
Subcommittee Meeting

of

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ABBOTT SUBCOMMITTEE

*"Discussion on articulation and transfer coordination
among New Jersey's community colleges and four-year institutions"*

LOCATION: Bergen Community College
Paramus, New Jersey

DATE: July 12, 2006
11:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF SUBCOMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Joan M. Voss, Co-Chair
Senator Ronald L. Rice
Senator Martha W. Bark
Assemblywoman Jennifer Beck



ALSO PRESENT:

Melanie Schulz, *Executive Director*

Sharon Benesta, *Chief of Staff*

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SENATOR RICE: Okay, I'm going to ask the Chairlady of the Subcommittee to come up.

Assemblywoman Voss, I'm going to ask everyone to kindly take their seats.

I know that many of you got up early. I know Senator Bark had a long drive, as well.

But it was good scenery, right?

SENATOR BARK: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: I'm going to, first of all, thank everyone for coming out this morning. I know that it's been a tough week or two for those of you in the community; those of you who work for institutions and entities that didn't know, from day to day, where your lives would be, where your institutions would be.

As it relates to Assemblywoman Voss, Senator Bark, and myself, we were in the same boat. We never knew where we were going to be, where our lives were going to be, either, when we walked out of the State House -- if the decisions that were made weren't rendered to the satisfaction of most people. But we all got through it.

And I just want to commend my colleagues, because I know it's tough for the academic community. But I think, overall, the community colleges and others kind of held their own. And we'll get through this. We have a lot of work to do.

My name is Ronald L. Rice. I am the State Senator representing the 20th Legislative District. I am also the Chair -- Co-Chair now -- of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools. And we have several subcommittees, which I established as Chair. And this happens to be one of

the subcommittees dealing with some of the concerns of higher ed, and some of the Abbott district concerns, as well as others.

I'm going to turn it over to the Co-Chair. She will be chairing this meeting. And we'll be answering and asking questions.

So why don't I just turn it over to Assemblywoman Voss? And she can let Senator Bark have some words.

Assemblywoman, Chairlady.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JOAN M. VOSS (Co-Chair): Thank you, Senator Rice.

I am so happy to have you all here in Bergen County. Usually I am in the car driving an hour-and-a-half to attend meetings. And I have always been so proud of this Community College. And Dr. Winn, who is the President of the College, has just been wonderful in hosting this event. And I hope you come back here. Because, as I said, this is a wonderful community college, and really caters to the needs of every single age group. So I am very happy that you're here.

Welcome to the sixth meeting of the Abbott Subcommittee on articulation and transfer of credits. It's been a day short of nine months since we last met to discuss this issue. And the members of the Subcommittee are very eager to learn what good work has transpired with the various working groups, and what we can expect to see as a result of this effort, as well as what the implementation -- when the implementation will occur.

Let me reiterate our objective. And that is to make the transfer process easier and more transparent to our students. No one should ever have to repeat coursework that is practically identical, just because it is

given at another institution and may go by another course name. The combined frustration of students and their repetitive costs can no longer be tolerated.

In addition, the New Jersey STARS program, which is a taxpayer-funded program, must ensure that these dollars are not wasted. I'm very proud of that particular piece of legislation. And hopefully we'll be able, in the future, to transfer the program over to four-year colleges. So I think--

I also understand and realize that rigor and integrity of coursework is of the utmost concern, and it should be. However, we have almost talked ourselves out on this issue, and our colleagues now -- not members of the Joint Committee -- are hearing from their constituents that this is a problem on a broader scale.

We have been addressing the P-3 issue. Our colleagues are concerned about the complexities of all the disciplines. I direct your attention to two bills that have been introduced in the Assembly. A-3361 is a Lampitt-Diegnan-Greenwald co-sponsored bill. And A-3159 is a Doherty bill. In essence, these bills each strive to achieve the same goal. In addition, these bills appear to have bipartisan and geographic support.

I urge you to bring the members of this Subcommittee constructive information about your plans for implementation. Now we look forward to hearing from our first presenters.

I'm sorry, Dr. Winn. Would you like to say a few words, please?

JUDITH K. WINN, Ph.D.: Thank you.

I want to welcome everyone to our campus, and also thank our Assemblywoman -- our most local Assemblywoman -- for arranging to have this here, and also our State Senators for being here with us today.

The articulation issue, as you know from previous meetings and your own discussions, is a very critical one for all of us at community colleges. And we feel that it's absolutely essential that those students that we serve are able to continue their education.

I think you probably are aware by now that the student population at our community colleges is incredibly diverse. And we feel it's critical that this diversity is able to successfully transfer without loss of credits, and then be infused into teacher -- into being teachers through their teacher education degrees at four-year colleges. So we're dealing with a very important issue.

I can't stay for the rest of the meeting. This is my board meeting day. But I did want to be here to greet everyone. And I look forward to successful outcomes of the work of the committee.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Senator Bark, would you like to say a few words?

SENATOR BARK: I just want to say good morning.

Before Dr. Winn leaves, I would certainly like to say that it was a wonderful opportunity to, once again, touch base with her. She was long with Burlington County College, and she was wonderful there. And I'm sure that she is doing an absolutely fantastic job here, too.

So it was good to see you.

And I certainly want to thank you -- the opportunity to come here and see another gorgeous community college. We do have wonderful community colleges throughout the State of New Jersey. But this-- I realize why you're very proud of this one.

And it's great to be here. And, once again, I hope that we have a great meeting, with wonderful results and a fantastic report.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Thank you.

Our first presenters are Dr. Arnold Speert--

A R N O L D S P E E R T, Ph.D.: Speert. (indicating pronunciation)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: --President of William Paterson University; Dr. Peter Contini, President of Salem Community College; and Dr. Jeanne Oswald, Deputy Executive Director of the Commission on Higher Education.

J E A N N E M. O S W A L D, Ed.D.: Good morning.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman and members of the committee.

Once again, on behalf of the Commission on Higher Education, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to talk with you about developing a smooth transfer path for community college students who want to go on to a four-year college, and to achieve and receive a P-3 certificate; and, of course, to expand the model in regard to P-3 to other degree programs across the colleges and universities in this state.

The challenge in doing this, of course -- in doing a smooth transfer path for community college students is to do so without eliminating the rich diversity and the innovation that exists at the four-year colleges,

which already have programs approved for P-3 teacher certification; and to do so, also, without having to standardize all of our courses across all of our institutions.

The work that we've talked to you about before over the past several months continues, and it continues on three fronts. First of all, the P-3 competency area, which is involved in determining what courses and competencies should be expected in the first two years of a student's education to achieve a P-3 certificate. And the work in that area continues. In fact, they are wrapping their work up now, as far as establishing competencies and rubrics for assessing those competencies. And I expect you'll hear more about that this morning.

The second area is the general education area. And that's probably the toughest nut to crack. You'll hear more about that from Drs. Contini and Speert, as we talk today. But it is certainly critical across all degree areas.

And the last one is improving student advisement, an area that sometimes gets forgotten but has to be foundational. Because no articulation and transfer system that you put in place is going to be effective unless the community college advisement is improved to make sure that students know what they need to take, when they need to take it, and where it will transfer. Without that, we aren't going to accomplish what the Chairwoman spoke about, which is eliminating duplicative costs and avoiding extensive time to a degree that really isn't necessary.

So we concur fully with you, at the Commission, that we need to develop this smoother transfer process. We need to do it now, and we need to do it with high quality. There are educators working now, at the

two- and four-year colleges, to achieve that. Hopefully that will be coming to closure in the near future. The Commission is totally committed to continuing, in good faith, to try to facilitate the work, along with the Presidents' Council, in that regard. And we're very anxious to continue working with you, now that there are two bills introduced, to ensure that we achieve our shared goal of providing a smooth transfer path for students in this state.

Peter.

PETER B. CONTINI, Ed.D.: Good morning.

It's a pleasure to be here and to see you once again. A reminder that I'm pleased to serve as Co-Chair, along with Dr. Speert, on the Articulation and Transfer Coordinating Committee for the New Jersey Presidents' Council. And in that capacity, that's why we're here to give you an update and a presentation.

As we have discussed in previous meetings, and reaffirmed by Jeanne Oswald this morning, we know the importance, certainly, of articulation and transfer. We know the importance of the autonomy of our individual institutions. But, at the same time, to keep in balance the needs of our students.

So we've addressed that, we trust, through the structure of the committees that were initially assigned to a P-3 review. But it didn't take us long to realize that this is not unique to P-3. This is certainly across the board for teacher education. But, more importantly, since teacher education in New Jersey requires a coordinate major, every major that could be involved in teacher education, as well as for all students -- transferring is a really critical area of concern.

