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ABSTRACT

This paper compares and contrasts the higher education articulation and transfer policies and processes between the states of Florida and Maryland. The author examines how the state governance structures impact articulation and transfer. Both states have instituted statewide policies meant to implement high levels of transfer between two-year and four-year institutions. The paper compares the results of different policies and programs, and attempts to make projections regarding future success for articulation and transfer within the two states. The State of Florida ranks fourth in the nation in population (15,111,244). Almost 4% of the total Florida population is enrolled in higher education. Compared to the national percentage of students in higher education, Florida received a D+ rating. In addition, Florida received a B+ rating for completion rates, and a D for affordability factors. Florida has a 2+2 system of transfer, which means that students who earn an associate's degree at a community college must be accepted into a Florida college or university. Maryland ranks 19th in the nation for population (5,171,643), with 4.13% of the population enrolled in higher education programs. Maryland received an A for percentage of students in higher education, a B- for retention, and a D for affordability. Maryland officials intend to develop a 2+2 strategy for transfer. (Contains 22 references.) (NB)

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Governance of Articulation and Transfer
in Maryland and Florida

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Governance of Articulation and Transfer in Maryland and Florida

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast the higher education articulation and transfer policies and processes between the states of Florida and Maryland. Both state governance structures will be presented as to how they impact on articulation and transfer. The articulation and transfer policies of both states will be provided with supporting statistics to reflect the level of success for articulation and transfer. Florida and Maryland have instituted statewide policies to implement high levels of transfer between two-year (Community College) and four-year (University or College) institutions. This paper will compare the results of the different policies and programs and attempt to make projections on future success for articulation and transfer within the two states.

Definition of Terms

To understand state governance structures of higher education systems, Richardson et al. (1999) has provided three definitions that will be applied in this paper to the states of Florida and Maryland. The three governance structures are: segmented, unified, and federal. The segmented structure has many multiple governing boards that are responsible for one or more higher education institution. In the segmented structure, there is no effective state agency with significant responsibility for all of higher education. In a unified system, there is a single governing board that manages all degree-granting higher education institutions and represents them in discussions with state government agencies. The last governance structure provided by the authors is the federal system. The federal system has a statewide board responsible for collecting and distributing information, advising on the budget, planning programs from a statewide perspective, and encouraging articulation. The federal system can best be described as

a “system of systems” with intermediate governing boards reporting to an overall board. The key feature of the federal system is its “layers” (pp. 16-17).

Defining the terms of articulation, transfer, native student, transfer student, receiving institution, and sending institution is required for the understanding of articulation and transfer policies within Florida and Maryland. A study of the literature on articulation and transfer is needed to ensure understanding of the terms and concepts that allows students to move from two-year to four-year institutions. The definitions provide a common framework in which to make comparisons and contrasts between the two state programs.

Cohen and Brawer (Collegiate, 1996) provided a framework for articulation. The articulation process of developing and reviewing curriculum and coursework rests with the faculty at the sending and receiving institutions to determine course comparability. The community college and university faculty is responsible for reviewing course content and authorizing acceptance of specific courses, sequence of courses, and programs for transferring students. Once this review and formal written acceptance process has occurred, a course, sequence of courses, or programs are said to have been articulated. The content of the courses at the community college assumes the necessary background and preparation has occurred to allow the student to progress to the next level of instruction at the four-year university.

Ignash and Townsend (2000) provided seven guiding principles for the establishment of a strong statewide articulation agreement. The seven principles are:

- Parity among institutions - community colleges and four-year institutions are equal partners.
- Parity of students - native and transfer students are treated equally by receiving institutions.

- Faculty have primary responsibility for developing actual statewide articulation agreements.
- Accommodation of students who transfer without an associate degree.
- Development of agreements to transfer program majors and program major courses.
- Participation of private colleges and universities in statewide agreement.
- Data driven evaluation on statewide articulation agreement. (§ 6-8)

Barkley (1993) indicates that articulation efforts are even more critical now than they were in the past. The author states that “public accountability for higher education combined with reduced levels of funding make it imperative that the nation’s community colleges and four-year institutions (private as well as public) communicate, collaborate, and cooperate in the delivery of higher education” (§ 2). Manzo (1998) reports that in many states, the “community college administrators are working hard at hammering out articulation agreements with their university neighbors” (§ 38). Manzo also points out that many states are now directing state articulation policies to ensure accountability to the taxpayer and provide increased transfer opportunities. Ignash (2002, February) states that students who do not complete the Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree, or at least the general education “package,” are subject to course-by-course transcript review by the receiving institution and are at a greater risk of losing credits upon transfer. The community colleges and four-year institutions are being forced by state directives to better facilitate articulation of college courses. Welsh and Kjollien (2001) indicate that 43 states have some form of an automated system for potential transfer students to review transfer and articulation policies and programs within their state.

