



South Carolina Course Alignment Project

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South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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First Steering Committee Meeting Held

The first meeting of the South Carolina Course Alignment Project (SC CAP) Steering Committee was held on May 16, 2006. Dr. David Conley and colleagues from the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) provided information to the group about the project and addressed its next steps which will be guided by the committee.

The SC CAP Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from four-year institutions; two-year institutions; secondary institutions; the South Carolina Department of Education; the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education; business and industry leaders; and others. The committee will identify faculty members who will serve as curriculum experts and specific courses to be included in the study. The objective of the study is to review the degree of alignment which exists between exit-level high school courses and entry-level college courses in the curricular areas of English, mathematics, and science. The alignment review will be conducted using course documents and information submitted by secondary and postsecondary faculty through an online syllabus tool. This review is important to determine if there are gaps or repetition in the material being taught in exit-level high school courses and entry-level college courses in the same curricular area.

The results of the alignment review will help in the development of the course pairs. Members of the SC CAP Steering Committee will identify individuals who will serve on course pair design teams in each of curricular areas (English, mathematics, and science). The design teams will be responsible for designing the paired courses, which consist of a secondary course which is matched or "paired" with a postsecondary one. Paired courses will be designed so that students can seamlessly transition from an exit-level high school course to an entry-level college course in the same curricular area. For example, an English course pair will allow students to seamless progress from English IV in high school to Composition I in college.

The design teams will be composed of leading faculty statewide who teach students in exit-level and entry-level courses. These teams of educators will draft performance standards, model syllabi, and sample common performance tasks for course pairs. Subsequently, the SC CAP Steering Committee will identify high school and postsecondary institutions which will teach these course pairs in an pilot implementation process. Pilot institutions will identify course instructors to review and critique course design, provide feedback, and prepare courses for pilot implementation. The goals of these course pairs and of the project overall are to:

- construct explicit connections between high school and college coursework in order to help reduce curriculum redundancy and to improve alignment of expectations;
- provide explicit information regarding the content and skills necessary for postsecondary success in order to improve high school student preparation for college coursework; and



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“An aligned K-16 system is one with clear, sequential expectations for students at each level. These expectations are designed to prepare students for success in postsecondary education, the workplace and society...”

-- Dr. David Conley
CEO and founder,
Educational Policy
Improvement Center

- increase the proportion of South Carolina high school graduates who go on immediately to some form of postsecondary education without the need for remediation.

Overall, these course pairs are expected to create a seamless transition from high school to college since students who successfully complete the exit-level high school course will be prepared to succeed in the entry-level college course.

Video Presentation Now Posted Online

An informative and useful video presentation which provides an overview of the Course Alignment Project is now available online. This presentation by Dr. David Conley is intended to be used by faculty and others who have an interest in understanding the project and can be accessed at

https://www.epiconline.org/south_carolina/presentation

Current Project Activities

The South Carolina Course Alignment Project is divided into three phases which span from July 2007 through August 2010:

- **Phase I** – Analyze Alignment Issues
- **Phase II** – Create Materials
- **Phase III** – Disseminate Materials and Explore Applications

Phase I Activities

Completed **Phase I** activities include:

- an environmental scan (discrepancy analysis) which examines K-16 alignment issues in South Carolina;
- a video presentation by Dr. David Conley which provides a project overview;
- the creation of the Steering Committee charged with oversight and strategic direction for the project; and
- an examination of college readiness standards for use in the syllabus review. The syllabus review will reveal if there are gaps or repetition in terms of what is taught and expected in exit-level high school courses and in entry-level college courses.

Current **Phase I** activities include:

- submission of course nominations for participation in the alignment study. This study will determine the degree of alignment between exit-level high school courses and entry-level college courses.

Current **Phase II** activities include:

- design team nominations



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For more information about the South Carolina Course Alignment Project or to find out how you can get involved, please visit

https://www.epiconline.org/south_carolina

- review of college readiness standards for use in paired courses;
- paired course development

Course Nominations for Alignment Study

Secondary and postsecondary liaisons will submit course nominations for syllabus review. Nominated high school courses should be exit-level courses that meet general education requirements and serve as a preparation for college-level courses in the subject areas of English, mathematics, and science. These exit-level high school courses are usually taken by high school seniors.