When we layer on top of that the advent of NJ STARS, it has now just put the spotlight, certainly, on the need for this transparent, seamless, smooth -- whatever terminology you want to use -- but, more importantly, the students receiving the credit, on transfer, that they do require, as a result of the hard work they've demonstrated.

One of the areas that certainly has been a tremendous value to us, in terms of moving from anecdotal to informational, was the implementation of NJ TRANSFER. That is that Web-based program that allows individual students to go online, literally, to determine what courses are being accepted within major, as electives, and may not be accepted at all in transfer. And we've been very pleased. And, certainly, the community colleges have been delighted with the implementation of that program, particularly with the leadership of Burlington County College and the staff from NJ TRANSFER.

We were certainly very discouraged, initially, when the Governor's budget came forward and indicated a zero for the continuation of that program. Through a great deal of conversation, and discussion, and dealing with the legislative leadership, we were pleased that the Appropriation Act fully supported restoration at the '06 level of \$780,000. And actually, we were jubilant over the weekend to realize that. And then that was short-lived when we learned that, through the process of the Governor signing the Appropriation Act, there was a reduction, through the approval process of the Appropriation Act, of half, to \$390,000. I can tell you, that is going to create a tremendous concern for the continuation of the program. And so we'll be certainly working collaboratively with the presidents of the state -- but hopefully with the Legislative and Executive

branches, to look at options that we may have for this year. Because there's been a tremendous investment already made, and we'd hate to see that investment lost at this particular time.

We had already looked at alternatives, in terms of reduction of costs. And so we're aware the \$780,000, as a full 100 percent continuation, may not be there. But \$390,000 just would not allow us to adequately propose -- to present the operational aspects of it. So we trust, through the support of this Subcommittee, along with, certainly, the Assembly Higher Education Committee, and others, that we will garner the support to continue and expand the funding for that program, whether it's through a collaboration with the Legislature and the Governor's Office, or in other measures.

The good news is that with the \$390,000, we will continue to operate for the short-term. And, unfortunately, due to being out of state today, President Messina -- who is the receipt, if you will, of the contractual responsibility for delivering that program through Burlington County, through the Commission on Higher Education -- is not with us today. But I can assure you he is very concerned. And we are -- we do have with us today the Director of the Program, John Scott; and Linda Tromp, a staff member, to certainly answer any specific questions about NJ TRANSFER, if that's required.

As Jeanne indicated, you'll hear, I'm sure, a little bit more detail from some of the other presenters about the work of the P-3 competencies Work Group. You have received, from us, a report that gave an update on the General Education Work Group, which basically is focusing on the general education foundation, as well as in major or degree areas.

I'll tell you candidly, this is an area that has not moved as rapidly as I would like to see it. We're almost a year away from when we met on this very topic. And we certainly have made progress in what I call *communications*. And I'm going to share some information with you, with regard to the awareness of the presidents. But we still have some major challenges in this area.

Just to remind you -- and it's in the report that you have copies of, that dates back six years-- This is the task force that talked about the principles of transfer, as well as the general education foundation pieces. And in that, there is a revised Attachment C that talks about the gen-ed requirements, in terms of whether they'd be associate degree in arts, or an associate degree in science programs. But basically we're saying, in general education, given certain areas, there ought to be a block of 45 credits for an AA degree, and a block of 30 credits for an AS degree. And by its term, *gen-ed*, general education, it would appear to me that these are general. And if they are in these areas, they should certainly be transferable.

What we've learned is some new language. And the new language is that there are specialized gen-ed. And that is because some majors require more courses that may be allowable within the major field. And so there is an overlapping of the major versus the general education requirement. And there is some of the challenge that we have.

When there is an individual articulation between a community college and a college -- a four-year college -- it works very well. But we can't do that across the whole state to try to deal with 19 community colleges and, certainly, those individual four-year institutions that might be delivering that particular major. So that's where we certainly have a major

challenge. NJ TRANSFER gives us the information, but even NJ TRANSFER is not going to resolve the problem if we don't deal with it.

Dr. Lynde, the Provost from Montclair; and Dr. Wilfrid, who is now Acting President at Mercer County College, but their Chief Academic Officer, also, had been working with various groups to look at this area, both in the public sector as well as the independent sector of our colleges. And, certainly, this is an area of great, what I call, *professional* challenge and tension, at times, in terms of the discussion. And they are moving forward, but certainly not at the pace that we would have hoped a year ago, when we talked about this.

The last group is the advisory group, the group that's talking about transfer and articulation opportunities between two and four. And with the leadership of Ann Jankowski, from Brookdale, and the committee structure that we've set up between two- and four-year colleges, I'm delighted to tell you there's great discussion going on. And I was able to attend a meeting this past May, at Rider, that brought this together. And you have before you, as one of the attachments -- I think it's toward the back of the packet -- an example of this collaboration, of putting together key information about transfer that needs to be shared early and often with students, with regard to the decision points they have to make. And they're calling this document "On Track," if I recall correctly. And there is an effort here to have some communications that would go out to students, whether it be Web-based, whether it would be in this formal document of a brochure. But the key word there is *communication*. And so the communication is not only at the transfer-counselor level, but also among the academic community, as we make changes in programs and so forth.

So I would suggest that the advisement piece is really prepared and ready to move forward -- good collaboration and continued work. And I'm pleased also to tell you that there are some examples of that already occurring, one through a Title V grant that's been occurring in the northern part of the state, which I think is going to serve as a model for other community colleges and four-year colleges in existence.

With regard to the presidents-- The committee that Dr. Speert and I co-chair-- Obviously, our reporting relationship is back to the presidents of the New Jersey Presidents' Council. And at a meeting of all the presidents on February 21, we made-- We had presentations made by these three committees: the P-3 Competency Group, the General Education and Coordinate Major Group, as well as the Advisement Group. And that solicited and developed some good -- what I call *professional candid discussion* about the role and the relationship of the two- and the four-year schools, with regard to transfer.

We also reintroduced this document that I just showed you a few minutes ago. And in the course of that discussion, we requested that the presidents become engaged in a dialogue on their individual campuses to ensure that the presidents, as well as their academic officers, as well as department chairs, and so forth, are well aware of the commitments that have been made through the principles of transfer, as well as the general education foundation piece.

We, as a result of that discussion, said that we would give some time. And if you recall, the Spring of this year has been a challenging period of time because of the economic challenges facing higher education. But we indicated that we would want to come back to the full group again

in June. And that was on June 21. We met with the full group to make a presentation on where we were with the activities. And what you have before you this morning is a summary of the feedback that we received from our institutions.

First, you have a cover memo, that Dr. Speert and I authored, that went out reminding the presidents that we wanted to see the status of their activity. And that's a two-pager here, with a survey form -- very brief, -- a reminder to them of a March 14 letter that was written by our chair at that time, Dr. George Pruitt from Thomas Edison, reminding them of the discussion that we had, and the action that was taken at that meeting. In effect, directing -- or encouraging the presidents to become involved in this discussion, and the need for the Legislature to be aware of the efforts, both of this committee, as well as-- Certainly at that point, we were well aware of the Doherty Bill and the soon-emerging bill -- Lampitt bill, that we have discussed already.

What you have then, behind that, is a summary of the 39 responses that we received. And I guess the encouraging part of the response is, number one, we have all the community colleges responding, the majority of the public four-year. We did not really expect a response from UMDNJ and Thomas Edison, because their relations are quite different -- the independents and one proprietary school. So that represents the 39. And behind that, you'll see the actual listing.

But I think the encouraging part was, number one, obviously, yes, they were engaged in the process. And there was discussion on their campus. Number two, to me, is probably the one that we would hope that we would hear, and that is, does your institution reaffirm the principles that

are contained in articulation and transfer, as well as the general education foundation agreement that was struck. And, again, very strong support.

Number three -- question number three-- And I won't go into each detail with you, because I want the committee, obviously, to have the opportunity to review it. But you will see that there are some recommendations for modification, some of which are what I call *procedural*. But some are really of substantial--

One of the areas that keeps coming up is the ability of transferring a course of a letter grade of C, and whether it should be higher than that. So that's, again, a discussion as a minimum grade level, and also dealing with the difference between course transfer, versus degree transfer, which is another issue that other states have faced. And in that issue, that may well help resolve some of the concerns about individual credit counting, particularly in the area of foundation. But as you look through what proposed modifications, you will see some continued dialogue and discussion certainly will occur.

We also asked them, when do you think your discussions may be completed. And we got a variety of responses there, some that are completed, some that will be this Fall, some will be Spring, some are ongoing. So, obviously, we need to get a little more definitive, in terms of that. And then any additional comments.

And you'll see some levels of frustration. One particular one that I point to in the community college area is that this particular president responding indicates, "I've been engaged in this discussion for 20 years. And if we can't deal with it internally, in a collegial way, maybe it's time for the Legislature to become involved." We know, as we've discussed

before, before you, that legislative solutions are not the magic bullet. And no matter what the structure is, there's going to still have to be collaboration.

