

# CALIFORNIA INTERSEGMENTAL ARTICULATION COUNCIL

## Transfer Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Best Practice

### Memorandum of Understanding Defined

Memorandum of Understanding related to transfer is an agreement between two or more institutions of higher education, typically a community college and an independent/private university, regarding the transfer process and related functions. According to the California Intersegmental Articulation Council (CIAC) “MOUs confirm agreements that students from the sending institution will receive special admission consideration or other benefits such as tuition discounts not offered to most other potential transfer students.” (1.2)

The CIAC categorizes MOU development related to transfer as a function of articulation. Articulation is coordinated and facilitated by the Articulation Officer on each campus. However, the development of an MOU is a separate and distinct process from the development of an articulation agreement. (1.2)

As also noted by the CIAC, “the obligations of a MOU are often beyond the level of authority of the sending institution’s Articulation Officer and may require approval and/or a signature from a high-level administrator at the sending institution”. (1.2)

### Background

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges adopted a Resolution on MOUs in the spring of 2005. Local senates were urged to “participate fully in all discussions of academic matters relating to MOUs”; and to develop criteria to use when considering MOUs. (1.1)

During the annual 2016 CIAC Conference, a session related to Transfer MOUs occurred and resulted in the following best practice recommendation.

### Reference

- (1.1) Academic Senate for California Community Colleges 13.01 Resolution on MOUs adopted by Spring 2005.
- (1.2) Articulation Best Practices – Definitions rev. 3/5/10. [www.ciac.csusb.edu](http://www.ciac.csusb.edu). Refer to Resources

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The CIAC has determined that establishing MOUs agreements related to transfer may not be beneficial due to the following:

1. Articulation agreements and/or transfer admission guarantees provide avenues that appear most effective in serving the needs of transfer students.
2. MOUs are often used as marketing tools for institutions attempting to differentiate themselves from their competitors. By entering into such an agreement, it may appear that a college is essentially endorsing a particular institution over all others. As a matter of equality, colleges are encouraged to provide opportunities for recruitment and promotion equitably among transfer institutions.
3. Offers of financial benefits that are included in MOUs are often used as promotional tools by institutions. Financial opportunities can be provided to students without an MOU. The financial obligations required for attendance at an institution is a confidential matter between the student and the institution, and not between institutions.
4. MOUs may impart a preferential status between the participating institutions. An MOU may give the false impression to students that enrollment at a particular institution is more advantageous than at any other, which may or may not be the case.
5. The legal ramifications in establishing an MOU agreement may pose a greater risk, than benefit, to institutions and/or transfer students.

It is highly recommended that institutions consider publishing a statement regarding their involvement with MOUs.

*Adopted by the Northern California Intersegmental Articulation Council (NCIAC) during the 10/14/16 Fall Meeting. Sheila Lau, NCIAC Chair*

*Adopted by the Southern California Intersegmental Articulation Council (SCIAC) during the 10/11/16 Fall Conference. Juliette Parker, SCIAC Chair*

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