

**Reply to ConnSCU Faculty regarding Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP) Commentary
from TAP Steering Committee (SC)**

November 12, 2012

Dear Faculty,

Thank-you for the thoughtful comments you raised during the Commentary period. In this correspondence, we would like to address some of the more common issues that were raised in the commentaries as well as provide you with the parameters under which we operated in developing the TAP Framework and Learning Outcomes.

The commentaries were broad, rather than focused in nature. In other words, there was no one issue that stood out as having been mentioned by a majority of institutions. Further, many commentaries represented differing opinions regarding the same issue. For example, some stated that the Framework should not provide six open credits and should specifically designate those six credits in Section A and eliminate Section B while others stated the opposite: that all designated credits should be embedded, eliminating Section A. In general, we noted that the commentators grappled with many of the same issues that the Steering Committee grappled with during our many hours of discussion. During our October 26 meeting, which lasted nearly 5 hours, we came to the conclusion that to change one area of the Framework to please one constituent would make another constituent unhappy. We therefore attempt in this document to answer some of the more common issues that arose so that you might see our thought processes, but decided that making major changes to the Framework at this time would result in a zero sum gain in terms of satisfied faculty. The Framework represents a compromise position of the varying viewpoints.

The TAP Framework, with several minor changes, is now being forwarded to the campuses for ratification. At its 10/26/12 meeting the Steering Committee approved the following motion with a vote of 16 in favor and one abstention. The Steering Committee has set a date of February 15 for all campuses to reply with the outcome of their ratification.

The TAP Core Competencies Steering Committee moves that each ConnSCU institution vote to ratify the TAP framework, competencies, and learning outcomes using established curriculum governance procedures. The results will be presented to the Board of Regents.

Parameters

The document that guided our mission was the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities Transfer and Articulation Policy Implementation Plan written by the TAP Coordinating Council (comprised of BOR Vice Presidents of the state universities and the community colleges, BOR Faculty Advisory Committee and a representative group of ConnSCU chief academic officers). We suggest reading the Implementation Plan for detailed information that will be referenced throughout this document. Operating under the guidelines of the Implementation Plan limited our flexibility in a number of areas since it delineated the parameters of the competency areas and other issues. Given that the law, as well as the Implementation Plan contained a number of ambiguities, the SC spent many hours interpreting and debating these issues.

Composition of Committees and hours spent

There were nine committees in total, a Steering Committee (SC) comprised of one member of each of the 17 ConnSCU universities/colleges and eight Core Competency Subcommittees, each comprised of eight members with five from the four-year institutions and three from community colleges (64 members). At various times, committee members (and others) pointed out that either the Steering Committee was unbalanced (with stronger voting power being given to the community colleges) or that the Subcommittees were unbalanced (with stronger voting power being given to the four-year institutions). Given the stronger CC representation at the SC level and the stronger 4-year representation at the subcommittee level, we feel that a balance was achieved; we also believe that, although each constituent represented the interests of his/her facility, the committees as a whole worked cooperatively for positive outcomes that balance the needs of all institutions and serve students.

The SC met a total of 12 times over the summer. Collective meeting/preparation/travel time for the 17 members is estimated at approximately 1500 hours while collective meeting/preparation/travel time for the subcommittees is estimated at approximately 1300 hours.

Designated vs. Embedded – This was an issue that was debated for many hours of SC meeting time. Although several colleagues wished to have a greater number of competencies embedded rather than addressed in designated courses, the majority believed that designation of courses was essential in terms of better articulation across institutions, greater ease in assessing the framework and facilitation of transferability for all students.

Foreign Language (World Languages) – Some commentators express concern that foreign language was not included in the Framework. Because the TAP Implementation Plan did not include foreign language as a competency area it was not included. All of the Connecticut State Universities have a foreign language requirement as part of their core curricula and transfer students will continue to be required to meet the requirement. In some cases a foreign language will be required as a part of a designated transfer degree as is currently the case.

Social Science Courses – Concern was expressed regarding under-representation of the social sciences and about the lack of a designated behavioral science course. It was not possible in the 30 credit limit to include adequate or equal representation of all discipline areas. Under Section B of the Framework a CCC may opt to include an additional social science course (perhaps a designated behavioral science). All transfer students will complete an additional 12 to 18 general education credits at the senior institution. Each of the CSUs and COSC will make public the additional courses that will be required to complete the general education requirements at that institution. Since all five of the institutions require a behavioral science we know that study of a behavioral science will be included in the plan of study.

