



# Community College of Vermont

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Susan Smallwood

FROM: D. Eisele *GRE*

SUBJECT:

DATE: April Nine in The Year of Our Lord  
Nineteen Hundred and Eighty

I have reviewed both the contract and draft transcript of . I would like to begin my comments with some general impressions and then specifically address each component part of the contract and transcript.

First of all, I sense that is a knowledgeable and skillful person with the potential to write an excellent contract and to go on, if desired, to upper division, baccalaureate work. However, the contract as presently written, has weaknesses which I feel prevent an effectual reflection of that competence.

A comprehensive review of this contract would be nearly as long as the document itself, therefore, I will restrict my remarks to those items which I feel have the most impact on the effectiveness of the total presentation.

### Study Area

"Electro-mechanical engineering/liberal arts" makes for a difficult marriage. To do justice to both areas in an associate degree program is a very heavy task. Normally, "engineering" is a baccalaureate level major. I would suggest the area of concentration be titled, "Electro-Mechanical Technology." The ten areas of competence takes care of the liberal arts component.

### Goal Statement

A goal statement is an essential part of a completed contract. It should express both short and long term educational, personal and career goals and show why and how the associate degree is related to the fulfillment of those goals. The statement in this contract should be further developed and placed at the beginning of the contract.

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### Narrative

An effective narrative should carefully construct the development of the stated goals over time. Marker events leading up to the present condition can be highlighted and their relevance to the student's goals described. This narrative, with some minor modifications, has the potential to do an adequate job.

### Linking Statements

Linking statements must both define the competence for the subject and show how that area of competence directly relates to the student's goals. In other words, it should answer the question, why is "Self Awareness" important for this individual, with his/her particular goals? The linking statements in this contract sometimes "define" and sometimes "link." They rarely do both. Without knowing what the student's goals are, it is difficult to give a good example. Under "Environment," the last two sentences of the linking statement are non-sentences. The use of incorrect grammar will often detract the reader from the substance of the statement.

### Competence Statements

Competence statements should clearly express a skill or understanding at the college-level (something that is above and beyond what people learn in high school or from routine everyday experiences). Many competence statements in this contract are valid in that sense and some are not. For example, "I am aware of the differences between country and city living" is a legitimate environmental awareness but it is of questionable value as college-level learning. To be appropriate, that competence would have to be expressed something like, "I am aware of how country living differs from city living in the way it affects people both psychologically and physically." The experience of living in both environments can be the vehicle for gaining the awareness and it could be documented by a paper describing some of the common physical and psychological impacts of living in the two differing environments. The paper can be evaluated by someone with expertise in that area, possibly someone on the Local Review Committee. If the competence statement does not give supporting examples or thoroughly describe the professed competence, the documentation must fill the void. The documentation must do more than prove that the student had an experience, it should validate the knowledge or skill that was gained from the experience. I have a sense that this problem is common throughout the contract, but without seeing the documentation itself, I cannot be sure.

Taking the competence areas one at a time, I will offer the following comments:

#### Self Awareness

"I am a peace loving person," "I am a considerate person," etc., etc., etc., are not really competence statements. The competence is the awareness of significant personal attributes and their effect on the total person. I would use the stated assertions of personal attributes to support the awareness of personal strengths. I would also suggest a similar analysis of personal weaknesses. The ability to be analytical about oneself or the understanding of what is significant, is the competence. The resulting insights can support the statements of competence either in the documentation or as examples under the competence statements.

#### Environment

This section has the potential to be an effectively written competence area. The statements need to be modified so that college-level understandings or skills are reflected. For example, Number 9 might read; "I appreciate nature's storms and understand how different elements within weather systems combine to produce the patterns and conditions necessary for the development of several different types of storms." To acquire college-level learning from the experience of living through storms, some supplementary reading or research would be necessary. The knowledge might be documented by someone with meteorological expertise who could evaluate either a paper or a verbal dialogue around the topic.

#### Communication

Most of this section is well done. I would leave out the ESP statements unless they can be addressed from an academic viewpoint. Having a psychic experience does not indicate college-level learning. Understanding the implications of ESP, knowledge of empirical research in that area, or an awareness of the important issues confronting the field, can be college-level learning. A book list, unless carefully annotated, is not appropriate documentation of learning gained from reading.

#### Cultural Awareness

Some good competence statements are expressed here. However, statements like, "I am aware of much of the Civil War" leave the reader hanging. What significant aspects of the civil war is the student aware of? Is it the marker events and important people? Is it the effects that the war had on the south? Are the factors and issues which were involved in the war the area of special knowledge? Unless this is explained in the documentation or in the competence statements, the reader has no idea. Also, some competence statements related to electro-mechanical Technology should be included in this area and all others.

### Knowledge

Again, we have good potential for an excellent section. And again, many statements leave the reader hanging. "I know the history and theory of many churches." This type of statement needs refinement, elaboration, several examples, or strong documentation. I would suggest that this section emphasize knowledge of both electrical and mechanical theory.

### Analytical Competence

The student's potential to write good competence statements is demonstrated in this section especially by competence statements 6 & 7.

### Manual and Physical (The linking statement here is especially weak)

Any knowledge of physiology, anatomy, or good health practices would be appropriately addressed here. First Aid and rescue squad experience would indicate knowledge in these areas.

### Creative Competence

I would emphasize number 9 and put it first. With the exception of the linking statement, this section is good.

### Interpersonal

Good potential exists here also. The competencies would be much better stated if the specific interpersonal skills were outlined rather than the ability to "relate well" with people. What does the student do to have these good relationships? Does he exhibit warmth, empathy, caring attitudes, acceptance, etc.?

Recent Business experience section is nice. Book list is not particularly helpful without annotations. The list of courses is very useful.

### Student Draft Transcript

It is difficult to evaluate the draft transcript without revisions to the contract. There appears to be topics listed, ("Contemporary Poetry, Poets, and Readers," "Human Geography," "Theory of Probability," "Logic," etc.) that have no related competence statements in the contract.

It is obvious that \_\_\_\_\_ has worked hard to develop his contract to this point. I realize that my brief review cannot do justice to the amount of work done. However, I do believe, based on extensive experience with the College's degree process, that my suggestions are appropriate and in the best interest of the student and the College.