STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM *of* FLORIDA
Board of Governors

Improving 2+2 Articulation
Strategy 1: Recommendation for a
Web-Based Advising Tool

September 2018

Introduction

In January 2016, the incoming chair of the Board of Governors noted that "Florida's 2+2 articulation system is a national model of which we can be proud – but it is not a system that is built and then runs on auto-pilot." Chairman Tom Kuntz established the Select Committee on 2+2 Articulation and charged it with assessing how the 2+2 program is currently working across the System and identifying appropriate strategies for enhancing the program. The Select Committee spent a year meeting with experts from the State University System (SUS), the Florida College System (FCS), and the Department of Education to review the current status of the system, identify critical areas for improvement, and select strategies for enhancing the state's 2+2 articulation agreement. In March 2017, the Select Committee and the Board of Governors approved an implementation plan for improving the statewide 2+2 articulation agreement.

The implementation plan outlined three strategies to address the most critical issues across four major components of 2+2 articulation: the academic transition, the admissions process, the cultural transition, and information on A.A. graduates. The three strategies, listed below, build on the strong relationships between the SUS, the FCS, and the Department of Education.

> *Strategy 1: Develop a comprehensive and easily accessible web-based 2+2 advising toolkit. The website should contain information for secondary and postsecondary students, secondary and postsecondary advisors, and other key users.*
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> *Strategy 2: Encourage the state universities to improve and expand existing local 2+2 enhancement programs and identify key components of effective programs in the four critical areas identified by the Committee (academic transition, admissions process, cultural transition, and information on A.A. graduates). Require the state universities to conduct regular reviews of enhancement programs and provide regular reports of those reviews to the Board.*
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> *Strategy 3: Develop and implement a 2+2 data and information toolkit looking at both the institutional and System levels. The toolkit should include already existing data and analyses and new data and analyses as needed.*

In August 2017, staff from the Board of Governors office established a Workgroup to develop recommendations for how to best implement the three strategies. The Workgroup is comprised of representatives from the FCS and its institutions, the Office of Articulation and high school counselors from the Department of Education, the SUS institutions, and Board of Governors staff. The Workgroup's membership list is provided in Appendix A and the work plan is provided in Appendix B.

The Workgroup spent the last year focused on developing a recommendation for Strategy 1, a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit. The remainder of this report provides an overview of the Workgroup's activities and a recommendation for developing a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit for students, counselors, advisors, and parents.

Creating a Vision for a Web-Based 2+2 Advising Toolkit

The Workgroup began by identifying key users for a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit. The Workgroup determined that the primary users of a web-based toolkit are FCS students and advisors; SUS advisors; and SUS 2+2 enhancement program staff. The Workgroup also discussed the importance of increasing the availability of information made available to high school students, particularly those intending to use accelerated programs; high school counselors, and parents of high school students. The Workgroup also noted the existence of several special student populations that may require more nuanced information on 2+2 such as veterans, homeschool students, high school graduates with Associate in Arts degrees, FCS and SUS department chairs and deans, and numerous others.

In developing critical content areas, the Workgroup considered the following areas suggested by the Board's Select Committee.

- Available baccalaureate degree programs
- Available 2+2 enhancement programs
- Recommended program pathways and course sequences for dual enrollment students
- General education core information
- Common prerequisites for degree programs
- Common course prerequisites and sequences
- Program admission requirements
- Information about the transferability of courses
- Reference and training resources for advisors and other key staff
- Transfer regulations and policies

The Workgroup also noted that users need information about the implications various decisions and actions have on a student's ability to fully benefit from the statewide 2+2 agreement.

In addition, the Workgroup considered the desired features and functions of a new web-based 2+2 advising toolkit. The Workgroup discussed a variety of features and functions including interactivity, comprehensive search abilities, minimal use of jargon, and a mobile-friendly format. Ideally, the web-based toolkit should serve as a one-stop academic planner that provides the user with a working educational plan. The Workgroup also recognized that the tool should comply with Title II of the American Disabilities Act (ADA).

The Workgroup also contemplated ways to ensure the successful development and implementation of a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit. The Workgroup discussed the

importance of establishing a steering committee or advisory group to be responsible for overseeing development, implementation, and ongoing maintenance with representation similar to that of the Workgroup. The Workgroup also acknowledged the need for a detailed implementation plan as well as clear terms and conditions for the entity responsible for developing the web-based 2+2 advising toolkit.

