



UNLOCKING THE POWER OF DATA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SOUTH CAROLINA TRANSFER & ARTICULATION CENTER WINS PESC 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BEST PRACTICES COMPETITION**

**GEORGETOWN'S CHARLES LEONHARDT AND AACRAO'S SPEEDE COMMITTEE  
HONORED WITH DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS**

(Washington DC) – The Board of Directors of PESC – the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council – is pleased to announce the South Carolina Transfer & Articulation Center (SC TRAC) as the winner of PESC's 12th Annual Competition for Best Practices. This submission received high praise from the Board Review Committee for Best Practices because the implementation focuses strategically on a high risk population (transfer students) through collaboration and the use of centralized resources and infrastructure, resulting in a robust, statewide solution that streamlines student transfer steps.

"SC TRAC...is a web portal designed to improve college course transfer and articulation in the state," according to a South Carolina Commission on Higher Education statement issued when SC TRAC was launched in March 2010. Developed by AcademyOne and implemented with the participation and support of all South Carolina public institutions of higher education, the web-based portal assists students and supports college and university staff members by providing online tools that make it easier for students to transfer academic credit by evaluating how higher education coursework transfers among and between all of South Carolina's two- and four-year public colleges and universities.

"Neither higher education institutions nor students have been insulated from the negative financial effects of the current economic downturn. At the same time, obtaining a college degree has never been more important to individuals and indeed to the nation. Now more than ever, states must do everything possible to eliminate barriers to degree completion and to ensure that students avoid additional expenses and delays. AcademyOne is helping South Carolina implement cost effective technology-based solutions that work for students, institutions, and the state," said Dr. T. Michael Raley, Director of the Division of Academic Affairs and Licensing at the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

According to David K. Moldoff, AcademyOne Founder & CEO, "states that tackle these trends head-on and develop a coordinated approach to college transfer and evaluation of prior coursework are going to be ahead of the game when it comes to workforce and economic

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development. The investment will ultimately save money and provide improved service to citizens.”

One of the key reasons SC TRAC was selected as the best practices winner is because the system utilizes standards-based web services registered in PESC’s EdUnify, a public registry established to bridge disparate information systems. SC TRAC’s enabling applications are designed to exchange data between institutions and South Carolina’s customized state portal, providing on-demand prospective student services and state-specific, real-time information. Utilizing web services affords code reuse and introduces a level of abstraction shared across different authoritative data sources, buffering the client from technical changes and lowering the cost of sustaining decentralized links.

“From the onset, this system has really assisted transfer students in bringing credits from former institutions,” states Dr. Barbara Chesler Buckner, Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation at Coastal Carolina University. “One student actually walked away with 15 more credits than were originally granted. The Equivalency Synchronizer makes the system fast, easy to navigate, and effective.”

"SC TRAC is a game-changer for students and families in South Carolina," said Clint Mullins, a Program Manager in the Division of Academic Affairs and Licensing at the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, who co-directs the project. Upon notification of the award, Mullins said, "The Commission staff would like to thank PESC and its Board Review Committee for Best Practices for this distinguished award and to acknowledge the value of the work of the organization and its members who are dedicated to helping 'unlock the power of data' by activating technical interoperability and promoting meaningful standards for educational data exchange." Mullins went on to say, "Most importantly, the exceedingly positive results we are experiencing in South Carolina would not be possible without tremendous ongoing support from the state's public institutions of higher learning and their dedicated personnel, the members of South Carolina's Education and Economic Development Coordinating Council, the South Carolina Education Lottery, and the South Carolina General Assembly. On behalf of all students who aspire to obtain a postsecondary credential, we sincerely thank everyone who has helped to make this system and this award possible."

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education serves as the coordinating board for the state’s public postsecondary institutions. South Carolina has 33 public higher education institutions, including 13 four-year universities, 16 two-year technical colleges, and 4 two-year regional campuses of the University of South Carolina which collectively serve over 185,000 students. In a 2010 report, 15,658 students enrolled in public institutions in the state in 2008 were transfer students, an increase of 9.6% from the previous year and an increase of 16.8% from two years prior. In addition, over 11,000 students take college courses annually while enrolled in high school.



**TEXAS CONNECTION CONSORTIUM AND SUNGARD HIGHER EDUCATION  
RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION IN 12<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL BEST PRACTICES COMPETITION**

Receiving an Honorable Mention is ***Texas Connection Consortium and SunGard Higher Education***. This submission highlighted the collaborative and successful process whereby all Texas high schools, required to use the Texas Records Exchange System (TReX) web-based application based in EDI, are automatically converting to PESC XML in order to electronically exchange student transcripts to the 42 public colleges and universities of higher education throughout Texas.