But I think the piece that we're really very much aware of-- We value autonomy. We value autonomy at the community colleges. We value the autonomy of our four-year institutions. But how do we bring about what's in the best interest of the student, without violating, if you will -- compromising the autonomy, but at the same time ensuring that we do not have unnecessary duplication of course credits, and so forth?

And so this will give you an idea, at least, of a quick analysis of the summary of the institutions that have responded. We think there is progress.

I can say this: On a collegial level, I think there's been great dialogue, and great discussion, and great awareness, and understanding and appreciation of the differences and the challenges that are faced. But I think, also, as we now do a survey of our NJ STARS students -- which we are currently doing -- I think we're also going to find out where the rubber meets the road. What is really occurring for these students? And these are extraordinarily talented young people who have done very well. And I can tell you, anecdotally -- and that's all this would be for me -- I know that the top student in our college, who received academic awards, who is recognized nationally as a PTK scholar, and is also certainly very aware-- I personally had to make some phone calls to help, in terms of her review of her course credits at an institution. And so that's the kind of thing that we need to make sure isn't going to occur unless there are some real differences. Because if a student started down a certain path for a major and changed,

then they should expect that things aren't going to be occurring just as smoothly as they wanted. But if they've done the due diligence, and they have reviewed it, and they've stuck within their major, and they are looking at the general education requirement, then we would suspect that that transfer should be acceptable.

So let me just stop on that note, and turn to my very gifted colleague, President Speert.

DR. SPEERT: Oh, I thought you were talking about Ed Yaw.
(laughter)

DR. CONTINI: Well, he is also, but you're--

DR. SPEERT: First, let me start by saying, though deeply disappointed at the severe cuts to higher education, and specifically the public colleges and universities, I want to thank you all for the Legislature's inclusion of restoration, but also your support for higher education and for K-12. It's very important.

Even more so is your directing your attention to the specific problems with respect to P-3 articulation and transfer. It provided a spotlight on all of the institutions and provided us with needed impetus.

I'm assuming that the 20-year veteran is Bob Messina.
(laughter) And Ed Yaw and I actually go back a little longer. We were presidents -- we have been presidents together. We were vice presidents together. And we were working on articulation and transfer some 26 years -- 27 years ago.

Matters have improved. They haven't improved as quickly; and it relates to a number of aspects. Certainly, there's been tremendous autonomy for our institutions, and there have been proliferation of courses,

both at the community college level and at the four-year college level. And the important thing is the communication and the ability to have information that we can act upon, and to have a rubric under which we can converse and work. And New Jersey TRANSFER has provided that. And I want to echo Pete's comments about the devastating cut of \$390,000 out of the budget for New Jersey TRANSFER.

New Jersey TRANSFER was able to provide, first of all, the means by which electronic transfer of transcripts could occur. And almost all of our institutions are taking advantage of that. New Jersey TRANSFER provides us with information, and more importantly provides students across the state with information about the programs at all of the colleges and community colleges, and allows them to do one-to-one comparisons.

While it's not common or very common for individuals to transfer between community colleges, we do have situations in which individual students are transferring between senior colleges. And New Jersey TRANSFER has provided an ability to deal with that, as well, because the information is certainly useful at many levels.

Jeanne mentioned the three areas. And I think each of them is important in their own right. P-3 Competencies-- It's critical that we talk -- when we talk about professional programs, that individuals be prepared to meet the vagaries of the classroom. And you all know, from your own districts and the schools within your districts, that things are far more complex today in the classroom than they were 20 or 30 years ago. And some of those complexities -- or most of those complexities are added by communities, by lack of structures within communities to deal with certain needs. And the classroom teacher really becomes the first socializing force

in the child's life. So it's critical that when we talk about courses, we're talking about specifics of knowledge, and talents, and modes of operation.

What we did, in response to your inquiries, is -- said that talking about coursework, and credits, and titles of classes wouldn't get us anyplace. What we needed to do was look at competencies. Our accrediting bodies throughout our industry are looking at competencies and are holding us responsible for it. The problem, of course, is that some of us are NCATE accredited, and some of us have other associations. And I think the community colleges have, still, a third group.

What we did was, by talking about competencies, we were able to find the common thread in each of those aspects and begin to talk about what our courses include and what our courses should include. And that has really facilitated discussions. And I think you will be hearing more about that to come.

The great stumbling block we keep on talking about is general education. General education is a nice term, but it really, for many institutions -- or for most institutions, it becomes a way of defining the program, defining the institution versus any other institution. I would say -- and I'm always going to talk about William Paterson and my knowledge of it. I would say that there is a lot of give within that particular area. We want students to have a background in science, we want students to have preparation in writing skills, in reading skills, etc. But we also want to shape the student and direct that student to be successful throughout their college career and beyond. And that's why there is such a tremendous feeling of ownership about the general education program.

When we get involved in articulation, we're dealing with the student's first introduction to coursework and second introduction to coursework. And the language between our institutions has not been, really, common. So pushing us, and having Dick Lynde and Tom Wilfrid work together with vice presidents across the educational -- the higher educational spectrum, has been very valuable in raising awareness. But I don't think that that's where the rubber meets the road. The rubber meets the road, institution to student.

I'm going to use myself as an example. Any of my colleagues could. I think I am the only senior representative. We have two fine -- and Judy was here earlier -- representatives of the community college area. But what we've done is, we've reinstigated contact with each of our community college partners. And what we're doing is using our region as a beginning. We're located in Passaic County, so we've met with-- Our provost, Ed Weil, has met with the Vice President here at Bergen Community, and talked about shared programs and shared understandings of programs. We've had college -- County College of Morris chair people and directors over to the institution, and talked to our deans and chair people about direct relationship and courses. We've had a similar system of conversations with Passaic County College. Ed has been out to Sussex County College and Warren Community College to initiate conversations, and will be going to Essex County College and Hudson County College. That's really our sending arena.

Early on -- I think it now goes back about 10 years -- we instituted, at William Paterson, a scholarship program for the top two graduates at each of the community colleges. And we've maintained that.

So we'd love to see individuals come to us from the southern part of the state. But a lot of community college students are really place-bound. They have families, they have jobs, they are an older student cadre from our generic students. So we recognize, at least at William Paterson, that the first area we have to deal with are the surrounding community colleges in our area.

And the conversations are based upon what is the value for the student. That has to be, I think, the constant core of our discussions. And that leads me to the third part, which is student advisement. And I think it was Senator Rice who raised -- Chairman Rice -- who raised the issue about what's the difference between the community college and the college -- the four-year colleges? The education going on in the classroom is excellent in both places. And he's absolutely right.

The difference is the student. It's the student's experience. And what we have to do is look at that student -- every student -- who enters our institutions, and say, "What is the value added? Why go to our institution and not another institution? Why go to college and not just take a job?" And so I think the contact between the institution and the student is critical. And the contact ought to be not, "You need to do this, but you ought to do this. Because if you make this choice--" And we're very high-- Our discussions with our students, from freshman year on, is making proper choices -- choices with alcohol use; choices with relationships to other individuals on campus; choices to the kinds of interactions women students, for instance, should expect. And we're devoting a great deal of time do to that.

We haven't really done that as well for our transfer students. Transfer students-- One of the assumptions is, "Well, they've gone to college for a couple of years, and they know how things are." Well, many times they haven't lived that. They certainly don't have a residential program at county colleges. We do at the senior colleges. And when they come to us, we ought to take note of the fact that they have similar needs to some of our generic students.

The other thing that's true is transportation. They're wrestling with getting to our campuses. My predecessor as president used to refer to William Paterson as being centrally remote. You could pass us by in any direction. (laughter)

You want to give students a sense of feeling at home. And I'm happy to report that 1:00 this afternoon we're conducting our first transfer student orientation program, where we're talking to students. We're talking about professional -- their professional needs in the programs. But we're also talking to them about career counseling and all of those things.

I'm proud to say that we're doing it. I'm embarrassed to say that this is the first formal transfer orientation that we've held. I'm not sure -- I'd like to tell you I would have done it anyway. But I'm not sure that it wasn't a direct result of your pushing us on the issue.

So I'd say, what I'm here to report is that William Paterson is just one of many senior institutions in the state, and most of us are taking this very seriously. And most of us, as shown by the survey, are pursuing the connections. But we can't ever lose sight of the fact that it doesn't matter, really, what the institutions do with each other. The key thing is what we are doing for the students. And any student problem is a problem

we have to be able to solve. And you should have the expectation that we will be successful with a student, whether that student starts in the freshman year at William Paterson, or that student joins us in the junior year at William Paterson, or for some reason transfers in at the last moment, or is back as a second degree student. We don't have the luxury of saying, "We do this well, and we don't do this well."