Rigor of Framework – Some commentaries asked whether two science or two writing courses may be too rigorous; they pointed out that this is not universally required now by all CCs or all four year institutions. Others praised the rigor of the Framework. The SC decided that it was important to design a pedagogically-sound program that would result in students acquiring the knowledge and skills that would most benefit them in the future and not utilize the “least common denominator” approach in which a lesser level was selected simply because not all institutions are currently providing the higher level. It is important to recognize that all ConnSCU students are expected to achieve the competencies. While a particular CSU might not require the exact course designations, the outcomes will still need to be taught, learned and assessed.

Flexibility of Curriculum – Several commentaries raised concern regarding the future of campus individuality and whether this might be lost under the TAP Framework. Under TAP, the freedom to design the curriculum for each campus will remain under the purview of that campus. Given that the Competency Areas are all outcome-based, there is a great deal of flexibility in the courses that might be utilized to meet the learning outcomes. For example, courses in anthropology, history, geography, philosophy, English, etc. could be proposed in the Historical Competency Area if they are designed to assess the learning outcomes.

Swirl Students – Faculty had particular concern about the impact on swirl students (those students who take courses at multiple institutions before graduating). Initially the charge to the SC was specifically to develop a framework for students who were *completing* a designated transfer degree, with no consideration of swirl students. The Steering Committee felt very strongly about the need to provide swirl students opportunities for taking courses across the ConnSCU system. The SC has been assured that the BOR will maintain an equivalency bank of courses hosted on the web site where students may find course-taking opportunities. In many cases courses that are vetted for inclusion in the Framework will be included in the bank and will be available for swirl students. In some cases there will be courses included in the Framework that do not represent equivalent requirements at the CSU of choice (e.g., a CC may select a course in oral communication in Section B and plan to transfer to a CSU that does not have a designated oral communication requirement). Consequently, those graduating from a designated transfer program will receive an equivalency that may not be earned by taking a course in isolation.

Outcomes – Some commentators expressed concern about the number of outcomes and complexity of outcomes that are present for some of the competency areas. The outcomes were developed by the subcommittees which were comprised of content area experts, and reviewed by the Steering Committee. The feedback was forwarded to the subcommittees for review and reconsideration. Very little was changed as a result of this process as the subcommittees felt that the outcomes set an appropriately rigorous standard. As with all elements of the TAP, as we move through implementation and assessment the outcomes will likely evolve.

Assessment – A number of questions were raised regarding assessment. Per the Implementation Plan, each institution will be responsible for its own assessment. Rubrics that correspond with the learning outcomes will be provided by the Subcommittees; however, institutions may select alternative methods of assessment. There are many ways to accomplish this: the timeframe, frequency, and type of assessment will be up to the individual institutions to decide. There may also be a system-wide initiative that will facilitate collaboration among the institutions.

Current Articulation Agreements – Some inquired about whether current articulation agreements that are working for transfer students would need to be replaced with the TAP. The instructions to the Steering Committee from the Core Committee were that Public Act No. 12-31 requires a common general education core for all designated transfer degrees and the development of system wide pathways to majors. The purpose is to create a more cohesive system of public higher education in Connecticut. The expectation is that all designated transfer degree programs will include the 30 credit Framework. However, the Core Committee has assured us that there will be a method for specific transfer pathways (e.g., College of Technology) to make a case for being exempt from the TAP.

The Steering Committee and the Sub-Committees have worked diligently, collaboratively, and with integrity in an effort to develop a plan that will meet the needs of our students and diverse campuses. The gathering of data over time will be an important component in refining all components of the Framework and Learning Outcomes. We present them to you as living documents and processes that will require ongoing faculty-oversight as we perfect them over the years.

Sincerely,

For the ConnSCU TAP Steering Committee,

Lauren Doninger and Deborah Weiss – Co-chairs

Framework for Community College Designated Transfer Degree Program Requirements

Section A – (24-25 credits) Designated Competencies

- 2 courses in Written Communication (6 credits)
- 1 course in Scientific Reasoning and 1 course in Scientific Knowledge and Understanding; at least 1 of these courses must include a lab (6-7 credits)
- 1 course in Quantitative Reasoning (with a prerequisite of or placement level above intermediate algebra) (3 credits)
- 1 course in Historical Knowledge/Understanding (3 credits)
- 1 course in Social Phenomena Knowledge/Understanding (3 credits)
- 1 course in Aesthetic Dimensions (3 credits)

Section B – (6 credits) Designated Competencies - 2 courses (to be decided at the local level) selected from among the following with no more than 1 course in each competency area:

- Quantitative Reasoning (with a prerequisite of or placement level above intermediate algebra)
- Historical Knowledge/Understanding
- Social Phenomena Knowledge/Understanding
- Aesthetic Dimensions
- Oral Communication
- Continuing Learning/Information Literacy
- Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking

Section C – (0 credits) Embedded Competencies – Any competency area below that has not been addressed in Section B, must have all of its outcomes embedded in the curriculum and must be included in assessment. How these outcomes are embedded will be determined at the local level.

