community colleges and universities, have been regionally accredited (SACS). With the amendment of the statute in **Recommendation 3**, Section 240.115(1)(b), F.S. should be similarly amended.

**Recommendation:**

**4. Section 240.115 (1)(b), Florida Statutes, should be amended as follows:**

*Any student who transfers among nationally and/or regionally accredited institutions that participate in the common course designation and numbering system shall be awarded credit by the receiving institution for courses satisfactorily completed by the student at the previous institutions if the courses are judged by the appropriate common course designation and numbering system faculty task force to be equivalent to courses offered at the receiving institution. The award of credit may be limited to courses that are entered in the common course designation and numbering system. Credits awarded pursuant to this subsection shall satisfy institutional requirements on the same basis as credits awarded to native students.*

**2. The Acceptance of Transfer Credit by SCNS-member Institutions**

The ability of a student to transfer among postsecondary institutions in Florida is grounded by the State Articulation Agreement, which provides for the admission of community college associate in arts graduates to the state university system. This system continues to work effectively due to the continued assurance to state universities, through common placement testing, the CLAST and the Statewide Course Numbering System, that the transferring community college graduates have achieved an adequate level of academic preparation.

Each community college and university designates an articulation officer to assist students who are transferring from or to another institution. These officers assist students in their understanding of admission requirements and prerequisites for specific programs of study. University admissions and registrar staff typically review the transfer students' academic transcript to determine the courses and credits that will be accepted for the baccalaureate degree requirements. In a formal correspondence, the course credits that are accepted and the credits that are not accepted for transfer are specified.

In regard to the Statewide Course Numbering System, when students transfer among participating institutions, the receiving institution must award the student credit for successfully completed courses that are equivalent to courses offered by the receiving institution as determined by the SCNS faculty discipline committees.

With the recommended expansion of the SCNS (*Recommendation 3 and 4*), there will, most likely, be an increase in the participation of Florida independent institutions in the system, although the number of institutions that will actually seek membership is unknown. It is noteworthy, however, that the 1992 SCNS performance audit performed by the State Office of the Auditor General found only two of 143 eligible nonpublic institutions chose to participate in the SCNS. In addition, the Commission's survey (see Chapter III) revealed that the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) institutions, all regionally-accredited, have, up to this point, chosen not to participate in the system. Nonetheless, with the proposed broadening of participation in the SCNS by institutions that operate under various national and regional accreditation standards, the Commission believes that procedures should remain in place, both to maintain the quality and value of the receiving institution's academic degree program and to forestall the arbitrary treatment of students.

### **Faculty Discipline Committees**

In defining the development of the SCNS, Section 229.551(1)(f), F.S., states that: *The system shall not encourage or require course content prescription or standardization or uniform course testing, and the continuing maintenance of the system shall be accomplished by appropriate faculty committees.*

As reported in Chapter II, the Statewide Course Numbering System is currently maintained by 164 faculty discipline committees, with 78 institutional coordinators. Committees have been established by subject area and consist of faculty representatives from various universities, community colleges and school districts, with one member serving as faculty discipline coordinator. Committees meet formally, at varying intervals, to review course placements, taxonomies and course-equivalency profiles. Each participating institution designates a contact person who helps institution personnel select course prefixes and numbers, notifies registrars and catalog editors when course requests have been processed and approved and recommends faculty for appointment to faculty committees.

For postsecondary institutions seeking membership in the Statewide Course Numbering System, faculty discipline committees will conduct an evaluation of each course submitted for entry into the SCNS. Typically, the coordinators of the faculty committees review course transmittals and assign course prefixes and numbers. The entire committee is consulted when major decisions about taxonomies are to be made, or if an issue is particularly controversial. If the faculty committee determines that a course is equivalent to the corresponding course in the System, then the same designation will be provided for use in the SCNS. If the committee determines that a course is not equivalent, the committee will issue a discrete course number.