Richardson et al. (1999) in studying governance structures provided a definition of articulation and collaboration that:

refer to the extent to which higher education institutions see themselves as systems and work together on such tasks as student transfer. These terms also help define the extent to which post secondary institutions work closely with the schools that furnish their incoming students. (p. 20)

The important element of this definition is that higher education institutions work together to transfer students among institutions through articulation.

There are many definitions offered by scholars who have examined the transfer process within higher education. For the purpose of this paper, the transfer process will focus on the traditional “vertical” transfer of students from a two-year institution (Community College) to a four-year institution (University) and is defined by a combination of two definitions of transfer provided by Eaton (1996) and the Florida Department of Education (Pathways, 2001). Eaton defines transfer as:

the movement of students from one institution to another. Students take certain packages of academic experiences from one institution and request that another institution formally recognize these packages—whether made up of courses, programs, or degrees. Transfer is a complex activity involving students, faculty, administrators, at least two institutions, many departmental interests, and perhaps even state regulations. (p. 559)

Another definition of transfer provided by the Florida Department of Education adds one more aspect in defining transfer. The Florida Department of Education (Pathways, 2001) defines articulation as “the joining of two or more segments or sectors of education” (p. 1).

Combining the definitions of transfer provided by Eaton (1996) and the Florida Department of Education (Pathways, 2001) allows for the development an all-encompassing definition of transfer. The definition of transfer has four main elements. They are:

- The joining of two or more segments or sectors of education.
- The movement of students from one institution to another.
- Gaining institution recognizes and accepts course work from another institution.
- Many interested parties participate in the process.

This definition of transfer will be used as the yardstick to compare and contrast the articulation and transfer policies of Florida and Maryland.

Cohen and Brawer (Policies, 1996) claim a primary responsibility of the community college is to facilitate student transfer to a four-year institution. Based on an eight-year study, the authors provided data that the community college transfer rate was about 22 % nationally. The demand for an educated workforce places greater emphasis on increasing the transfer rate across the nation. The authors offer that improved advising and counseling, faculty support, and open transfer policies and programs at the four-year institution will support the needed increase in transfer rates.

There are many categories of transfer students that must be defined. London (1996) defines the “first generation community college student as a student who attends a community college and whose parents have not obtained a college degree” (p. 9). London argues that first generation community college transfer students are at risk of not transferring to a four-year institution due to exposure to new ideas and lifestyles and may become alienated from family support. The first generation transfer student has self-doubts about academic capabilities and motivation to strive toward a college degree. London also indicates that community colleges have a responsibility to provide enhanced counseling and advising services to assist the first generation transfer student. Faculty and administrators must be committed to assisting first generation transfer students and respond appropriately to their needs.

The native student, as defined by Carlan and Byxbe (2000), began his or her higher educational studies at a four-year institution and has not transferred to another institution of higher education. The transfer student is one who began his or her studies at a community college and has transferred academic credit to a four-year institution. The sending institution is a community college where the student earned transferable academic credit to be accepted by the four-year institution. The receiving institution in where a transfer student wants to enroll and have academic credit earned at a community college accepted at the four-year institution.

Florida Articulation and Transfer Policies

Florida's higher education governance process, as defined by Richardson et al. (1999), is a federal system. Florida has established a statewide regulatory governing board with program approval, the Florida Board of Education (FBOE) that meets the definition established by the authors. As per the Florida Senate Bill S0020E (2002), section 1001.02, the FBOE has responsibility for collecting and distributing information about all secondary and post secondary education system., advising on the budget, and management of the budget, strategic planning, approval of curriculum programs and courses, planning programs from a statewide perspective and ensure coordination of articulation and transfer. The FBOE governance powers are listed in 35 pages of statutes that clearly empowers the FBOE as a federal governance structure.

The following tables are presented to provided statistical data on Florida's institutions of higher education. The data allows the reader to understand the state profile of higher education within Florida. Table 1 is the number of Florida's institutions of higher education with student population data. Table 2 provides data on student demographics in higher education institutions and Table 3 provides information on student completion rates. Table 4 provides statistics on

affordability of higher education within Florida. All statistical data is provided by Measuring Up (2000).

The State of Florida ranks fourth in the nation for population at slightly over 15 million people (15,111,244). The total number of Florida higher education students is over 580 thousand (584,357) shown in Table 1 according to Measuring Up (2000). This indicates that 3.87 % of Florida residents are taking advantage of higher education opportunities. Table 1 reflects the State of Florida education institutions and student populations.

<i>Type of Institutions of Higher Education</i>	<i>Number of Institutions of Higher Education</i>	<i>Number of Students Enrolled by Institution</i>	<i>Percent of Students Enrolled by Institution</i>
Public 4-Year	10	169,786	29%
Public 2-Year	28	320,710	55%
Private 4-Year	61	80,239	14%
Private 2-Year	41	13,622	2%

Table 1

The State of Florida received a category grade of “D+” rating in student participation from Measuring Up (2000) for the percentage of students enrolled in higher education. The rating was based on comparing each state with the third best state of the 50 states in the survey. The data to support the “D+” rating is provided in Table 2.