And I wanted to thank you for shining a spotlight on us.

I'd be happy to answer any questions.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Thank you very much.

May I just introduce Assemblywoman Jennifer Beck, who arrived.

Would you like to say a few words?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BECK: Well, maybe first and foremost, an extended apology to everybody. I certainly underestimated the amount of time it would take me to get to your remote location. (laughter)

But I'm very happy to be here. And, certainly, this is an issue-- The Abbott school districts, and education in general -- as a member of the Higher Education Committee in the State Assembly -- really critical issues that we're facing in this state. And I'm very happy to be here today.

So thank you for taking the time to be with us.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Thank you.

Does anyone have any questions?

SENATOR RICE: Yes.

We had indicated before that time is becoming of the essence. Do you have any idea of when we're going to kind of craft the legislation that we want to craft, from all these series of meetings and committees'

input, etc.? Because I had indicated before, as Chair -- Assemblyman Vas -- that we're not going to spend a lot of time waiting, because we know that, in the past, there have been those that didn't want to participate at all.

It appears from listening to you, the majority -- pretty much all -- are coming to the table now, and really taking us seriously about where we want to go. People are starting to put various bills in. I don't like a lot of bills until we get this kind of information right. That's why I haven't done eminent domain yet. I'm not going to do 20 bills.

But I really believe that the legislation that's going to address this needs to come, and be recommended, from the members of this committee to the various education committees, etc., when we complete our business. But we can't wait.

Do you have any time frames in mind, in terms of wrapping up with those committees, their reports? There was one area, Peter, you said was very difficult. And I believe you indicated that Montclair State and some other people were working on it. Do we need to bring-- Are they here? Do we need to bring them in and kind of see where we can be of assistance, or where the barriers are? I don't think anything from the academic community is that difficult to resolve, when it comes to something like this. That's why we make them presidents and pay them so much.
(laughter)

Didn't we say pay them-- No, that's principals, right?
(laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: No, it's superintendents.

SENATOR RICE: Okay.

But do you have any idea?

DR. CONTINI: I wish I did. I wish I could tell you that on October 15 you will have before you an articulated system that will resolve the challenge that we're facing, in terms of transfer, particularly in the general education and within degree major.

I think your observation is true, that since the discussion began last July to today, this has probably been the most movement I've seen in the three-plus years that I've served as Co-Chair of this Committee. I think we've made great progress in what I call the *structural* things, like NJ TRANSFER, and so forth. But the reality of looking at what's occurring to those individual students-- I think it also happened to occur at the same time NJ STARS was created. So I think that put another impetus behind it.

The challenge that I see-- And I can tell you that I'm a collegial type of person. You know that, Senator, personally, because we worked together. I always look for the solution in a way that's a win-win. And so I would hate to see any solution be a win-lose, that there was somehow a rift that was created between the two- and four-year institutions that would create, then, almost a barrier -- further barrier of collaboration for our students. So I would really be concerned.

On the other hand, I think what we do -- what's coming clear to me now is, there has to be some motivation, some clearinghouse, some ability to say, "What if it doesn't happen?" Where is the oversight, and where, more importantly, if necessary -- I hate to even use the word *sanction* -- but encouragement, inducement, or whatever, that will cause this to occur.

And so, if in crafting-- If it has to be legislation, I think we have to keep in mind that we do not want to throw the baby out with the

bathwater. There's a lot of great things that are happening. Individually, as I said, there are some great articulation agreements from institution to institution. Can they be models? We're looking at those. But, more importantly, what if we end up with students -- whether NJ STARS students, or students who are not performing at that level but are very successful -- are being advised, on transfer, that they're not having their gen-ed piece, for example.

I understand -- and Dr. Speert and I have had these discussions -- general education, as I look at it on the chart, speaks to areas of knowledge base that we think a college graduate should have. I'm not convinced that we can't structure, whatever the major is, to say that there ought to be flexibility within that gen-ed requirement that would allow a student to transfer -- not a course-by-course -- but their degree. And so when they arrive as a junior, they're a junior, because they've demonstrated that they have communication skills, math skills, science skills. And, obviously, we know that their major may well be different. And in education--

And in New Jersey, because of education having a coordinate major, it's really critical. We don't have, at the table here, discussion. But we also realize that layered on top of the collaboration between the two- and four-year institutions is also the requirements of the Department of Education for program approval for teacher education. And so we need to look at why is it there is a limitation, for example, on course credits that can be transferred from a two- to four-year institution? If we're looking at competencies, why should we be worrying about credits? We should be worrying about what's really happening for the student.

So I think we are at a critical crossroad. When I came to your meeting last July, I have to tell you I came two days off of vacation. And I thought I was coming to talk about NJ TRANSFER. In about 10 minutes, I realized that this was serious business, and that we were -- that this was the time and the opportunity to really take a hard look at what was happening for our students. And as many war stories as you have probably heard -- and I've heard those, too -- there are great stories, too. There are very successful students.

We need to find a mix of that and find the best solution. And if the impetus of that is going to be either the awareness of potential of legislation, or the actual legislation, I trust that that mix will be not more impediment, but rather a smoother transition. So I just think we have to keep the fire under the kettle, so to speak, and keep moving forward.

I also want to clarify that Dr. Lynde -- Dick Lynde, who is the Provost of Montclair -- is not serving in terms of Montclair, but serving for the State, in terms of taking great leadership, in terms of the four-year institutions. And Tom Wilfrid -- the same thing for the community colleges. And there's been great exchange.

But I can tell you these are not easy tasks. And they're going to take-- And at a point in time, someone is going to have to say -- with all due respect, and with all the great, what I call, *professional tension and discussion* -- this is the way it's going to be. Because if not, then we're going to be talking for several years ahead.

I mean, I've talked to enough legislators to know that some of them thought there was full faith and credit. They thought I was-- "What

do you mean? When you transfer from a community college, you don't get every credit that the student took?"

So these are historical things, and we have a historical opportunity, I think, to do something in a collaboration, with great impetus from this Subcommittee. And certainly we're really delighted about the Assembly Higher Education Committee taking a serious look at this topic, also.

SENATOR RICE: Well, the reason, through the Chair, I raise that is because I had a note here -- and I spelled the word *pressure*, because I'm not the brightest person in the world. But I just can't believe that the four-years and the communities can't get together to work out those differences. I'm concurring with you.

I'm going to ask, through the Chair, for staff to get me a list of all the people involved with that Committee. I think we need a meeting with them, forthwith. And if need be-- If we have to put State people in our committee and involve them-- Whatever we're going to have to do, we're going to have to do.

But someone needs to tell me why it can't happen. I don't want to go into next year -- which is an election year -- making this a political thing. And then we get no good product out of it. I don't want to go into next year cutting higher education's budget again. We'll try to put more money in it, hopefully, next year to resolve some of these problems, because we won't have a budget deficit next year.

I want to go back and see what we can do to get this \$390 million (*sic*) restored. But I can't do all those things with people dragging their feet. And if the barrier is that someone just doesn't want to

participate -- and we get that once in a while, even in committees -- I know how to push them aside. And I think they know I know how to do that.

So, through the Chair, if we can maybe arrange a meeting with all the participants who -- Melanie -- you all think should be there, that's dealing with that one issue. It seems to me that if we can get past that hurdle, then we can actually craft legislation from what we know so that the various education committees can start to consider it. And that's where I'm at with this. And we need to move forthwith on that.

We work during the Summer. People think we don't. That's why we're here now. And I want to thank the Assemblywoman. Some do, some don't. They work during the Summer, too, because they have to get ready to bring in the next September classes. So we know they're around. You all just coordinate that.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Thank you.

As a life-long educator, I'm very conversant with the State colleges, and universities, and community colleges. One of the things I think we really need to address, and I think one of the things that is of great concern to everyone associated with the State schools is that when a person takes a course, is that course giving them the competencies that they should have? And I think that this is what we have to address.

We have tests. We test kids all the time. And I'm not particularly happy about the type of tests they get. But I think that we need to-- And I've had many people come to my office and express this. If someone takes a course in early childhood education, they should have a set of competencies. And regardless of whether they take them at Bergen

Community, or if they take them at Essex County College, the competency must be there.

Because having interviewed teachers for most of my career, as soon as I start asking questions and I see that they don't have that foundation, I don't want them in the school system. And I want to know that when I get a transcript, if they say, "I have had this course, this course, this course--" Regardless of where they took it, it must be a complete package of competencies which they can then bring to the school district. And this, I think, is what is disturbing many of the people in education -- that, are they getting the same competencies from every institution? This is something that I would personally like to address. Because I think that-- As you said, these community colleges -- that the students are really place-bound. They need to go to the place that's closest to them. But they need to get the very best education, regardless of where in the state they are being educated. And that's a major concern of mine.

