

Senate Higher Education Subcommittee (HESC) Hearing

Supplemental Materials: Academic Advising Update

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Overview

- The University of Texas at Dallas (UT Dallas) uses a Web based, student transfer system known as the Course Applicability System (CAS). This software enables students, advisors, faculty, and administrators from colleges and universities across the nation to obtain timely, consistent, and accurate information regarding the transferability of coursework from other postsecondary institutions to UT Dallas.
- Additionally, UT Dallas uses CAS with our online degree audit system (DARS) to allow students, advisors, and even parents to apply those courses to meet student-selected academic program requirements at our institution.
- Through the CAS software, UT Dallas provides an efficient, accessible, and virtual process to help transfer students move from school to school and earn degrees in a timely manner.

The UT Dallas Experience

Through CAS, UT Dallas provides:

- Access to view up-to-date (real time) student-specific course transfer credit equivalencies and interactive degree program requirements 24/7
- Students and advisors the ability to enter and store unofficial course work
- An evaluation of transfer work against any/all UT Dallas degree programs
- Accurate data to students regarding course equivalencies and applicability
- An accurate resource for advisors who advise transfer students
- An avenue for schools to present their commitment to seamless transfer between institutions
- A location to advertise statewide transfer agreements
- An attractive interface
- "FREE" access to anyone with internet access (anyone can create a *free* CAS account)
- Prospective students, regardless of where they are in the transfer evaluation/degree audit process, an electronic evaluation through CAS (also available via email) or in paper format through our online transfer guides
- An easy-to-use articulation system with a focus on the needs of functional and end-users

The University of Texas at Dallas— CAS Implementation Timeline:

Implementation and Training Period

- *July 19, 2006* – UT Dallas met with representatives from the Registrar's Office at UNT to discuss CAS partnership
- *August 1, 2006* – UT Dallas purchased CAS License
- *September 1, 2006* – UT Dallas connected CAS to Online Degree Audit System (DARS) to run a preliminary degree audit
- *September 1 through September 30, 2006* – Office of the Registrar created and met with advisory group/stakeholders (academic advisors, recruiters, admissions personnel) to plan the usage and implementation of CAS

- *September 15 through September 30, 2006* — Office of the Registrar staff completed CAS course articulation training module
- *October 2006 through May 2007* — Office of the Registrar staff built new degree audit system (DARS) to be used with CAS
- *May 1, 2007 through August 1, 2007* — Office of the Registrar staff input transfer tables for top feeder schools (60 institutions) into degree audit system
- *September 30, 2007* — Office of the Registrar rolled CAS out to advisors and recruiters
- *September 2007 and January 2008* — Office of the Registrar provided initial training sessions for CAS to advisors and recruiters
- *January 26, 2008* — **OFFICIAL KICKOFF** - CAS link was added to the UT Dallas homepage

How has CAS changed recruitment and advising to generate greater success for transferring students?

- The Office of the Registrar continues to provide on-going CAS training sessions for advisors, recruiters, and admissions staff. (March, April, and May 2008).
- As our recruitment staff visits the 100+ community college campuses throughout the state, they are offering CAS training to advisors and students.
- As part of the University's Comet Connection program (52 community colleges), UT Dallas is using CAS to illustrate to students and advisors the benefits of transfer evaluation and degree audit prior to admission.
- Recruiters are asking prospective transfer students to use CAS exclusively prior to advising sessions and events.
- CAS allows us to see and provide projections about the number of students interested in our University as well as provides us with a list of institutions from which they hail. This facilitates articulation of CAS for those schools.

What problems did CAS solve?

- Removed dependence on manual transfer guides.
- Enhanced advising process for both advisors and students.
- Allowed clear interpretation of degree requirements for specific programs and degrees.
- Created an opportunity for coordination of curriculum.
- Strengthened transfer course articulations and agreements.
- Facilitated Reverse Transfer (requires CAS license).

