



**The Ohio Articulation and Transfer Network (OATN)
Ohio Guaranteed Transfer Pathway Steering Committee**

The Fawcett Center (Hancock Room)
2400 Olentangy River Rd, Columbus, OH 43210
Thursday, April 4, 2019
10:00 am to 2:00 p.m.

Present: Joe Whitehead, Robbin Hoopes, Terry Filicko, Jack Cooley, Cindy McQuade, Marcia Ballinger, Mike Snider, Andrew Martin, Randy Smith, Howard Dewald, Steve Robinson, Gigi Escoe, Sarah Parker-Clever, Carl Brun

ODHE/OATN Staff: Stephanie Davidson, Paula Compton, Jared Shank, Jessi Spencer, Nicole Chain, Ellen Peterson

I. Welcome and Introductions

President Marcia Ballinger welcomed the group and asked the representatives to introduce themselves and comment on their campuses' discussions surrounding the Ohio Guaranteed Transfer Pathways (OGTP). Many representatives noted the positive conversations that have occurred on their campuses, while others indicated that there have been mixed opinions. Typically, points of dissension arise when faculty express concern over modifying their current academic programs. However, one representative acquiesced, people are often hesitant towards change, but the changes the OGTP is creating will be beneficial to students.

Several noted that existing bilateral agreements seem to fit nicely within the OGTP framework. These bilateral agreements will continue to expand and provide rich experiences for students, especially for the many students who transfer within a region, but can do so while simultaneously fulfilling the requirements of the OGTP. Furthermore, one representative commended the templates for providing an informative visual aid for students as they plan which courses to take and when to do so. Some group members also expressed a need for empowering advisors to use more student-friendly language when explaining the templates and for better informing academic advisors of upcoming changes the OGTP will bring.

Overall, the group emphasized the importance of student success and facilitating ease of transfer, especially because transfer students comprise a significant portion of the student population on any given campus. The group also agreed that the certainty of credits transferring is reassuring to students. While progress on the OGTP may sometimes appear slow, it certainly is steady, and moving any faster might lead to mistakes. The Steering Committee serves a valuable purpose in discussing different viewpoints and solving problems to promote student success. Ohio in particular is setting an example through its work developing transfer pathways and is often

highlighted at national conferences for such work. Notably, Columbus State was recently received an award for recognizing its exceptional rates of student completion and success, which is largely due to transfer pathways.

II. Approval of (11.30.18) Minutes

President Marcia Ballinger requested a motion for the approval of minutes from the November 30, 2018 Steering Committee meeting. All representatives were in support.

III. Discussion on Bilateral Transfer Agreements and Statewide OGTP Templates Agreements

The group discussed the arrangements of bilateral agreements within the OGTP framework, focusing on how to reconcile statewide initiatives and local agreements. Rather than have this discussion in explicit detail, the group opted to undergo a more philosophical discussion. However, the group realized that they do not yet know to what extent bilateral agreements are disharmonious with the OGTP. First, though, the group needs to define “harmonious.” To Dr. Gigi Escoe of the University of Cincinnati, bilateral agreements are rich and intend to mimic the experiences of native students—statewide agreements pose neither such advantage. President Ballinger responded that “harmonious” to her means that a bilateral agreement satisfies the requirements of the OGTP. If it contains additional criteria to provide a richer experience (e.g. utilizes course-sharing between the sending and receiving institution, shares resources between two institutions), this creates “superharmony.”