DR. CONTINI: We concur.

DR. SPEERT: If I might, just-- I don't want to take issue with everything that my colleague has said, because I actually agree with much of what he said.

But I did want to-- And it's directly responsive to your comments, Chairwoman Voss. One party that hasn't been at the table, because of a number of reasons, has been the Department of Education. And I think it is critical. And I was delighted to see yesterday that Commissioner Lucille Davy is now the permanent Commissioner. And I think it will make things easier.

But I had served for 12 years on the Board of Examiners at the Department of Education and, in fact, chaired the credential review committee. And it is, in essence, the competencies that need to be paid attention to.

With proliferation of courses, the senior institutions found some students transferring and expecting that they had fulfilled all of their educational professional studies. And, in fact, there was a clamoring for student teaching at the first and second year of study when, in our own cases, students didn't go out for practicum until the junior year and didn't go out for student teaching until the senior year. And there was a need to make sure that students weren't misled. So, in part, that's where I think the two course transfer -- and I'm not arguing for it or against it. But I do think there has to be some understanding of the maturation of an individual as that individual trains for P-3 or for K-12. And it is looking at the competencies that makes the discussion, I think, real. Talking about what we call a course or what book we're using doesn't mean anything. It's what expertise are we transferring to the student, and how are we shaping that student as a professional.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: This is one of the things I wanted to ask you. I did my undergraduate work at Montclair. And every single year, we had to have practical experience in teaching, from freshman year all the way through. And I'm very upset when I have someone coming in as an alternate-route teacher, who has no classroom experience at all, and is thrust into a room, and then goes two nights a week to learn how to teach, when they are, theoretically, teaching. This, I think, is a big problem that we also need to address.

And, again, is there going to be some kind of standardization of practicum at all levels of education so that-- I mean, a lot of people think they want to be a teacher, and then they get in a classroom, and they go, "Ah, this is definitely not for me." So, I mean, we need to, you know, weed the people out, initially, who are not going to be successful for whatever reason. And those have to be incorporated, I think, into the course of study for each year, whether they be in a community college or in a four-year college.

DR. SPEERT: I think we're finding, also -- in part, I think, urged on by our discussions with our community college colleagues -- that an early experience might be a good idea, depending upon how it was structured.

With respect -- and I'm going back, now, to my years on the Board of Examiners. The alternate-route was something-- The senior colleges were not really in favor of the alternate-route to begin with. But it certainly was a much better system than emergency certification. And emergency certification led to some horror stories across the state. And I think that's why the Department -- and Peter was in the Department at the time -- I think that's why the alternate-route became the rubric that was structured.

But you're absolutely right. There, too, the only way that the Department of Ed was able to deal with the respective colleges was by dealing with competencies. When they get the exposure to teaching experience is a serious question. And I think we agree.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Anyone have any questions? (no response)

Senator?

SENATOR BARK: I think, right now, I will hold my tongue.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Thank you very much.

DR. CONTINI: Thank you very much.

DR. SPEERT: Thank you.

DR. OSWALD: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Cynthia Rice, from the Association of Children of New Jersey.

CYNTHIA C. RICE, ESQ.: Good morning.

Thank you for the opportunity to again come and testify on the status of developing a seamless articulation system between the institutions of higher education and -- that prepares New Jersey's preschool teachers.

In this year's Department of Education budget, the only area that was really neither cut nor frozen was in the area of preschool. In fact, the Abbott preschool programs received an additional \$39 million. And so for the Fiscal Year 2007 budget, Abbott preschools are being funded at \$243.2 million. That's an increase of \$100.8 million since 2004. That's nearly 71 percent.

Now, I know I'm biased, but I think that is money well spent. Because I think the reason for this huge investment is because the data is showing that high-quality preschool programs are making a difference in the lives of children, at least in the Abbott districts.

Last year, I testified on the increase in the quality of the programs. But this year we've seen that test scores have dramatically improved for those children in third and fourth grade who have experienced two years of a quality preschool program.

New Jersey DOE data indicates -- from 2003-2004 to 2004-2005 -- that's just one year -- the percentage of Abbott third-graders passing the State test rose significantly, from 62 to 69 percent, in one year in Language Arts; and from 58 to 70 percent in Mathematics. That's 12 percent in one year. Those significant increases were not seen in non-Abbott districts. Moreover, the overall Language Arts percentages in five of the Abbott districts were higher than the State average; and in four Abbott districts in Mathematics.

And I bring this up for a couple of reasons. One is to say that there has been such tremendous anti-Abbott sentiment. And decisions are being made, often, because of the *Bergen Record* articles, that I don't have to explain. All I have to do is say the *Record* articles. Everyone knows what we're talking about. I live in Bergen County, and went to my -- end of my driveway for six days in a panic as to what was going to be written. But I think that what these dramatic increases in test scores are showing is that this is money well spent. And one of the pivotal pieces of a quality education is the highly qualified teacher.

Nearly a year ago -- it was July 20 -- the Abbott Subcommittee of the Joint Committee met at Middlesex County Vocational-Technical School. I went back and read the transcript. And I saw that Assemblyman Vas said, "I think the objective today is to try to find a way to systematically coordinate the curriculum, specifically targeting the P-3 certification, early childhood education, between two-year universities and four-year universities;" and then added, "And I think, again, it is our preference to have the experts find the solutions to the problems. And those are the two- and four-year universities." But he also said, "Absent a

voluntary solution by the two-year and four-year institutions, it is our obligation and our responsibility to do so.”

From ACNJ’s perspective, it has been a very, very long year. We became involved in this issue because we were concerned that the higher ed system wasn’t set up in a way that-- Often made it difficult for perspective preschool teachers, a majority of them being nontraditional students -- they’re not 18-year-olds coming into college -- to transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions of higher education. And I tell you that our concern remains the same today.

Now, there have been good things that have happened in this year. In February, much because of the work of Dr. Contini -- very persuasive arguments -- I saw the New Jersey Presidents’ Council support the notion of a seamless articulation system. And that’s a good thing.

During this year, I have participated, mostly as an observer and an office provider, in an extraordinary group of professionals: professors from both the community colleges and four-year institutions who participated in the P-3 group, that was one of the three subgroups, and transfer and articulation work group. They met regularly and worked diligently to develop a P-3 matrix. That is this draft that I sent around. This was no easy feat to put together. That identifies the criteria that each perspective preschool teacher should have at the end of two years, regardless of the school that they attended. It’s based on competencies. And you’re going to hear a little bit more about that later.

The document is not perfect yet. But it was developed thoughtfully and in a comprehensive manner, because each of the people sitting at that table were committed to develop a system that would ensure

adequately trained prospective preschool teachers in their first two years of study, regardless of the college they attended.

They worked under the premise that they were doing what was ultimately in the best interest of prospective preschool teachers, and eventually in the best interest of children. For P-3, they were the right people to have at the table, from the beginning. And they proceeded as equals. As an outside observer, this group took to heart what you charged them to do nearly a year ago. And, more importantly, they showed us that what you asked for could be accomplished.

In preparing my testimony, as I said, I went back and read the July 20th transcript. And I was reminded on that day-- It was a very long-- I don't know. Some of -- many of us were there. It was a very long hearing. But there really was some very compelling testimony. We heard from Dr. Muriel Rand, from New Jersey City University, who, in her testimony, described her university's collaboration with Hudson County Community College, which is now a revered national model for articulation, right here in Hudson County. She said, "The only way we got to where we have this seamless transition is to stop looking at courses and look at programs. We have to get away from comparing syllabi, to comparing outcomes." This, as Dr. Rand stated, is really the general direction that education throughout the country is moving right now.

We also heard from Dr. Nancy Lauter, from Montclair State, who supported the development of a seamless articulation based on competency rather than individual coursework. As Dr. Lauter stated, "As my colleagues have done at Montclair, sitting down and going through this, course, by course, by course, is endless hours."

And one of the most compelling people to testify was -- I hope you remember -- Mr. Robert Mays, who was a student at New Jersey City University, who described the personal barriers many of his fellow prospective early childhood teachers faced in attempting to successfully complete their formal education. And then he described the system's barriers: that it was, "A blow to the ribs, after overcoming personal problems and obstacles, to face the bureaucracy of the higher education system."

In speaking about the transfer experiences of many of his friends, he stated, "To just say that it was not good enough, try again, and not only are you going to try again, but you are going to try it again and sometimes double or triple the tuition cost--"

What Mr. Mays described did not point out that the existing transfer system was not only a duplicative expense for many students, but at least for Abbott preschool teachers, it was costing the State, often, twice -- a double charge.

