

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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Commissioner of Education



July 20, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: State University Presidents
Community College Presidents

FROM: John L. Winn

SUBJECT: Nonpublic Institution Participation in the Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS)

The Florida State Board of Education is committed to improving student opportunities for higher learning by coordinating the efforts of all education sectors to facilitate progress toward a degree. Nonpublic colleges and universities play an important role in achieving this goal. Many Florida students at non-regionally accredited institutions, however, continue to encounter difficulties when transferring credit.

Section 1007.24(6), Florida Statutes (F.S.), states that “Nonpublic colleges and schools that are fully accredited by a regional or national accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education...may participate in the statewide course numbering system.” Furthermore, Section 1007.24(7), F.S., guarantees the transfer of credit between all participating institutions:

Any student who transfers among postsecondary institutions that are fully accredited by a **regional or national accrediting agency** recognized by the United States Department of Education **and that participate in the statewide course numbering system** shall be awarded credit by the receiving institution for courses satisfactorily completed by the student at the previous institutions. Credit shall be awarded if the courses are judged by the appropriate statewide course numbering system faculty committees representing school districts, public postsecondary educational institutions, and participating nonpublic postsecondary educational institutions to be academically equivalent to courses offered at the receiving institution, including equivalency of faculty credentials, regardless of the public or nonpublic control of the previous institution.

We ask that you make your staff aware that students who transfer from nonpublic institutions that participate in the SCNS enjoy the same rights to guaranteed course transfer as students from Florida public institutions. **Courses with the same prefix and last three digits**—those that have been deemed equivalent by an SCNS faculty discipline committee—**are guaranteed transfer to another institution offering that course** (subject to standard system-wide exemptions). This credit will satisfy institutional requirements as though the student took that course at the receiving institution. No additional supporting documentation is required to validate the

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transfer of equivalent courses; in the process of assigning course numbers, the Department of Education has already ensured that the teaching faculty possess credentials comparable to those at regionally accredited institutions. *Moreover, the Department continues its efforts to ensure improvements in all facets of the faculty credential evaluation process.* Again, receiving institutions **must** award this transfer credit for equivalent courses regardless of whether the accreditation of the participating institution is regional or national.

The State Board of Education and I take very seriously our responsibility to ensure and enforce appropriate policy implementation. To test and improve quality assurance in the implementation of this policy, the Department of Education, in conjunction with the Articulation Coordinating Committee, will be reviewing transfer policies and sampling student records across institutions. Results of sampling will be publicly reported along with specifically reported and confirmed incidents of violation. I encourage your attention to your institution's policies and practices to facilitate student success in this policy area.

For your convenience, attached is a list of nonpublic institution courses on the SCNS. You may also download updated copies of this report in the "Latest News" section of the Statewide Course Numbering System website at <http://scns.fldoe.org>. Should you have any questions about the transfer of credit from nonpublic institutions, please contact the Office of Articulation at (850) 245-0427. Thank you for your consideration regarding this matter.

JW/mb

c: Chancellor Debra Austin
Chancellor David Armstrong
State University Registrars and Admission Directors
Community College Registrars and Admissions Officers
State University Council of Academic Vice Presidents
Community College Council on Instructional Affairs
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