Western Alliance of Community College Academic Leaders

On Board the Transfer Express: Promising Practices by Community Colleges

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Terminology

• **Transfer**: Process of moving a student’s credits across different institutions.

• **Articulation**: Institutional policies or other structures that are implemented to encourage, facilitate, and monitor the student transfer process.
Why Do States Care About Transfer?

• National Educational Attainment Goals
  – “By 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.” (President Obama, February 24, 2009)
  – “To increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025.” (Lumina Foundation for Education)

• Economic Competitiveness
• Budget Constraints
• Productivity
• Student Success
Why Do Institutions Care About Transfer?

- State laws and policies
- Mission
- Performance Indicators and Incentives
- Student success
- Political pressure
A Lot of Students Transfer

- Of first-time bachelor’s degree recipients, almost 60 percent attend more than one institution (1999-2000)

A Lot of Students Transfer

• About one-third of all students change institutions at some point

A Lot of Students Transfer

• State examples
  – California (2007-2008)
    • Almost 55,000 students → CSU
    • About 14,000 students → UC
    • Almost 33,000 students
  – North Dakota (Spring 2004-Fall 2004)
    • 1,446 students (North Dakota University System)
    • Additional 259 students (National Student Clearinghouse)

It’s Not Clear that the Transfer Process Works

"You've earned 232 credit hours at the community college, which, after taking everything into consideration, will translate into 2 full hours of transferable credits."
Best Practices in *Statewide* Articulation and Transfer Systems

To develop a deeper understanding of how states coordinate their articulation and transfer programs

- Literature Review
- “Promising Practices in Statewide Articulation and Transfer Systems”
- “Higher Education Web Portals: Serving State and Student Transfer Needs”
- State Policy Summaries in WICHE’s State Higher Education Policy Database ([higheredpolicies.wiche.edu](http://higheredpolicies.wiche.edu))
- Meeting of Web Portal Stakeholders (April 2011)
Lessons Learned

• States vary in how they approach transfer and articulation.
• Overall, there is little evidence of what actually works.

**PROMISING** practices, indeed!!
Promising *Institutional Policies and Practices*

- Academic
- Communication
- Data
Academic Policy

• Transfer pathways for students to meet general education requirements
  – Kishwaukee Community College and Northern Illinois University
• Transfer pathways for students who have selected a major
  – Linn Benton Community College and Oregon State University
• Guaranteed admissions policies
  – Valencia Community College and University of Central Florida
• University Centers and Partnerships
  – Washington Community and Technical Colleges
Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI)

- Statewide transfer agreement - transferable among more than 100 participating colleges or universities
- Participating institutions accept a “package” of IAI general education courses in lieu of their own comparable lower-division general education requirements
- Includes major recommendations for the first two years of college in several popular majors
Oregon Degree Partnership Program

• Joint admission - single application form and fee
• Eligibility to enroll concurrently at both institutions
• Financial aid applies to both institutions for the same term (for qualified students)
• Transcripts automatically sent from partner college to OSU at the end of each term
• Students work simultaneously with the community college advisor and the OSU advisor
• Access to more classes through the community college, on-site at OSU, and with online courses
Florida’s Statewide Articulation Agreement “must specifically provide that every associate in arts graduate of a Florida college shall have met all general education requirements and must be granted admission to the upper division of a state university, except to a limited access, teacher certification program or a major requiring an audition.”

- Fla. Stat. §1007.23
University Centers and Partnerships

- Community and technical colleges offer select four-year degrees on their campuses
Communication of Policies

• Campus personnel as single points of contact
  – **Nevada**: Articulation coordinator at each campus

• Maps that indicate course equivalencies
  – **Northern Illinois University**: Listing of general education courses in community college numbers

**Advising is critical and extremely challenging!**
Use of Data

• Assess student success through quantitative measures of individual student-level indicators of performance
  – Oregon State University
  – Illinois
  – Florida

• Evaluate student experiences and perceptions of transfer and articulation policies and practices
  – Northern Illinois University: Transfer Student Survey
Remaining Challenges

- Developmental education courses
- Postsecondary enrollment/dual enrollment courses
- Courses taken too long ago
- Lack of course transfer for those applied toward AAS degrees
Final Thoughts

• Institutions do not exist in a vacuum. State policy matters.
• States and possibly institutions do not systematically evaluate effectiveness.
• Local partnerships between two- and four-year institutions are promising, but is this efficient?
For More Information

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