The Best Practices Competition is held each year by PESC to promote innovation and ingenuity in the application of standards for business needs. An Awards Ceremony will be held immediately prior to the keynote address of PESC's Spring 2011 Data Summit being held April 26-28, 2011 in Boston. Prior winners of PESC's Annual Best Practices Competition are listed below.

**GEORGETOWN'S CHARLES LEONHARDT AND AACRAO'S SPEEDE COMMITTEE  
HONORED WITH DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS**

At its Awards Ceremony, PESC will also honor ***Charles Leonhardt***, Principal Technologist at Georgetown University, and the ***Standardization of Postsecondary Education Electronic Data Exchange (SPEEDE) Committee*** of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) with "Distinguished Service Awards."

Charlie currently serves as Chair of PESC's Electronic Authentication and Electronic Authorization (EA2) Task Force, a volunteer position he's held since the launch of the EA2 in 2007. He is a long-time advocate of efficient and cost-effective use of technology and standards and served as Chair of the Common Solutions Group. While AACRAO itself, a founding member of PESC, was honored in 2007 for its administrative support in launching PESC, the AACRAO SPEEDE Committee, founded in the early 1990's have been and continue to be the pioneers of data standardization across education. Over the years and starting with the first EDI transcript developed over 20 years ago (which is still being implemented), AACRAO's SPEEDE Committee continues to educate the community on the complexities of electronic data exchange, on standards, and members of the Committee participate in almost every PESC development workgroup. PESC is pleased to honor both for their tireless efforts throughout the years.

Past winners of PESC's Annual Best Practices Competition include:

- **2009** – **College Foundation of North Carolina** Electronic High School Transcript System
- **2008** – **California Community College System** California Statewide Electronic Exchange Program (CCCTran) and **University System of Georgia Board of Regents** Implementation of High School and Postsecondary XML Transcripts
- **2007** – **Sinclair Community College and Wright State University** Exchange of Electronic Transcripts via Ohio Board of Regents Articulation and Transfer Clearinghouse
- **2006** – **Data Quality Campaign (DQC)** Using Data to Improve Student Achievement
- **2005** – **NCHelp Electronic Standards Committee** CRC Beta Test



- **2004** – **U.S. Department of Education, FSA XML Registry and Repository for the Education Community, User Guide**
- **2003** – **Schools Interoperability Framework Association SIF Specification**
- **2002** – **ELM Resources ELMNet and NCHelp Meteor Advisory Team Meteor**
- **2001** – **NCHelp Electronic Standards Committee Common Account Maintenance**
- **2000** – **University of Northern Iowa EDI Bridge**
- **1999** – **Ontario Universities' Application Centre A Model of an Electronic Standardization Initiative**

Past recipients of PESC's Distinguished Service Award:

- **2009** – **Kristi Blabaum, NASLA; Michael Morris, ACT**
- **2008** – **Steve Biklen, NASLA; Dave Moldoff, AcademyOne; Clare Smith-Larson, Iowa State University**
- **2007** – **Judith Flink, University of Illinois**
- **2006** – **AACRAO; Jim Farmer, Georgetown University**
- **2005** – **Ed Hauser, SunGard Higher Education; Keith Riccitelli, Sallie Mae; Tom Stewart, AACRAO SPEEDE**
- **2004** – **Tim Bornholtz, US Department of Education; Mark Bolembach, SunGard Higher Education**
- **2003** – **Holly Hyland, US Department of Education; Adele Marsh, AES/PHEAA; Dallas Martin, NASFAA; Bruce Marton, University of Texas at Austin**
- **2002** – **Jerry Bracken, Brigham Young University**
- **2001** – **Steve Margenau, NASLA; Adele Marsh, AES/PHEAA; Bruce Marton, University of Texas at Austin; Jeanenne Rothenberger, Purdue University; Michael Sessa, NASLA**
- **2000** – **Rebecca Babel, ELM Resources; Ellen Blackmun, NASFAA; Steve Margenau, NASLA; Karl Van Neste, College Board**
- **1999** – **David Leonard, USA Group; Tim Pavlick, KPMG; Dave Stones, Harbinger**

**About PESC**

Established in 1997 at the National Center for Higher Education and located in Washington, D.C., the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) is a non-profit, community-based, 501 (c)(3) umbrella association of colleges and universities; college and university systems; professional and commercial organizations; data, software and service providers; non-profit organizations and associations; and state and federal government agencies. Through open and transparent community participation, PESC enables cost-effective connectivity between data systems to accelerate performance and service, to simplify data access and research, and to improve data quality along the higher education lifecycle.

