

September 1, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Gregory Fitch, Executive Director
Alabama Commission on Higher Education

FROM: AGSC Research Sub-Committee
Dr. Charles Nash
Dr. Joe Morris
Dr. Ed Roach (Chair) *EAR*
Dr. Kandis Steele

RE: Request to continue the AGSC Research Project Conducted by ACHE

We are writing to you on behalf of the AGSC and the AGSC Research Sub-Committee. Over the last few years, ACHE has provided our committee with research support led by Ms. Diane Sherman and her staff. We appreciate the fine work she and her staff have done to assist us in our research efforts.

Recently, Ms. Sherman, along with our AGSC sub-committee reported their initial findings (referred to as Stage I) to the AGSC at its summer meeting. I am attaching a copy of the AGSC Project Overview. The primary focus of this research was to determine the following:

- Baccalaureate completions (graduation rates) for native and transfer students who began their college work in Summer 1999 through Spring of 2001
- Time-to-degree (total terms enrolled from start to finish) for native and transfer students who began their college work in Summer 1999 through Spring of 2001
- Grade point averages for native and transfer students who began their college work in Summer 1999 through Spring of 2001

As of today, only one cohort student group has been researched. The AGSC would like to extend this research over (at least) two more cohort groups (those starting college in 2001-2002 and those starting in 2002-2003).

The AGSC believes that:

- it would be beneficial to continue to run similar reports for these student cohort groups in order to look for trends, issues, or problems relating to transfer student success in our state.
- this type of on-going research would ultimately lead to further and more in-depth statistical analysis (tests of significance, variable analysis, etc.).
- this type research will eventually impact policy decision making at both the two-year and four-year institutions in our state.
- this research project makes the decade of collecting data for the statewide student database viable and useful.



Over the last fifteen years, the AGSC, ACHE, and the leaders at our public institutions of higher education have worked diligently to improve the transfer of coursework from institution to institution. The AGSC and STARS Program has drastically reduced student/parent complaints regarding articulation in our state. Students and their parents have been spared the extra cost of retaking coursework and delays in graduation caused by articulation hurdles that were present two decades ago. Today, we want to make sure that students not only transfer without problems, but that they ultimately graduate and become productive members of society.

Thus, we request your permission to permit Ms. Sherman and her staff to continue this very important research. We realize that you have to prioritize staff workloads and research dollars within the ACHE budget in a context of difficult financial times. We hope that you see the value of continuing this research over the next few years and will grant Ms. Sherman permission to continue this research on behalf of the AGSC.

Should you desire, we would be very happy to set up an appointment at your convenience to meet with you to discuss this research further.

Again, thank you and your staff for your continued support of the AGSC and STARS Program. We hope to hear from you soon.

Attachment

cc: Dr. Dan Osborn, Chair, AGSC
Dr. Elizabeth French
Ms. Diane Sherman