A formal appeals process exists for an institution who disagrees with the level, prefix and number assigned to its course(s) by the faculty discipline committees. In this process, an appeal

is reviewed by the faculty committee, the Oversight Committee of the Articulation Coordinating Committee and, ultimately, the Articulation Coordinating Committee which has final review authority.

***Recommendation:***

- 5. The DOE Office of Postsecondary Coordination should ensure that independent institutions who participate in the Statewide Course Numbering System are represented on the appropriate Faculty Discipline Committees.***

Faculty committees develop course categorization schemes, analyze Course descriptions, assign numbers to courses, and approve statewide course-equivalency profiles. Guidelines that faculty committees use for determining course equivalencies include attention to prerequisites, intended students, level of complexity (introductory, intermediate or advanced), content, depth and detail with which content is treated in a course, and outcomes (level of operation or specific skills). Instructional delivery methods are not a consideration and remain the prerogative of the individual professor.

As part of the 1995 "Higher Education Access 2000 Act" or "Time to Degree Bill", Section 229.551(1)(f), F.S. directed the Articulation Coordinating Committee to:

*Appoint faculty committees representing both community college and university faculties to recommend a single level for each course included in the common course numbering and designation system. Any course designated as an upper-division level course must be characterized by a need for advanced academic preparation and skills that a student would be unlikely to achieve without significant prior coursework. ....By January 1, 1996, the common course numbering and designation system shall include the courses at the recommended levels ....*

In its 1997 report: ***Review of Postsecondary Articulation Policy Issues***, the Commission reviewed the implementation of the "Time to Degree" legislation addressed the role of faculty and recommended that ***The Articulation Coordinating Committee and institutions should ensure that faculty have the opportunity for continued discussion on curricular reform. The Commission concluded that: It is through communication among faculty that the State can truly address the continuity of the transfer process and minimize the line between the lower and upper division academic experience.***

With the increased participation in the SCNS, there must be corresponding efforts at the state-level to maintain the system's current standards for academic credit equivalency in the designation of course numbers that are used in the student transfer process among institutions. The Commission received testimony that standards pertaining to an institution's *education program* do vary among accrediting agencies. Figure 4 (page 17) displays the standards for faculty credentials for SACS, a regional accrediting agency, and for ACICS, a national accrediting agency, and shows that faculty credentials are more rigorous for SACS, the regional association.

The selection and retention of competent faculty at all academic levels is of major importance to the educational quality of an institution. In the SCNS, the faculty discipline committees analyze course descriptions, assign numbers to courses and approve statewide course-equivalency profiles. Similar to the accreditation process, the Commission believes that a minimum faculty credential can be identified within the Statewide Course Numbering System that will qualify faculty to teach equivalent academic courses in a discipline. The SCNS faculty committees provide the most appropriate process to determine consistent faculty credential standards for each discipline and these standards will provide an additional source of assurance for each committee's assignment of equivalent course numbers.

***Recommendation:***

- 6. The DOE Office of Postsecondary Coordination should direct each Statewide Course Numbering System Faculty Discipline Committee to identify the minimum level of faculty credential needed to teach equivalent academic courses in their discipline. The Articulation Coordinating Committee's Oversight Committee should develop a process to verify and maintain the minimum standards.***

Although the focus of this study has been on the *receiving* institution in the transfer process, the *transferring* institution has a key responsibility to provide comprehensive and accurate counseling to enable a student to complete during the freshman and/or sophomore years those lower division courses which are the stated prerequisites for upper division work in a specific major disciplinary field.

The Commission believes that this discussion serves to highlight the value of articulation agreements in which faculty of Florida postsecondary institutions come together to review courses and link degree programs to facilitate student progression from one institution and degree level to the next. It is anticipated that new interinstitutional agreements will be established as participation is expanded in the Statewide Course Numbering System to include more Florida independent institutions.