The Workgroup also spent a substantial amount of time discerning who would be the best entity responsible for the development and implementation of a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit. In order to make an informed decision, the Workgroup charged a subgroup with conducting an in-depth review and assessment of state- and system-level websites that currently provide information about the statewide 2+2 agreement and other information for transfer students. The subgroup reviewed sites maintained by the Board of Governors office, the FCS, the Office of Articulation, and Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC). The sites were reviewed to determine 1) the extent to which information about the 20 critical content areas was available on each site, 2) the appropriateness of the content for each primary user group, and 3) usability. The results of the review revealed that the 2+2 portions of websites maintained by the Board of Governors office and FLVC included some level of information for approximately 10 of the 20 critical content areas – the most of all sites reviewed. However, the subgroup determined that the content within both sites is not user-specific and neither site is user-friendly in terms of the accessibility of information (i.e., over-reliance on pdf-formatted documents), the organization of the content, and the ability to successfully locate content via search. Staff from FLVC indicated that their site does contain content across all 20 critical content areas and that it would not be difficult to develop a page or series of pages that would make information from all 20 areas easier for the primary users to locate. An overview of the subgroup review and assessment are provided in Appendix C.

The Workgroup also considered the pros and cons of recommending the creation of a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit within an existing site, issuing a request for proposals from potential developers for the development of a toolkit either within an existing site or as a new stand-alone site, and establishing the development of a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit as a class project for either an SUS institution or an FCS institution. The Workgroup also discussed the feasibility of obtaining additional funds to develop a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit.

Recommendation for a Web-Based 2+2 Advising Toolkit

After careful and thorough consideration, the Workgroup recommends that FLVC be charged with developing a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit. In a meeting with the Workgroup on July 31, 2018, staff from FLVC indicated that a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit aligned with their vision to enhance and improve FloridaShines.org as evidenced by their current effort to revise the Common Prerequisite Manual portion of their site - a critical component of the recommended web-based 2+2 advising toolkit. Dr. John Opper, Executive Director of Distance Learning and Student Services for FLVC, stated that they are required by statute to "coordinate with the Florida College System and the State University System to identify and provide online academic support services and resources when the multi-institutional provision of such services and resources is more cost effective or operationally effective" (1006.735). Dr. Opper also stated that FLVC could create a web-based 2+2 advising toolkit within existing resources.

The Workgroup further recommends that the Board of Governors office work collaboratively with the Division of Florida Colleges office and the Office of Articulation to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with FLVC to establish clear expectations and responsibilities for all parties. In addition, the Workgroup recommends that the MOU include a timeline with specified deliverables as outlined below.

- Phase 1: Short-term (temporary) solution
  - Enhance the transfer section of FloridaShines.org to incorporate links to information provided elsewhere within the site, develop pages for specific users, and improve search-ability of the 20 critical content areas
  - Incorporate the revisions to the Common Prerequisite Manual
  - Provide professional development for counselors and advisors on how to use the new Common Prerequisite Manual
- Phase 2: Long-term solution
  - Develop a 'guided pathway' tool for the primary user groups
  - Create and implement a marketing plan for students and staff
  - Provide professional development for counselors and advisors on how to use the new toolkit
  - Provide data analytics to the Board of Governors office, the Division of Florida Colleges, and the Office of Articulation
  - Plan for future development to ensure continued usability and to provide content for other user groups as outlined below

The Workgroup further recommends that the MOU include the following requirements identified by the Workgroup, as well as any additional requirements established by the Board of Governors office, the Division of Florida Colleges office, the Office of Articulation, and FLVC during the development of the MOU.

Implementation Requirements
1. A steering committee or executive advisory board be primarily responsible for the content and governance of the tool. Membership should include staff from the Board of Governors office, the Office of Articulation, and the Division of Florida Colleges office and possibly representatives from the SUS and FCS institutions as well.
2. The entity responsible submits a detailed plan that addresses the following.
   a. Governance as outlined above
   b. Detailed description of the development and implementation process and timeline for Phase 1 and 2 as outlined above
   c. Plan and process for ongoing maintenance and content update/refresh
   d. Marketing and promotion
   e. Continuous funding
   f. Clearly defined roles for all responsible parties
3. The entity responsible for developing the tool must agree to the following.
   a. An expeditious timeline for development and implementation
   b. Input and testing by students, parents, and advisors
   c. Making the code for the tool readily available to all parties on the MOU or their designee(s) to ensure continuity