Furthermore, OATN would like to build off of successful bilateral agreements when creating the OGTP rather than “reinventing the wheel.” On the other hand, if the bilateral agreement does not fulfill requirements of the OGTP, the two are “disharmonious.” For instance, Dr. Compton described a situation where community colleges and four-year institutions are not offering TAG courses in programs where they exist, preventing students from obtaining credits that might help them transfer. Several representatives pointed out that some four-year institutions accept certain courses from two-year institutions anyway, even if they are not TAG courses. In this case, however, students would not be able to transfer anywhere in the state and this is the point of the OGTP legislation. Dr. Carl Brun of Wright State University suggested that perhaps we should view this as a 23:13 relationship between community colleges and universities rather than a 1:1 relationship. Several representatives voiced support for the OGTP, specifically in how they provide certainty to students that their credits will transfer and that the faculty create the templates with the students in mind. Dr. Randy Smith guided the group back to the point that we do not know yet how many bilateral agreements substantially depart from the OGTP and how much work it would entail to bring them into alignment.

One representative surmised that disharmony often suggests a four-year institution has special requirements for its program. Students would need to know why this is the case, and advisors should help guide students accordingly. Dr. Ballinger noted, though, that we do not necessarily know what typically causes disharmony, and this is another reason to survey the landscape regarding congruity between bilateral agreements and the OGTP.

Additionally, Dr. Randy Smith also noted that from a 4-year perspective, the strongest departments focus only on 3-4 aspects of certain programs. Therefore, even within an institution there could be several versions of a transfer pathway. Dr. Robbin Hoopes asserted that we cannot afford to encompass every aspect of every program. Additionally, he wondered what happens to the student who begins but does not complete a transfer pathway—could a bilateral agreement help facilitate their transfer? Students enter college from so many different avenues, and the OGTP may not encapsulate all of them. For instance, students who enter with College Credit Plus (CCP) credits typically do not follow specific pathways and instead have a hodgepodge of credits. Perhaps a bilateral agreement could help them. Furthermore, transfer pathways may be a challenge for adult learners. More generally, transfer students are not all 18 year-olds who select a major and continue it through completion.

Dr. Gigi Escoe voiced concern over compromising an institution's specific and unique general education requirements. Mr. Shank commented that recommendations can be added in the "Advising Notes" section of the template to help students ensure they fulfill their receiving institution's requirements. In the future, hopefully the OTM will be opened up and there will be more flexibility in aligning institution-specific general education requirements and the OTM.

The group circled back to the original issue of studying the landscape to determine how often disharmony between bilateral agreements and statewide agreements occurs. It was decided that selecting a sample of bilateral agreements to review for potential disharmony would be wiser than undergoing a comprehensive review. The group decided that we could trust institutions to report to us which of their agreements they thought might not be congruent, rather than involving a third party to conduct the review. Overall, the group believed it would be a healthy review for the universities to revisit their bilateral agreements.

Several representatives also suggested that all 13 four-year institutions gather to discuss this issue. The eight four-year institutions may have questions or concerns about how and why we are wanting to review bilateral agreements for potential disharmony. Additionally, as OATN asks institutions to undergo this review, it could be helpful to narrowly define what harmony and disharmony entail. It is important to calibrate the

test equipment to avoid upending decades-long partnerships that suddenly are deemed “disharmonious.” On the other hand, one representative pointed out that we cannot fully define “disharmonious” until we understand the current landscape, presenting a chicken/egg dilemma. Mr. Jared Shank of the Ohio Articulation and Transfer Network suggested that for now we should define “disharmonious” as situations where OTM and TAG courses are not offered in programs where they are available and where multiple courses are unnecessarily duplicated upon transfer. The group agreed that this effort would be something their colleagues would be willing to tackle. Fortunately, faculty panel meetings have led to suggestions for at least 4-5 new TAG courses, which could also help align bilateral and statewide agreements.