<i>Category of Students</i>	<i>Florida Percent of Students Enrolled</i>	<i>Top 3 States Percentage of Students Enrolled</i>
Young Adults	60%	60%
<i>High School Freshman Enrolling in College within 4 Years in any State</i>	29%	54%
<i>18-24-Year-Olds Enrolling in College</i>	30%	42%
Working-Age Adults	40%	40%

<i>25 to 44-Year-Olds Enrolled Part-Time in Some Type of Postsecondary Education</i>	3.5%	4.7%
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Table 2

Florida’s higher education completion rates are very competitive when compared with all fifty states. The rating of “B+” was given by Measuring Up (2000) for the success the state has enjoyed in returning first year students for their second year and for students earning degree, diplomas, and certificates. Table 3 illustrates the Florida completion rates in two categories and four sub categories.

Table 3: State of Florida Higher Education Student Completion Rates “B+” Rating		
<i>Category of Students</i>	<i>Florida Percent of Students</i>	<i>Top 3 States Percent of Students</i>
Persistence	20%	20%
<i>1st Year Community College Students Returning their 2nd Year</i>	61%	64%
<i>Freshman at 4-Year Colleges/Universities Returning their Sophomore Year</i>	80%	84%
Completion	80%	80%
<i>First-time, Full-time Students Completing a Bachelor’s Degree within 5 Years</i>	52%	66%
<i>Certificates, Degrees, and Diplomas Awarded at all Colleges and Universities per 100 Undergraduate Students</i>	18%	20%

Table 3

The State of Florida has not done well in comparison with the other states in the area of affordability. The Measuring Up (2000) authors awarded a “D” rating for students and families to be able to afford higher education. The costs are almost \$800. above the national average for loans that students and or families need to borrow each year. Also financial aid provided by the state of Florida is extremely low when compared to the top three states. Table 4 provides the state’s affordability data.

Table 4: State of Florida Higher Education Student Affordability Factors “D” Rating		
<i>Category of Students</i>	<i>Florida Percent of Students / Cost Per Year</i>	<i>Top 3 States Percent of Students / Cost Per Year</i>
Family Ability to Pay	50%	50%
<i>Percent of Income needed to pay for college expenses minus financial aid:</i>		
<i>At Community College</i>	24%	17%
<i>At Public 4-Year College/University</i>	26%	19%
<i>At Private 4-Year College/University</i>	66%	30%
Strategies for Affordability	40%	40%
<i>State Grant Aid targeted to Low Income Families as a Percent of Federal Pell Grant Aid to Low- Income Families</i>	10%	106%
<i>Share of Income that Poorest Families Need to Pay for Tuition at Lowest Priced Colleges</i>	14%	9%
Reliance on Loans	10%	10%
<i>Average Loan Amount That Students Borrow Each Year</i>	\$3,841.	\$3,094.

Table 4

Florida’s Articulation and Transfer Policies and Programs

The Florida Board of Education has direct responsibility for transfer and articulation policies and programs as specified in Florida Senate Bill S0020E (2002), section 1001.02, Para c.

The FBOE will:

Execute general supervision over the divisions of the Department of Education as necessary to ensure coordination of educational plans and programs and resolve controversies and to minimize problems of articulation and student transfers, to ensure that students moving from one level of education to the next have acquired competencies necessary for satisfactory performance at that level. (pp. 44-45)

This new Florida statute is very explicit in providing direct responsibilities to the FBOE for sorting through and correcting articulation and transfer issues.

In the early 1970's, a group of educators formed a committee called the Articulation Coordinating Committee whose task was to organize and define a set of rules and guidelines to help students transfer from one institution to another. As a result, the State of Florida has a well-defined articulation process outlined in the Florida Senate Bill S0020E (2002) located in sections 1007.22-25 called the Articulation agreement; acceleration mechanisms. This agreement and mechanisms coordinates the articulation process between accredited public and private two-year and four-year institutions.

The agreement, Florida Senate Bill S0020E (2002), sections 1007.22-25 states that every graduate who hold an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree from an accredited Florida community college has met all curriculum requirements and must be admitted to a State University at the upper division level. The curriculum requirements are successful completion of 60 hours of coursework of which 36 hours must be in general education. The only exception is for programs that have limited access or require an audition. In this case, students transferring with an A.A. have the same opportunity to be accepted as those students already enrolled in the University. The agreement also states that Florida residents who are transferring with an A.A. will have preference with respect to admittance over an out-of-state student.

The articulation agreement, Florida Senate Bill S0020E (2002), sections 1007.22-25, also guarantees admission to those graduates who hold an Associate in Science (A.S.) degree whose program is listed in the Statewide Articulation manual as well as those with an A.S. from the interdisciplinary capstone degree program. The general curriculum needed for transfer varies from program to program, and students should check for specifics either in the Statewide

Articulation Manual or at their community college or University. Again, the only exception is for programs that have limited access or other requirements such as a higher grade point average or higher test scores. In addition, Florida residents who are transferring with an A.S. will have preference with respect to admittance over an out-of-state student. The articulation agreement also has provisions for the Applied Technology Diploma with regard to the transfer to an Associate in Applied Science or Associate in Science Program within the Community College.