Unexpected benefits

- Students from institutions from all over the U.S. have learned about UT Dallas via CAS. We are not limited by state boundaries
- CAS is a convenient option for students/prospective students with time and/or travel constraints or for people who prefer self-service or "web browsing" for information
- UT Dallas has received positive feedback from students using CAS
- The University can use CAS to examine our own transfer articulation tables
- The sharing of information—anyone using CAS can review other university/colleges transfer equivalencies, degree plans, transfer guides, and layout of information available to students
- Every Texas college/university benefits each time another college/university joins CAS
- Partnerships are strengthened between institutions
- Reverse transfer through our Comet Connection to allow transfer students the option to "transfer back" to their community college to earn associate degrees while pursuing 4-year degrees

Long-term Goals

- Increase Graduation Rates
- Increase Transfer Success Rates
- Reduce Time-to-Degree Rates

University/CAS Statistics

- *September 1, 2006 – January 26, 2008* – with NO advertisement or web link from UT Dallas' home page, 51 college students "found" UT Dallas through our affiliation with CAS.
- *As of February 7, 2008*: 314 college students ran 186 planning guides.
- *As of February 17, 2008*: 375 students, 27 advisors, 6 parents, and 2 high school students – totaling 412 users – ran 239 planning guides.
- *As of May 22, 2008*: 1,769 college students, 42 advisors, 2 faculty, 29 parents, and 41 high schools students – totaling 1883 users – ran 840 planning guides.
- UT Dallas has a total of 2487 courses entered from 105 institutions in Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, and Texas.
- UT Dallas reaps the benefit of 217 postsecondary institutions, in 17 states, servicing 2,276,109 students licensed to use CAS.
 - Of those, seven states (Arizona, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, and Oregon) have implemented CAS state-wide

What other institutions should know before they implement CAS?

- CAS is nationally networked.
- Local enhancements benefit everyone on the network.
- Fall 2007, The University of Texas at Dallas installed CAS.
 - UTD immediately benefited from the interfaces installed at TCCD, NCTC and CCCCD.
- CAS is not dependent on any one degree audit application or articulation database product or structure.
- IMPORTANT: The process is only as good as the articulation database.
- An electronic degree audit system is needed to perform degree audits (DARS—*Degree Audit Reporting System*--has a seamless interface).
- Dedicated personnel are needed to maintain transfer equivalencies and provide technical support.
- The ongoing input of advisors and recruiters (stakeholders) is necessary before and after implementation and training.
- CAS becomes exponentially more beneficial to students as more institutions use it.
- Initially, there is the potential for resistance to change from paper transfer guides to an online articulation database.
- Student feedback at UT Dallas has been overwhelmingly positive. As students and advisors become more technically savvy, they really appreciate the benefits of CAS.

General CAS Background

- Miami University - with the support of the Ohio Board of Regents and the Arizona Board of Regents - developed a multi-state, decentralized electronic advising system.
- Through one entry, a potential transfer student can have direct access to course acceptability, equivalency, and applicability among all participating institutions by using each institution's existing transfer articulation agreements and course equivalency tables.
- With CAS it is possible for a student at one of the participating institutions to use an internet browser to view a degree program at another participating college or university, enter the courses taken at his/her current institution, and immediately see how the courses fulfill degree requirements at the desired school.
- Students may also ascertain whether additional courses from their home school fulfill degree requirements at the target transfer school.
- To avoid repetitive course entries, CAS provides a storage vehicle to hold the student's complete academic portfolio for future evaluations at any of the participating schools.
http://www.dars.muohio.edu/Handout_CAS.html

General CAS Features

- **Course Catalog** – students can view course information from either the 'course bank' (a table provided within CAS to store course information) OR an institution's website containing this information. The course information may include a description, requirements, prerequisites, co-requisites, syllabus, or any other pertinent information that an institution wishes to make available.
- **Course Equivalencies** – a visual display of the transfer articulation rules/tables that depict how a course(s) will be transferred from one selected institution to another.
- **Individual Student Course Storage** – CAS provides a semi-permanent storage area for students/advisors to enter course work previously taken or planned for the future. This information then produces the desired planning guides from any participating CAS institution.
- **Programs** – a display of the programs offered at each institution and their requirements. CAS can automatically generate planning guides from the same requirements used to evaluate the student's courses.
- **Request Planning Guides** – enables the student/advisor to enter the criteria necessary, such as the destination institution, program of study, and the student's home institution to create personalized planning guides. CAS then sends the student's coursework to the appropriate institution for evaluation.
- **View Planning Guides** – shows the student/member the list of planning guides that have been run and enables their viewing/printing. The planning guides typically report how the transfer courses are articulated and how they apply towards the chosen degree. Optionally, the report can also show what courses can still taken at their current - or other cross-referenced institution - which will transfer to and satisfy requirements within this selected program.