There were a few questions that were clarified. One representative wondered whether more courses in bilateral agreements could be aligned to TAG courses, which would “create” harmony. However, Dr. Compton clarified that these institutions do offer appropriate TAG courses but leave them out of the templates. Then another representative wondered what happens if students switch majors into a different cluster. The group agreed that the templates cannot serve this purpose and do not purport to do so. Dr. Escoe brought up a scenario where both institutions offer the OTM courses for a particular category in the template but tell students to take certain courses to enrich their experiences and because they will transfer according to their bilateral agreement. Dr. Escoe believes that in this scenario, they would be in violation. Dr. Compton responded, though, that when the institutions submit their templates, our staff at OATN does a first review to see if courses are harmonious with the statewide agreements. The real issue is that institutions who believe their pathways are not harmonious with the statewide pathways do not even submit templates. If an institution is only one or two courses away from being harmonious, Dr. Candice Grant, Director of the Ohio Guaranteed Transfer Pathways, will call the institution and discuss why this is the case and see if a solution can be worked out. Finally, one representative explained a situation where a student takes a particular course in their first two years, transfers to a university, and is required to retake this course due to the sequencing of the courses and the program’s strict cohort model. It was noted that the reason for this would need to be explained by the faculty who design the program.

In summary so far, suggestions on the table include having the 13 four-year institutions review bilateral agreements which might not be harmonious with the OGTP and bring them forward. Then this group could address some of the broad issues that are arising that could potentially lead to disharmony. The institutions could follow Mr. Shank’s suggested criteria of examining programs that do not use applicable TAG and OTM courses or those who require unnecessary duplication of courses. Additionally, if the four-year institutions have any successful bilateral agreements that are harmonious that they are proud of, they could bring those forward and we can see how they are harmonious. One representative then wondered whether a successful bilateral

agreement could be a trump card if it has been successful. However, we do not have information on how successful particular bilateral agreements are. Another representative believed that the OGTP should trump bilateral agreements. It was suggested that in the 13-institution review, they should pick an area with many existing bilateral agreements and one in which an OGTP exists. Perhaps the institutions could start with bilateral agreements in Business since those OGTP templates are already completed and posted to the OGTP website. It was thought that the community colleges are more likely to be out of compliance since it is often the case that universities accept courses even if they are not OTM or TAG. It was emphasized that two-year institutions cannot be out of compliance with TAGs because then the student is behind and do not have the appropriate credits to transfer to a four-year institution. Additionally, sometimes it is both the two-year and four-year institution who are not in compliance, so the OGTP are helpful in this respect because it forces both to be in alignment. If we do decide to go in this direction and have the 13 institutions review a sample of their bilateral agreements, then we should reach out to the other eight universities not represented at this meeting to explain to them our rationale. We should also have written guidelines to present to them so they know what to look for when reviewing. Perhaps a webinar could be held to explain this task. At some point, based on their findings, we might have to bring the 13 institutions together to talk.

Dr. Joe Whitehead wondered if there are two routes available for the same major, a bilateral agreement and a statewide agreement, would the legislation not rule? Going forward, should the widely differing bilateral agreements be allowed to exist? Dr. Ballinger affirmed Dr. Whitehead's question and added that when one looks at the considers close-knit regional relationships, would the OGTP still trump a bilateral agreement if it does not have all aspects of the OGTP, even if the bilateral works for that region and its students? Or can they co-exist? Does that provide a student with even greater opportunity than saying they must follow the OGTP at a community college if the plan to transfer? The overarching goal, here, is to protect all students regardless of where they want to go.

Dr. Steve Robinson wondered whether the search for disharmony between bilateral agreements and the OGTP was a solution in search of a problem. However, several representatives from ODHE confirmed that existing disharmony is known. Dr. Robinson asked whether being on top of the disharmonious agreements is more important than building off the OGTP. The steering committee does not know that there is rampant incongruity, so that is why they are having this discussion about bilateral agreements and how to identify disharmonious ones. If the OGTP knows of agreements that are not harmonious, they can send these to the institution to work on. If the institution still wants to offer their bilateral agreement, it is still not meeting the baseline standards of the OGTP. One representative compared this situation to a cake. Some examples presented in this meeting that go beyond the standard baseline of the OGTP represent

icing on the cake. On the other hand, the ODHE knows of some bilateral agreements that do not even have flour for the cake. Overall, the student needs to know that they can go to another institution after taking their 60 hours and be able to bake the cake without duplicating one or two courses, if this is even necessary. Again, the steering committee does not know how many instances there are where the minimum standards are not being met.