According to Pathways (2001), the Division of Community Colleges has signed an articulation agreement with the State University System and with the 26 Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida. This agreement provides rules and guidelines for the transfer of students from institution to institution. Florida has what is known as the 2 + 2 system with respect to transfer programs. Students who complete the two-year Associate in Arts degree at a community college must be accepted into the State University System or into one of the 26 Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida with no less than 60 credit hours. To facilitate the transfer process, Florida has adopted a Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) that classifies courses by subject. In order to smooth the transfer process, all public universities, community colleges, and vocational-technical schools as well as a few private institutions have adopted the use of this numbering system.

According to the Florida Student Transfer Brochure, Pathways (2001), 70% of community college associate in arts degree graduates in Florida now transfer to four-year institutions and pursue bachelor degrees. The latest data available on the number of transfer students to a state four-year institution is from 1997. The data reflects that 50,793 students transferred to a university. This was 23.3 % of the total students (218,058) in the states' public universities.

According to Ignash (2002, February) the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) report in 2002 stated that while Florida's degree-linked, "2+2" system of articulation between community colleges and universities seems to work well for most students, one in five students who complete the A.A. degree still end up taking a semester or more of lower division courses once they transfer to a university (OPPAGA, 2002, p. 3). Is this level unacceptably high? Or, considering how often some students change their majors, is this to be expected? Further analysis by OPPAGA revealed that, of the lower division courses that A.A. degree transfer students take, a little over half were courses that were required for a student's major or to meet foreign language requirements (51%). Another 21% of these courses were general education courses. This latter finding is of special concern, since A.A. degree completers who transfer should not have to take additional lower division general education courses (OPPAGA, 2002, pp. 6-7). Although some students may have taken additional general education credits as electives, it is unlikely that the majority did so. (pp. 1-2)

Maryland Articulation and Transfer Policies

Maryland's higher education governance process, as defined by Richardson et al. (1999) is a segmented system. Maryland has created this segmented system by establishing multiple regulatory governance and coordination boards with program coordination for six segments of the states' higher education governance structure. There is no one effective state agency with overall responsibility for higher education. The State Board of Regents for the University System of Maryland has its own independent governance structure separate from the other five segments of higher education. The institutional interests of the separate segments all compete at

the executive and legislative level for resources. There are voluntary coordination in deals with each of the six segments of higher education.

According to the Maryland State Profile (2002), the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) was created in 1988 to serve as the coordinating body for Maryland's postsecondary education system consisting of six segments. The six of the governance structures are: University System of Maryland, Morgan State University, St. Mary's College of Maryland, Community Colleges, Independent Colleges and Universities, and Private Career Schools. Effective July 1999, legislation was enacted that changed the coordination, governance and funding responsibilities of MHEC. The major thrust of the 1999 legislation was to charge the MHEC to review, administer, and coordinate higher educational activities within the state. The review functions of the MHEC are: campus mission statements, campus performance accountability, biennial review of the statewide plan for postsecondary education, review operating and capital budgets and capital projects of public institutions and make budget recommendations to the governor and legislature consistent with the statewide plan, review and approve new and existing academic programs. The administrative functions are: administer statewide programs of student financial assistance, and to establish minimum degree requirements for public and private institutions. The coordination activities consist of: coordinating education policies with the Maryland State Department of Education and the University System of Maryland through the K-16 Partnership, and serving as the coordinating agency for the 16 locally governed and one state-operated community colleges.

The following tables are presented to provide the State of Maryland statistical data on institutions of higher education. The data allows the reader to understand the state profile of higher education within Maryland. Table 5 is the number of Maryland's institutions of higher

education with student population figures. Table 6 provides data on student demographics in higher education institutions and Table 7 provides information on student completion rates. Table 8 provides statistics on affordability of higher education within Maryland. All statistical data is provided by Measuring Up (2000).

The State of Maryland ranks nineteenth in the nation for population at slightly over 5 million people (5,171,643). The total number of Maryland higher education students is over 580 thousand (584,357) shown in Table 5 according to Measuring Up (2000). This indicates that 4.13 % of Maryland residents are taking advantage of higher education opportunities. Table 5 reflects the State of Maryland education institutions and student populations. There is a significant difference between Florida with its 38 public two and four-year institutions and 490,496 students enrolled and Maryland with 33 public two and four-year institutions and only 189,373 students enrolled.

<i>Type of Institutions of Higher Education</i>	<i>Number of Institutions of Higher Education</i>	<i>Number of Students Enrolled by Institution</i>	<i>Percent of Students Enrolled by Institution</i>
Public 4-Year	13	85,319	40%
Public 2-Year	20	104,054	49%
Private 4-Year	22	23,456	11%
Private 2-Year	3	1,138	1%

Table 5

The State of Maryland received a category grade of “A” rating in student participation from Measuring Up (2000) for the percentage of students enrolled in higher education. The rating was based on comparing each state with the third best state of the 50 states in the survey. The data to support the “A” rating is provided in Table 6.