**C. Articulation Among Florida Postsecondary Institutions**

Articulation is the means by which schools, colleges and universities coordinate their programs and services to facilitate the movement of students through the educational system. Florida is considered a national leader in developing highly effective articulation at the state and local levels between and among public institutions and education sectors. State policies have established articulation as an important component of student access by providing for the smooth movement of students who seek postsecondary education from secondary school through the community college system and into the state university system. A State Articulation Agreement, first authored in 1957 and confirmed in 1971 by the State Board of Education, puts into practice the programs that support the Two-Plus-Two system. As expressed in Section 240.115(1)(a), Florida Statutes, the agreement states that "every associate in arts graduate of a Florida community college shall have met all general education requirements and must be granted admission to the upper division of a state university..."

The Legislature and state educational leadership have also actively supported and promoted the progression of Florida residents through the state's independent postsecondary sector and have viewed these colleges and universities as vital resources that are crucial to the maintenance of diversity and choice in the overall educational delivery system. The Commission has been steadfast in its support of contracting with independent institutions for specific academic programs and of providing financial assistance to students who desire to attend an independent college or university as policies designed to meet overall state education needs. More recently, the Limited Access Competitive Grant program was established to provide enrollment opportunities through financial support for qualified applicants unable to obtain admission to selected state university limited access degree programs. In all of these efforts, the challenge, as has been recognized in previous Commission master plans and reports, continues to be to maintain a meaningful level of cooperation between the public and independent sectors.

Significant progress was made in 1992 when the State Board of Community Colleges and the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) signed an articulation agreement to assist students in transferring from a public community college to an independent college or university in Florida. Under the Agreement, community college students holding an associate in arts degree are guaranteed junior standing, recognition of the general education core and the application of a minimum of 60 credit hours toward the baccalaureate degree. The Agreement also established an articulation committee composed of representatives of ICUF and the community college system to conduct continuing review of the agreement and to review instances of student transfer and admissions difficulties and recommend appropriate solutions.

#### **1. Articulation Coordination Committee**

In addition to the articulation agreement, the transition of students through the education system is supported by the State Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC). The ACC was established to adjudicate institutional or student conflicts regarding student transfer and admissions, to interpret and recommend amendments to the Articulation Agreement and to develop procedures to facilitate articulation. Specific responsibilities of the ACC include:

- Accept continuous responsibility for public school district-community college-university relationships;
- Review instances of student transfer and admissions difficulties among state universities, community colleges and public schools (decisions are advisory to the institutions concerned);
- Establish groups of university-community college-public school representatives to facilitate articulation in subject areas;
- Conduct a continuing review of the provisions of Rule 6A-10.024, Florida Administrative Code, known as the Articulation Agreement;
- Recommend resolutions of issues and recommend policies and procedures to improve articulation systemwide.

The Committee membership includes three state university system representatives, three community college system representatives, three public school representatives, one vocational education representative, one student representative and one member-at-large. The ACC is staffed by the Office of Postsecondary Coordination and is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner for Educational Programs.

The current membership of the ACC does not include representation of the state's independent postsecondary sector. In order to further develop Florida's education system as an interdependent, seamless system among all sectors and at all levels, the membership of the ACC should be expanded to include participation by independent sector representatives, and its role as a final appeal for students with transfer conflicts should be expanded.

***Recommendation:***

7. ***The Articulation Coordinating Committee should expand its membership to include two representatives of the state's independent postsecondary sector. State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024(2) should be amended accordingly.***

2. **The Transfer Process and Student Appeals**

In the student transfer process, the current practice whereby institution admissions and registrar staff review an academic transcript and, when warranted, consult with academic staff and faculty to determine course and credit equivalency to their degree program requirements provides a process whereby equivalent coursework that students have successfully completed is recognized and counted. The academic administrators and faculty of the receiving institution retain the authority to evaluate academic courses and credits that a student has completed at another institution prior to awarding academic credit toward one of their degree programs. During the admissions process, however, student applicants may not be able to count all credits taken from another institution toward his/her new program, if the coursework is determined to be not equivalent to the receiving institution's course and degree requirements. Similarly, when a native student changes his/her academic major field of study, there is no guarantee that all credits earned will be counted toward the requirements for the new degree major.