The list of exit-level high school courses appropriate for use in this project includes, but is not limited to: English IV, English Literature, American Literature, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Algebra III/Trigonometry, Pre-calculus, Calculus, Statistics, Anatomy and Physiology, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Similarly, nominated postsecondary courses should be entry-level courses that meet general education requirements and serve as prerequisites for other courses in the subject area. These entry-level courses are usually taken by college freshmen. The list of entry-level college courses appropriate for use in this project includes, but is not limited to:

English

Composition I
 Composition II
 American Literature I
 American Literature II
 English Literature I
 English Literature II

Mathematics

College Algebra
 Probability and Statistics
 Elementary Calculus
 Analytical Geometry and Calculus I
 Analytical Geometry and Calculus II

Science

Biological Science I
 Biological Science II
 Anatomy and Physiology I
 Anatomy and Physiology II
 College Chemistry I
 College Chemistry II
 Physics I (non-calculus-based)
 Physics II (non-calculus-based)
 University Physics I (calculus-based)
 University Physics II (calculus-based)

To submit a course nomination, confirmed liaisons should log on to this site using the username and password provided by EPIC: <https://www.epiconline.org/sc/cn/>

Course nominations must be submitted by September 30, 2008!

After the nominated course information is received, EPIC will contact instructors to explain the syllabus and course document submission processes. Instructors will be able to upload syllabi and course documents easily online. As an added benefit for those instructors who want to use it, a syllabus creation tool, SyllabusMaker, can be used during the submission process. In addition to submitting syllabi, secondary instructors will identify the reference standards that students will meet after successfully completing their course and postsecondary instructors will identify the reference standards that must be met for entry into their particular college course.



South Carolina Course Alignment Project

We welcome your suggestions to improve this newsletter. Continuously, we seek to engage in meaningful communication about the project and would appreciate suggestions for future articles or content.

Please contact Ms. Trena Houp at thoup@che.sc.gov or 803.737.4853 with your suggestions.

EPIC will use the materials submitted in the alignment review to determine how well entry-level college courses are aligned with exit-level high school courses and with the standards identified during the standards review. During the syllabus review, content experts will review all submitted syllabi for evidence of reference standards. Reference standards are those identified during the comparison of the South Carolina Academic Standards (2007) to the *Knowledge and Skills for University Success* (KSUS) standards. These reference standards are available under "Publications" at https://www.epiconline.org/south_carolina

Using the syllabi submitted, EPIC will complete a discrepancy analysis to determine the degree of alignment between high school and postsecondary courses. This process will allow EPIC to identify a potential list of paired courses by region to submit to the SC CAP Steering Committee for review.

Design Team Nominations and Paired Course Development

The Steering Committee will nominate leading faculty statewide to participate in the design of paired courses. **These nominations should be submitted by August 30, 2008.**

Participating faculty members will form the design teams that will draft performance standards, create model syllabi, and develop sample common performance tasks for each course pair. Three design teams will be formed (one each for English/Language Arts, mathematics and science) and will be comprised of experienced secondary and postsecondary faculty.

EPIC will work with the design teams to develop paired courses. These courses are designed in tandem to sequence curriculum and performance expectations. Paired courses can be two newly created courses developed concurrently, but in all likelihood will be two existing courses that have been modified to align with each other. These paired, aligned courses will promote academic success as students leave high school and enroll in colleges and universities. As stated earlier, we expect these paired courses will help to promote a more seamless transition from high school to college.

Did You Know?

The South Carolina Academic Standards 2007 received very positive reviews during the standards review process. Standards in mathematics, English/Language Art, and science were compared to the *Knowledge and Skills for University Success* (KSUS) standards to determine those to be used in the alignment study. Content experts from across the nation who reviewed the standards were especially impressed by South Carolina's science standards, which they found to be well-aligned with the KSUS standards.