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January 18, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: State University Council of Academic Vice Presidents
Community College Council on Instructional Affairs

FROM: Dr. Heather Sherry, Director, Office of Articulation

THRU: Dr. R. E. LeMon, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs,
State University System/Board of Governors

Dr. Judith Bilsky, Executive Vice Chancellor,
Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education

SUBJECT: Common Prerequisites

In 1996, the Articulation Coordinating Committee directed an effort to establish a list of common prerequisite courses for every university degree program. Specifically, s. 1007.25(5), Florida Statutes, directs the Department of Education to “identify common prerequisite courses and course substitutions for degree programs across all institutions.” These common degree program prerequisites must be offered and accepted by all state universities and community colleges, except in cases approved by the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors. The statute also directs the department to develop a centralized database containing the list of approved courses and courses substitutions that meet the prerequisite requirements for each baccalaureate degree program. Required completion of common prerequisites is further addressed in State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024 and Board of Governors Articulation Regulation.

Given that a decade has passed since the initial legislation relating to common prerequisites, the purpose of this communication is to reacquaint institutional personnel with the existing regulations and the process for requesting changes to the Common Prerequisite Manual. The Common Prerequisites Counseling Manual is a centralized compilation of program prerequisites that can be referenced by counselors and students in their academic planning. You can access the Common Prerequisites Counseling Manual at www.facts.org by clicking on the ‘Advising Manuals’ and the ‘Common Prerequisite Manual’ tabs.

HEATHER R. SHERRY, PH.D.
Director, Office of Articulation

Discipline committees made up of faculty from a variety of public institutions across the state meet as needed to develop and review the common prerequisites for their academic programs. Academic departments in all Florida public higher education institutions are expected to abide by the program prerequisites, as determined by those discipline committees and approved by the Articulation Coordinating Committee for placement into the Common Prerequisites Counseling Manual. Institutions and departments found not to be in compliance with these requirements, after notification from the Office of Articulation and a reasonable time to adjust their curriculum, will be referred to the Articulation Coordinating Committee as an agenda item and to either the State Board of Education or Board of Governors for a final disposition of the matter.

The courses in the Common Prerequisites Counseling Manual are intended to be those that are required of both native and transfer students prior to entrance to the major program, not simply lower-level courses that are required prior to graduation. The common prerequisites and substitute courses listed for a degree program are mandatory and must be approved by the Articulating Coordinating Committee. This requirement includes those programs designated as “limited access.” Institutions may not require any additional courses as a prerequisite for entrance to a program.

Additional lower-level institution-specific courses may be required for graduation, but must be accommodated in the junior and senior years without exceeding the specified number of credit hours for the degree. These courses may be specified in university counseling manuals, but may not be referred to as “prerequisites” in any institutional publications. They may not be considered common prerequisites or be required for admission. These courses do not require approval by the Articulation Coordinating Committee and may vary from institution to institution.

Proposed changes to any common prerequisites established by the Articulation Coordinating Committee should be submitted in writing to:

Dr. Heather Sherry
Office of Articulation
Florida Department of Education
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1401
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
Heather.Sherry@fldoe.org

Proposed changes may include the addition or deletion of a course designated as a common prerequisite and the addition or deletion of course substitutions. Proposed amendments should be submitted between February 1 and September 10 to accommodate implementation for the following fall semester. All recommendations are reviewed by the Oversight Committee with the Articulation Coordinating Committee giving final approval.

Florida is recognized across the nation as a leader in articulation and common prerequisites have been an important factor in the success of Florida’s 2+2 articulation system. In the spirit of preserving Florida’s reputation for student-friendly transition policies, we are requesting that you please review your

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institution's policy regarding the acceptance of and adherence to these common prerequisite courses. In addition, please forward this correspondence to your department chairs and ask each department to review the appropriate common program prerequisites to ensure compliance with these requirements.

Should you have any questions regarding the Common Prerequisite Manual, please contact Heather Sherry at the address listed above. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

HS/da

c: T. Willard Fair, Chair – Florida State Board of Education
Carolyn Roberts, Chair – Florida Board of Governors
Ed Massey, Chair – Articulation Coordinating Committee
Mark Rosenberg, Chancellor – State University System
David Armstrong, Chancellor – Community Colleges and Workforce Education