

Technology and Partnerships for Transfer Success

By Olivia Tufo and Nicholas Fuselier

Overview

There is an ongoing need for innovation, improvement, and the removal of impediments to successful student transfer of college credit. Particularly, technological advancements that address information gaps for students and advisors are needed. For example, in a connected chain of transfer events, the student needs to be aware that they have transfer-eligible credits and the likely applicability of these credits to their intended major course of study. The student's advisor needs information to help assess the likely portability of their intended courses. The receiving college or university needs efficient transfer of the incoming credits but also often other information that would help counselors and advisors successfully onboard and support incoming transfer students. Additionally, the sending institution that awarded transferable credit needs confirmation of which credits were accepted and how they can provide any needed support to the student as they transition to the destination institution, and to inform their work with other transfer students.

To address these needs, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) supported 13 institutions across six projects as part of its **Technology and Partnerships for Transfer Success** initiative. In these Transfer Partnerships projects facilitated by WICHE, a four-year university or university system was paired with a two-year college or technical school to collaborate on a project leveraging technology solutions financed by WICHE and used by the paired institutions so

This is the first in a four-part series that highlights findings from the **Technology and Partnerships for Transfer Success** initiative that explored how technology and cross-institutional partnerships can improve transfer pathways and student outcomes. The briefs share insights and lessons to inform efforts to make credit transfer more seamless, transparent, and effective.



Learn more at wiche.edu/technology-partnerships-for-transfer-success.

that transferring students could optimize their transferable credit.

The participating institutions engaged in a two-year community of practice (2024-26) to share challenges, success, and best practices. Institutions were selected based on their ability to share data about existing rates of transfer, partnerships that aspire to make possible the “backward” exchange of information about transfer students’ success at receiving institutions, the existence of transfer advising and assistance that the technology enhancement would support, participation of cross-functional teams, and overall readiness to begin work and execute the implementation within two years.

Background

The Interstate Passport® program (2010-23) was a national transfer initiative developed by WICHE in partnership with dozens of institutional stakeholders and was funded generously over 10 years by Carnegie Corporation of New York (2011-14), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2014-19), Lumina Foundation (2014-18), the U.S. Department of Education's First in the World Grant (2015-20), ECMC Foundation (2020-23), the National Science Foundation (2020-23), and WICHE (2011-24). By guaranteeing a block-transfer of lower-division general education credits across state lines, Interstate Passport® allowed students to focus on their long-term goals without the burden of navigating multiple schools' requirements. Even as the Interstate Passport® Network sunset the program because of sustainability and data challenges, a \$435,000 technology implementation grant that was awarded for academic year 2022-23 remained. Rather than return the funds, WICHE worked in partnership with the anonymous funder to develop a new initiative, the Technology and Partnerships for Transfer Success (Transfer Partnerships), that pivoted funding from Interstate Passport® and subgrants to institutional partners in the WICHE region. The goals of the new initiative were to support hands-on transfer advising and transfer assistance through the development and implementation of technology solutions that provide targeted and real-time information to transfer advisors and students and to increase the rates at which transfer students successfully proceed through major coursework towards completion.

In January 2024, WICHE opened a request for participation (RFP) to invite pairs of institutions in the WICHE region to propose a co-investment in technology to support the transfer pathway between their institutions. WICHE asked

that each proposed project engage cross-institutional teams of key transfer-focused staff, registrars, and information technology (IT) representatives who were required to participate in quarterly virtual community of practice calls. The community of practice calls were intended to exchange examples and information among the project participants and provide WICHE the opportunity to summarize collective learning about possible technological approaches to transfer student support. The final community of practice call in Spring 2026 was treated as a focus group, which allowed WICHE to inquire about the experience and impact of participating in the initiative.

Project participants were selected based on demonstrated demand of upward transfer, based on data about existing rates of transfer; focus on improving transfer in majors that have lower rates of transfer success or greater curricular complexity; approaches that addressed key impediments to transfer students enrolling and progressing in major coursework; existence of transfer advising and assistance staff and services; and demonstrated readiness to develop and implement the proposed technology improvement within the two-year project timeframe. The initiative was designed with the intention that year one of the project (AY 2024-25) would be spent gathering benchmarking data and implementing the technology solution, and the second year of the project (AY 2025-26) would act as an interim measurement against the benchmarking data to understand the impact of the technology within the limited scope of one academic year.