- Oral Communication
- Continuing Learning/Information Literacy
- Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking

Section D – (0 credits) Embedded Competencies - Must be embedded

- Written Communication (in addition to the designated courses in Section A)
- Ethical Dimensions (embedded only)

Explanatory information for the TAP Framework

The diversity found in the unique general education cores of the ConnSCU institutions is valued; therefore a homogeneous common design is not required. This framework leaves significant latitude to the discretion of faculty at the local level. Below are guidelines to assist in understanding the proposed framework:

I. Background and terminology

- a. Competency Areas** – The competency areas transcend traditional department designation. For example, it is conceivable that a course that meets the learning outcomes for the Historical Knowledge and Understanding competency may be a course in history, anthropology, political science, etc., as designated by each institution. There are 11 competency areas as follow:

Competency Areas	Credits	Section A All must be Designated	Section B 2 must be designated	Section C Must be Embedded (unless Designated in Section B)	Section D Must be embedded
1. Written Communication	(6)	X			X
2. Oral Communication	(0-3)		X	X	
3. Scientific Reasoning	(6-7)	X			
4. Scientific Knowledge and Understanding One course must include a lab		X			
5. Quantitative Reasoning	(3-6)	X	X		
6. Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking	(0-3)		X	X	
7. Continuing Learning/Information Literacy	(0-3)		X	X	
8. Historical Knowledge/Understanding	(3-6)	X	X		
9. Social Phenomena Knowledge/Understanding	(3-6)	X	X		
10. Appreciation of Aesthetic Dimensions of Humankind	(3-6)	X	X		
11. Appreciation of Ethical Dimensions of Humankind	(0)				X

- b. Learning Outcomes** – Each competency area has a goal and measurable learning outcomes (separate documentation). Rubrics are being developed to guide institutions in assessment.
- c. Designated Competency course** – A course that assesses all of the learning outcomes for a competency area (Sections A and B).
- d. Embedded Competencies/courses** – An embedded competency area is one that is addressed within a course without being the primary focus of the course. An embedded competency course will include at least one learning outcome (but may include as many as all learning outcomes) for a competency area. All of the learning outcomes of an embedded competency must be met; this means that they will typically be spread over more than 1 course. Redundancy of learning outcomes in multiple courses across the curriculum is encouraged in order to improve student learning through multiple exposures to material.

II. Explanation of Framework

- a. Section A – This section requires 24-25 credits (variability due to potential additional credits for science laboratory courses) of designated competency courses as outlined in the Framework.
- b. Section B – This section requires 6 credits of designated competency courses. Each CC will select 2 competency areas from among the 7. The designation of these 6 credits will be the same for all transfer degree programs from that institution. If an institution selects Oral Communication as 1 of the 2 competency areas, any course that meets the learning outcomes for that competency area will be accepted. This provides the latitude for a general oral communication course, business communication, etc.
- c. Section C - Oral Communication, Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking, and Continuing Learning/Information Literacy must either be selected in Section B or be embedded in Section C.
 - i. Example 1 – Institution selects Oral Communication and Social Phenomena in Section B. In order to satisfy Section C, Continuing Learning/Information Literacy and Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking must be embedded.
 - ii. Example 2 - Institution selects Continuing Learning/Information Literacy and Critical Analysis/Logical Thinking in Section B. In order to satisfy Section C, Oral Communication must be embedded.
- d. Section D
 - i. Written Communication must be embedded in addition to being designated in two written communication courses in Section A. At minimum one Written Communication learning outcome must be addressed in one course.
 - ii. Ethical Dimensions may not comprise a designated course; it must be embedded. All Ethical Dimensions learning outcomes must be met.