And I think what struck me the most in rereading the testimony a year later, was another comment by Dr. Rand. She asked, "How do we get people to want to do this?" She was quite candid about the lack of incentive, in particular on the part of the four-year institutions, to develop such a seamless system. And she said, "Social justice was not enough for everybody." And this year's journey has shown that I think she might have been right.

In reading the June 9 memorandum regarding the progress in enhancing articulation and transfer -- and then its update -- it became clear

to me, at least, that time and circumstance had minimized the urgency made clear by this Subcommittee last year.

Let me give you some examples. The General Education Subcommittee findings were that the gen-ed foundation agreements for associate's in arts and science provided the framework for gen-ed transfer and articulation between the community colleges and the baccalaureate institutions. The Subcommittee's recommendation is that the community colleges and baccalaureate institutions that have endorsed the program were to review and to recommit to the program.

Here's the problem: If these foundation agreements were working, we wouldn't have to be here today. This recommendation is promoting a system that doesn't work.

I have to tell you, I read this -- and it's good to be a pack rat, because I found a letter that our Executive Director and I wrote to then-Governor Jim McGreevey, in June of 2002 -- that's four years ago -- outlining why foundation agreements were not working and remained a barrier to many prospective early childhood teachers wishing to transfer from a community college to a four-year institution. This was an issue for us, because we were, and remain, immersed in Abbott preschool issues. And this was the halfway point for when the court said that the teachers had to have their bachelor's degree. So we were seeing-- In 2002, we had some serious problems and were worrying what was going to happen in two years if we didn't address this system of articulation. So this is a good reason to hold on to everything.

I read through it. Very much of the issues are the same four years later. Instead of transferring the credits as a block, as was intended,

some of the institutions-- I want to be fair. It is institution-specific; it really depends on what university. They're transferring course-by-course.

Now, the credits may be accepted, but often -- this is the key -- it's not that they're not being accepted, but they're not being accepted in the gen-ed piece. They're being accepted as electives. And so that's why, when you look-- When I listened to Dr. Contini talk about the survey-- Are they being transferred? Yes, but they're being transferred, often, as electives. And so the students have to take the course -- either a similar course or the same course -- over again. That's a very different issue. And how we define *articulation* really needs to be addressed.

With the existing-- And this is what Mr. Mays was talking about last year. This is what was happening to him and his friends. With the existing system, the prospective teachers have no recourse. No entity ensures that the institutions are complying with the foundation agreement that they agreed with. To be frank, it is impossible for institutions to recommit, as the recommendation suggests, when they were never committed, in the first place, to this approach.

Now, we have to talk about something. This is the elephant in the room. There are many four-year institutions -- and I have talked to many of the individuals at four-year institutions. They say, "Look, the quality is not the same at the community college." And that is an issue that we should bring to the front, and let's address it. But if the programs -- if the articulation system is based on competencies, then this becomes less of an issue, because either a student meets the competencies, or they don't. And what does it say to the community colleges? "You're not doing your job." And they will have to address that.

But we cannot-- Course-by-course is not an effective way. Meet the competencies, whether it's in the P-3 or looking at a general ed approach. So that's what we have to focus on.

Also, when we talk about the major, it doesn't appear to be any different than it is now. And it certainly doesn't address the problems that the current students are facing during the transfer process. The committee states, and I quote, "The common core professional experience will vary in credit, but generally allow two courses in the major to be taken at the community college. These will be basic courses in the major and readily transferable." In theory, this is the current system. But it is up to the individual four-year institutions to determine whether these basic courses will actually be accepted as the major and not as an elective, given by -- as an elective towards a person's major.

It is institution-specific. And the result is, more often than not, that students are taking the same or similar courses again, because they've been transferred as an elective.

Even the community college subcommittee makes recommendations under the premise that the existing system will not change. Of course, students need to receive accurate advisement, but the advisement shouldn't be based on a broken system. This subcommittee made that point very, very clear last year.

The first paragraph says, "Effective transfer advisement presents a challenge, because institutional general ed course requirements vary. Education courses transfer inconsistently. And upper division program requirements are fluid." Well, aren't these the issues that were supposed to be addressed during this year by the experts?

After reading this, I have to tell you, I was so frustrated. And I think you should be, too, after a year. And we are not the only ones. We have two Assembly bills, right now, that -- to try to remedy these transfer issues.

Now, both bills are far broader than what we've come to talk about today on P-3 issues. And they don't address a lot of these very basic problems that I've outlined in my testimony. But what both bills do is indicate that there is an acknowledgment that the seamless system will not come to fruition without some sort of legislative intervention. I know that there have been-- Many of the people who have sat on these committees have worked in good faith to come up with the various documents. I know that. And I don't want to sound critical to the work that has been done. But I submit to you that if this is the best we can do after a year to solve this problem, then it is clear that legislation is warranted.

ACNJ is willing to do whatever it has to do to support the development of legislation that meets the needs and concerns of the universities, the community colleges, and the prospective teachers with whom both entities are there to educate. It is only this way that the people that we advocate for at ACNJ -- our youngest citizens, the children -- will obtain the educational skills necessary to be successful in both school and in life.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Any questions?

SENATOR RICE: Thank you very much for your testimony. I'm very much concerned. And I'm going to request that, if you can, to expedite the system-- And I'll ask anyone else out here: Based on your

testimonies, any recommendations you have to potentially fix some of those issues you raise -- get them to us through the Sub-Chair right away, because we're going to start to move some things and get people accountable.

Most of my colleagues-- And I get concerned when legislation comes through, because it's based on what people here, and in some cases -- know if they work in the system. But I'm a product of community colleges. And the one thing that continues to come up is this area of electives, if you will. And I always say I didn't do a Ph.D. You don't call me Doctor today. Maybe I should have gone. I opted to go to law school, because when Dr. Mueller (phonetic spelling) told me -- in the Rutgers Ph.D. program they started -- I had to take statistics again, I said, "I'm not going to do that, because I took it at Essex County College and got an A." I went to John Jay, and got a B-plus, I believe. I didn't remember anything the next day. Hated it. Then I get to my master's program, and had to take it again. And they told me it was going to be simple in the Ph.D. And I said no.

But the point I'm making is that I should have never had to take it again. Statistics don't change. (laughter) But when I got to John Jay, they said that "We will give you credit for it as a math, but here it's a social science." So I wound up taking statistics again, when I could have taken another course.

In the meanwhile, I graduated with more than enough credits. They said, "But when you get to Rutgers' graduate program, you will be missing a research course. You don't have enough credits to graduate." Well, I could have gotten the research course there if they just took my statistics. Do you see what I'm saying? But I paid for this.

And so I'm very much concerned when someone tells me they can't fix something like that. The bottom line is that there are certain things that don't change. And if you come from my background of criminal justice, the theory of differential association is the theory of differential association, regardless of what school you go to. You can go to Berkeley, you can go to anyplace you want -- it's not going to change. I don't care what category it's in -- sociology over here, or criminal justice -- it's not going to change.

And so that's why I'm concerned about this barrier on little things like that. There may be one or two things that are difficult. And I say, "Okay, let's put together what we have to, to measure it, and go forward. And we can tweak later."

So I'm asking, through the Chair, for anyone who has recommendations on your report -- and I kind of agree with the things that you are saying. And I also agree with the people earlier, and people like Peter, who make it clear to us -- at least to me -- that regardless of how many institution representatives come together that really want to do this thing right, there are the one and two that still want to be the barrier -- something that elected officials are confronted with on a daily basis, whether it's in the crowd disturbing a meeting, or someone in Trenton being the barrier. We're going to move something.

And I can say this: Those who don't want to cooperate, in some kind of way, they're going to be the victim. And I'll say it for the record, and the media can print it: They will be the victim of my wrath. I will cut their budgets. I will find whatever I can legally do to say, "Since

you don't want to help, we're not going to help you, period." And so I think that needs to be said, for the record.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. RICE: Senator, I don't know if it's that individuals are being barriers. But when you're going to change a system, that means everyone is going to change a little bit. And I think that that is tough. Change is tough for all of us, regardless whether you're a university provost or just a parent.

So I think that that needs to be addressed. I think the focus has to be on the students and to ensure that we are training them in the best way. And that means addressing some uncomfortable issues. It's not easy to come and say, "Look, some community colleges are better than others. And some aren't doing their job." And that's clear from what we're hearing from the four-year institutions. That's very hard to say. But at the end of the day, we're responsible -- or they're responsible for giving a quality education. There are State dollars being paid for it. And there needs to be accountability.

It appears that going through competencies is a way of being fair, and it's a way of saying, "Regardless of where; it doesn't matter what the course is called. You're going to have to prove, student, that you can meet these courses. These are the standards. This is how you're going to go about it. And these are the instruments that we're going to use to assess." That's what the P-3 Work Group looked at. I think that that makes sense.