Table 6: State of Maryland Higher Education Student Participation “A” Rating		
<i>Category of Students</i>	<i>Maryland Percent of Students Enrolled</i>	<i>Top 3 States Percent of Students Enrolled</i>
Young Adults	60%	60%
<i>High School Freshman Enrolling in College within 4 Years in any State</i>	43%	54%
<i>18-24-Year-Olds Enrolling in College</i>	42%	42%
Working-Age Adults	40%	40%
<i>25 to 44-Year-Olds Enrolled Part-Time in Some Type of Postsecondary Education</i>	4.6%	4.7%

Table 6

Maryland’s higher education completion rates are competitive when compared with all fifty states. The rating of “B-” was given by Measuring Up (2000) for the success the state has enjoyed in returning first year students for their second year and for students earning degrees, diplomas, and certificates. Table 7 illustrates the Maryland completion rates for two-year and four-year institutions.

Table 7: State of Maryland Higher Education Student Completion Rates “B-“ Rating		
<i>Category of Students</i>	<i>Maryland Percent of Students</i>	<i>Top 3 States Percent of Students</i>
Persistence	20%	20%
<i>1st Year Community College Students Returning their 2nd Year</i>	55%	64%
<i>Freshman at 4-Year Colleges/Universities Returning their Sophomore Year</i>	83%	84%
Completion	80%	80%
<i>First-time, Full-time Students Completing a Bachelor’s Degree within 5 Years</i>	58%	66%
<i>Certificates, Degrees, and Diplomas Awarded at all Colleges and Universities per 100 Undergraduate Students</i>	14%	20%

Table 7

The State of Maryland has not done well in comparison with the other states in the area of affordability. The Measuring Up (2000) authors awarded a “D” rating for students and families to be able to afford higher education. The costs are almost \$1,100. above the national average for loans that students and or families need to borrow each year. Table 8 provides the state’s affordability data.

Table 8: State of Maryland Higher Education Student Affordability Factors “D” Rating		
<i>Category of Students</i>	<i>Maryland Percent of Students / Cost Per Year</i>	<i>Top 3 States Percent of Students / Cost Per Year</i>
Family Ability to Pay	50%	50%
<i>Percent of Income needed to pay for college expenses minus financial aid:</i>		
<i>At Community College</i>	26%	17%
<i>At Public 4-Year College/University</i>	28%	19%
<i>At Private 4-Year College/University</i>	60%	30%
Strategies for Affordability	40%	40%
<i>State Grant Aid targeted to Low Income Families as a Percent of Federal Pell Grant Aid to Low- Income Families</i>	40%	106%
<i>Share of Income that Poorest Families Need to Pay for Tuition at Lowest Priced Colleges</i>	17%	9%
Reliance on Loans	10%	10%
<i>Average Loan Amount That Students Borrow Each Year</i>	\$4,121.	\$3,094.

Table 8

Maryland’s Articulation and Transfer Policies and Programs

The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) has direct coordinating responsibility for transfer and articulation policies and programs. The *2000 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education* (2001) outlines eight statewide postsecondary education goals of “quality, access, economic development, research, teacher education, diversity, information

technology, and accountability” (p. 4). Each of the eight state goals has many related objectives with corresponding strategies to obtain the objective. This process allows for all stakeholders of Maryland’s higher education to understand the direction, responsibilities, and tasks they are directed to meet.

Several of the state goals have specifically identified objectives and strategies aimed at meeting articulation and transfer needs. The 2000 Maryland State Plan (2001) lists the following objectives and strategies that affect articulation and transfer:

2.34 Strategy – Develop “two plus two” curricula collaboratively, particularly in underserved areas.

6.11 Strategy – Improve the retention, graduation and transfer rate of African American and other minority students whose achievement trails the state average.

8.2 Objective – Reaffirm and strengthen articulation and transfer agreements among all postsecondary institutions.

8.12 Strategy – Remove institutional barriers that unnecessarily delay the degree progress of students.

8.4 Objective – Facilitate collaboration between and among states, institutions, colleges, schools, business, industries, and governments to improve efficiencies and expanded opportunities. (pp. 23, 27-29)

The MHEC does allow each higher education institution to determine how to incorporate the goals, objectives and strategies into their mission and planning process. The objectives and strategies provides guidance to community colleges and universities to provide real opportunities for transfer and articulation within Maryland.

