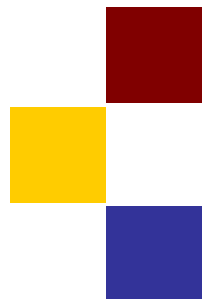


2006-2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by
Keith Sessions
Executive Director of AGSC/STARS



2006-2007 ANNUAL REPORT

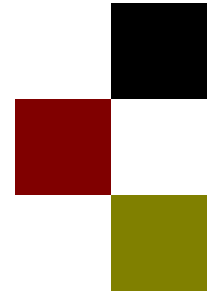


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AGSC MEMBERS & ALTERNATES

APPOINTING AUTHORITY

Alabama A&M University

Alabama State University

Auburn University

University of Alabama System

University of South Alabama

Regional Universities

Regional Universities

State Board of Education (2-Year)

State Board of Education (2-Year)

State Board of Education (2-Year)

VOTING MEMBER

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Professor, School of Business

Dr. Alfred Smith
Assistant VP for Academic Affairs

Dr. Linda Glaze
Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies

Dr. Sue Kirkpatrick
Dean of Liberal Arts
University of Alabama at Huntsville

Dr. Keith Harrison
Associate VP for Academic Affairs

Dr. William Meehan
President
Jacksonville State University

Dr. Ed Roach
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost
Troy University

Mrs. Susan Salatto
President
Southern Union State Community College

Dr. Susan Price*
Vice Chancellor for Instructional and
Student Services
Alabama Department of Postsecondary
Education

Dr. Rod Britt
Dean of Academic Division
Southern Union State Community College

ALTERNATE MEMBER

Dr. Juarine Stewart
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs
& Undergraduate Studies

Dr. Evelyn White
VP for Academic Affairs

Dr. Janet Warren
VP for Academic Affairs
Auburn University Montgomery

Dr. Charles Nash***
Vice Chancellor
The University of Alabama System

Dr. Victoria Rivizzigno
College of Arts and Sciences
Dept. of Earth Sciences

Dr. Richard Holland
President
University of West Alabama

Dr. Roosevelt Newson
VP for Academic Affairs and Provost
University of North Alabama

Dr. Joe Morris
Dean of Instruction
Jefferson State Community College

Currently Vacant

Mrs. Linda Johnson
Assistant to the President
Southern Union State Community College

Non-Voting Members:

AGSC Secretary

Alabama Commission on Higher
Education (ACHE)

STARS

Mrs. Deborah Nettles – *Administrative Assistant to the ACHE Executive Director*

Dr. Gregory Fitch - *Executive Director*
Dr. Elizabeth French - *Director Institutional Effectiveness and Planning*

Dr. Keith Sessions – *Executive Director*
Mr. Shannon Nichols – *Programmer (IT Director)*
Mr. Dendy Moseley – *Program Coordinator*

* AGSC Chair for 2006-2007

** AGSC Vice-Chair for 2006-2007 (Chair-Elect for 2007-2008)

*** Serves as Representative of Council of Chief Academic Officers to the AGSC



MESSAGE FROM THE AGSC/STARS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Supporters of the AGSC/STARS Program:

Two decades ago, transfer students in Alabama faced numerous obstacles and hurdles when transferring in-state from one public institution of higher education to another. While many obstacles and hurdles still exist, one that has been drastically reduced is that of losing course credit upon transfer. In the last couple of decades, Alabama has positioned itself, not only in the southeast, but also nationally, as a leader in the articulation of coursework from one institution to another. Over the last few years, the AGSC/STARS Program has been recognized as a model state articulation program by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Many states are looking to the articulation program implemented in Alabama as an example of what can be accomplished if higher education leaders set goals and work together to achieve them.

Over the past year, like those before, the AGSC Members and STARS Staff have worked diligently to continue to move the program forward. I commend and appreciate the tireless work and unwavering commitment of the AGSC Members and the STARS Staff. Without the support of these individuals, my efforts as the Executive Director of this program would be both ineffective and unproductive. It is indeed a pleasure and honor to lead the work associated with maintaining and improving the AGSC/STARS Program.

The AGSC/STARS program has had, and continues to have, a positive impact on transfer students across the state of Alabama. In the 2006-2007 academic year over 80,000 transfer students, academic advisors, faculty members, and college administrators obtained or viewed transfer guides online using the STARS System. Since 1998, over 530,000 transfer guides have been obtained through the STARS Website. It is conservatively estimated that the STARS Program has saved Alabama taxpayers close to \$500,000,000 dollars in the past nine years by diminishing the loss of course credit upon transfer.