III. Additional important information

- a. Students at all ConnSCU institutions will demonstrate competency in the foundational skills and content areas outlined by the Board of Regents (BOR) in the Transfer and Articulation Policy (TAP) Implementation Plan, based on New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Standard 4.
- b. All CC programs that are designated as ConnSCU transfer programs will develop *one* 30 credit transfer core based on the framework that will be utilized for all its transfer degree programs.
- c. Connecticut State Universities (CSUs) and Charter Oak State College (COSC) have 42-48 credits in their general education programs. All CSUs and COSC will accept the 30 credit cores from CC designated transfer program graduates and will apply the credits to specific requirements of their general education programs (not as open electives). The remaining 12-18 credits will be outlined so that it will be clear what remains to be completed in the general education programs. Some of these courses may be completed at the CCs.
- d. This is a work in progress. There will be many challenges along the way, but it is the assumption of the Steering Committee that all are working toward a coherent system that serves students, employers, and the citizens of the state of Connecticut.

Competency Area	Goal	ConnSCU students completing the 30 credit General Education Core will be able to:
Written Communication in English	Students will be prepared to develop written texts of varying lengths and styles that communicate effectively and appropriately across a variety of settings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to Rhetorical Situations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and evaluate the specific audience and purpose in different writing situations, and adapt their writing appropriately to those situations. Develop effective prose that influences attitudes, beliefs, and actions through appropriate logical, ethical, and emotional appeals. Use Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate and evaluate sources appropriate to the rhetorical situation. Read, comprehend, and summarize an argument from a complex piece of writing. Analyze, evaluate, and respond to an argument from a complex piece of writing. Summarize, paraphrase, and quote accurately the ideas of others, clearly differentiating them from the students' own ideas. Craft Logical Arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate a controlling idea or thesis. Provide clear and logical evidence, support, or illustration for their assertions. Choose appropriate and effective organizing methods, employing effective transitions and signposts. Apply Language Conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use diction, tone, and level of formality appropriate to audience, purpose, and situation. Apply the conventions of Standard English grammar, spelling, and mechanics. Formulate Effective Writing Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proofreading their writing. Reflect on and explain the effectiveness of their writing choices regarding the audience, purpose, and situation.
Oral Communication in English	Students will be prepared to develop oral messages of varying lengths and styles that communicate effectively and appropriately across a variety of settings.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to Rhetorical Situations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and evaluate the specific audience and purpose in different communication situations, and adapt the communication appropriately to those situations. Develop effective messages that influence attitudes, beliefs, and actions through appropriate logical, ethical, and emotional appeals. Recognize when others do not understand the message and then manage those misunderstandings. Listen effectively by understanding, remembering, interpreting, evaluating, and responding appropriately to the speech of others. Use Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate, evaluate, use, and acknowledge sources appropriate to the communication purpose. Synthesize and integrate others' ideas purposefully and ethically into their own communication. Summarize, paraphrase, and quote accurately the ideas of others, clearly differentiating them from the students' own ideas. Craft Logical Arguments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select an appropriate and effective medium for communicating. Provide clear and logical evidence, support, or illustration for their assertions. Choose appropriate and effective organizing methods for the message, employing effective transitions and signposts. Apply Language Conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use diction, tone, and level of formality appropriate to audience, purpose, and situation. Use pronunciation, grammar, articulation, and nonverbal behaviors appropriate for the message and designated audience. Formulate Effective Communication Strategies

