I. ECS SURVEY OF STATE POLICY STRUCTURES
The Education Commission of the States (ECS) surveyed all 50 states in order to identify the different ways that states define policies for 2/4 transfer (Education Commission of the States, 2001). The ECS report lists seven categories of policies:

1. **Legislation**: state law articulates the 2/4 transfer mission (30 states).

2. **Cooperative agreements**: statewide frameworks or networks support voluntary cooperation between institutions (40 states).

3. **Transfer data reporting**: the state collects some type of data on 2/4 transfer patterns (33 states).

4. **Students are given incentives and rewards for transfer**, such as financial aid or guaranteed admission (18 states).

5. **Statewide articulation guides** describe the requirements for course and institutional articulation between two-year and four-year institutions (26 states).

6. **Statewide common core curricula** (23 states).

7. **Common course numbering systems** (8 states).

(This text taken from a 2002 report on “State Policy and Community College-Baccalaureate Transfer, available at [http://www.highereducation.org/reports/transfer/transfer.pdf](http://www.highereducation.org/reports/transfer/transfer.pdf))

II. See also updated, individual state summary information on “articulation, transfer & alignment.” These capsule summaries reference numerous examples of legislation. [http://higheredpolicies.wiche.edu/content/policy/state/summaries/31](http://higheredpolicies.wiche.edu/content/policy/state/summaries/31)

**Samples of Legislation Regarding Core Curricula/General Education and Transfer in Individual States**

**Alabama**
“The Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC) was created in March 1994 by the State Legislature through ACT 94-202. The AGSC was charged to develop no later than September 1, 1998, a statewide freshman- and sophomore-level general studies curriculum to be taken at all public colleges and universities, and develop and adopt by September 1, 1999, a statewide articulation agreement for the freshman and sophomore years for the transfer of credit among all public institutions of higher education in Alabama. The AGSC adopted a 64 semester hour curriculum consisting of written composition (Area I), humanities and fine arts (Area II), natural sciences and mathematics (Area III), history, social and behavioral sciences (Area IV), and freshman- and sophomore-level pre-professional, major, and elective courses.”
Arkansas
“State legislation on transfer, enacted in 1991, established a statewide mandatory transfer core curriculum, now in place at all public institutions. Individual institutions may vary the specific course titles in the curriculum, and may require additional course work or specific grades for transfer. Students who complete the core courses at a two-year college know that the credits will be accepted and counted toward the general education requirements at the receiving four-year institution, and students who earn an associate degree know that all units will be accepted and that they will be admitted with upper division standing.”
(Source: http://www.highereducation.org/reports/transfer/transfer10.shtml)

Colorado
“gtPathways is a set of general education courses that the state guarantees to transfer. The curriculum consists of 31 credit hours of courses across 6 content areas. Receiving institutions shall apply guaranteed general education courses to a student's general education or major requirements. Approved courses in gtPathways are not based on course equivalencies but meet content and competency criteria.”
(Source: http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Transfers/gtPathways/curriculum.html For background and statutory authority, see http://highered.colorado.gov/Academics/Transfers/)

Florida
“State law specifies that any student who earns an associate degree will be guaranteed admission into a public university degree program, and the units from core courses transfer as a block to any public institution. Thus students need not negotiate individual course-level transfers with the receiving institutions. They are not guaranteed admission into high-demand programs or into programs with special requirements, but the law requires that transfer students be treated the same way as native students with respect to admission to these programs. Students who believe they have been treated unfairly can bring their complaints before the Articulation Committee.”
(emphasis added)
(Source: http://www.highereducation.org/reports/transfer/transfer10.shtml)

“The State of Florida established in law a Statewide Articulation Agreement in 1971 and has since adopted a number of additional policies to assist students in smoothly transitioning between community colleges and four-year colleges and universities.”

and

“These policies include the establishment of a 36-credit general education program. “The specific courses that make up the 36-hour general education block vary from one institution to another. If a student completes the 36-hour general education block at any community or state university, it will be accepted in total by any other public institution in Florida and no further courses will be required to meet the general education component.”
(Source: http://www.fldoe.org/articulation/pdf/Pathways_to_Success.pdf)
New Mexico:
“Articulation and transfer legislation enacted in 1995 directed the Commission on Higher Education to collaborate with the institutions to develop a common transfer core curriculum of 35 units. This curriculum, mandated for all public institutions, has now been in place for almost seven years. Receiving institutions are required to accept additional courses as meeting core requirements, based on seven 64-semester-hour transfer modules that cover broad discipline areas and that are developed and maintained by statewide faculty groups.”
(Source: http://www.highereducation.org/reports/transfer/transfer.pdf)

North Carolina
“In 1995 the state legislature enacted a comprehensive statewide articulation policy that had been developed by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the State Board of the Community Colleges. To strengthen the community college–baccalaureate transfer function while ensuring the quality of academic completion for college-level work, the legislation established a general education transfer core curriculum that applies to all associate degree programs in all of the state’s public institutions; each four-year campus may also require additional courses for certain majors. Students who enter community college without having completed the high school courses required for admission to the University of North Carolina must complete at least two courses in a foreign language in their A.A. or A.S. program in addition to the general education transfer core. Transfer students who have completed the core curriculum must still compete for admission to a four-year college and for acceptance into a major, but they are not required to complete work beyond that required of all continuing students or transfer students from four-year institutions.”
(Source: http://www.highereducation.org/reports/transfer/transfer.pdf)

Tennessee: A Comprehensive Approach to Increasing College Completion
“In January 2010, Tennessee’s state legislature enacted a comprehensive set of higher education reforms designed to increase the number of citizens with a postsecondary credential. The Complete College Tennessee Act passed nearly unanimously. Altering the state higher education funding formula to emphasize outcomes is a key component of the new law.