I want to thank the State of Alabama for their continued support of this worthwhile program. Annual funding allows our office to improve and enhance the state articulation program each and every year. I would like to thank all those who contact their representatives to make sure that the AGSC/STARS program continues to grow and benefit thousands of transfer students in our state.

As the Executive Director of AGSC & STARS, I am looking forward to the opportunities and challenges that 2007-2008 brings. Though much has been accomplished, we still have much to improve upon. I look forward to partnering with each of you as we continue to take the AGSC/STARS Program to even greater heights in years to come.

Sincerely,

Keith Sessions,
Executive Director of AGSC/STARS

LOOKING BACK AT 2006-2007: A STATUS REPORT

Improved Communication and Partnerships Among Institutions

One of the most important outcomes of the legislation that created the AGSC and expanded the STARS System, was the bringing together of administrators, faculty, and staff from both the two-year and four-year institutions in Alabama to solve the transfer problem that impacted both sectors. Over the last thirteen years, higher education leaders have worked together to create a statewide articulation program.



Today, there are AGSC/STARS Institutional Points of Contact (primary and alternate) at each and every two-year and four-year institution. These individuals work together to facilitate communication and understanding of the articulation program. Often these individuals work through problems that arise when students transfer from one institution to another. Communication between institutions is one of the most important elements in the whole transfer process. The STARS Office continues to provide training and workshops for these individuals.

Students who transferred prior to the articulation legislation may have encountered numerous obstacles and hurdles primarily due to miscommunication between two-year schools offering courses and four-year schools accepting these courses for transfer credit. Often students were told one thing at one institution and then told something totally different at other institutions. Students now obtain state approved transfer guides that protect them from the “he said/she said” syndrome that they faced decades ago.

Over the past year, the STARS staff has made a concerted effort to try to encourage communication and teamwork among the various state institutions – both two-year and four-year. A number of four-year institutions have created “Community College Days” in which they either send representatives from their institutions to the surrounding community colleges or they bring in community college staff for transfer/articulation workshops. The STARS Office usually sends staff to these workshops to make presentations and field questions from both two-year and four-year representatives related to articulation issues and concerns. These workshops have increased communication between the institutions and provided an annual forum for articulation and transfer discussion between the institutions involved. The STARS Office encourages these types of communication efforts and partnerships.

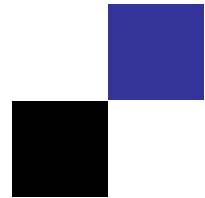
This year, the STARS office provided multiple three day workshops/training sessions for advisors, counselors, administrators, points of contacts and others to help explain the transfer process and how it impacts their institutions. At each of these workshops, both two-year and four-year members were invited to attend. We plan to continue to provide similar workshops across the state. Institutions interested in hosting a workshop/training should contact the STARS office. The STARS staff will be glad to assist in any way possible to set up a workshop on two-year or four-year campuses. The STARS staff is able to tailor presentations and training to the meet the various needs of two-year and four-year faculty and staff.



Did you know?

There are currently over **70** college administrators who actively serve as AGSC/STARS Institutional Points of Contacts throughout our state. These individuals are dedicated to working to make the transfer process in Alabama a positive experience. To view a listing of these individuals, please go to:

<http://stars.troy.edu/agsc/pointsofcontact.htm>



Increase Role and Effectiveness of Academic Committees

The foundation of the AGSC/STARS Program falls directly on the continuous work of the various faculty-based academic committees established by the AGSC in the 1990s. Some of these committees are very active and meet regularly to discuss issues (including articulation matters) that impact their disciplines. Following is a list of the roles and responsibilities of the various academic committees:

REQUIRED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. On-going review and recommendation for approval or disapproval of new and/or revised courses from two-year and four-year institutions as general studies courses.
2. Review of all previously approved courses in the discipline every three year period. (1/3rd of courses in first year, 1/3rd in second year, and 1/3rd of the courses in the third year).
3. Annual review of the established discipline specific guidelines for their discipline.
4. Bi-annual review of the discipline templates and development of new discipline templates, as necessary. Continuing dialogue with the faculty in their discipline, campus curriculum committee(s), departments, and discipline organizations at their respective institution.
5. Communicate with state professional organizations in the discipline where one exists.
6. Provide an annual report to the Executive Director of the AGSC/STARS recapping activities and decisions of the committee for that academic year.
7. Other tasks as may be assigned by the AGSC.