Primary Audience
1. Florida College System students, advisors
2. State University System advisors and 2+2 program enhancement staff
3. High school students interested in accelerated programs
4. High school parents and counselors

Other Potential Users
1. K12: middle school students, parents, counselors
2. Postsecondary: SUS students, FCS/SUS success coaches/mentors, FCS/SUS faculty (non-advising), FCS/SUS department chairs, FCS/SUS academic administrators, FCS/SUS student affairs administrators, FCS/SUS career advisors
3. Special populations: out-of-state students, returning adults, students with disabilities, veterans, high school graduates with Associate of Arts degrees, students without a high school diploma, students with GED, homeschool students

Critical Content Areas
1. Statewide 2+2 agreement
2. General education core
3. Common program prerequisites
4. SUS institution admission requirements
5. Available SUS and FCS baccalaureate programs
6. Detailed information about SUS and FCS baccalaureate programs
7. What courses to take when
8. Sequencing and timing of math courses
9. Accelerated mechanisms and 2+2

10. 2+2 enhancement programs
11. Course prerequisites and how they differ from program prerequisites
12. Transferability of courses
13. Electives
14. Transferring before completing the Associate of Arts
15. Co-curricular activities and opportunities
16. Financial aid
17. SUS and FCS baccalaureate graduation requirements
18. Choices and consequences, frequently made mistakes
19. Terms and definitions
20. How to contact advisors, counselors, and transfer coordinators

Toolkit Functionality & Features
1. Interactive
2. Searchable
3. Include only "hot spots" on home page
4. Common portal that brings together the various sources of information
5. Establish common requirements for SUS/FCS institution sources of information
6. ADA compliant
7. Any videos should be 2 minutes or less in length
8. Engaging, inviting
9. Minimal use of jargon and technical terms
10. Mobile friendly
11. Device agnostic (e.g., MAC/PC, iPhone/Galaxy)
12. User analytics for the site
13. Appropriate use of flow charts or other visualizations to explain processes and other information
14. Easy to update and maintain
15. User feedback mechanism
16. Search engine optimization
17. Ability to create user accounts and store information
18. Contact us
19. FAQ's for each user group

APPENDIX A
WORKGROUP MEMBERS

Dr. Karinda Barrett, Division of Florida Colleges

Dr. Karen Borglum, Valencia College and member of the Articulation Coordination Committee

Dr. Jennifer Buchanan, Florida State University and member of the Articulation Coordination Committee

Mr. Todd Clark, Office of Articulation, Florida Department of Education

Dr. Christy England, Board of Governors Staff

Dr. Karen Griffin, Hillsborough Community College

Dr. William Hudson, Jr., Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and member of the Articulation Coordination Committee

Dr. Jeffrey Jones, University of Central Florida

Ms. Helen Lancashire, Department of Education (August 2017 – December 2017)

Ms. Lynda Page, Board of Governors Staff

Dr. Traki L. Taylor, Board of Governors Staff

Mr. Andrew Weatherill, Department of Education (January 2018 – present)

Strategy 1: Develop a comprehensive and easily accessible web-based 2+2 advising toolkit. The website should contain information for secondary and postsecondary students, secondary and postsecondary advisors, and other key users.

Action Step	Estimated Timeline
Identify major components & requirements of website, including required elements, cost to update & maintain the website, & identification of the responsibilities of institutions & state entities to keep the site current.	Summer 2017-Winter 2018
Submit recommendations to BOG staff.	Spring 2018

Strategy 2: Encourage the state universities to improve and expand existing local 2+2 enhancement programs and identify key components of effective programs in the four critical areas identified by the Committee (academic transition, admissions process, cultural transition, and information on A.A. graduates). Require the state universities to conduct regular reviews of enhancement programs and provide regular reports of those reviews to the Board.

Action Step	Estimated Timeline
Identify key components & best practices.	Summer-Fall 2018
Submit recommendations to Board staff.	Winter 2019

Strategy 3: Develop and implement a 2+2 data and information toolkit looking at both the institutional and System levels. The toolkit should include already existing data and analyses and new data and analyses as needed.

