

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Sam Houston State University

AND

Wharton County Junior College

Sam Houston State University (SHSU), an institution of higher education in the State of Texas and a component of The Texas State University System and Wharton County Junior College (WCJC) are linked by common academic interests and seek to develop collaborations and exchanges in fields of shared interest and expertise. The activities undertaken pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are based on a spirit of cooperation and reciprocity that is intended to be of mutual benefit to both parties.

This MOU formally recognizes that SHSU and WCJC are actively committed to enhancing the educational experiences and services for students attending both schools.

I. PURPOSE

- A. This MOU serves as a written understanding of agreed upon principles between SHSU and WCJC concerning a set of general objectives including but not limited to:
- a. Transfer of credit, including reverse transfer
 - b. Program-to-program Articulation Agreements
 - c. Exchange of Data
 - d. Marketing and Recruitment
 - e. Partnership Parameters

II. TRANSFER OF CREDIT

A. Criteria for Lower-Division Course Credit

Lower-Division (Baccalaureate/Associate Degree) Courses

Courses offered in the first 2 years of college study are generally those which:

- a. Are identified by a majority of public 4-year undergraduate

institutions in the state as courses intended to comprise the first two years of collegiate study.

- b. Stress development of disciplinary knowledge and skill at an introductory level.
- c. Include basic principles and verbal, mathematical, and scientific concepts associated with an academic discipline.

B. Criteria for Upper-Division Course Credit

Upper-Division (Baccalaureate) Courses offered only in the third or fourth years of a baccalaureate program are those which:

- a. Are identified by a majority of public 4-year undergraduate institutions in the state as courses intended to comprise the third and fourth years of post-secondary study.
- b. Involve theoretical or analytical specialization beyond the introductory level.
- c. Require knowledge and skills provided by previous courses for successful performance by students.

C. Free Transferability

Lower-division courses included in the *Academic Course Guide Manual* (www.highered.texas.gov) and specified in the definition of “Lower-Division Course Credit” shall be freely transferable to and accepted as comparable degree credit by any Texas public institution of higher education where the equivalent course is available for fulfilling baccalaureate degree requirements. It is understood that each Texas institution of higher education may have limitations that invalidate courses after a specific length of time.

For Texas community colleges, these freely transferable courses are identified in the latest revised edition of Coordinating Board publication *Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual*, (www.highered.texas.gov) (revised 2021).

Specifically excluded are courses designated as vocational, English as a Second Language, ESL/ESOL, technical, developmental or remedial, and courses listed as

“basic skills.”

For senior four-year institutions, lower-division courses that have the same course content and CIP codes as approved by the Coordinating Board shall bear equivalent credit. Specifically excluded are courses designated as ESL/ESOL, technical and developmental/remedial courses.

Within the spirit of the law it is realized that differences in interpretation of “same course content” may generate disputes.

D. **WECM Courses** are designated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as workforce education (technical) courses offered for credit and CEUs (Continuing Education Units). While these courses are designed to transfer among state community colleges, they are not designed to automatically transfer to public four-year colleges and universities.

E. **Field of Study Curriculum/ Texas Direct Associates Degree**

The Field of Study Curriculum is a set of courses that generally apply toward the lower-division requirements for a baccalaureate degree in a specific academic area at a general academic teaching institution. In accordance to Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, §§ 4.39, alignment to the Texas Direct Associates Degree programs will apply toward requirements for a baccalaureate degree in specific academic area.

F. **Core Curriculum – (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)**

The curriculum in liberal arts, humanities, 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 Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) is established in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 61, Subchapter S. Coordinating Board rules regarding TCC are in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B.*)

G. Reverse Transfer

Reverse transfer allows students to transfer course work from SHSU back to WCJC in order to complete requirements for the associate degree. This program is specifically designed to allow students to receive the advantages pursuant to completion of the associate degree when they leave WCJC prior to degree completion. Within two weeks after the beginning of each semester (fall, summer, and spring), SHSU will have available, *at the partnering institutions request*, a reverse transfer file showing transfer students' completed hours that may qualify them for the awarding of an associate degree at the partnering institution. SHSU will facilitate the reverse transfer process through the National Student Clearinghouse.