Over the last few years, the AGSC also suggested that the academic committees take on the additional roles:

SUGGESTED ROLES:

1. Study, discuss, and keep in touch with the changes in the field of study.
2. Sponsor periodic professional developmental activities for faculty in the field.
3. Create and maintain a communications network that provides for sharing and collaboration among faculty at different institutions.
4. Investigate and share information on research and good practices in the field.

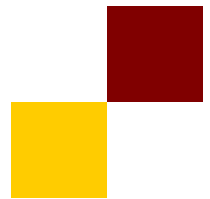
This year, these committees have been asked to begin to review previously approved guidelines and requirements for transfer courses in their disciplines. In addition, the STARS office is in the process of sending out at least a third of all of the previously approved courses and ratified templates for their review. This activity, which will be on-going each year, ensures that the transfer courses and templates are up-to-date and still viable for use by prospective transfer students. The goal is to review all the previously approved courses and templates every three years. Not only does this improve the reliability of the information that is disseminated, but it also encourages the committees to discuss and address articulation issues on a more routine basis.

We respect the time constraints and job requirements of each of the full-time faculty. It should be noted that each of the member of the various AGSC Academic Committees is appointed by his/her institution and is not paid for his/her service. Much has been done to try to use technology to simplify the work of the academic committees. The AGSC and STARS Staff take this opportunity to thank each and every faculty member who diligently serves on an academic committee. Their work impacts the lives of thousands of students each year.

Did you know?

There are currently **34** AGSC Academic Committees. Over **650** two-year and four-year full-time faculty members serve on these committees. To learn more about the various academic committees and how they impact the articulation program, please go to: <http://stars.troy.edu/agsc/academic.htm>





Increase Efforts to Publicize and Promote the AGSC/STARS Program throughout Alabama

In 2006-2007, the STARS office continued to look for ways to increase publicity and visibility of the AGSC and STARS Program throughout the state. The following publicity efforts took place this past year.

Publicity Projects Undertaken in 2006-2007

- STARS representatives were sent to make presentations to various groups of students, advisors, counselors, administrators, and educational and government leaders across the state
- STARS purchased various promotional items (listed below) to distribute as gifts for students, advisors, counselors and administrators
 - STARS Key Chains
 - STARS Highlighters
 - STARS Pens
 - STARS Calendars
 - STARS Letter Openers
 - STARS Mouse Pads
 - STARS Clipboards
 - STARS Calculators
- STARS provided two-year schools with web access to various printed ads (color and black & white) to use in course schedule books and school newspapers
- STARS provided “GET THE GUIDE” Post Cards to four-year recruiters to hand-out when recruiting community college students
- STARS provided “GET THE GUIDE” Post Cards and Posters to two-year counseling/advising offices to hand out and post on their campuses
- STARS provided “GET THE GUIDE” Post Cards and Posters to high school counseling/advising offices across the state for students who may be considering attending a community college prior to transferring to an in-state four-year university (sent out in publicity packages to all high school counseling offices in Alabama)



STARS In-State Visits

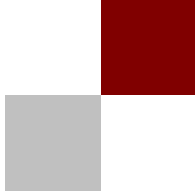
In promoting the STARS Program, staff members are routinely sent to various colleges and organizational meetings to promote and publicize the program to all groups directly and indirectly impacted. This past year the STARS staff visited over 50 universities, colleges, and high schools in Alabama. In addition to campus visits, STARS staff were often invited to present at state professional conferences. Members of a professional education associations or groups, who feel that their association/group would benefit from an AGSC/STARS presentation, should contact STARS office at 334-670-3690. There is no charge for this service.

STARS Out-Of-State Publicity

Often members of the STARS staff have the opportunity to go to conferences in other states and share the AGSC/STARS story. This year, STARS staff made presentations in Texas, Mississippi, and Missouri. Institutions or organizations from other states who want to learn more about the AGSC/STARS Program can contact the STARS office at 334-670-3690. Because out-of-state travel is limited, the STARS staff can only make a few presentations each year to professional groups in other states.

New Two-Year Student Orientations

Each year, a number of two-year institutions in Alabama invite members of the STARS staff to talk to their incoming freshmen at “new student orientation programs.” These campus visits allow the STARS staff an opportunity introduce STARS and answer questions about the transfer of credit to the various four-year institutions in Alabama. Many of the two-year colleges now require their new students to obtain a STARS Transfer Guide in one or more majors prior to enrolling in their first class.