‘At a time when state resources are tighter than ever, we’ve got to prioritize how we spend those finite dollars and retool our funding formula to make it based on success and outcomes, including higher degree completion rates….It’s the responsible thing to do for the budget and, more importantly, that change, as much as any other, will drive decisions at the campus level and help really focus us on the core mission of college completion.’ – Former Governor Phil Bredesen

In addition to shifting the formula away from being based on enrollments to reward completion, the new Tennessee law requires:

•Development of a multi-sector statewide master plan to increase educational attainment;
•Creation of a common core associate degree curriculum;
•Guaranteed junior status for any state community college student who transfers with an associate degree to a public state four-year institution;
•Establishment of common course numbering within the community college system;
• Greater transparency in course-by-course transfer policy;
• Establishment of dual-admission and dual-enrollment policies at all public two- and four-year
institutions of higher education;
• Creation of a statewide community college system, rather than 13 separately-managed schools; and
• Acceleration of associate degree and certificate attainment through creation of highly structured
programs designed to speed progress and increase completion.

(Source: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/college_completion_tool_kit.pdf)

Texas
Since 1987, every student who received a baccalaureate degree from a Texas public institution of
higher education has been required to complete the state’s general education core curriculum as
part of their degree requirements. Regardless of the student’s academic discipline or “major,”
each student earning an undergraduate degree from a Texas public institution of higher education
holds in common their completion of the Texas Core Curriculum.

Core curriculum courses offer Texas students a unique educational opportunity they will not
have again. The Texas General Education Core Curriculum assures students high-quality
undergraduate educational experiences across a broad range of intellectual and practical areas of
inquiry. Far from being those “basics” that students are frequently advised to "get out of the
way," the Texas General Education Core Curriculum embodies a carefully-designed set of
significant intellectual skills and content intended to contribute in specific ways to excellence
within the undergraduate experience for all students.

Texas law provides this definition for “core curriculum” (TEC §61.821): “… the curriculum in
liberal arts, humanities, and sciences and political, social, and cultural history that all
undergraduate students of an institution of higher education are required to complete before
receiving an academic undergraduate degree.”

The first legislative initiative to define "core curriculum" was House Bill (HB) 2183, passed in
1987 by the 70th Texas Legislature. That bill provided for the adoption and evaluation of general
education core curricula by Texas public colleges and universities. HB 2183 sought to ensure
quality in undergraduate higher education.

Senate Bill (SB) 148, passed by the 75th Texas Legislature in January 1997, repealed all earlier
legislation concerning either lower-division transfer or core curriculum. SB 148 sought to
resolve certain concerns regarding the transfer of lower-division course credit among Texas
public colleges and universities, while maintaining the core curriculum as one of the fundamental
components of a high-quality undergraduate educational experience. More recent sessions of the
Texas Legislature have fine-tuned the existing laws regarding core curriculum, but the essentials
of SB 148 have not changed since 1997.

The current statutes (TEC §61.821-61.832) continue the state-level focus on excellence in
undergraduate education while facilitating the transfer of lower-division course credit among
public colleges, universities and health science centers throughout the state. One of the most
important provisions allows a transfer student to use the successfully completed group of lower-
division core curriculum courses to substitute for the similar group of requirements at the
college, university or health science center to which they transfer.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board was required by law to adopt rules that include
"a statement of the content, component areas, and objectives of the core curriculum" – a template
or model for a consistent statewide curriculum. Details of the statewide core curriculum are
included in Coordinating Board Rules, Chapter 4, Subchapter B. Within the statewide model,
each institution selects the specific courses it will offer to fulfill that model in a way that takes
into account the individual role and mission of the college, university, or health science center.

Those course selections and other aspects of core curriculum implementation must receive final
approval from the Coordinating Board before they can be implemented, and institutions must
evaluate the effectiveness of their core curricula at regular intervals (usually once every five
years) and report the results of those evaluations to the Board.

Across the state, core curricula adopted by an institution of higher education and approved by the
Coordinating Board must require courses totaling 42 semester credit hours (SCH), unless an
individual institution has requested and received approval from the Coordinating Board to have a
core curriculum that exceeds 42 SCH (institutions may decide to request an expansion in the
number of SCH they want to require for their core curriculum, up to 48 SCH). A completed core
curriculum must be transcripted as such, and will transfer and substitute for the approved core
curriculum at any public institution of higher education in Texas.

The Coordinating Board relied heavily on advice and recommendations from faculty and
administrators at Texas public colleges and universities regarding the content, component areas,
and objectives of the statewide core curriculum. Two advisory committees were convened, one
between 1987 and 1989, and the next between 1997 and 1999, and each committee was charged
to make recommendations to the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Coordinating
Board, and to offer other assistance in the implementation of the laws regarding core curriculum.

Each Core Curriculum Advisory Committee consisted of 24 members who were appointed after
an exhaustive process in which institutional presidents, along with chancellors and systems
officials, were invited to submit nominations for membership. Committee membership
represented two-year and four-year institutions equally, and as specified in the law, a majority of
the members held faculty appointments, although admissions and registrars offices, academic
advising centers, and undergraduate general education administrative staff were also represented
among the committee membership.

As all institutions of higher education strive to meet the goals for participation, success, and
excellence in public higher education that are recognized as essential to the continued prosperity
and success of all Texans, the Texas General Education Core Curriculum provides one
opportunity for each college, university and health science center to focus on its commitment to
enhancing the quality of undergraduate education across the state.
(Source: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=7ED7FC71-B6F1-8ED7-
15BA580555A5100A)