In Maryland, a student may transfer from the community college to the four-year university without loss of time or duplication of courses. Maryland has established a set of five principles to ensure transferability. The principles are (Student, 2001):

- Maryland community college students who have completed the associate degree or students who have completed 56 semester hours of credit with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher on a scale of 4.0 shall not be denied direct transfer to a Maryland public four-year institution .
- Courses taken at a Maryland community college as part of a recommended transfer program will ordinarily be applicable to related programs at a Maryland public institution granting the baccalaureate degree.
- The General Education Program a student takes at one public college or university will transfer without further review to another public institution without the need for a course-to-course match. That is, courses that are designated as general education by a sending institution will transfer as general education, even if the receiving institution does not offer that specific course or has not designated that course as general education.
- Courses designated as meeting the general education requirements at any Maryland public college shall be applicable to the general education requirements at any other Maryland public college or university.
- Credit earned in or transferred from an associate degree-granting institution shall be limited to approximately one-half the baccalaureate degree program requirement, not to exceed 70 credits, and to the first two years of the undergraduate educational experience. (pp. 1-2)

The 1996 community college transfer data as provided by the *Retention, Graduation and Transfer Rates at Maryland Community Colleges* (Filipp, 2001) indicates that “10,905 new full-time freshman matriculating in fall 1998, 12.2 % transferred to a Maryland public four-year college” (p. 1). This amounts to 1,435 students that transferred to a public university.

The MHEC revised the statewide transfer and articulation policy in 1995 in order to reduce growing dissatisfaction. The potential transfer student has a state directed policy to ensure sending and receiving institutions provided realistic transfer and articulation for the student. According to Tschechtelin (1997), the MHEC made four major changes to the articulation and transfer policy to facilitate the ease of transfer for Maryland’s students. The changes were:

- (1) the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees would require a minimum of 30 credits and a maximum of 36 credits of general education,
- (2) a student transferring to a public four-year institution who has completed the 30 to 36 lower-division credits would be required to take a maximum of 46 general education for the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees,
- (3) a student who has taken any part of the 30 to 36 lower-division general education credits at a public college or university would receive lower-division general education credit for those courses successfully completed at any public institution to which that student transfers, and
- (4) All institutions would use common definitions and guidelines in determining which course could be offered for general education credits. (¶ 27)

The changes made by the MHEC were to ensure a more cohesive transfer process without loss of credits for students who transfer before completing the Associate’s degree. The policy

changes created a common articulation and transfer guidelines for 16 community colleges, 13 public four-year universities, and 21 private four-year universities.

The *Student Guide to Transfer among Maryland Colleges and Universities* (2001) stipulates that higher educational institutions have individual transfer and articulation agreements with each other, that incorporate the four state mandated policy directives. The individual articulation agreements can be accessed on the Internet through Maryland's Articulation System (ARTSYS) system. The transfer student can review the agreements and conduct an analysis of what courses will transfer to the receiving institution. The student can use the ARTSYS to review the transferability of courses and identify the equivalent course at the receiving institution for courses completed at the sending institution. ARTSYS is designed for the transfer student to enter his or her courses taken at the sending institution to determine the transferability of courses to the receiving institution. ARTSYS also lists transfer recommendations at individual colleges and universities in the majors. The student is also strongly encouraged to discuss transfer concerns and issues with a Transfer Coordinator at the sending institution. The Transfer Coordinator is the expert on how to transfer and what will articulate.

Ignash (2002, April) reports that Maryland has developed two distinct articulation agreements: an agreement for a common set of general education requirements for all public two- and four-year institutions, implemented in 1996, and an agreement to articulate the Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree with a Bachelor of Technology in 1998. Maryland has not developed other statewide articulation agreements for specific majors. As of this date, Maryland is unique among states in fully articulating the A.A.S. degree with a baccalaureate degree in technology. The impetus for this articulation arose as institutions sought to prepare more graduates for technical occupations, in response to recommendations by the Governor's

Workforce Investment Board. Maryland has developed articulation agreements for students who have completed the A.A. degree or 56 semester hours (without the A.A.). The fact that general education credits will transfer without the need for course-to-course match is a strong feature of this state's articulation agreement. (p.7)

According to Ignash (2002, April), students can articulate between 30 and 36 total credits for the general education program for the A.A. or A.S. degrees. For the A.A.S. degree, students can articulate between 20 and 36 credits in general education in English composition, math, arts and humanities, social and behavioral sciences, biological and physical sciences, and interdisciplinary and emerging issues. The official policy is for one half of the Associate degree, not to exceed 70 semester hours, as the maximum transferable credits allowed. An interesting feature of Maryland's general education articulation policies is that universities can require additional general education after the student transfers. Students in Maryland may be required to take between 10 and 16 additional semester credit hours of general education after transfer as part of the B.A. or B.S. degree. Additional credits may be assigned by each institution from English, mathematics, arts & humanities, social & behavioral sciences and biological & physical sciences to complete the number of credits required for the General Education Program. There are pro's and con's in this approach. A positive point is that Maryland's agreement guarantees that a substantial portion of general education credits will be accepted in transfer. A negative point is that it also allows receiving institutions to impose their own additional general education requirements upon students after transfer. If students delay in choosing a transfer institution, they may lengthen time-to-degree by having to take additional general education coursework after transfer. This problem, however, is mitigated in that there is a cap on how many additional

hours of general education can be required for the B.A. or B.S. degree (e.g. no more than 10 to 16 semester hours). (p.9)