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on and explain the effectiveness of their communication choices regarding the audience, purpose, and situation. • Speak ethically by accepting responsibility for their communication practices and by communicating openly and directly. • Revise and rehearse speeches before delivery. • Work collaboratively with others, including managing discussion, tasks, and information.
Quantitative Reasoning	Quantitative: Students will learn to recognize, understand, and use the quantitative elements they encounter in various aspects of their lives. Students will develop a habit of mind that uses quantitative skills to solve problems and make informed decisions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Represent mathematical and quantitative information symbolically, graphically, numerically, and verbally. 2. Apply quantitative methods to investigate routine and novel problems. This includes calculations/procedures, mathematical and/or statistical modeling, prediction, and evaluation. 3. Interpret mathematical and quantitative information and draw logical inferences from representations such as formulas, equations, graphs, tables, and schematics. 4. Evaluate the results obtained from quantitative methods for accuracy and/or reasonableness.
Scientific Reasoning	Scientific: Students will become familiar with science as a method of inquiry. Students will develop a habit of mind that uses quantitative skills to solve problems and make informed decisions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the methods of scientific inquiry that lead to the acquisition of knowledge. Such methods include observations, testable hypotheses, logical inferences, experimental design, data acquisition, interpretation, and reproducible outcomes. 2. Apply scientific methods to investigate real-world phenomena, and routine and novel problems. This includes data acquisition and evaluation, and prediction. 3. Represent scientific data symbolically, graphically, numerically, and verbally. 4. Interpret scientific information and draw logical references from representations such as formulas, equations, graphs, tables, and schematics. 5. Evaluate the results obtained from scientific methods for accuracy and/or reasonableness.
Critical Analysis and Logical Thinking	Students will be able to organize, interpret, and evaluate evidence and ideas within and across disciplines; draw reasoned inferences and defensible conclusions; and solve problems and make decisions based on analytical processes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying arguments: Identify issues, evidence and reasoning processes; distinguish facts from opinion; recognize various types of arguments 2. Formulating arguments: Formulates good arguments, including a significant focus on inductive reasoning. 3. Analysis: Break subject matter into components and identify their interrelations to ascertain the defining features of the work and their contributions to the whole. 4. Evaluation: Identify assumptions, assessing the quality and reliability of sources of evidence, and demonstrating knowledge of the criteria for evaluating the success of each kind of inference. 5. Synthesis: Draw together disparate claims into a coherent whole in order to arrive at well-reasoned and well-supported inferences that can be justified as a conclusion.
Continuing Learning/ Information Literacy	Students will be able to use traditional and digital technology to access, evaluate, and apply information to the needs or questions confronting them throughout their academic, professional, and personal lives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate competency in using current, relevant technologies to solve problems, complete projects, and make informed decisions. 2. Access, navigate, identify and evaluate information that is appropriate for their need(s) and audience(s). 3. Synthesize information to broaden knowledge and experiences and produce both independent and collaborative work. 4. Evaluate the economic, legal, ethical, and social issues surrounding the access and use of information and relevant technologies.
Scientific Knowledge/ Understanding	Students will gain a broad base of scientific knowledge and methodologies in the	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate using appropriate scientific terminology. 2. Use representations and models to communicate scientific knowledge and solve scientific problems. 3. Plan and implement data collection strategies appropriate to a particular scientific question.

	natural sciences. This will enable them to develop scientific literacy, the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes essential for personal decision making and understanding scientific issues.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Articulate the reasons that scientific explanations and theories are refined or replaced. 5. Evaluate the quality of scientific information on the basis of its source and the methods used to generate it.
Historical Knowledge/ Understanding	Students will study the interrelatedness of various realms of human experience from multiple historical perspectives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and differentiate types of historical sources including popular, academic, primary and secondary. 2. Recognize ever-changing interpretations of history. 3. Place the development of societies in national and/or international contexts. 4. Explain the influence and agency of social circumstances, which may include race, class, gender, and others, on historical events. 5. Describe the impact of the past on subsequent events, including the present. 6. Examine the complex, dynamic, and interrelated nature of change.
Social Phenomena Knowledge/ Understanding	Students will develop an increased understanding of the influences that shape a person's, or group's attitudes, beliefs, emotions, symbols, and actions, and how these systems of influence are created, maintained, and altered by individual, familial, group, situational or cultural means.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain social, organizational, political, economic, historical, or cultural elements that influence and are influenced by individuals and groups. 2. Summarize different theories and research methods used to investigate social phenomena. 3. Explain ethical issues pertaining to social contexts and phenomena. 4. Explain issues of diversity within and across cultures. 5. Apply concepts or theories of social phenomena to real world situations. (e.g., service learning, group work, clubs, organizations, civic engagement, conflict resolution, and internships).
Appreciation of the Aesthetic Dimensions of Humankind	Students will understand the diverse nature, meanings, and functions of creative endeavors through the study and practice of literature, music, the theatrical and visual arts, and related forms of expression.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply key concepts, terminology, and methodologies in the analysis of literary, performing, visual, or other arts. 2. Identify works of visual, performing, or literary art within historical, social, political, cultural, and aesthetic contexts. 3. Articulate ways in which literature, performance, the visual arts or related forms respond to and influence society and culture. 4. Actively engage with the literary, performing or visual arts or other cultural forms through experience or creative expression. 5. Articulate the ethical dimensions surrounding the creation, circulation, and interpretation of works of visual, performing, or literary art.
Appreciation of the Ethical Dimensions of Humankind	Students will identify ethical principles that guide individual and collective actions and apply those principles to the analysis of contemporary social and political problems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize and reflect critically on ethical issues. 2. Apply appropriate concepts and terminology in identifying ethical problems and proposing and defending solutions to them. 3. Apply standards and practices of scholarship, research, and documentation to defend positions and beliefs, including reevaluating beliefs in light of unforeseen implications or new evidence. 4. Recognize the value of creative, collaborative, and innovative approaches to problem-solving, including the ability to acknowledge differing points of view.