

STATE OF ALABAMA

Articulation and General Studies Committee

MINUTES OF MEETING Virtual Annual Review and Planning Session August 25, 2026 - 9:00 AM

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The planning session of the Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC) was called to order by Dr. Catherine Wehlburg at 9:03 a.m.
2. **WELCOME:** Dr. Catherine Wehlburg welcomed members and guests to the virtual meeting.
3. **ROLL CALL:** Dr. Wehlburg asked Jacinta Whitehurst to call the roll to have a record of members present, even though no voting would take place at this meeting.

Members present: Dr. Seela Aladuwaka, Dr. Charles Bringardner, Dr. Charles Israel, Dr. Rhonda Gaede, Dr. Tonjanita Johnson, Dr. Eric Loomis, Dr. Catherine Wehlburg, Dr. D. Kristen Gilbert, Dr. Fred Figilano, Dr. Amy Jones, Dr. Mary Beth Lancaster, Dr. Jeff Goodwin, Dr. Bruce Crawford, Dr. Leslie Reeder, Dr. Chantae Calhoun and Dr. David Campbell. Alabama Transfers staff: Dr. Keith Sessions and Shannon Nichols. ACHE staff: Dr. Robin McGill and Mrs. Jacinta Whitehurst.

4. **WELCOME & RECOGNIZE GUESTS:** Dr. Sessions introduced two new members: Dr. Jeff Goodwin, President of Northwest Shoals Community College, who replaces Mrs. Jackie Screws following her retirement, and Dr. Nicole Carr of the University of South Alabama, who replaces Dr. Julie Estis. He also congratulated Dr. Leslie Reeder on the completion of her doctorate.
5. **PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT OF 2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT.** Dr. Keith Sessions presented an overview of the first draft of the 2025-2026 Annual Report. He discussed a summary of the key accomplishments of the Alabama Transfers staff during FY25-26;
 - Successfully hosted the virtual ACHIEVE conference.
 - Advanced the Alabama Transfers-EdVisorly Ai pilot project.
 - Enhanced the Alabama Transfers website and student experience.
 - Reviewed statewide general education course offerings.
 - Expanded promotion and awareness of Alabama Transfers.

Dr. Sessions discussed a questionnaire distributed primarily to four-year institutions to gather an overview of changes occurring in general education across Alabama. He noted that responses from a few institutions were still pending. Preliminary results indicate that some institutions have implemented significant changes, while others have made no changes.

He gave the sub-committees an opportunity to discuss their status report for each of the AGSC Priorities.

Priority 1: General Education Sub-Committee

Dr. McGill provided an update on the subcommittee's progress, including the following areas of discussion:

- The rationale for the general education curriculum.
- Historical research related to general education.
- Challenges associated with the general education sequence in Areas II and IV, including efforts to improve alignment and address differences that may affect transfer students.
- Recommended Next Steps:
 - Present a formal recommendation to the committee to rename the General Studies curricular areas (Areas I–IV).
 - Continue convening the General Education Subcommittee during FY 2026–27.
 - Propose that the AGSC establish a separate subcommittee to review articulation agreements and address issues related to Area V courses.
 - Gather broad stakeholder input on a draft rationale for the general studies curriculum and the implications of eliminating the sequence requirement.

Priority 2: Annual ACHIEVE Conference

Dr. Sessions provided an update of the 2026 ACHIEVE Conference. The virtual conference marked a milestone with 497 registered individuals which doubled the previous in-person conference. He suggested the committee continue doing the conferences virtual for the next year or two.

- Recommended Next Step:

To begin the planning process for the next, ACHIEVE online conference or in-person to be held in Spring 2027.

Priority 3: AP Credit Sub-Committee

Dr. Loomis summarized the AP Credit Report, which examined strategies to encourage colleges and universities to award college credit for AP exam scores of 3.

- Two-year institutions have implemented the recommendation; four-year universities continue to require higher scores in several subject areas.
- Committee discussions were held in the fall to better understand the reasons for the difference.
- Feedback raised by faculty indicated that some institutions consider a score of 3 insufficient preparation for students to enter second- or third-semester courses.
- A review of independent research and College Board studies found that earlier studies were criticized for not accounting for factors such as socioeconomic status and prior academic achievement. However, more recent research continues to indicate that students who take AP exams and earn college credit are more likely to enroll in college and complete a bachelor's degree.