PESC envisions national and international interoperability, that is a trustworthy, inter-connected environment built by and between communities of interest in which data flows seamlessly from one system to another and throughout the entire eco-system when and where needed without compatibility barriers but in a safe, secure, reliable, and efficient manner. To achieve the mission and the vision, PESC organizes activities to: accelerate performance and service, reduce cost, lead collaborative development, set and maintain common data standards, promote best practices, link public and private sectors, and serve as data experts.

While PESC promotes the implementation and usage of data exchange standards, PESC does not set (create or establish) policies related to privacy and security. Organizations and entities using PESC standards and services should ensure they comply with FERPA and all local, state, federal and international rules on privacy and security as applicable.

More information about PESC can be found at <http://www.PESC.org>.

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## **Improving College Transfer with the South Carolina Transfer and Articulation Center (SCTRAC.ORG) Website – State Launches Web Portal Devoted to the Transfer of Academic Credit among Public Colleges and Universities**

**Columbia, SC, March 29, 2010** – The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education is very pleased to announce the launch of a web portal designed to improve college course transfer and articulation in the state. This system has been developed by AcademyOne, Inc. of West Chester, Pennsylvania, with the participation and support of all South Carolina public institutions of higher education. The web-based portal will assist students and support college and university staff members by providing online tools that make it easier to transfer academic credit and evaluate how higher education coursework will transfer among South Carolina's public colleges and universities. The web portal, called SCTRAC (the South Carolina Transfer and Articulation Center) can be accessed online at [www.sctrac.org](http://www.sctrac.org).

Developed under the auspices of South Carolina's Education and Economic Development Act, SCTRAC provides a first of its kind online resource that will help improve student advising and persistence across institutions, help provide seamless pathways for adequately prepared students to move directly into institutions of higher education, and foster student degree completion in the state. The system provides students with the information and tools needed to make sound academic decisions and better choices by avoiding taking courses which will not count toward a degree. Using the site, students can easily:

- locate information related to transfer, including application deadlines, requirements concerning the transfer of credit, and contact information for institutional transfer officers;
- access transfer agreements that exist among the state's public institutions as well as statewide transfer agreements; and
- search for course equivalencies to determine how courses taken at one institution may transfer to another.

In addition to helping students make sound academic decisions, the transfer and articulation portal enables higher education institutions to display course equivalency and articulation information that pertains to college transfer and helps institutions coordinate articulation efforts with other institutions. The portal also streamlines the publishing of institution-specific information and other processes that support each institution's programs and course offerings, including requirements for degree completion. By using the online system, institutions are able to present their institutional offerings in a consistent framework to better serve the state's college students, high school students taking college courses, and adults aspiring to enter or re-enter college.

South Carolina has 33 public higher education institutions, including 13 four-year universities, 16 two-year technical colleges, and four two-year regional campuses of the University of South Carolina which collectively serve over 180,000 students. Last year, 15,658 students enrolled in public institutions in the state were transfer students, an increase of 9.6 % from the previous year and an increase of 16.8 % from two years prior. In addition, over 11,000 students take college courses annually while enrolled in high school.

Handling the increasing volume of academic credit transfer requests and the myriad of administrative tasks that accompany such requests can prove to be burdensome and costly for postsecondary institutions. “Especially in times of fiscal exigencies such as those South Carolina is experiencing presently, we must implement cost effective practices that yield more efficiency and enable students to make the most effective choices toward degree completion in order to avoid additional expenses and delays,” says Dr. Gail M. Morrison, Deputy Director and Director of the Division of Academic Affairs & Licensing at the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. According to David K. Moldoff, AcademyOne’s founder and CEO, “states that tackle these trends head-on and develop a coordinated approach to college transfer and evaluation of prior coursework are going to be ahead of the game when it comes to workforce and economic development. The investment will ultimately save money and provide improved service to citizens.”

Public service announcements and radio advertisements designed to reach the college-going public have been developed with the support and assistance of the South Carolina Education Lottery and South Carolina Educational Television and will begin airing immediately.

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education serves as the coordinating board for the state’s public postsecondary institutions. AcademyOne, Inc., a leader in information technology for higher education, specializes in solutions which address student mobility and academic credit transfer.



The South Carolina Transfer and Articulation Center (SCTRAC)  
A statewide transfer and articulation system implementation  
and integration success story - [www.sctrac.org](http://www.sctrac.org).





# Improving student access, success, and degree completion with **cost conscious system and institutional productivity solutions**

## Background

Strategic planning efforts of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP) recognized the need for a coordinated, system-wide solution to support students and help the state meet degree completion and workforce development goals. The plan of action to address these needs was developed in response to South Carolina's Education and Economic Development Act of 2005.

