

A New CAN Approval Model

A Proposal from the CAN Board To the Articulation, Transfer and Academic Community

September 2002

HISTORY

In January 2000, the CAN Board met in a retreat and agreed the CAN system needed to be modernized. It was suggested that the "bilateral agreement" (whereby colleges obtained agreements with four other 4 yr. colleges to validate their courses) was outmoded and should be replaced. Many creative ideas were shared, but for approximately 18 months no formal actions were taken. A presentation was made to the Inter-segmental Council of Academic Sena (ICAS) during this time. ICAS asked CAN Board to develop a more detailed proposal and return after consulting with the field on such details.

In July 2001 a workgroup met and discussed the concept (along with many other issues). When the new director of CAN was hired in October 2001, the development of a new approval model was made a top priority. In January 2002, again meeting in retreat, the CAN Board fleshed out the concept and formed a workgroup to provide a detailed proposal. That workgroup met in March and produced a draft. At the May 2002 CAN Board meeting an extensive discussion resulted in a model that could be shared with the field to stimulate discussion. At the August 2002 meeting the Board agreed that it was time to seek input to send this proposal to the field as a discussion draft. We now seek your participation in this effort.

THE NEW MODEL

Attached you will find the proposal adopted at August 2002 meeting. On the left side we have tried to summarize the current system. On the right side we noted recommended changes (and those aspects we would not change). There are many ideas in this model, but two stand out as the most significant. 1) Initiation of CAN descriptors will be welcomed from other inter-segmental articulation efforts (such as IMPAC or CSU Core) as well as from the CAN process itself. We do not want to waste the valuable work being done by our segments. 2) The "bilateral" validation system (by which a college asked four other colleges to approve their course) is proposed to be replaced with inter-segmental committees of discipline faculty who will review courses for CAN content, in a manner more similar to the IGETC course approval process.

YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED

We are seeking a broad discussion of these ideas. **A new model has NOT been adopted...we have only adopted a discussion item for your consideration.** Please study the changes we have proposed, ask questions, discuss these concepts with your peers, communicate your thoughts to us, complete the survey on these issues. We need your response by October 25, 2002. A workgroup of the CAN Board will compile your comments. We plan to make a presentation to ICAS this fall regarding our process and the current status of thinking regarding the modernization of CAN. We will ask ICAS for their advice and guidance regarding the next steps in this process in light of our work and field response. Obviously, your participation in the evolution of the CAN system is critical and most appreciated.

We do not yet know the outcome of this effort, but we have already learned so much through this effort. We welcome your partnership in our effort to build the best system possible to serve our students. Thank you.

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A New CAN Articulation Model
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The chart below presents certain current elements of the CAN system and suggests changes in some aspects as illustrated below. When a change is suggested you will find a bold **recommend** comment under “The New Model”. Please read the cover introduction for background, review the changes as proposed and then complete the survey regarding these changes. Thank you.

CURRENT MODEL	THE NEW MODEL
Some BASIC Features of the CAN System	
CAN is a cross-referencing or “third” numbering system to identify courses of comparable content that may be used in lieu of one another.	No change.
CAN is a process to facilitate transfer---from 2-year to 4-year institutions and between 2-year colleges (called “free flow” in the community colleges).	No change.
Participation in CAN is voluntary.	No change, but note: CAN is now the “official” common course numbering system of the Community Colleges. While participation is not a state mandate, a college would be subject to some significant pressure should a decision be made to cease participation.
Institutions sign an agreement to participate in CAN.	No change in the nature of the agreement, but recommend the institutional agreement to participate in CAN be renewed every 5 years to ensure continuing institutional knowledge of, and commitment to, CAN.
CAN is based upon faculty-approved articulation agreements.	No change. We absolutely affirm the principle that only faculty should make academic judgments regarding curriculum.
CAN is solely for lower-division coursework.	No change.
CAN is a process for major preparation requirements.	Recommend the CAN process apply to recommended <i>electives</i> as well as <i>requirements</i> in major preparation.

The Development of CAN Descriptors

Historically, the CAN System Office has identified the need for new descriptors in a particular area through consultation with the field (primarily with faculty and articulation officers) and through CAN Board actions.

Once a discipline was identified as a focus of activity, the CAN System Office would convene Faculty Discipline Review Groups (FDRG) to discuss, develop and approve CAN course descriptors to provide to the field. These groups were intersegmental, including representatives from CSU and CCC at a minimum.

In 2001-2002 this process has been in flux as other efforts (such as CSU Core Alignment or the IMPAC project) have sought to bring forward new CAN descriptors.

Note: The previous process was more detailed than this description would indicate, but the purpose of this chart is to provide detail on the *new, recommended* process, not the historic process.