Did you know?

*In one academic year, our office will send out over **150,000** "GET THE GUIDE Post Cards" to two-year colleges and prospective two-year students. If your institution would like to assist us by handing out post-cards to your prospective transfer students, please call 334-670-3690.*

Improvements to STARS Website and STARS Usage Reports

Each year, the STARS staff looks for ways to enhance and improve the AGSC/STARS website. The website is located at <http://stars.troy.edu>. Since the website has become the primary tool for gaining information related to the Alabama articulation program, it is vital that the website is easier to use and more useful for students, faculty, staff, and administrators who use the system.



This past year links to approved course syllabi were added to the website so that students, faculty, and advisors have a better understanding of the courses as offered at the institution for which it is approved. These syllabi are also used by the AGSC Academic Committees to make transfer articulation decisions.

We are currently testing software that will allow us to provide "live help" through a chat window interface with the end-user. We hope to have this feature fully operational in the fall of 2007.

Another project that the STARS staff has begun to work on is an "AGSC/STARS Interactive Training CD-Rom." Once it is developed, we will be able to send them out to counselors, advisors, faculty, staff and students. The CD-Rom will provide general training information based on the needs of the end-user. It will also interface with current web pages to provide up-to-date information that tends to change on a regular basis.

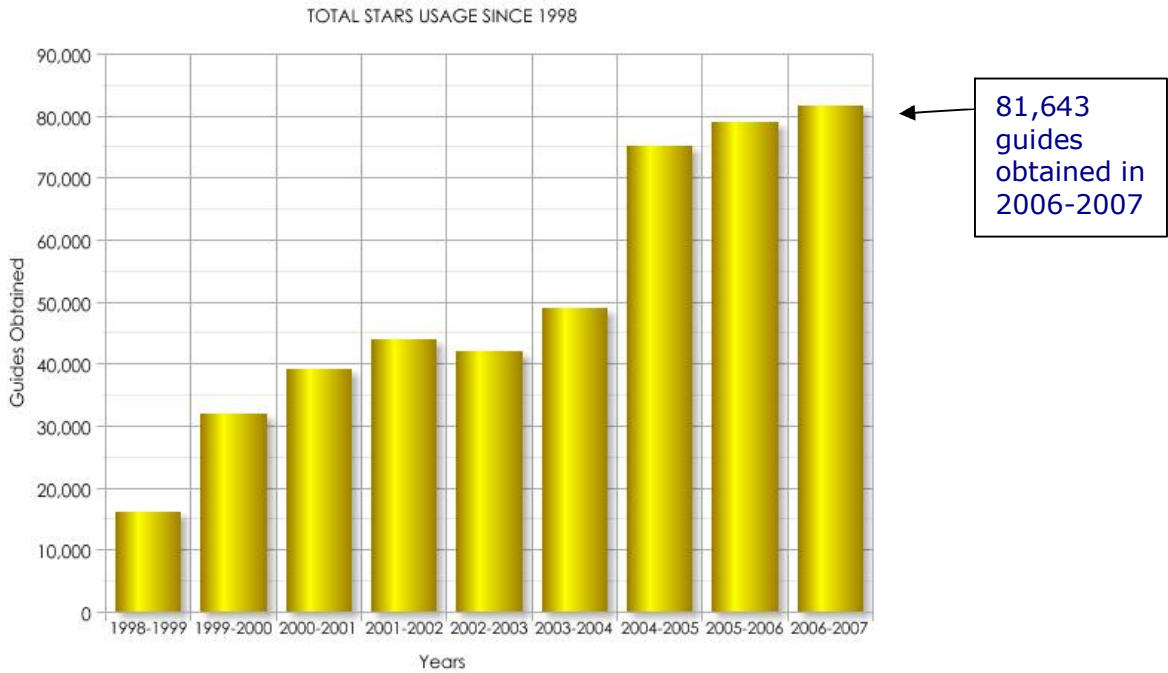
Like the website, STARS Usage Reports have also become an important output of the STARS System. Both the two-year and four-year institutions request information regarding the use of STARS. Through the STARS reporting system, points of contacts at the four-year and two-year institutions receive monthly reports that provide detail data on the use of the STARS system by institutions and programs. The STARS staff continues to listen to the requests and comments made by those who depend on the reports when making decisions related to transfer students. Over the last few years, the reports have been modified or changed so that they are more useful to those who need the usage information. Each month, four-year institutions receive student information from end-users who are considering a transfer to their institution. This is FREE RECRUITING information provided to the four-year institutions at no cost. Institutions which need additional institution specific reports should contact our office. The STARS staff will do everything possible to accommodate these requests.