Along with participating in the community of practice, project participants were required to submit a detailed project plan in August 2024, an interim report in June 2025, a final report in June 2026, and facilitate a site visit to at least one participating institution in their project by WICHE staff during the project period. The findings in the Technology and Partnerships for Transfer

Success series of briefs are based on the project reports, institution site visits, and observations from the community of practice calls.

Projects

The six projects listed below were a part of the Transfer Partnerships initiative. These summaries are intended to inform institutions, systems, and their transfer partners considering technology-enabled approaches to transfer advising, credit mobility, data exchange, and cross-institutional collaboration.

1. Northern Arizona University, Maricopa Community College District, and Mohave College

Northern Arizona University (NAU), Maricopa Community College District (MCCD), and Mohave College, all located in Arizona, proposed development of a technology system to connect silos of information between the student information, customer relationship management systems, and the Arizona Statewide System for Information on Student Transfers (ASSIST) database with a focus on supporting the “some college, no credential” (SCNC) student population in re-enrolling and completing their credentials. Unforeseen challenges with leveraging the ASSIST database required a pivot to partnering with Ellucian Transfer to execute the scope of work originally identified to be supported by ASSIST.

2. University of Arizona and Pima Community College

University of Arizona and Pima Community College, both located in Arizona, invested in a homegrown technology solution called “UnBlockEd,” a platform that acts as an exchange that gives students earlier insights into how particular courses transfer to specific

programs at target institutions. This design will integrate a newly developed transfer articulation capability that leverages curricular analytics to create efficient cross-institutional degree plans. Additional consultant budget allowed the institutions to engage with a Salesforce consultant to investigate how UnBlockEd could integrate the tool and data from each institution’s Learning Management System (LMS) and Student Information System (SIS).

3. University of Northern Colorado and Laramie County Community College

Despite being in different states, University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in Colorado and Laramie County Community College (LCCC)* in Wyoming are only 50 miles apart. Students who wish to transfer between the two institutions cannot leverage the Wyoming in-state transfer tool called WyoTransfer to evaluate how their credits will transfer. For this project, the institutions invested in Transferology by CollegeSource to improve the visibility of the pathway between the two institutions and support student advising.

**In September 2026, the Laramie County Community College Board of Trustees unanimously adopted a resolution changing the name of Laramie County Community College to Wyoming State College. The change takes effect on July 1, 2027.*

4. Montana University System and Helena College

Montana University System and Helena College, both located in Montana, requested funds to implement DegreeWorks, a widely used web-based degree audit review program that allows undergraduate students to monitor progress toward degree completion. Implementing DegreeWorks at Helena College closed the loop for the entire Montana University System to have the ability to pursue full implementation of a Transfer Finder tool.

5. Dakota State University and Lake Area Technical College

Dakota State University (DSU) and Lake Area Technical College (LATC), both located in South Dakota, identified a need to improve transfer pathways between a technical college and a regental university leveraging Transferology and the Transfer Evaluation System (TES) developed by CollegeSource. There was not a strong transfer population between the two institutions because of a South Dakota Board of Regents (SDBOR) policy that did not permit regental universities to accept technical courses through transfer from colleges affiliated with the South Dakota Board of Technical Education (SDBOTE), a policy that was revised in 2022. LATC offers multiple Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees in computer science fields that under the new policy are well-positioned to transfer into DSU, a special focus university in computer and cyber science, computer information systems, and emerging technologies. The project successfully articulated four degrees during the scope of the program.

6. Northern State University and Southeast Technical College

Northern State University (NSU) and Southeast Technical College (STC), both located in South Dakota, entered a co-admission and co-enrollment partnership that enables students to be jointly admitted and enrolled at STC and NSU, the first such relationship between a technical college and regental university in the state of South Dakota. This project was used to invest in Transferology, TDX, and TDX iPass to improve course-to-course transfer and to seamlessly and securely share student information.

Outcomes

All six projects successfully deployed their planned technology investments, positioning the institutions to better support transfer and credit mobility efforts. Most participating institutions implemented their projects using internal technology expertise, while grant funding from WICHE was used for professional development, training, collaboration, and targeted consulting support to help address specific capacity needs.