Most postsecondary institutions maintain a process whereby students can appeal decisions related to the transfer of credit for courses successfully completed at other institutions. Typically, the appeals process includes the involvement of admissions and registrar staff, an articulation officer and specific academic departments and, in most cases, appeals are settled at the academic department level. In regard to the Statewide Course Numbering System, when students transfer between participating institutions, the receiving institution must award the student credit for successfully completed courses that are equivalent to courses offered by the receiving institution as determined by the SCNS faculty discipline committees.

A Student Bill of Rights exists that was developed to express the rights of transfer students among state postsecondary institutions under the Statewide Articulation Agreement. As stated in the "bill of rights," the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) is available for state-level review of student admissions and transfer conflicts. With the expansion of the SCNS, the ACC

should be the source of final appeals of student transfer and admissions difficulties for students at all institutions, public and nonpublic, that participate in the SCNS.

***Recommendations:***

8. ***The Articulation Coordinating Committee should review student appeals of transfer and/or admissions conflicts among all postsecondary institutions who participate in the Statewide Course Numbering System. State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024(2)(f) should be amended accordingly.***
9. ***The Articulation Coordinating Committee should update the Florida Student Bill of Rights and ensure that all students who attend postsecondary institutions that participate in the Statewide Course Numbering System have access to the document.***

Rarely does admissions correspondence include procedures for the transferring student to appeal the decision of the academic credit review. The details of the appeals process are expressed in institution catalogs and administrative policies and procedures manuals, although Commission testimony confirmed that many students either do not have access to these materials or, if they have the materials, do not read them.

Beginning with the initial inquiry by a potential applicant for admission, all institutions should provide accurate and comprehensive printed information on programs, regulations and requirements, procedures and services, along with appeals procedures for academic decisions that may result in a delay of a student's progression toward a degree. All institution materials should be written with specificity and clarity.

***Recommendation:***

10. ***For every postsecondary institution that joins the Statewide Course Numbering System, the DOE Office of Postsecondary Coordination should review the following:***
  - (1) ***the process that exists for a student to appeal a decision regarding his/her academic record, particularly one involving the transfer of academic credit from another institution; and***
  - (2) ***the institution's official catalogs, brochures, and forms to ensure that all academic standards, policies and procedures, including student appeals procedures, are expressed with accuracy, clarity and specificity.***

***The Office should maintain on file the student appeals procedures of all SCNS-member institutions for use by the Articulation Coordinating Committee.***



## CONCLUSION

For the past 25 years, the Statewide Course Numbering System has provided a process that has enhanced student access by facilitating the smooth transfer of students among the public community colleges and universities. The Commission believes that the expansion of the System to include the state's nationally or regionally accredited nonpublic institutions will ease the transfer process for a broader range of Florida students and, hopefully, will increase the number of bachelor degrees granted by Florida postsecondary institutions.

With the increase in participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System by nonpublic institutions, it is imperative that the Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Coordination has sufficient staff and other resources to enable it to effectively coordinate the System and support all faculty discipline committees and participating institutions.

The role of the faculty in the determination of faculty credentials to deliver equivalent academic courses, as well as the assignment of course numbers and equivalencies, is crucial to the overall effectiveness of the System. Recommendations in this report provide for a course numbering system that will broaden participation and enhance the student transfer process, while maintaining the quality and value of the receiving institution's academic degree. Accordingly, recommendations one through six must be implemented together in a coordinated plan to increase the participation of nonpublic institutions in the System.

## **APPENDIX A**

State Higher Education Executive Officers -  
Electronic Survey

## POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PLANNING COMMISSION

### STATE HIGHER EDUCATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS - Electronic Survey

To all SHEEO mail network state academic officers:

The Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission has been directed by the Florida Legislature to review its statewide common course numbering system, and examine the feasibility of expanding participation to include independent postsecondary institutions that are not regionally accredited. Issues that will be studied include:

- the standards for participation in the system,
- the statutorily-required acceptance of credit for transfer,
- the impact of the required acceptance of credit for transfer on the receiving institution's accreditation and
- costs of participating in the state course numbering system.