III. PROGRAM-TO-PROGRAM ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

SHSU and WCJC will collaborate with academic leadership at both institutions to identify associate degree programs that will feed into a baccalaureate degree at Sam Houston State University. (Commonly referred to as a 2+2 program)

IV. EXCHANGE OF DATA

SHSU and WCJC will develop data exchange processes to ensure an effective transfer process and student success. Within the guidelines and regulations of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), WCJC will provide prospective student lists for marketing and recruitment and SHSU will provide WCJC transfer student enrollment, success, and completion statistics.

V. MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

SHSU and WCJC will collaboratively develop a strategic, joint- branded marketing and recruitment campaign designed to expose WCJC prospects and students to the opportunities and requirements of transfer to SHSU. The institutions will identify select degree programs for which specific marketing and recruitment materials will be developed and distributed (refer to addendum for list). Materials can include but are not limited to:

A. Transfer degree maps

- B. SHSU Representation at transfer fairs/events
- C. Targeted email campaigns

VI. PARTNERSHIP PARAMETERS

- A. WCJC and SHSU will exchange information within legal guidelines with the goal of making students aware of scholarship, financial aid, and the potential to satisfy degree requirements by transferring course work between both institutions.
- B. SHSU will recognize, for transfer credit within legal and accreditation limitations, course work submitted from WCJC resulting from transfer credit, dual/concurrent enrollment, advanced placement, CLEP, or other recognized means by which credit is awarded by examination (as appropriate and subject to WCJC policies).
- C. WCJC and SHSU will strive to make financial aid transfer between the respective institutions as convenient as possible for the student.
- D. WCJC will be responsible for assuring students comply with state-mandated higher education admission requirements, such as the Texas Success Initiative (TSI). It should be noted that students seeking certification in a teaching field are generally subject to more stringent requirements than students in the general population.
- E. Separate academic records for students will be maintained at each institution. Periodic exchange of information advantageous to students, WCJC, or SHSU is anticipated.
- F. The parties will collaborate to share information concerning the benefit of reverse transfer of credit for eligible transfer students.

- G. The parties shall only share or exchange student educational records under this agreement in a manner compliant with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- H. The parties acknowledge that as an agency of the State of Texas, SHSU must strictly adhere to all statutes, court decisions and opinions of the Texas Attorney General with respect to disclosure of public information under the Texas Public Information Act, Chapter 552, Texas Government Code. WCJC is required to make any information created or exchanged pursuant to this MOU, that is not otherwise excepted from disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act, available in a format that is accessible by the public at no additional charge to the state. The following format(s) shall be deemed to be in compliance with this provision: electronic files in Word, PDF, or similar generally accessible format

VII. TERM

Termination and renewal of this memorandum of understanding:

- A. This arrangement is expected to commence with the start of the Fall 2024 for a period of 3-5 years. It will terminate with the start of the Fall 2029 unless it is renewed.
- B. Prior to any termination, the MOU may be renewed with the consent of both parties for a period not to exceed 5 years.
- C. The MOU may be terminated by either institution by submitting written notice of the intent to terminate. The termination notice must be submitted before the term when the termination is to become effective.
- D. In the event this MOU is terminated, both parties agree to make every effort to protect individual students who are already part of the program.

VIII: SIGNATURES

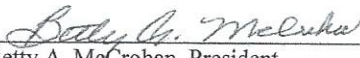
- A. Notwithstanding any provision of this agreement, nothing herein shall be construed as a waiver by the parties of their constitutional, or common law rights, privileges, immunities, or defenses. To the extent any term of this paragraph conflicts with any other provision in this agreement, the terms of this paragraph shall control.

- B. This MOU shall enter into force on the date of full and final execution by qualified representatives of both institutions.

- C. Notices. All notices and official correspondence required or necessitated by this agreement shall be provided by mail or email at the following addresses:

<p>(Partner Institution)</p> <p>Wharton County Junior College Director of University Transfer 911 E Boling Hwy Wharton, TX 77488 natalies@wcjc.edu 979-532-6964</p>	<p>Sam Houston State University</p> <p>Edgard Sanchez Director Transfer Partnerships & Early College Credit Office of the Provost Bobby K. Marks Administration Building, Suite 302 1806 Ave J, Huntsville, TX 77340 esanchez@shsu.edu (936) 294-1103</p>
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This framework of cooperation between Sam Houston State University and Wharton County Junior College is agreed to as of the date last written below:

<p> Date <u>10/22/24</u> Betty A. McCrohan, President Wharton County Junior College</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Date <u>11/1/24</u></p> <p>Michael T. Stephenson, Ph.D. Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Sam Houston State University</p>
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