PROJECT OVERVIEW

The WICHE Interstate Passport Initiative, launched in October 2011, is a pilot project that focuses on the problem of interstate student transfer. Working with five Western states—California, Hawaii, North Dakota, Oregon, and Utah—the initiative attacks this problem with the goal of improving graduation rates, shortening time to degree, and saving students money.

The Interstate Passport Initiative will focus on forging general education core transfer agreements, based on Essential Learning Outcomes (LEAP), between 28 institutions in the five partner states. The LEAP outcomes were developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities in concert with hundreds of institutions. On a regional level, the initiative will introduce a new framework for transfer based on this outcomes work. The project will focus on the lower-division general education core, the common denominator among institutions—concentrating on it as a whole, not on individual courses—and will allow for a cross-border “match” of outcomes-integrated general education cores for block transfer.

A Pilot State Facilitator (PSF) has been appointed to lead this effort in each participating state. The PSF will establish and maintain productive interactions and communication with faculty and administrators at the pilot institutions and with the Passport Initiative leadership team. These interactions and communications will be directed at accomplishing the Passport Initiative goals:

- To provide data and information on each state’s general education core and its relationship to state transfer policies and patterns; the number of students who transfer among WICHE states; and the process by which change in policy occurs
- To establish block transfer agreements within and among the pilot states for the lower division general education core, based on successful integration of LEAP’s Essential Learning Outcomes
- To identify the implications for institutional and state policy for a transfer framework based on learning outcomes for further research and projects.

Over the course of the two-year project the Pilot State Facilitators, with assistance from the Pilot State Coordinator and WICHE staff, will assemble and meet with teams of relevant stakeholders; establish the current status of the participating institutions’ transfer agreements for the general education core; define the extent to which the LEAP outcomes are integrated into the core and how they are assessed; facilitate data collection to help inform the Passport initiative; and participate in Passport implementation—specifically, negotiate a regional agreement for “Passport Status” among eligible participating institutions.

This two-year pilot project, funded by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, will allow the Western states to work together to better serve the needs of their students and may provide a model for other regions, and ultimately the nation, to adopt.

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www.wiche.edu/passport