The Commission is compiling information on postsecondary course numbering systems in other states. If your state maintains a statewide postsecondary course numbering system, please respond to the following questions:

1. Identify the categories of postsecondary institutions that participate in the System. (i.e., two-year - four-year, public-private, accreditation status, etc.)
2. State the standards for institutions to participate in the System and identify where they are expressed. (state statutes, rule, etc.) Please forward your state's policies.
3. Explain the process whereby postsecondary courses are classified, leveled and numbered. (i.e., standing faculty discipline committees, ad-hoc task forces, state office activity, etc.)
4. Identify the state office that administers and maintains the System, and include staff size and responsibilities.
5. State the costs involved for institutions to participate in the System and include the fee structure.

\*\* In order to compile a national summary, if your state does not maintain a state course numbering system, please E-Mail a "NO" reply to this survey. Your participation is appreciated. THANKS!

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## **APPENDIX B**

Survey of Florida Independent Postsecondary Institutions

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PLANNING COMMISSION

SURVEY OF FLORIDA INDEPENDENT POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

The Postsecondary Education Planning Commission is conducting two legislative studies that will impact Florida independent postsecondary institutions. Commission *STUDY OUTLINES* that include the legislative directives for each study accompany this survey. As the Commission gathers information, reviews issues and considers recommendations for its reports to the Legislature, your input is needed and will be appreciated. **Please Return Survey By October 10, 1997. Thank You!**

**SECTION I. *General Information***

- A. Institution Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Regional Accreditation: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Other accreditation: \_\_\_\_\_
- D. State Licensure by SBICU \_\_\_\_\_ SBIPVTTBS \_\_\_\_\_ Exempt from Licensure \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Credentials offered: Certificate \_\_\_\_\_ Diploma \_\_\_\_\_ Associate degrees: A.A. \_\_\_\_\_ A.S. \_\_\_\_\_ baccalaureate \_\_\_\_\_ graduate \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Enrollment (Headcount) 19\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_
- G. Institution Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION II. *Participation in the Florida Statewide Course Numbering System***

Chapter 246.013, Florida Statutes, states:  
*(1) Non public colleges and schools that have been issued a regular license and that are fully accredited by a member of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and accredited nonpublic postsecondary colleges exempt from state licensure pursuant to s. 246.085(1)(a) may participate in the common course designation and numbering system. Participating colleges and schools shall bear the costs associated with inclusion in the system and shall meet the terms and conditions for institutional participation in the system.*

- A. If your institution is authorized to participate in the Statewide Course Numbering System, please identify the primary reasons that you choose *not* to participate.
  - 1. Existing student articulation/transfer is successful \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Faculty/staff resources & time \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Unknown/unclear benefits \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. Required fees (application Fee - \$1000; transaction fees - approx. \$40. per course, maintenance fees, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

(turn over)

5. Other \_\_\_\_\_

B. If not now authorized, and if legislation was enacted to permit your institution's participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System, would your institution commit the financial and staff resources needed to participate in the System?

YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

If NO, please identify the primary reasons that you would choose *not* to participate.

1. Existing student articulation/transfer is successful \_\_\_\_\_
2. Faculty/staff resources & time \_\_\_\_\_
3. Unknown/unclear benefits \_\_\_\_\_
4. Required fees (application Fee - \$1000; transaction fees - @ \$40. per course, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION III. A Review of Licensure Requirements of the State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities**

The Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) is housed in the Department of Education and operates an extensive data collection system that obtains follow-up data on former students that includes information on employment, continuing education, military service, public assistance participation and incarceration data. For employment status, participant social security numbers are electronically linked to Department of Labor unemployment insurance wage records. FETPIP data are integral parts of accountability data displays used by schools, colleges and universities.

