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Memorandum Number 06-09

March 17, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Community College Presidents

FROM: J. David Armstrong, Jr.

SUBJECT: Process for Seamless Articulation and Transfer of Credits

On March 1, 2006, the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Education (DCCWE) sponsored a very productive meeting in Tallahassee with Dr. Belle Wheelan, President, Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and Dr. Gary Puckett, Executive Director/President of the Council on Occupational Education (COE). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and compare accreditation standards of those two organizations, particularly as they apply to faculty credentials. At issue is the development of a process for more seamless articulation and transfer of credits between Florida technical centers and public community colleges in regard to postsecondary adult vocational coursework and associate degree programs. Our goal, in keeping with the recommendations of last year's Career Education Task Force (chaired by Lt. Governor Toni Jennings), and with Strategic Imperative #4 (Increase the quantity and improve the quality of education options), is to facilitate the development of a pipeline which would enable students to progress toward their educational goals without unnecessary roadblocks, while at the same time preserving standards for necessary and appropriate learning outcomes.

During the meeting, Dr. Wheelan repeatedly pointed out that three years ago SACS reworded Principles of Accreditation, Standard 3.7.1, to provide postsecondary institutions with more flexibility and control in determining faculty credentials. No longer are colleges "required" to employ only those faculty who hold a "Master's degree plus a minimum of 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline" for teaching associate degree courses designed for transfer to baccalaureate degree programs. This level of professional preparation is considered one of several credential options, and is listed as such under 3.7.1 as a *Credential Guideline*, along with several others including "competence," "effectiveness," "related

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Memorandum Number 06-09

Page Two

March 17, 2006

work experiences in the field,” and “professional licensure.” Institutions need to carefully review current SACS standards in regard to faculty credentials, and to be aware that SACS has placed the responsibility for determining acceptable qualifications upon the institution. As noted in 3.7.1, “For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty.”

Dr. Wheelen, per direction of the Commission on Colleges, will be generating a memo to postsecondary institutions confirming this interpretation, and bringing it to the attention of visiting review committees in the near future. As we move forward to forge more seamless articulation measures and expand opportunities for career education students, this clarification regarding faculty credentials will make the work of converting postsecondary adult vocational credit into educational units creditable toward degree programs much more manageable. The Division will continue to keep you apprised of developments in this arena. If you have further questions regarding this issue, please contact Dr. Judy Bilsky, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Success, at (850) 245-9452, or Dr. Bonnie Marmor, Vice Chancellor for Workforce Education, at (850)245-9469.

JDA/jbh

c: Judith Bilsky
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Stacey Webb