1. **Recommend** there be a regular cycle for the review of disciplines so that every discipline is reviewed every 5 years at a minimum.
 2. **Recommend** the review process be structured in a regular annual cycle, (to be determined in consultation with the colleges), that provides specified deadlines throughout the year.
 3. No change: The CAN Board and CAN System Office should continue to convene the Faculty Discipline Review Groups as necessary to conduct reviews and recommend descriptors.
 4. No change: The output of the process would continue to be the course descriptor.
 5. In recognition that faculty discipline review of course content may (and does) happen in several venues (such as IMPAC or CORE Alignment), not just through CAN-sponsored events, **recommend** that to the extent these reviews inform the decision-making process, the results should be appropriately used in the CAN process.
 6. **Recommend** that an official CAN descriptor have five required elements:
 - a. Descriptor must be developed and maintained through a faculty-based consultation.
 - b. Articulation officers shall be involved in the review.
 - c. The consultation must be intersegmental, offering an opportunity to consult to representatives of all segments participating in CAN.
 - d. The opportunity to consult must be available statewide.
 - e. The descriptor must be adopted by the CAN Board.
 7. **Recommend** any CAN descriptor brought forward by another articulation project shall be measured against these requirements and additional consultation or action shall be undertaken as necessary to fulfill all five required elements.
- In sum, CAN remains in control of the faculty discipline review process for CAN descriptor purposes, either by originating and completing a review, or by officially completing and adopting some other group's review product.

<p>There is a general, informal agreement on the content of a descriptor but there is wide variation in the current format.</p>	<p>Recommend the immediate development of a web-based CAN descriptor template to specify the minimum elements and format of a descriptor. This will facilitate the development of descriptors by faculty review groups and will make the process more efficient and effective. Recommend that the CAN System Office request the assistance of CIAC to undertake the development of a proposed template as soon as is feasible.</p>
<p>Once a CAN descriptor is approved, it is provided to the field by the CAN System Office.</p>	<p>Recommend that the CAN System Office request each campus to identify the person responsible for the coordination of CAN (in a manner similar to the annual ASSIST affirmation of the campus contact). This person would receive all notices regarding new descriptors and other CAN communication.</p>
<p>The articulation officer initiates a curriculum review to determine: (a) if there is a comparable course that could or should be matched to this new CAN descriptor or (b) if curriculum changes are needed or desirable to meet the amendments to the old CAN descriptor.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>The Validation of Institutional CAN Courses</p>	
<p>The campus validates the course content by formally articulating the course with four public or private 4-year campuses. When there are four such “bilateral” agreements in place, the CAN system office verifies the bilateral agreements and then the course is qualified to use the CAN number. If one of the four agreements is lost, the course validation is pulled.</p>	<p>Recommend that the courses be validated (for comparability to the CAN descriptor based upon course syllabi) through approval by discipline peer groups serving on central CAN course validation committees. Many implementation details will need to be determined, but the concept is based upon the following policies and procedures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recommend these central CAN course validation committees be composed of discipline faculty with a full opportunity provided for intersegmental participation. 2. Recommend each discipline be reviewed on a minimum of a 5-year rotation so a CAN course validation will last up to 5 years. 3. Recommend courses approved through the old bilateral system remain approved until the next revalidation cycle and then go through the new committee approval process. 4. Recommend to save time, expense, and travel, that maximum use be made of web-based committee consultation where appropriate. 5. Recommend there be an appeal process. 6. Recommend the course submission and approval process function in an annual timeline (to be determined in consultation with the colleges).

Maintenance and Use of the CAN Numbers

<p>An annual report system maintains the currency of CAN courses.</p>	<p>No fundamental changes, although this report process will certainly evolve with the new articulation model, the new annual calendar and advances in web-based technologies.</p>
<p>Once a campus receives CAN approval of a course, that campus agrees to accept (without further content review) any other course similarly approved for that specific CAN number. If a campus chooses not to submit its course for CAN approval then the campus is not under an obligation to accept other colleges' courses with that number.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>The system does not produce or require identical course content. The goal is to guarantee comparable content that sufficiently prepares a student in a particular body of knowledge or set of competencies. Institutions must be willing to accept variations in order to facilitate the overall goal of more seamless student transfer.</p>	<p>No change.</p>
<p>Faculty involvement is on an "as needed" basis through requests to the Academic Senates or departmental chairs.</p>	<p>Recommend the CAN system name one lead faculty person in each discipline for each segment to serve for a specified term (or until replaced). Minimally, that person should have had some leadership responsibility (such as a department chair role) and membership in an appropriate professional organization(s). That person would work with the CAN System Office to identify additional faculty in her or his discipline and in her or his segment to participate in both Faculty Discipline Review Groups and the central validation committee activities. The person could be the same as the lead for another project (such as the current IMPAC leads) or work cooperatively with that other lead.</p>