And I also think it should minimize the fear -- the real fears of four-year institutions who are saying, "Look, some of the students aren't as adequately prepared as those who started at our institutions." If they've

met the competencies -- if they haven't, then they're not ready for that program. I think that that's a way of being fair to everyone.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Did they develop specific rubrics to assess these competencies? Because I haven't seen them, and I would like to.

MS. RICE: I did hand it out. That's what I handed out.

But Dr. Adesanya, who is in the audience, I think is going to testify next, or close to next. She's going to talk about how-- And it really was from a non-academic. To watch this happen, to talk-- There was an exchange of the substantive issues. And the reality of how we're going to do this -- how is a professor going to do that -- that's the conversation that's-- It's not enough to develop the standards. But how are we going to implement it, and how are we going to ensure that the competencies -- a student has the same competencies once they finish their second year?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: It's almost a situation like what we deal with -- home rule.

MS. RICE: Right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I mean, everybody is very proprietary over their institution and their curriculum. And I don't know how we get over that barrier. You see it even between State universities and private universities. And education should be education, regardless of where one gets it. But that's not the situation, unfortunately.

MS. RICE: That's right.

Thanks very much.

SENATOR RICE: Madam Chair, through you, let me just say this, because I don't usually bite my tongue. I'm a little older than some

people in here. I've been around. Those people who are barriers need to get out of the way. I'll call them *barriers*. Some may be intended; I don't know which ones. But I'm smart enough to know that people have their biases, including the State. They don't want a change, because it messes up "their system." But they're never criticized, because there is never a challenge.

I know that there are some folks who don't want certain students from certain geographic areas or populations within their systems in great numbers, regardless of how talented they are. I know that there may be some who don't like a lot of different languages, in terms of diversity in their system.

And so I'm not going to be naïve enough to say that I don't have at least one out there who may think that way, or it's a simple ego. We're going to bust those bubbles. They need to know that. So there isn't any use in me hiding that. I've been there.

And so any recommendations you have, anyone else has, please get them to us. Because when I finish reading this stuff-- If I have to write the recommendations, if there is legislation, somebody is not going to be happy. It's going to cost a lot more money paying lobbyists, and coming down and knocking on their doors and mine, just to tell them, "I don't want to hear from you anymore."

So I think you're doing a great job collectively. But if those people I call "barriers" are here, or their representatives, please understand what I'm saying. If they're not here, anyone who would like to take messages back can take it back to them -- that the Chairman is not a happy camper right now.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR RICE: The Chairman of the Joint Committee, not so much the Chair of the Subcommittee. I don't want to get beat up.
(laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Assemblywoman Beck has a question.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BECK: Just a quick question, which is: You've talked a couple of times about competencies and the need to make sure that a student has them. Are you suggesting -- or maybe someone else is going to come up and testify on that issue -- but are you suggesting an exam, a written, oral exam? I mean, how do you do that?

MS. RICE: Well, if you look at the rubric -- and I'm going to let Dr. Adesanya talk.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BECK: Okay, so that is going to be addressed.

MS. RICE: Right. She is going to talk about how it was developed and what instruments would be used, because it depends on the standard that we are attempting to, or they're attempting to, demonstrate -- that specific competency. So she would be able to talk about it. They're the experts.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BECK: Okay, good. Thank you.

MS. RICE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I'm going to call Regina Adesanya to testify, since we segued right into it. (laughter)

R E G I N A M. A D E S A N Y A, Ph.D.: Good morning, everybody.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Good morning.

DR. ADESANYA: I'm Dr. Adesanya, and I'm an Assistant Professor in Early Childhood Education at New Jersey City University.

I'm very pleased, on behalf of my subcommittee, to be here to speak to you about the process, in which we engaged, to come up with this draft competency matrix.

Just to let you know a little bit about the subcommittee: It was a very interesting experience, because being relatively new to the higher education community when I entered this meeting -- and knowing that there were two-year colleges there and four-year colleges there -- I know that all of us entered with a sense of trepidation and fear. It was kind of like, we don't want to give up our own turf. And how do we work together?

But fortunately for this group of people that came together, all of us, right away, put aside our own individual institutions and began to think about what was best for our students. And I think that's because, in early childhood education, for the most part, we work with the nontraditional student. We work with young mothers who have -- who are coming back to school. We work with people who don't fit the standard mold of student. So we've had to make accommodations all along. And we all came together right away. Within 10 minutes of getting to know each other, everyone in the meeting was like, "Oh, yes. Well this is about the benefit of the student." So keeping that in mind, I think that we were able to dismiss, right away, some of the tension that would come because of our own individual institutions.

The colleges involved-- And just to give you a sense, it was a really broad-based group. It was Brookdale Community College, Burlington

Community College, Caldwell College -- one of the privates -- Cumberland Community College, Hudson Community College, Montclair State University, William Paterson University, and my own institution, New Jersey City University.

All of us are early childhood educators first. And I would guess we are probably -- we have allegiance and loyalty to our colleges. But that's our second thing. When you're an early childhood person, a preschool person, that comes first in life.

So I think the first thing that we set out to do was to try to figure out what was going to be the objectives for this group. And we started talking in a course-by-course way. Of course, that's the normal way. All of us have courses, so we started with, "Well, we can probably take Intro to Education." "Well, I don't have that. I have--" And, right away, we were like, "This is crazy. If you don't have it, and we can't come to an agreement about what course, we might as well stop the discussion and figure out another way."

And the second issue that came up was that the four-year schools are required to be accredited. Most of the public schools are accredited by NCATE -- National Council for Association (*sic*) of Teacher Education -- so we are all accredited. And we were concerned that if the two-year colleges weren't accredited, that -- you know, we're responsible for the accreditation and what the students know. So that was an issue that came up.

But there was a little wrinkle in the NCATE, in that NCATE also says that the schools have to-- In your discipline, you need to have the approval of your discipline. And at that point, we talked about the

National Association for Education of Young Children. All of us agreed on that. That organization is the body that all preschool people agree is the leader in early childhood. They kind of set the standards for early childhood education. So it doesn't matter whether you're a two-year person or a four-year person.

When you're thinking about standards -- what teachers of young people need to know, what early childhood programs should be like -- we all agree that NAEYC is the standard-bearer.

So, at that point, we were able to take a step back and say, "Well, if we agree on this, why don't we look at how the standards--" And we all agree that it should be a standards-based education, because the issues of quality came up. And it wasn't the issues of quality -- whether or not one college provided a good course or not. It was more of, "Well, if the two-year students in the community college have this, would the four-year students have this?" "Well, our four-year students might not be taking that, because they're concentrating on general ed." So it was more, not looking at the quality of courses.

What we decided, then, was to look at the NAEYC standards, and there are five standards. The five standards are: promoting child development in learning; standard two is building family and community relationships; the third one is observing, documenting, and assessing to support young children and families; the fourth one is teaching and learning; and the fifth one is becoming a professional. So that was how we organized our work. We started with those standards. That was something that we all agreed upon. Whether you were accredited or not, when you developed your courses you would try to align your courses to meet those

standards. So every institution, two-year and four-year, that had preschool courses -- that's how they focused it. So it didn't really matter whether you were teaching literacy. Your literacy course was going to meet the standard established in the NAEYC guidelines.

Then we said, "Okay. Well if we agree on these standards, as universities and as two-year colleges, what will we expect the student to know at the end of two years?" And we took the approach of saying, "What will we expect all of the students to know?" Not the two-year college students, not the four-year college students, but all of the students that were going to be preschool teachers.

And I think, Assemblywoman Voss, that kind of speaks to your question: How do we know that the students are really getting the education that they need in order to be well-qualified teachers at the end of the day?

So, for example, if standard one, which is promoting child development and learning -- we all agreed on that -- then the outcome that we came up with-- We said, "Well, there's one major outcome. For the two-years, we expect that the student should at least be able to demonstrate a beginning knowledge and understanding of children's characteristics and needs." And that's in your document. At least at that level, they should be able to tell me what a 3-year-old is like. What is it between birth and 3 that children can do? What is it that the primary grade child should be like? What are we expecting, in terms of social skills, in terms of physical development, in terms of emotional development for a child between the ages of 5 and 8? We all agreed that those were important kinds of things for the beginning student to tell us.

Those kinds of things -- just to think about courses. In the back of our minds we're all saying, "In my college, what is that going to be?" Just to think about it-- That would be covered, maybe, in a child development course, it might be covered in the intro to early childhood course.

But we didn't want to get bogged down and to specify what course specifically-- Because if you met these competencies, and if the two-year college-- Of course there's some faith involved here. But if the two-year college says that you meet the competencies, you're able to demonstrate knowledge in these criteria that we've come up with through the various suggested assessment tools, and the school certifies that you have met those competencies, when you get to the four-year college, the four-year college should give you credit or accept those competencies for credit in their schools. And that's pretty much how we approached every topic.