The issue of the math course changes was then discussed. There is not a one size fits all approach but in laying out the expected math in the pathways, students can have this knowledge up front. If a student changes pathways, this is different from a true transfer, and they would still have to take the required math on the new pathway. As mentioned before, this is never going to help a student who changes pathways. Mr. Shank also shared an example where a student on the business pathway is only required to take algebra at the community college despite business calculus being the standard at a four-year school. The four-year in this case takes the student but still makes them take business calculus, which makes the transfer pathways a moot point. Making transfer easier does not necessarily make the student more prepared and does not necessarily serve the student.

Dr. Robbin Hoopes asked whether there were models in other states where there are successful bilaterals between two-year and four-year institutions. Dr. Compton explained that we have looked at how other states do this, and many of them use common course numbering. If we had an ideal then we would share it, but we do not have this. Ohio is currently creating what other states will look at.

Dr. Randy Smith provided a succinct summary of the discussion surrounding bilateral agreements. The committee is discovering that they do not know enough about the issues that exist. The first step would be to ask the 13 four-year institutions to set the record straight on how often disharmony occurs. They would also ask them to identify broad areas within the bilateral agreements that often conflict with the OGTP. The next step would be to decide how much action, if any, the committee should take to correct the disharmony. They will ask the institutions for a sample rather than a comprehensive review, deciding that 5 active bilateral agreements would be a reasonable workload. These bilaterals would also need to be in an area where an OGTP exists. Before the April 18 meeting of provosts, the department will share a summary of this discussion and these next steps with them.

IV. Lunch

V. OGTP Progress Status

The group then discussed the progress made on the OGTP. Dr. Compton noted that work has begun for all templates, whether they are in the development, endorsement, or implementation phase—this is a compliment to the faculty of the state.

Mr. Shank summarized the recent work done for Medical Laboratory Science and Information Technology and Computer Science. The recent meetings for these two areas have been productive and illuminating, and several issues have been brought to the table for discussion. For Medical Laboratory Science, one notable issue is that some four-year institutions do not have a match for certain TAG courses because these types of courses are taught by third party entities. Offering such a TAG course would be a disservice to students because the third party entities would require that the students take their course. This situation merits future discussion on what solutions could exist when similar scenarios arise. In the Information Technology and Computer Science meeting, the focus group narrowed down the pathways and expressed particular interest in the Associate of Science (AS) degree. Future discussion would surround whether it would be necessary to include a separate pathway for the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree, since these two drafts were almost identical. Both the Medical Laboratory Science and the Information Technology and Computer Science areas could reach the endorsement phase in the fall.

Ms. Ellen Peterson of the Ohio Articulation and Transfer Network explained her work collecting the endorsement surveys. She is currently organizing responses from mechanical engineering and electrical engineering, with only a few responses remaining. Responses regarding communication studies programs are still slowly trickling in. Overall, Ms. Peterson has noticed a fair mix of endorsements and criticisms.

Ms. Nicole Chain of the Ohio Articulation and Transfer Network then explained her observations in reviewing institution-submitted templates. Overall, institutions are on the right track, submitting aligned OTM and TAG courses and including all the correct major requirements. Issues mostly arise with formatting and ensuring all general education requirements are accounted for. Dr. Compton commented that we should be happy with our progress, even if sometimes it feels like we are not moving quickly enough.

VI. Proposed Language for the Implementation Policy Update

The group then reviewed proposed changes to language in the implementation policy regarding exemptions. These changes were made based on discussion during the

Steering Committee's November 30, 2018 meeting. Notably, the word "exception" was replaced with "exemption." (There were a few forgotten "exceptions" that will be changed after this meeting.) The group also suggested adding the modifier "brief" to "presentation." The group should ensure that each member understands precisely what the group is agreeing to and should feel comfortable with the agreement, especially because we currently know of at least two institutions who plan to submit an exemption request. After agreement, OATN would like to distribute these instructions as soon as possible so that institutions may begin to follow them. It was also noted that OATN would not yet address the language regarding bilateral agreements since they have not reached a consensus on them. No other changes to the policy's language were recommended.

