



May 2011

## **DRAFT: Proposed Changes to Communication Requirement in the Direct Transfer Agreement**

### **Introduction**

Washington is gifted with a strong community and technical college system. More than 70 percent of the students who access higher education in Washington do so first at a two-year institution. Transfer is key to increasing bachelor's degree production because a higher percent of public and private college students in Washington (49 percent) attend community and technical colleges than in the United States in general (34 percent).

Washington has developed several specialized transfer degrees:

- Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA): a general, all-purpose transfer degree for students who aren't sure what they will major in.
- Associate in Science – Transfer: a specialized transfer degree for students in science fields, such as engineering and biology/chemistry.
- Major-Related Programs (MRP): a specialized transfer degree based on the DTA or AS-T and intended for students majoring in a handful of popular majors.

In 2009-10, almost 19,000 students transferred credits from community and technical colleges to public and private baccalaureate programs in Washington.

- More than 73 percent (13,973) attained a specialized transfer degree.
- Of these, 95 percent (13,242) completed the DTA or related MRP.

### **Historical Perspective**

The purpose of the change proposed in this document is to make the communications requirement in the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) clearer to students and to align the requirement with current course credit practices.

The communications requirement in the DTA was first defined in 1984. Prior to that, distribution areas were not defined beyond a general guideline that courses were to be “reasonably distributed.” For the last 25 years, the DTA communication requirement directed students to complete two courses in composition, and it allowed them to take remaining credits from courses such as speech or debate. In practice, however, few students have any credits remaining after taking two composition courses.

DTA language, which currently requires two composition classes of six or more credits, was written at a time when a number of colleges offered composition courses in a three-credit format. These courses are now generally five credits each. A proposal to clarify the communication requirement of the DTA was reviewed by higher education stakeholders with approval by the baccalaureate institutions in Fall 2010, and final review and approval by the Community and Technical College (CTC) system in Spring 2011. The proposal is being forwarded to the HECB for final approval and adoption by the system.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> RCW 28B.76.240 requires the HECB to adopt statewide transfer and articulation policies that ensure efficient transfer of credits and courses across public two- and four-year institutions of higher education.

**Communications in the DTA  
Proposal for Change  
Approved by Public and Private Baccalaureates – 2010  
Approved by SBCTC May 2011**

**Current Language:**

- I. Be issued only to students who have earned a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.00, as calculated by the degree awarding institution.
- II. Be based on 90 quarter hours of transferable credit including:
  - A. A minimum of 60 quarter hours of general education courses distributed as follows:
    - 1. Basic Requirements
      - a. Communication Skills (10 credits)  
Must include at least two courses in English composition which total to at least six credits. Remaining credits, if any, may be an additional composition course or designated writing courses or courses in basic speaking skills (e.g. speech, rhetoric, or debate)

**Proposed DTA language change:**

- I. Be issued only to students who have earned a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.00, as calculated by the degree awarding institution.
- II. Be based on 90 quarter hours of transferable credit including:
  - A. A minimum of 60 quarter hours of general education courses distributed as follows
    - 1. Basic Requirements
      - a. Communication Skills (10 credits)  
*Must include at least five (5) credits of English composition. Remaining credits may be used for an additional composition course or designated writing courses or courses in basic speaking skills (e.g. speech, rhetoric, or debate).*