STARS Usage Reports can be viewed at <http://stars.troy.edu/agsc/reports/reports.htm>
 -OR -
 Go to our website at <http://stars.troy.edu> and click on the icon that looks like this....

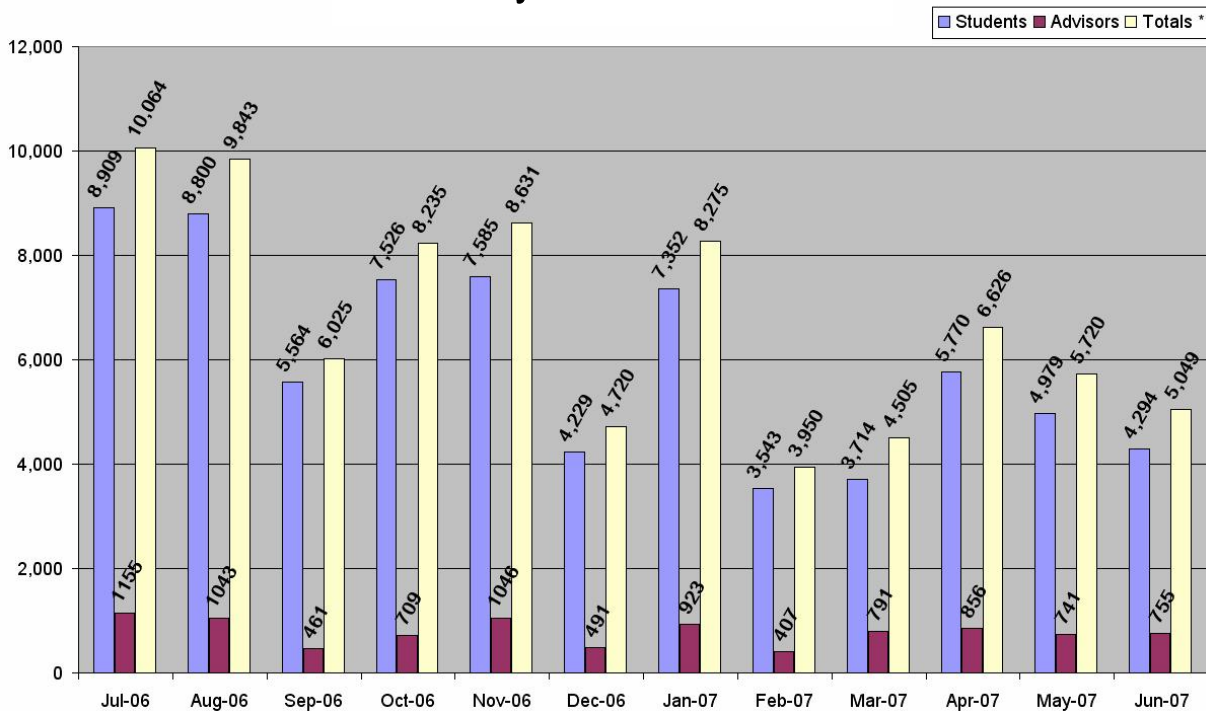


STARS USAGE REPORTS

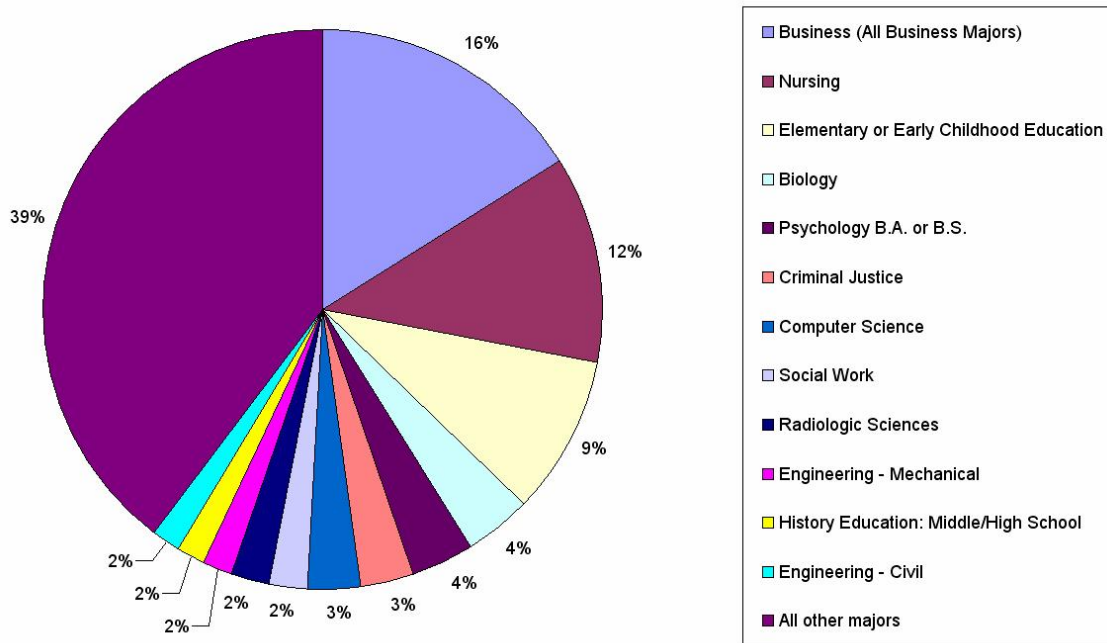
Annual STARS Transfer Guide Requests Since 1998



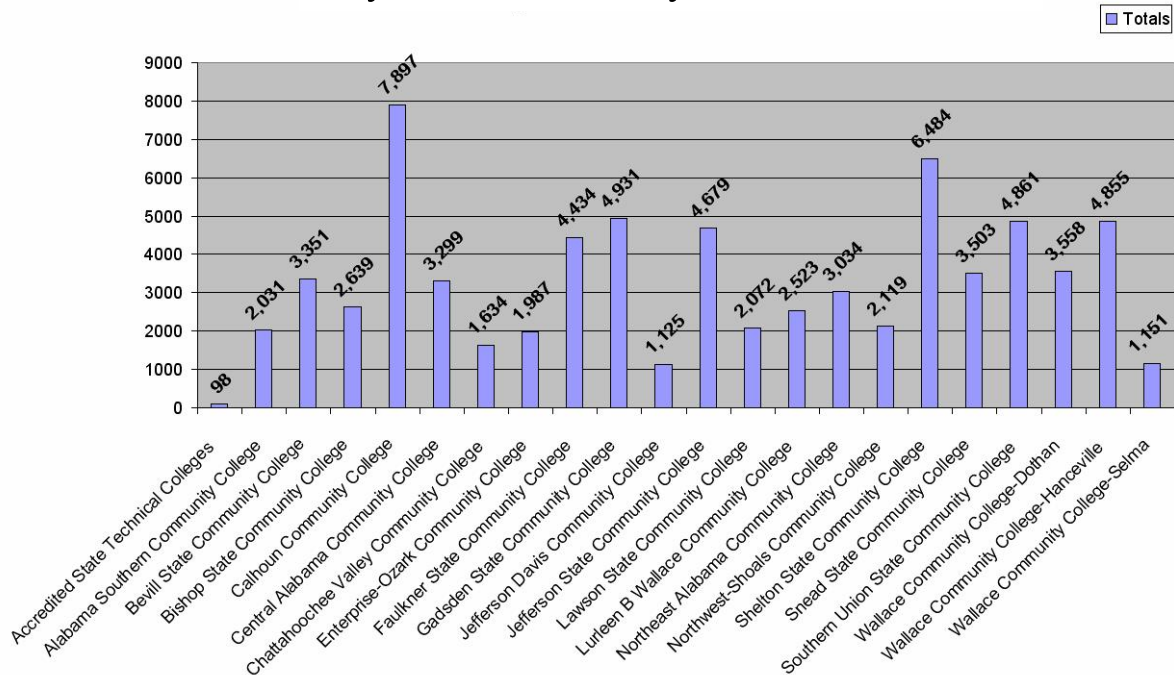
Monthly STARS System Usage from July 2006 – June 2007



Two-Year Transfer Guide Requests by Major for July 2006 – June 2007



Two-Year Transfer Guide Requests by Institution for July 2006 – June 2007



NOTE: Institution Specific Reports for both the two-year and four-year institutions can be obtained by contacting the STARS Office.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2007-2008: PRIORITIES

In the upcoming year, the AGSC will work to:

- ⇒ Make substantial progress on the twelfth recommendation of the Evaluation Project (March 2001) that calls for “a carefully designed study to evaluate the success of community college students who transfer to state universities.”
- ⇒ Continue review of previously approved/ratified courses and templates for program offerings in order to maintain the transferable General Studies program for students in Alabama’s two-year and four-year institutions.
- ⇒ Strengthen communication about the STARS Program with students, administrators, faculty, parents, legislators, and the general public.
- ⇒ Improve Area V web pages at four-year institutions in an effort to facilitate the transfer of students from two-year to four-year institutions.