A. Does your institution participate in the FETPIP program ? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

If NO, how does your institution solicit, compile and report placement information for program graduates?

telephone follow-up \_\_\_\_\_ survey mailing to graduates \_\_\_\_\_ employer surveys \_\_\_\_\_

exit interviews \_\_\_\_\_ No formal follow-up of graduates exists \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Return Completed Survey via FAX at 850-922-5388 to:**

**Dr. Jon Rogers**

**Postsecondary Education Planning Commission**

**E-Mail: [ROGERSJ@mail.doe.state.fl.us](mailto:ROGERSJ@mail.doe.state.fl.us) Phone# 850-488-0981**

## **APPENDIX C**

Florida Statutes and Rules

## FLORIDA STATUTES AND RULES

This appendix provides key sections of the Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules pertaining to the Statewide Course Numbering System that focus on state policies and operating procedures for the system.

### **Section 229.551, F.S. - Educational Management.** --

*(1) The department is directed to identify all functions which under the provisions of this act contribute to, or comprise a part of, the state system of educational accountability and to establish within the department the necessary organizational structure, policies, and procedures for effectively coordinating such functions. Such policies and procedures shall clearly fix and delineate responsibilities for various aspects of the system and for overall coordination of the total system. The commissioner shall perform the following duties and functions:*

*(1)(f) Development and coordination of a common course designation and numbering system for community colleges and the State University System which will improve program planning, increase communication among community colleges and universities, and facilitate the transfer of students. The system shall not encourage or require course content prescription or standardization or uniform course testing, and the continuing maintenance of the system shall be accomplished by appropriate faculty committees. Also, the system shall be applied to all postsecondary and postsecondary adult vocational programs and courses offered in school districts and community colleges, The Articulation Coordinating Committee shall:*

- 1. Identify the highest demand degree programs within the State University System.*
- 2. Conduct a study of courses offered by universities and accepted for credit toward a degree. The study shall identify courses designated as either general education or required as prerequisite for a degree. The study shall also identify these courses as upper-division level or lower-division level.*
- 3. Appoint faculty committees representing both community college and university faculties to recommend a single level for each course included in the common course numbering and designation system. Any course designated as an upper-division level course must be characterized by a need for advanced academic preparation and skills that a student would be unlikely to achieve without significant prior coursework. Of the courses required for each baccalaureate degree, at least half of the credit hours required for the degree shall be achievable through courses designated as lower-division courses, except in degree programs approved by the Board of Regents pursuant to s.240.209(5)(e). A course designated a lower-division may be offered by any community college. By January 1, 1996, the Articulation Coordinating Committee shall recommend to the State Board of Education the levels for the courses. By January 1, 1996, the common course numbering and designation system shall include the courses at the recommended levels, and by fall semester of 1996, the registration process at each state university and community college shall include the courses at their designated levels and common course numbers.*



4. *Appoint faculty committees representing both community college and university faculties to recommend those courses identified to meet general education requirements within the subject areas of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. By January 1, 1996, the Articulation Coordinating Committee shall recommend to the State Board of Education those courses identified to meet these general education requirements by their common course code number. By fall semester 1996, all community colleges and state universities shall accept these general education courses.*

5. *Appoint faculty committees representing both community colleges and universities to recommend common prerequisite courses and identify course substitutions when common prerequisites cannot be established for degree programs across all institutions. Faculty work groups shall adopt a strategy for addressing significant differences in prerequisites, including course substitutions. The Board of Regents shall be notified by the Articulation Coordinating Committee when significant differences remain. By fall semester 1996, common degree program prerequisites shall be offered and accepted by all state universities and community colleges, except in cases approved by the Board of Regents pursuant to s.240.209(5)(f). The Board of Regents shall work with the State Board of Community Colleges on the development of a centralized data base containing the list of courses and course substitutions that meet the prerequisite requirements for each baccalaureate degree program.*