With 33 public higher education institutions, including three research institutions, ten teaching institutions, 16 two-year technical colleges, and four two-year regional campuses of the University of South Carolina, the state's public institutions collectively serve undergraduate students. In 2009, 15,658 of the students enrolled in public institutions in South Carolina were transfer students, an increase of 9.6 % from the previous year and an increase of 16.8 % from two years prior. In addition, over 11,000 South Carolina high school students take college courses annually. Focusing attention on the needs of transfer students and how institutions can effectively serve them was central to the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's (SC CHE's) plan\*.

South Carolina partnered with AcademyOne to develop and implement an ambitious, multi-year project utilizing AcademyOne's state-of-the-art technology and other higher education services to address academic credit portability and meet the state's goals.

\*Source: [Report on the Migration of First-Time Undergraduate Transfer](#). South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, 2009

"From the onset, this system has really assisted transfer students in bringing credits from former institutions. Our AcademyOne administrator has been able to help every student I have taken to see her. One student actually walked away with 15 more credits than were originally granted. The Equivalency Synchronizer makes the system fast, easy to navigate and effective."

**Dr. Barbara Chesler Buckner**  
Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation  
Coastal Carolina University



## Project Mission & Goals

Handling the increasing volume of academic credit transfer requests and the complex administrative tasks that accompany such requests can prove to be burdensome and costly for postsecondary institutions. "Neither higher education institutions nor students have been insulated from the negative financial effects of the current economic downturn. At the same time, obtaining a college degree has never been more important to individuals and indeed to the nation. Now more than ever, states must do everything possible to eliminate barriers to degree completion and to ensure that students avoid additional expenses and delays. AcademyOne is helping South Carolina implement cost effective technology-based solutions that work for

students, institutions, and the state," said Dr. T. Michael Raley, Director of the Division of Academic Affairs and Licensing at the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

The SC Commission on Higher Education (SC CHE) sought to provide an integrated, web-based solution with software tools to meet the course articulation and college transfer needs of South Carolina's public colleges and universities and their students. The system that was developed by AcademyOne to meet South Carolina's needs allows institutional autonomy, flexibility, and individual practice in serving stakeholders while achieving three primary goals to help students:

- FINISH a degree faster, thereby saving money and time.
- MAKE BETTER CHOICES and avoid taking courses which will not count toward a degree.
- JOIN THE WORKFORCE EARLIER and become part of the state's economic engine.

To begin gaining the benefits of an online solution as quickly as possible, a multi-year project plan consisting of three overlapping phases and deliverables.

## Phase One: Software Tools Implementation

Phase One included the systematic collection of a variety of transfer-related information from institutions and system offices. Easy to access, collaborative web-based tools were provided to institutions so that information could be easily updated and maintained using coordinated and sustainable content management methods.

## Lander University

Lander is a coeducational, state-assisted, comprehensive, regional, four-year liberal arts and science programs, and professional programs in business, law, and education. Enrollment is approximately 3,000 with a student body representing 23 states.



### Find us on:



### Address:

320 Stanley Ave  
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Greenwood, South  
United States

### Transfer Admissions:

Office of Admissions  
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### Branch Campuses/ Additional Locations

#### Lander University at the University

Center of Greenville  
225 S. Pleasantburg Drive  
Greenville, SC 29607  
Greenville, SC

"Access to up-to-date course equivalency information is extremely vital to students, faculty, and staff. It is necessary to have this information in one easily accessible/navigatable place. AcademyOne has done a great job with this; SCTRAC.org provides a wealth of knowledge and is easy to use and find information.

The initial setup of the system took some time, but now it is basically maintenance free. I just make sure our database is accurate and the synchronizer maintains the information available on SCTRAC.org. I also appreciate all of the options they provide when entering your course information into their system. This flexibility is very helpful since every college has a unique way of entering course information and equivalents.

AcademyOne has been great to work with. They are extremely knowledgeable and are there when you have questions or need help. "

**Taylor Johnston, Transfer Articulation Director, Office of the Registrar, Lander University**

The specific AcademyOne software tools that were deployed in South Carolina are:

**The Course Equivalency Management Center (GEMC)**, which helps institutions map courses at other institutions to their own courses, records courses in the database as equivalencies, and provides updates.

**The Transfer Agreement Management Center (TAMC)**, which enables institutions to publish their transfer agreements, codify them, and promote their agreements to prospective students.

**The Transfer Profile Management Center (TPMC)**, which provides a summary of transfer information. Institutions can promote their programs and services, such as admission requirements and transfer credit information which are especially relevant to prospective transfer students.