APPENDIX

THE FOLLOWING ACT CREATED THE AGSC AND EXPANDED THE STARS PROGRAM STATEWIDE:



ACT 94-202

Enrolled, An Act

To amend Section 16-5-8, Code of Alabama 1975, to provide for a uniform articulation agreement among all institutions of higher education and a statewide general studies curriculum; to provide for the computation of grade point averages of certain transferred students; to specify that this act shall not impede the objectives of historically black institutions; to provide for implementation conditioned on the participation of certain institutions; and to specify certain reporting requirements.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Section 16-5-8, Code of Alabama 1975, is amended to read as follows:

Section 16-5-8

"(a) The commission on higher education is authorized to review periodically all new and existing programs and units of instruction, research, and public service funded by state appropriations at the state universities and colleges and to share with the appropriate governing board, through the president of the institution, and state legislature, its recommendations.

"(b) The commission shall seek through the use of advisory committees to study needless duplication of education, research, or service programs and programs which are not adequately provided in the state, and shall make findings and recommendations to the institutions, the governor, and the legislature that would strengthen the total program of higher education in the state.

"(c) The governing boards of public institutions of higher education in this state and the campuses under their governance or supervision shall not undertake the establishment of any new unit or program of instruction for academic credit with state funds before submitting plans for the new unit or program to the commission for its review, evaluation, and approval. Not state funds shall be expended by any public institution on any new unit or program of instruction which has not been approved by the commission. Any plan submitted to the commission, or its staff, and not receiving final action by the commission within 10 months of submission shall be considered approved. The term 'new unit of instruction,' includes the establishment of a college, school, division, or institute, and includes the establishment of any new branch or campus. The term does not include reasonable extensions or alternations of existing curricula, or programs which have a direct relationship to existing programs. The commission may, under its rulemaking power, define the character of the reasonable extensions and alterations.

"(d) The commission shall have the authority to authorize and regulate off-campus offerings, new or existing. An exception to this off-campus authority is provided for the branch campuses of universities or branch campuses of junior colleges in existence at the time of passage of this chapter whose fall 1978 registrations exceeded 500 class enrollments and branch campuses of universities operating prior to 1960. For those branches which began operating since 1960, the commission shall present its recommendation for the continuation or termination of each branch with full findings of fact to the legislature before a public joint meeting of the education committees of the house and senate no later than the fifth legislative day of the 1981 regular session of the legislature. In making the recommendation, the commission shall not use the ratio of full-time faculty to part-time faculty and/or a requirement to attend the main campus for degree completion as a part of its judgment of the quality of a program or branch campus. The education committee of each house shall report to its respective house with a concurrence or nonconcurrence on each recommendation of the commission. Debate on each recommendation shall be limited to one hour of continuous uninterrupted discussion for each recommendation and at the end of the time, it shall be mandatory that the

president of the senate and the speaker of the house shall in their respective houses call for a recorded vote. The resolution by simple majority of both houses is required to affirm a commission recommendation. No more than one branch shall be continued or terminated in one resolution.

"(e) The computerized advisement system for students operated by Troy State University which includes a comprehensive undergraduate program and course information for all public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education, existing on the effective date of this amendatory act, shall ensure students at each two-year institution accredited by the Southern Association's Commissions on Colleges, the opportunity to enter into a contract with a four-year institution guaranteeing the transfer of credit earned for courses taken at the two-year institution pursuant to the terms of the contract provided the student is admitted to the four-year institution. Under this contract, all agreed upon credits transferred from a two-year institution to a four-year institution shall fulfill degree requirements at the four-year institution as if they were earned at the four-year institution. Information regarding this advisement and contracting program shall be included in the official catalog of each institution of higher education. All public two-year and four-year institutions in the state accredited by the Commission on Colleges shall participate in this system.

"In addition, there is created an articulation and general studies committee which shall consist of ten members composed as follows: two representing the state's regional universities, three representing the state's two-year colleges (one of whom shall be black), one representing each of the following: Auburn University, the University of Alabama System, the University of South Alabama, Alabama State University, and Alabama A&M University. The Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the Director of the computerized advising system operated by Troy State University shall serve as nonvoting members.