Action Step	Estimated Timeline
Develop requirements for a 2+2 data & information toolkit. The toolkit should identify essential descriptive data & critical research questions. Data sources & methodologies may also be identified.	Spring 2019
Submit recommendations to Board staff.	Spring/Summer 2019

Board of Governors Website (https://www.flbog.edu/forstudents/ati/transfer.php): Has one web page dedicated to transfer students. Includes information related to more than half (11.1 out of 20) of the content areas but mostly in the form of regulations (in pdf form), general information, and links to other sites (e.g., Office of Articulation). The content provided is best suited for advisors and state/system level staff. The content is not usable by students because it is 1) too technical, 2) contained within pdf documents; and/or 3) too generic for planning purposes. Content areas not addressed: detailed program information, what to take when, math timing/sequencing, 2+2 enhancement programs (except as part of Board materials), course prerequisites, electives, transferring before completing A.A., co-curricular information, choices/consequences, terms/definitions, and how to contact advisors.

Office of Articulation (http://www.fldoe.org/policy/articulation/): Main web page provides links to documents or other websites but contains very little information on the actual page. The documents and other websites contain information relative to 7.9 content areas but it's not obvious to the user that such information is available within those resources. For instance, based on the web page text a user would not know (though they might infer) that information about the statewide 2+2 agreement is available via the documents/pages provided through links to: Statewide Postsecondary Articulation Manual; Information on Florida's 2 + 2 Pathways and Programs; Transfer Student Rights; and Florida Counseling for Future Education Handbook. The content provided is best suited for advisors and state/system level staff. Most of the content is too technical and contained within pdf documents, which can/will not be easily used by students. Only one document appears to have been designed specifically for students but only general information is provided. Search function is challenging to use and pages take a while to load. Content areas not addressed: available programs, university admission requirements, program information, what to take when, math timing/sequencing, 2+2 enhancement programs, course prerequisites, electives, transferring before completing A.A., co-curricular information, university graduation requirements, choices/consequences, terms/definitions, and how to contact advisors.

Florida College System (https://www.floridacollegesystem.com): Has one page dedicated to the topic of transfer. Contains very general information and links to statutes postsecondary articulation manual, common numbering system, and FloridaShines.org all of which are located on other web pages. The content provided is best suited for advisors and state/system level staff. Seventeen of the 20 content areas were not addressed.

Florida College System (http://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/postsecondary-articulation.stml): Has one page dedicated to the topic of transfer that provides links to documents or other websites but contains very little information on the actual page. The documents and other websites contain information relevant to some content areas but it's not obvious to the user that such information is available within those resources. For instance, the user would not know the wide array of topics addressed in the Postsecondary Articulation Manual (a pdf document). The content provided is best suited for advisors and

state/system level staff. Most of the content is too technical and contained within pdf documents, which can/will not be easily used by students. Search function is challenging to use and pages take a while to load. Eighteen of the 20 content areas were not addressed.

Florida Virtual Campus (https://www.FloridaShines.org/): Various pages throughout the site contain information that address 9.9 content areas. The quality of the content varies from page to page as does the level of detail. The site is not organized specifically for transfer students or advisors of transfer students, which makes it difficult to navigate. The target audience of the various pages is not readily apparent from page to page. The portions of the site that appear to enable exploration or planning are not actually designed to do so; rather users are forced to select a current institution and major before they are allowed to proceed. The site also is primarily populated with information about the Florida Colleges and it is difficult to locate information about SUS programs. Program/degree information is often portrayed in the format of a "degree audit," a format that is not user friendly for students and the format varies by institution. All of the critical information about common prerequisites is contained within an extensive library of pdf documents that are not easily useable by advisors or students. Content areas not addressed: statewide agreement/policy, computation/communication requirements (Gordon Rule), what to take when, math sequencing, 2+2 enhancement programs, course prerequisites (outside of those identified in the common prerequisite manual), transferability of courses, electives, co-curricular information, choices/consequences, terms/definitions, and how to contact advisor.

OVERALL: None of the above sites meets all of the needs for all of the users identified by the 2+2 Workgroup. Of the above sites, FloridaShines.org and the BOG site address the most out of the 20 content areas. The following content areas were not addressed on any of the sites reviewed: what to take when, math sequencing, 2+2 enhancement programs (except in BOG meeting materials), course prerequisites, electives, co-curricular information, choices/consequences, terms/definitions, and how to contact advisors. A considerable amount of time and resources will be needed to revise either site as envisioned to 1) address all 20 content areas and 2) be user friendly for all primary users.

[Based on the reviews conducted by Karen Griffith, Lynda Page, and Helen Lancashire]