**Section 240.115, F.S. - Articulation agreement; acceleration mechanisms.--**

*(1)(b) Any student who transfers among regionally accredited postsecondary institutions that participate in the common course designation and numbering system shall be awarded credit by the receiving institution for courses satisfactorily completed by the student at the previous institutions if the courses are judged by the appropriate common course designation and numbering system faculty task force to be equivalent to courses offered at the receiving institution. The award of credit may be limited to courses that are entered in the common course designation and numbering system. Credits awarded pursuant to this subsection shall satisfy institutional requirements on the same basis as credits awarded to native students.*

*(7) A student who received an associate in arts degree for successfully completing 60 semester credit hours may continue to earn additional credits at a community college. The university must provide credit toward the student's baccalaureate degree for an additional community college course if, according to the common course numbering and designation system, the community college course listed in the university catalog as required for the degree or as prerequisite to a course required for the degree.*

**Section 246.013, F.S. - Participation in the common course designation and numbering system. -**

*(1) Nonpublic colleges and schools that have been issued a regular license and that are fully accredited by a member of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and accredited nonpublic postsecondary colleges exempt from state licensure pursuant to s. 246.085(1)(a) may participate in the common course designation and numbering system. Participating colleges and schools shall bear the costs associated with inclusion in the*

*system and shall meet the terms and conditions for institutional participation in the system. The department shall adopt a fee schedule that includes the expenses incurred through data processing, faculty task force travel and per diem, and staff and clerical support time. Such fee schedule may differentiate between the costs associated with initial course inclusion in the system and costs associated with subsequent course maintenance in the system. Any college that participated in the system prior to July 1, 1986, shall not be required to pay the costs associated with initial course inclusion in the system. Fees collected for participation in the common course designation and numbering system pursuant to the provisions of this section shall be deposited in the Institutional Assessment Trust Fund created by s. 246.31. The Legislature finds and declares that independent nonprofit colleges and universities eligible to participate in the Florida resident access grant program pursuant to s. 240.605 are an integral part of the higher education system in this state and that a significant number of state residents choose this form of higher education. Any independent college or university that is eligible to participate in the Florida resident access grant program shall not be required to pay the costs associated with participation in the common course designation and numbering system.*

**State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024 Articulation Between Universities, Community Colleges and School Districts.**

*(1) Each state university president, community college board of trustees, and district school board shall plan and adopt policies and procedures to provide articulated programs so that students can proceed toward their educational objectives as rapidly as their circumstances permit. Universities, community colleges, and school districts shall exchange ideas in the development and improvement of general education, and in the development and implementation of student acceleration mechanisms. They shall establish joint programs and agreement to facilitate articulation, acceleration, and efficient use of faculty, equipment, and facilities.*

*(2) Articulation Coordinating Committee. The Commissioner shall establish an Articulation Coordinating Committee which shall report to the Commissioner and consist of thirteen (13) members appointed by the Commissioner: three (3) member representing the state university system; three (3) members representing the state community college system; one (1) member representing vocational education; three (3) members representing public schools; one (1) member representing students; one (1) member from the Commissioner's staff who shall serve as chairman; and one (1) additional member. The Committee shall:*

*(a) Accept continuous responsibility for community college, university-school district relationships, including recommending to the Commissioner plans for school district articulation relationships with community colleges and universities, including coordination of cooperative plans required by Section 229.814(5), Florida Statutes.*

*(b) Establish articulation accountability measures. Further, the Committee shall annually collect, analyze, and make recommendations to the Commissioner of Education on the accountability measures. Such report, at a minimum, shall address the provisions set forth in Section 240.1162, Florida Statutes. The articulation accountability report shall be included in*

*the Commissioner's annual report on the status of education to the State Board of Education and the Legislature.*

*(c) Develop suggested guidelines for interinstitutional agreements between public schools, community colleges, and universities to facilitate interaction, articulation, acceleration, and the efficient use of faculty, equipment, and facilities.*

*(d) Establish groups of university-community college-school district representatives to facilitate articulation in subject areas.*