"Unless provided by the governing board of the respective institution, the representatives to the articulation and general studies committee shall be selected in the following manner: The presidents of the state's regional universities shall select the two representatives of these institutions on the committee. The State Board of Education shall select the representatives of the state's two-year colleges on the committee. The Chancellor of the University of Alabama System and the Presidents of Auburn University, the University of South Alabama, Alabama State University, and Alabama A&M University shall each select the representative of their institutions on the committee. It is the intent of the Legislature that women be represented on the committee. This committee, utilizing whatever resources and task forces it deems appropriate, shall develop no later than September 1, 1998, a statewide freshman and sophomore level general studies curriculum to be taken at all colleges and universities. Nothing herein shall be interpreted as restricting any institution from requiring additional general studies courses beyond the statewide general studies curriculum.

"This committee shall also develop and adopt no later than September 1, 1999, for the freshman and sophomore years, a statewide articulation agreement for the transfer of credit among all public institutions of higher education. Under this articulation agreement, all applicable credits transferred from a two-year institution to a four-year institution shall fulfill degree requirements at the four-year institution as if they were earned at the four-year institution. The committee shall further examine the need for a uniform course numbering system, course titles, and descriptions.

"A four-fifths vote of the entire voting membership of the committee shall be required for the adoption of the articulation agreement and general studies curriculum. Upon adoption of the articulation agreement and general studies curriculum, this committee shall continue its duty and authority prescribed herein. The committee shall meet at least annually, or at other times as convened by the chair. The committee shall elect annually a chair from its membership. The chair of the committee shall rotate annually between a representative of the four-year institutions and a representative of the two-year institutions.

"In case of problems in the administration or interpretation of the articulation agreement or the general studies curriculum, institutions shall present the problem to the articulation and general studies committee for resolution. A majority decision of the committee shall be final and binding.

"The budget recommendation of the commission shall not include an appropriation for institutions of higher education violating the stipulations of this section.

"(f) Nothing in this or any section, however, shall be construed to prohibit any institution of higher education in this state from seeking and securing by separate bill the approval of the legislature for any new unit or program of instruction, research or public service denied approval by the commission, in which case the action of the legislature, when approved by the governor or otherwise upon becoming law, is final.

"(g) Colleges and universities conducting off-campus offerings on military reservations are exempt from the commission's regulatory review and approval authority for those offerings on the military reservation."

Section 2. Nothing in this act shall be deemed to require a public institution to include any grades earned at another institution in the computation of a student's grade point average at that institution. However, if any public institution includes freshman and sophomore level course grades earned at any other public institution in the computation of a student's grade point average, all freshman and sophomore level course grades earned at all public institutions shall be included in the computation.

Section 3. Nothing in this act shall be interpreted or used in any way to discourage or impede the efforts or abilities of the historically black institutions or their officials to carry out the mandates and objectives of federal court decrees and to provide equal access for all citizens of Alabama to full benefits of higher education.

Section 4. It is the intent of the Legislature that all two- year and four-year institutions of higher education in the state comply with the intent of this act and the guidelines developed pursuant to it (unless otherwise exempted by this act). In the event of noncompliance by any institution governed by a board of trustees established by the Constitution with the statewide articulation agreement as provided in this act of the 1994 Regular Session amending Section 16-5-8 of the Code of Alabama 1975, no other two-year or four-year institution shall be required to comply with the statewide articulation agreement. These two-year and four- year institutions shall continue to comply with all other provisions of Section 16-5-8, Code of Alabama 1975. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education shall notify the Legislative council, the governing body of each four-year institution, and the State Board of Education within 30 days of any failure to comply with this act or guidelines.

Section 5. Pursuant to Section 16-5-7 and 16-5-8 of the Code of Alabama 1975, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education shall make regular reports to the Legislature regarding the implementation of this act.

Section 6. The provisions of this act are severable. If any part of this act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, that declaration shall not affect the part which remains.

Section 7. All laws or parts of the laws which conflict with this act are repealed.

Section 8. This act shall become effective immediately upon its passage and approval by the Governor, or upon its otherwise becoming a law.

Senate - March 10, 1994 - *Amended and Passed*

House - March 10, 1994 - *Concurred in Senate Amendment*

Signed by

Governor Jim Folsom

March 17, 1994



AGSC/STARS CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions and/or comments regarding this document should be sent to:



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<http://stars.troy.edu>



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