

History of ASSIST

The Arizona State System for Information on Student Transfer, or ASSIST, is a relational database containing enrollment and degree information on students attending Arizona's three public universities and ten public community college districts. The information is made available to participating institutions through a statewide data warehouse. Data warehousing is a cost-effective technology for tracking student enrollment outcomes throughout the state.

One goal of ASSIST is to provide information to assess the effectiveness of Arizona's general education curriculum and transfer model. Arizona's public post-secondary institutions have adopted a general education curriculum that if completed at the community college fulfills general education requirements at the university. The transfer model identifies specific curricular pathways for the student to follow. Another goal of ASSIST provides the community colleges and the universities information for the federal graduation rate report. This information is particularly important for the community colleges. They need to know how many former students enroll and graduate from a public four-year university.

ASSIST evolved from the statewide student data warehouse, which was one of the implementing recommendations of the Transfer Articulation Task Force in 1996 and 1997. ASSIST became official when the Arizona State Legislature appropriated resources to build the data warehouse over three years, beginning on July 1, 1998. The appropriation required that the community colleges and universities match resources. The Academic Program Articulation

Steering Committee (APASC), a committee with representatives from both the two-year and four-year post-secondary sectors, was given oversight of ASSIST. Arizona State University, which has expertise in data warehousing technology, signed a memorandum of understanding with APASC to be the ASSIST project leader.

Two pieces of legislation were key to the current existence of ASSIST. The first piece was House Bill 2451 of the 42nd State Legislature. This bill, which became law, prescribed a report on university articulation to be submitted to key state officials. The second piece, and crucial piece to ASSIST, was Senate Bill 1399. This piece of legislation basically states that universities cannot use social security numbers as identities for faculty, staff, and students after June 30, 2002. Hence, this is why ASSIST uses eight-digit, sequentially generated, identification numbers (ASSIST ID's).