Now, I have to say that this wasn't easy. We've met almost every month. Sometimes we met twice a month. Sometimes we talked on the phone. We did a lot of e-mailing. Because the specifics and the words are as important as the ideas. So we've-- This is our final document -- that's still a draft.

And our last meeting was very interesting, because I think our next step -- at least our next thought-about step -- would be to develop the specific assignment and rubric. And then we said, "Oh, if we do that, that starts to take away some of the freedom that the professors have. But if we say this is what's suggested, this is the criteria, this is what we're expecting, then you can develop your own individual course, or assignment, or what

the individual college expects the student to achieve in the way that that college, or that institution, or that program would like. But the student would still have the competencies, and meet those requirements at the end of the day.”

And then what my vision would be -- that when they come, and their transcript comes, there is some kind of little statement that comes with it saying they’ve met these competencies in these areas. And they’re ready now to move on to the next level in the preschool program.

This is really only-- We’ve only talked about P-3 certification. But I think our feeling was that we came together around something that we all could agree on. And that’s what makes it -- that’s what made this work. Will it work in other areas? That I cannot say. They wouldn’t put me on another committee. They want to keep me on P-3 -- that’s what I know. (laughter) But it’s true that I think all of us realize that the benefit has to be for the students.

And I think that’s it.

The question you asked -- you raised earlier about the practical and field experience-- Most of the types of recommended assessments require the student to do something with either children or be in the field. So it’s not-- Maybe in the school they’ll have a specific practicum, but the-- Like a child study-- You can’t do a child study in the classroom -- in the college classroom. You have to go out and meet with children, interview with the family. If it’s a family interview, you have to be out in the field. So most of them are in the field. And I think a lot of the schools have moved to have earlier practicum, if you will, because if you don’t do it early, you might get to your junior year -- you’ve already spent most of your

money -- and you find out that teaching is not for you. And then, when you start over, it will be expensive, because you really do have to take a step back and figure out something else to do.

I think we've enjoyed working on this process. It's not been easy. There is more work to do. I think what we envision, as our next step, is that this would be folded back into the main work group. And the work group would move it forward through the college hierarchy, because, certainly as professors, we don't have the responsibility or the authority to do that. And as you've heard from the presidents of the college, they're well aware of the work that's been done. And I think they'll be the ones to move it forward from here.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I just had a question. I certainly support the idea of assessing competencies. But I think that, going back many, many years, when I was doing student teaching-- You have to have more than one person doing the assessment. And I think that you have to have a consensus: "Is this person --" so that the competencies are really, really being addressed. And I think that that's something that maybe can be built into the process. Since, with early childhood, paper and pencil tests are not -- it's really not. But you need more than one person, I think, to really assess the competency of the person who is going to be a teacher.

DR. ADESANYA: Well, we're expecting -- at least at this level -- that what will happen -- that some of these competencies might occur in different places in the college. So it might be in a psychology course, it might be in an education course, it may be in different places. But our discussion centered around, perhaps, the early childhood departments at the two-year college, gathering the information from all of the various

courses and information that the student presents, and then making the decision. We certainly anticipated that it would not be a decision that one professor would make, based on all of these competencies.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: It can't be arbitrary and capricious.

DR. ADESANYA: Right, exactly.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Anybody have any questions?
(no response)

We have some sandwiches and some refreshments in the back.
We would like to take a 15-minute break, and we'll resume shortly.

Thank you.

(RECESS):

AFTER RECESS:

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: If we could resume the meeting.
Okay. We have one more presenter, and that is Ave Latte, of Brookdale.

Good afternoon.

A V E L A T T E: Good afternoon, and thank you.

I know my name is a challenge.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: No, it's not. It's nice.

MS. LATTE: Oh, thank you.

I'm Ave Latte. I'm Education Coordinator and a faculty at Brookdale Community College, for the education department. And I also have served on the statewide collaborative professional P-3 working group, among the two- and four-year institutions. And as you know, it's attempting to define a statewide outcomes process for articulation.

I'm here to tell you about a very new initiative from the National Association of the Education of Young Children -- and that's NAEYC -- that would allow community colleges to obtain NAEYC accreditation. NAEYC is a nationally recognized body, setting standards for excellence in early education for over 75 years. And over the past year, NAEYC piloted a rigorous accreditation process for associate degree early childhood programs at community colleges, that establishes standards of excellence as demonstrated by a peer review board.

Earning accreditation assures high-level quality program excellence for early childhood associate degrees among public and professional groups. More importantly, accreditation meets a common core of professional standards, providing quality assurances for articulation between two- and four-year institutions.

After the first wave of associate degree accreditation was met in May of 2006, NAEYC expanded their opportunities for all states to join into the process. As a result, a volunteer, peer review training program recently began in New Jersey, with the first group representing two-year institutions, beginning this process in the Fall of '06.

By demonstrating excellence through this accreditation process, community colleges will be ensuring that they are high-quality programs, as

the NAEYC standards are aligned with the standards that are required for four-year institutions, known as NCATE.

For New Jersey community colleges, the move toward NAEYC accreditation is very timely. To be frank, we know that our colleagues at the four-year institutions are concerned about the quality at the community colleges, particularly since we are not obligated to adhere to the NCATE standards. By beginning the process of becoming accredited by NAEYC, New Jersey community colleges would be making a good-faith effort to indicate a quality education is important to all of us in the higher education community.

Brookdale Community College, along with other two-year institutions, recognizes the benefit of national accreditation and is very interested in pursuing this opportunity as a means to ensure program excellence. While the process is in its infancy, we feel this is a critically important step in bridging the programs and ensuring quality across two- and four-year institutions.

For too long, we feel early childhood education has been given -- not been given its fair attention. But with the P-3 certificate, and the new NAEYC national standards for accreditation, community colleges can now assure quality for their programs and expand opportunities, we feel, for teachers and, more importantly, for the young children in our state.

And, Senator Rice, I just wanted to address -- particularly from Brookdale -- that we think this accreditation would address issues of quality and assure quality to the four-year institutions. We both hold NAEYC standards in the highest of regards for quality programs. And while we see, at Brookdale, that there are some barriers to achieving accreditation --

particularly with funding issues and the arduous process that it would take to meet accreditations -- we are willing to take that on. We find it to be part of the answer, perhaps, to some of these barriers that we're presenting today.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Thank you.

Any questions, Senator?

SENATOR RICE: No.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Assemblywoman? (no response)
Senator?

SENATOR BARK: No, just thank you.

MS. LATTE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: Does anybody else wish to speak, make comments, ask questions? (no response) Open forum, speak now. (no response)

SENATOR RICE: Madam Chair, let me, on behalf of the Joint Committee as a whole, thank everybody, once again, for coming out.

And, certainly, the Assemblywoman -- Chairlady -- would do that on behalf of her committee.

But let me just indicate that I don't want people to walk away thinking I'm arrogant and all those kinds of things that I am. (laughter) But I do want you to know that I am very serious, and so are members of our Committee. Assemblyman Joe Vas is not here. And I think you heard the same concerns at previous meetings, in terms of how important it is to get this done -- but get it done right, as best we can, in a reasonable time frame. It has been a year. People are doing things, now, that may not be in

the best interest of what legislation should look like. And we're going to have to take a look at that and consider it.

So I'm very much concerned about the higher ed component. And I'm going to encourage you, once again, to send me recommendations as to how to break those barriers. I'll think of some of my own. I would hope that this Subcommittee will do the same thing. Because we are going to push forward.

I'm also going to go back and take a look at how we can, maybe collectively, get the \$390,000 back. I think you're okay for this budget session here. But in talking with staff, around October we may have to look at some legislation to try to do some appropriations back in. Because, certainly, transfer -- the site is going to probably -- the fund is probably going to run out. And I think that's important. If we're committed, as a Committee, to make these kinds of things happen, in terms of the whole agreement and how we actually address the transfers, then we can't take away some of the tools in place that are starting to move it forward. That's a contradiction in itself. And I don't like contradictions, when they're obvious to me. But we did have a tough budget year, and everybody took a little bite. It doesn't mean that you can't go back for more. It's like serving dinner. You get a little bit now. And after you finish that, by that time, I'm going to have a little bit more cooked. So we'll have some more cooked later. Okay? (laughter)

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VOSS: I want to thank everybody for coming. As a lifelong educator, and a politician -- which is a dangerous situation (laughter)-- When I start talking, I always go, "My two

professions, my mouth runneth over.” I just really want you to know that -- please contact my office. Education is my passion. It’s where I spent my entire life. And I think that it’s very important that legislation is crafted by people who have an intimate knowledge of what goes on in classrooms and in the field of education. And so feel free to contact me.

Thank you all for coming.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)