

# Position Statement on Associate Degree Credit for Community College EAP Courses

*(Approved by the SSTESOL Board of Directors, September 28, 2002)*

Sunshine State Teachers of English To Speakers of Other Languages (SSTESOL) of Florida is a professional organization dedicated to the teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages. The mission of SSTESOL is to provide educators access to professional development, resources, and interactions and to provide leadership and advocacy in language policy issues.

## **Issue:**

Many community colleges across the state are offering the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses within the Florida Department of Education Statewide Common Course Numbering System (SCNS). These courses are offered to degree-seeking students and/or to students who have completed at least a high school diploma but lack near-native proficiency in English. A series of six levels of course descriptions are included within the SCNS class prefix for EAP.

It was recommended by the Faculty Discipline Committee on English as a Second Language (ESL), who wrote the EAP course series under the auspices of the SCNS, that the upper two levels of courses (the 1500 and 1600 levels) carry college-credit towards the associate degree. This recommendation was also endorsed by the Florida Community College Council on Academic Affairs as noted in the Minutes of their meeting on September 30, 1999.

Currently, a lack of consistency exists across the state regarding the awarding of associate degree credit for the recommended EAP course series. Some institutions offer credit for their more advanced EAP courses, while others do not. Those that do not offer credit towards the associate degree for any EAP courses have categorized all EAP courses within the College-prep/remedial levels.

## **Position:**

SSTESOL supports the awarding of credit towards the associate degree for the 1500 and 1600 level of the EAP course series as recommended by the Faculty Discipline Committee on ESL.

## **Rationale:**

- the EAP courses are rigorous, academic courses in English comparable to advanced foreign language courses for native speakers of English;
- a lack of proficiency in a new language is not comparable to a lack of academic skill in one's native language;
- skills courses in the college-prep series within the Florida SCNS system are designed for native speakers who are not working at college level and are not comparable to EAP courses;

- among students enrolled in EAP courses are those who have earned both undergraduate and advanced degrees from their home countries and seek cognitively demanding collegiate courses in English in order to acquire sufficient English proficiency to practice their professions in the U.S.;
- receiving credit for advanced EAP courses increases motivation and student retention.