

Details on process used to “remove roadblocks” to students earning degrees

Lane Community College serves many students who complete at least 90 credits at Lane but transfer classes directly to four-year institutions without an associate’s degree. We asked ourselves whether some of these students might qualify for a degree, and whether there were any common curricular roadblocks among these students.

1. We selected a pilot group of students for investigating possible obstacles to earning a degree. We chose our Engineering transfer students from the past four years (2007-2010) because we believed that they had completed more than enough credits for our Associate of Science (AS) degree. There were 101 students in this pilot group. Only 17 students had been awarded an AS degree. The majority of these students transferred to a 4-year university without earning any degree from Lane.
2. We performed a degree audit for the remaining 84 students in the pilot group, and analyzed the requirements for the AS degree that were not completed. The most common unmet AS degree requirements were:
 - a. The requirement for three credits of Health Education and three credits of Physical Education. Most of these engineering students were planning to transfer to Oregon State University, where a health class is required, but not P.E.
 - b. The requirement for 93 total credits for the degree
3. We surveyed the AS degree requirements at all other Oregon community colleges, and found that no other college required both 3 credits of Health and 3 credits of P.E. . At every other college the Health/P.E. requirement could be satisfied with no more than 3 credits. We also found that the norm for total credits required was 90.
4. We compared the AS degree requirements to our other transfer degree requirements, and found that our Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer degree required only three credits of either Health or P.E.; and a total of 90 credits.
5. We tentatively proposed changes to the AS degree to require three credits of Health or P.E.; and a total of 90 credits for the degree.
6. We performed a “what-if” degree audit analysis of the pilot group of engineering students to see how many additional degrees would be awarded if the proposed changes were adopted. Our results showed that an additional 17 students would have been awarded an AS degree if these proposed changes were adopted.
7. We presented the proposed changes for the AS degree to Lane’s Degree Requirements Review Committee. We presented the results of the “what-if” analysis to show what impact these changes would have had on our engineering transfer degree awards. We also presented the information about requirements at the other Oregon community colleges, which demonstrated that our current requirements were unique among Oregon colleges.
8. The Degree Requirements Review Committee approved our proposal for changes, and recommended approval by our Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.