Performance

Using Richardson et al. (2000) descriptions, Florida has a federal system of governance structure. Maryland has a segmented system. The difference in these governance structures can be seen in how each state manages articulation and transfer. Florida with its federal structure has a more directed articulation and transfer policies. Florida has established specific transfer directives with compliance required for up to 60 credit hours of an Associate of Arts degree. Maryland, with its segmented system, has articulation and transfer guidelines for 30-36 general education credit hour transfer with the remaining credit hours based on individual articulation agreements between higher education institutions. The federal system in Florida's case, has a more positive effect on student transfer success. Florida reports in Pathways (2001) that in 1997 only 50,793 students or 23.3% transferred to four-year institutions. Maryland reports (Filipp, 2001) that only 1,435 students or 12.2% of its students transfer to a four-year higher education institution.

Measuring Up (2000) has provided excellent data on Florida and Maryland to compare success in several categories. Tables 9 and 10 below, compares Florida and Maryland in many important areas. In the categories shown, Maryland was better than Florida in eight of the 14 categories. Maryland was more costly in getting an education and the student debt incurred per year. Florida did considerably better in the all degree completion category, however, Maryland graduates received higher increased income from education. The Maryland lower index score in all degree completion may be attributed to the state's articulation and transfer policies.

Florida & Maryland State Comparisons Index Scores – Black Indicates Higher & Better Index Score							
<i>States</i>	<i>High School to College Rate</i>	<i>Young Adult Enrollment</i>	<i>Working Age Adult Enrollment</i>	<i>Family Ability to Pay at CC</i>	<i>Family Ability to Pay at Public 4-Year</i>	<i>Family Ability to Pay at Private 4-Year</i>	<i>Need Based Financial Aid</i>
Florida	54	71	73	72	73	46	9
Maryland	79	100	97	65	69	50	37

Table 9

Florida & Maryland State Comparisons Index Scores – Black Indicates Higher & Better Index Score							
<i>States</i>	<i>Low Priced Colleges</i>	<i>Low Student Debt</i>	<i>Students returning at 2-Year College</i>	<i>Students returning at 4-Year College</i>	<i>Bachelor's Degree Completion</i>	<i>All Degree Completion</i>	<i>Increase Income from Education</i>
Florida	63	81	95	96	79	91	56
Maryland	50	75	86	99	88	71	87

Table 10

Comparing the data in Tables 9 and 10 may lead one to believe that the Florida federal governance structure, in comparison to Maryland’s segmented system, is not as effective in obtaining more positive results in the 14 different categories provided by Measuring Up (2000). The poor Florida results in this national study may be a good argument to pursue a change from a federal to a unified or segmented system. Maryland can argue that their segmented system better meets students, business, state, and higher education needs.

Maryland does not have a statewide articulation and transfer agreement or common course numbering system. Both states rely on providing guidance through a set of principles and guidance for the development of series of individual articulation and transfer agreements between higher educational institutions. The effectiveness of the articulation and transfer policies of Maryland and Florida can be measured by the yardsticks provided by Eaton (1996), Florida Department of Education (Pathways, 2001) and Ignash and Townsend (2000).

Using Eaton (1996) and the Florida Department of Education (Pathways, 2001) definitions of transfer, both Florida and Maryland have met all elements of the combined definition. Both states, through the MHEC and FBOE, use their transfer principles and published policies to ensure the joining of the many sectors of the educational structure. I have focused only on the linkage of community college to university, however, both states also link K-16 (Maryland) and K-20 (Florida) as a feature of their transfer policy. The movement of students from one institution to another does occur in both states. Florida has a more effective transfer policy based on sheer numbers and percentage of 50,793 students or 23.3% transferring to public colleges or universities. As presented by Petrimoulx (2001), one of Florida's schools, the University of South Florida (USF) is proud of its transfer program. USF boasts that more than 50 percent of their entering class are transfer students. More students transfer to USF than any other school in the nation. Maryland had 1,435 students or 12.2% transfer to public institutions. The difference in the transfer numbers may be slightly influenced by the reporting years, but the greater number of students in Florida indicates that the transfer process is more viable than Maryland's process.

Maryland did establish a statewide policy of articulation. However, as a coordination board, the MHEC has less power to enforce articulation within Maryland. Florida does have a well-defined statewide policy on articulation as indicated by a common course numbering system. Maryland provided guidance on the articulation process, but left the acceptance of course work to the receiving institution. The effectiveness of the articulation guidance can be judged by the numbers of transferring students. Maryland literature highlighted an extensive student appeal process for the articulation of courses or programs. Maryland also strongly encourages students to interact with a Transfer Coordinator and use the ARTSYS software to

ease transfer to the receiving institution. The Florida's transfer policy is certainly more student friendly and less complicated than Maryland's. Both states required direct involvement of the faculty in reviewing the curricula, courses, and programs for articulation and transfer. Florida and Maryland did include all interested parties in the articulation and transfer process.