The result is the availability of consistent, accurate, and up-to-date institutional information for students, advisors, and the public to access.

## Phase Two: Customized Web Portal Deployment of SCTRAC.ORG

South Carolina required an electronic web portal to assist students in making better choices about the transfer of academic credit. The web portal supports both students and academic professionals by providing tools that allow students to evaluate how prior coursework will transfer among public postsecondary institutions. The South Carolina web portal, [www.SCTRAC.org](http://www.SCTRAC.org), was launched in Spring 2010.

SCTRAC is a one-stop information source for transfer students and the administrators, advisors, and faculty who support their academic progress. SCTRAC facilitates student transitions between and among South Carolina's institutions of higher education and supports the academic professionals who are charged with making and managing transfer and articulation decisions, agreements, and policies. The web portal provides academic professionals with a trusted source of validated information and an electronic means to coordinate and collaborate with each other across campuses.

SCTRAC makes available a first-of-its-kind online resource that helps to improve student advising and persistence across institutions, provides seamless pathways for adequately prepared students to move directly into institutions of higher education, and fosters student degree completion in the state. The system provides students with a reliable, easy-to-access information resource that assists them in making sound academic decisions and better choices by avoiding taking courses which will not count toward a degree. Using the site, students can easily:

- **LOCATE** information related to transfer, including application deadlines, requirements concerning the transfer of academic credits, and contact information for institutional transfer officers;
- **ACCESS** transfer agreements that exist among the state's public institutions as well as statewide transfer agreements; and
- **SEARCH** for course equivalencies to determine how courses taken at one institution may transfer to another.

In addition to helping students make better academic decisions, South Carolina's customized transfer and articulation portal enables higher education institutions to display course equivalency and articulation information that pertains to college transfer and helps institutions coordinate articulation efforts with other institutions. The portal also streamlines the publishing of institution-specific information and other processes that support each institution's programs and course offerings, including requirements for degree completion. By using the online system, institutions are able to present their offerings in a consistent framework to better serve the state's college students, high school students who take college courses, and adults who aspire to enter or re-enter postsecondary education.

To help create public awareness and promote SC TRAC, public service announcements and radio advertisements designed to reach the college-going public were developed with the support and assistance of the South Carolina Education Lottery and South Carolina ETV Radio and began airing in the Spring of 2010.

# Phase Three: Institutional Interfaces Utilize Web Services to Promote System Integration, Data Synchronization, and Real-Time, Self-Service Academic Planning

What makes South Carolina's AcademyOne implementation such a success is the sophisticated use of technology to reduce the effort required to maintain a coordinated transfer and academic data repository in order to provide real-time student guidance and advising services. The project is also an outstanding example of cross-institutional, system-wide collaboration.

Institutional interfaces allow for the connection of institution-based student information systems to the centralized SCTRAC portal. Automated connections help students by offering a the ability to create a personal account that allows students to manage their coursework, reduce manual entry of data, and improve accuracy in degree planning. Administrative overhead is reduced and time is saved for campus departments by enabling high quality online, real-time student self-service. The institutional authentication process is supported by the use of a secure private network. Records cannot be altered and transfer and admissions staff members can be confident that students receive accurate degree planning information through web-based advising and guidance.

## **Coursework Importer Software for Two-Year Institutions.**

One of the barriers to helping prospective students assess transfer pathways is the lack of access to prior learning transcripts. CollegeTransfer.Net, a website powered by AcademyOne, is dedicated to helping students, faculty, academic advisors and administrators collaborate and share transfer information. CollegeTransfer.Net provides a secure interface between an institution's student information system and SCTRAC.org, which permits students to import their academic course history automatically into a Student Passport using a student account. No identifying student information is retained by CollegeTransfer.Net; only the course, year/term taken, and grade received is retained. Once an academic course history is imported to the Student Passport, students have the ability to create Course Equivalency Maps to destination institutions they are interested in attending.

## **Equivalency Synchronizers for Four-Year Institutions.**

The Equivalency Synchronizer is an integration tool that automatically accepts many thousands of course equivalencies from an institution's student information system (SIS) and or degree audit system (DAS) and synchronizes the equivalencies with SCTRAC.org. Equivalency synchronization eliminates the need for common course numbering and resolves course and institutional crosswalk coding challenges.

## Whats Next

SC CHE strives for continuous improvements to student and institutional service and system productivity, and is investigating new and improved ways to utilize SCTRAC.org as well as the software tools and interfaces to promote system progress. For example, SCTRAC is now being used to support the display of Advanced Placement (AP) exam and International Baccalaureate (IB) exam credit awards by institutions in accordance with state policies.

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