- Independent findings show there is positive correlation between taking AP classes, getting at least a score of 3, being awarded college credits, college acceptance and completion rates.
- Reviewed a dashboard developed by the University of South Alabama (USA) comparing student performance in advanced courses based on how prerequisite requirements were met. The data indicated that students entering with AP credit generally performed as well as or better than students who met prerequisites through traditional coursework or transfer credit.
- Recommended Next Steps:
 - Expand data collection
 - Encourage institutions to award at least some college credit
 - Develop a statewide transfer policy to ensure students who successfully complete a successor course are not required to repeat prerequisite course

Priority 4: Align curriculum changes in elementary and early childhood education programs at four-year institutions with Alabama Transfers Guides

Dr. Lancaster provided an overview of Priority 4.

- Four courses (PSY 210, PSY 240, CHD 201 and CHD 210) from the two-year college curriculum were reviewed by the four-year institution to assess alignment with accreditation standards and curriculum requirements. The review focused on determining whether the course components met the applicable accreditation criteria and institutional curriculum expectations. Some revisions were made.
- Discussion was held regarding course sequencing at four-year institutions, and whether components of junior- and senior-level courses could be introduced at the freshman and sophomore levels within the two-year college curriculum.

Dr. McGill reported that all curricula for the Elementary, Early Childhood, and Collaborative Special Education K-6 Education Preparation programs have been submitted for review under the Numeracy Act and approved as meeting the statutory requirements. She also noted that several institutions have adopted the four-course framework developed by the USA and made available for other institutions to utilize and share. She emphasized that full program approval has not been granted yet, pending program checklist approval, which is required for educator certification. She also noted that ACHE prepared its annual report on implementation of the Alabama Numeracy Act by Educator Preparation Programs, including a section on implications for students seeking to transfer from two-year to four-year colleges, and she provided the committee with a link to access and review the report.

Priority 5: Evaluate the success of the EdVisorly Pilot

Dr. Sessions provided the committee with an update on Priority 5, highlighting the pilot program's activities, key milestones, and accomplishments during its first year of implementation.

- Recommended Next Steps:
 - Complete the interface redesign
 - Drive student adoption in the Fall 2026 through coordinated outreach
 - Evaluate Year 1 pilot performance
 - Complete Phase 2
 - Develop a statewide expansion plan
- Annual Usage Reports: Dr. Sessions provided an overview of the annual usage reports for official transfer guides accessed through Alabama Transfers from July 2025 through June 2026. He noted that usage remained consistent with the previous year.

A copy of the 2025-2026 Annual Report is available by request.

6. **BUDGET REVIEW & DISCUSSION.** Dr. Sessions reviewed Alabama Transfers' proposed budget for fiscal year 2025–2026, providing a breakdown of expenditures to date and the remaining funds to be spent by September 30, 2026. He briefly reviewed the budget for fiscal year 2026–2027, noting a \$200,000 increase in allocated funding.

Q&A:

Dr. Crawford inquired whether the 5% cost-of-living increase provided for Alabama Transfers staff was aligned with the state's 2% increase. Dr. Sessions explained that Troy University provided employees with a 5% cost-of-living increase. Since Alabama Transfers operates under Troy University, the 5% increase was used as the basis for the budget calculation. Dr. Crawford inquired about the costs associated with web development and whether these expenses are recurring annually? Yes, Dr. Sessions stated that they pay at least \$3,000 per month.

7. DRAFT PRIORITIES & GOALS FOR 2026-2027.

Dr. Reeder led the committee discussion on draft priorities and goals for 2026-2027. The committee suggested to carryover some priorities from 2025-2026 year, which includes the following:

- Continue convening the General Studies Subcommittee and follow up on its recommendations.
- Continue reviewing AP scores, work toward finalizing the process, and develop recommendations.
 - Dr. Reeder suggested providing Dr. Loomis with data from two-year colleges on students who received AP credit, including their performance in subsequent courses and their completion rates, and asked whether that information would be helpful? Dr. Loomis suggested that the argument could be strengthened.

- Finalize Alabama Numeracy Act requirements and update the Alabama Transfer Guides accordingly.
- Continue Phase 1 of the EdVisorly Pilot Project and assess Year 2.

8. CALL TO FOUR-YEAR MEMBERS-RECOMMEND MEMBER TO SERVE AS VICE CHAIR FY2026-2027:

Dr. Wehlburg requested recommendations from the four-year members to be considered for the role of Vice-Chair for the upcoming FY 2026–27. The recommendations will be discussed during the afternoon business meeting.

9. OUTGOING CHAIR RECOGNITION: Dr. Sessions recognized and expressed appreciation to Dr. Wehlburg for her service as Committee Chair. Dr. Wehlburg expressed her thanks to the committee.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Wehlburg adjourned the Annual Review and Planning Session at 10:55 a.m. The business meeting was to convene at 2:00 p.m. on the same day.

Chair

Jacinta Whitehurst, Recording Secretary