*(e) Conduct a continuing review of the provisions of Rule 6A-10.024, FAC.*

*(f) Review instances of student transfer and admissions difficulties among universities, community colleges, and public schools. Decisions shall be advisory to the institutions concerned.*

*(g) Recommend resolutions of issues and recommend policies and procedures to improve articulation systemwide.*

*(h) Recommend the priority to be given research conducted cooperatively by the Divisions of Community Colleges, Universities, and Public Schools with individual institutions. Such research shall be encouraged and conducted in areas such as admissions, grading practices, curriculum design, and follow-up of transfer students. Research findings shall be used to evaluate current policies, programs, and procedures.*

*(i) Review and make recommendations to institutions for experimental programs which vary from official transfer policy.*

*(j) Develop procedures to improve articulation systemwide.*

*(k) Collect and disseminate information on successful cooperative programs under Rule 6A-10.024(1), FAC.*

*(l) Perform such other duties as may be assigned in law or by the State Board or the Commissioner.*

*(17) When a student transfers among institutions that participate in the common course designation and numbering system, the receiving institution shall award credit for courses satisfactorily completed at the previous participating institutions when the courses are judged by the appropriate common course designation and numbering system faculty task forces to be equivalent to courses offered at the receiving institution and are entered in the course numbering system. Credit so awarded can be used by transfer students to satisfy requirements in these institutions on the same basis as native students.*

*(18) All postsecondary courses offered for college credit, vocational credit, or college preparatory credit, as they are defined in Rule 6A-10.033, FAC., shall be entered in the common*

*course designation and numbering system. Each course shall be assigned a single prefix and a single identifying number in the course numbering system.*

**6A-10.0242 Procedures for Determining the Level at Which Courses Shall be Classified.**

*(1) Baccalaureate upper-lower divisions. The following procedure shall be followed to distinguish lower division (freshman or sophomore) courses from upper division (junior or senior) courses. University and community college curriculum committees shall deliberate course proposals. Institutional procedures for study, review, and decision making shall be followed. The procedures shall include deciding the level at which the courses shall be classified.*

*(a) Criteria to identify baccalaureate lower division shall include:*

- 1. General education courses required to earn an associate of arts degree and for which there is consensus that the courses should be offered within the first two (2) years of baccalaureate programs.*
- 2. Introductory courses open to all students*
- 3. First course in sequence and in which nonmajors may enroll.*
- 4. General survey courses open to all students.*
- 5. Courses designated to meet requirements of Rule 6A-10.030, FAC.*
- 6. Courses designated to teach the skills identified in Rule 6A-10.031, FAC.*
- 7. Physical education activity courses.*
- 8. Courses offered in the first two (2) years of a required four-year sequence program major and the first year of a required three-year sequence program major.*

*(b) While not exhaustive, the criteria establish intent, which further guides decision making. The institution's decision regarding upper and lower division classification shall be indicated in the submission of the course for entry in the uniform course numbering and designation system. Should another institution object to the level designated, it may appeal to the Articulation Coordinating Committee after first attempting resolution directly with the subject institution.*

**6A-10.043 Nonpublic College Participation in the Common Numbering and Designation System.**

*Nonpublic colleges may participate in the common course numbering and designation system pursuant to Section 246.013, Florida Statutes.*

*(1) Eligibility Reimbursement. In order to participate an institution must:*

- (a) Be eligible pursuant to Section 246.013(1), Florida Statutes,*
- (b) Agree to abide by the system's requirements and responsibilities, and*
- (c) Pay the required fees.*

*(2) Fee Schedule. The fees charged to participating institutions shall be:*

(a) *Entry Fee.* The total cost per course of entering an institution's courses in the course numbering and designation system.

(b) *Maintenance Fee.* The total cost of maintaining an institution's courses in the system.

(c) *Fiscal Year.* The period for which fees are calculated shall be from July 1 through June 30.

(d) *Payment.* An invoice shall be sent to each participating nonpublic institution. The fees incurred by each college shall be payable to the Department within sixty (60) days. An institution which fails to pay shall be withdrawn from the system.