The group then reviewed the exemption process for any suggested edits. Dr. Gigi Escoe inquired as to how many people show attend the presentation and what types of people should these be. It was noted that this would vary depending on the nature of the exemption request. Dr. Compton expressed that the institution should be able to build a case around their exemption request and should invite relevant representatives to accomplish this goal. It was suggested that one representative could give the presentation while a content expert could answer any follow-up questions. Dr. Escoe also inquired as to whether a specific set of questions would be provided to the institution before the presentation. The group decided this may not be necessary. Dr. Cindy McQuade then suggested that perhaps the first request for exemption could be submitted in writing and that any remaining questions could be addressed in person in a presentation. However, Dr. Compton stressed the importance of respecting the law. Due to the strong language of the policy, exemptions should be rare and taken seriously and strong cases surrounding an exemption request should be built before an exemption were granted.

Dr. Escoe voiced concern over a specific issue at her institution where some programs are highly competitive and are extremely unlikely to accept transfer students. For these cases, she wondered, would it be dishonest to submit a template for such a pathway despite the unlikelihood of that program accepting a transfer student? Furthermore, if her institution submitted an exemption request based on this reasoning, would a presentation be warranted, or would a written statement be sufficient? Ultimately, the group decided that an advising note could be added to this template explaining the highly competitive nature of the program. Furthermore, several representatives noted that the current language in the policy implies that institutions have the option, rather than an obligation, to give a presentation for their exemption request. The group then agreed to keep the policy's currently outlined process of putting the exemption request in writing, providing it four weeks in advance of a presentation, and having the option to gather several institutional representatives to give a presentation to support the exemption request.

Finally, one representative expressed concern over the consequences of granting an exemption request and leaving a region without a particular pathway. The group pointed out, though, that there will not be a pathway in every area for every institution.

VII. Tracking

Dr. Compton provided a brief update on the move towards using a tracking system. We will be part of a tracking system, Cyanna, but it is still in development. It will be available at the start of the academic year in the fall.

VIII. A Focus on Technical and Applied Associate Degrees Aligned with Bachelor's Degree

Dr. Compton explained that many associate degrees in technology are awarded in Ohio. If four-year institutions were interested, additional pathways could be developed where applied associate degrees were aligned with bachelor's degrees. Doing so could help promote statewide completion goals and the governor's push towards workforce development. Dr. Compton wondered whether the group would be interested in providing workshops, webinars, or conferences where institutions with these types of pathways in existence could teach institutions interested in creating such pathways. The group agreed that such educational tools would be useful for those interested in participating, both for two-year and four-year institutions. Many community colleges offer the opportunity for students to earn stackable certificates in their associate's degree. Dr. Compton mused, then, that hypothetically it should not be a problem to develop pathways in technical areas from an associate's degree to a bachelor's degree. While some institutions already offer a bachelor's degree in applied technology, these degrees are typically generic, and students may wish to follow a more specific pathway.

It was also suggested that the group consider the needs of industries and the gaps in preparation of who industries need. However, one representative remarked how technology is changing rapidly and it may be difficult to see gaps since certain jobs have never existed before. Furthermore, many jobs that will exist in ten years have not been created (an estimated 85%). Artificial intelligence, automation, and advanced manufacturing are changing the landscape in Ohio, and the group should consider this when developing these technical pathways.

IX. For the Good of the Order

The group recognized the accomplishments of Dr. Jack Cooley, who is retiring in June. He made significant advancements in Ohio higher education and is considered an inspirational and thoughtful leader. Dr. Ballinger thanked Dr. Cooley on behalf of the



Steering Committee for his contributions. With no other topics of discussion, the meeting was adjourned.