The seven guiding principles provided by Ignash and Townsend (2000) can be used as the evaluation yardstick for the Florida and Maryland articulation agreements. "Parity among institutions - community colleges and four-year institutions are equal partners" (§ 6). The articulation and transfer principles presented by each state does support parity between community colleges and universities. The stated policies did not favor one type of institution over another. "Parity of students - native and transfer students are treated equally by receiving institutions" (§ 7). Florida clearly stated that native and transfer students would be treated equitably. Maryland did not specify parity of students, however, there was no mention that they should not be treated the same. In Maryland, the student transfer numbers were considerably less than Florida. This would indicate that transfer students were not readily accepted at the receiving institution, and therefore not treated equitably.

Ignash and Townsend (2000) also stated "faculty have primary responsibility for developing actual statewide articulation agreements" (§ 6). There was not a statewide articulation agreement for all courses in either state. Florida, according to the Florida Senate Bill S0020E (2002), does have a common agreement for 60 credit hour Associate in Arts Degree with 36 credit hours of general education courses. Maryland (Students, 2001) directed 30-36 general education credit hours would be transferred. Both states required sending individual institutions to develop articulation agreements with receiving institutions. In Maryland, the faculty was charged with developing individual articulation agreements. In Florida, program and

course curriculum frameworks are developed by the faculty and approved by the Florida's Articulation Coordinating Committee and are covered under the statewide articulation agreement.

One of Ignash and Townsend's (2000) guiding principles required articulation to "accommodate students who transfer without an associate degree" (§ 7). Both states required students with associate degrees would be allowed to transfer. Florida and Maryland articulation and transfer principles indicated that students without an associate degree could also transfer to a receiving institution. Maryland (Students, 2001) allowed up to 70 credit hours to transfer, but had a review process to decide what courses would transfer beyond the initial 30-36 general education courses.

Ignash and Townsend (2000) provides additional principles for comparison. "Develop agreements to transfer program majors and program major courses" (§ 8). The Maryland transfer guide did allow for courses and program majors to transfer. The individual transfer agreements would specify what programs and courses would transfer in both states. Maryland posted on the ARTSYS information system the programs and courses that would transfer. "Private colleges and universities participate in statewide agreement" (§ 8). Florida and Maryland incorporated the private institutions into the state articulation and transfer principles. "Data driven evaluation on statewide articulation agreement" (§ 8). Statistical data was available on transfer rates in numerous categories from both states. However, evaluation of the data was not available on the effectiveness of the articulation agreements.

The Eaton (1996) and Florida Department of Education (Pathways, 2001) combined definition of transfer indicated that there were no major differences in either state affecting student transfer to receiving institutions. Using Ignash and Townsend's (2000) seven guiding

principles provided an excellent assessment tool to measure the articulation policies of Florida and Maryland. The assessment of both states indicates that Florida has a better-defined set of articulation and transfer principles and agreements. Florida does have a statewide articulation and transfer policy. Maryland did not have a statewide articulation agreement and relied on individual articulation agreements between institutions. However, Florida does have an advantage over Maryland on articulation and transfer based on the greater number of student transfers. Florida does a better job of ensuring that more of the “components” transfer. Maryland is considerably more flexible in what it allows the receiving institution to be able to require after transfer. This flexibility can result in the loss of credits when Maryland students transfer.

Are the articulation and transfer policies of Maryland and Florida designed to provide a seamless transition between community colleges and state universities? In the case of Florida, the answer is yes, in that 60 credit hours in the Associate of Arts degree will transfer to any state university. Maryland does not have a seamless transition between community colleges and state universities. Without a statewide mandated articulation and transfer policy, transfer and articulation will be debatable. Maryland only allows 30-36 credit hours of general education to seamlessly transfer. All other courses or programs are reviewed by the faculty to determine what will transfer and what will not. This does not allow for a seamless transfer and articulation between community colleges and state universities.

Transfer and articulation are issues that affect any student moving from one institution to another. The transition may be a seamless process or may be problematic depending on the transfer and articulation policies of a particular state. The Florida Department of Education (2001) defines

articulation in the context of education refers to the joining of two or more segments or sectors of education. It may also refer to the process of making a transition or transfer from one sector of education to another. Examples are the process of earning college credit while still in high school, the process of admission of high school graduates to a college or university, the process of transferring credits earned at one college or university to another, and the process of admission to a graduate program following completion of a baccalaureate degree program. (p. 1)

Conclusion.

My analysis indicates Florida has achieved a greater partnership between the community colleges and the state universities for articulation and transfer. This partnership has been aided by the federal governance structure and system executed through the Florida Board of Education and mandated by Florida statutes. This governance structure allows for the continued development of a seamless K-20 education system in Florida. The beneficiaries of the K-20 seamless partnership are the secondary and postsecondary students, the for profit and not for profit businesses, and the citizens and employees of Florida.

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