The community of practice facilitated by WICHE created meaningful opportunities for institutional leaders to learn from one another, supporting problem solving, and strengthening implementation efforts. Participants consistently reported the peer engagement and shared expertise helped them navigate challenges and advance project goals. Insights gathered through campus engagement, focus groups, and project reporting informed the lessons and practices highlighted throughout these WICHE Insight documents.

Because the implementation period was relatively short, quantitative evidence of changes in transfer outcomes remains limited. However, participating institutions have established the technology infrastructure, institutional knowledge, and operational foundations needed to support longer-term improvements in transfer pathways. The full impact of those investments is expected to emerge over multiple academic years as institutions continue to integrate the technology into advising, enrollment, and transfer workflows and as more students or other end-users engage with the technology solutions.

A Note on Artificial Intelligence

This project started in early 2022. While the recent boom of artificial intelligence (AI) can be traced back to the advent of large language models and generative pretrained transformers in 2017, the acceleration and adoption of tools have expanded significantly during the four-year course of developing, selecting, implementing, and evaluating technology solutions for this project. During that time, the question of how AI can be used to reduce manual processes associated with curricular analysis, enhance advising capacity, support interoperability of systems, and support self-

advising practices have proliferated the higher education space. Considerations around developing in-house tools versus commercially available options, student data privacy, institutional risk appetite, controlling token budget, and evolving AI policies and procedures are changing approaches to leveraging these technologies in real time. Postsecondary institutions are grappling with whether and how to implement advising agents equipped with appropriate guardrails, even as students are independently leveraging AI to self-advise outside of approved institutional environments and technologies. None of these concerns are addressed within the scope of this initiative, but questions about how AI will impact higher educational operations and budgets persist.

Acknowledgments

WICHE extends its deep appreciation to the experts and practitioners from across the region who participated in the community of practice. Representing a wide range of institution types, leadership, faculty and staff roles, and local contexts, each participant contributed important insights and perspectives that informed the conversation. WICHE acknowledges that each institution's project may have engaged additional staff, faculty, leaders, and students not listed here.

Community of Practice Members

Bolded individuals acted as project leads and held primary responsibility for communicating across institutions and producing project deliverables to WICHE.

- Don Abens, IT Director of Enterprise Systems, Pima Community College
- Aaron Adamian, Manager, Enrollment Reporting Compliance & S Office Registrar, Mohave College
- **Helice Agria, District Director of Academic and Student Systems, Maricopa Community College District**
- Sharon Aiken-Wisniewski, Asst. Vice Provost for Academic Advising and Affiliate Faculty, University of Arizona
- Nichole Anderson, Associate Registrar, Lake Area Technical College
- Amy Beaner, Registrar, Northern State University
- Amanda Bormann, Director of Enterprise Applications, Southeast Technical College
- Debbi Bumpous, Vice President of Technology/Chief Information Officer, Northern State University
- Shelly Caseneda, Executive Director, Institutional Research, Mohave College
- Kerry Casper, Director, Academic Advising & Student Achievement Office, Northern State University
- Ravneet Chadha, Associate Vice President and Chief Data Officer, University of Arizona
- Christi Chaney, Information Technology Director, Lake Area Technical College
- **Lauren Copeland-Glenn, Delivery Lead/ Director of Business and Educational Partnerships, Northern Arizona University**
- Andy Corbin, Chief Information Officer, Laramie County Community College
- **Cameron Corey, Vice President, Lake Area Technical College**
- Charlie Couch, University Registrar, University of Northern Colorado
- Laura Cross, Registrar, Dakota State University
- Tim Culver, Interim President, Mohave College
- **Sarah Dellwo, Executive Director of Enrollment, Helena College**
- **Angela DeWolf King, Director of Transfer and Special Projects, Montana University System**
- Casey Feininger, Graphic Design & Digital Communications Instructor / Department Supervisor, Associate Dean, Lake Area Technical College
- Megan Fischer, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Southeast Technical College
- **Erin Fouberg, Provost, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Northern State University**
- Tyrell Garton, Student Success Coach, Laramie County Community College
- Autumn Glanzer, Associate Registrar, Dakota State University

- Tom Halverson, Professor, Associate Dean of Beacom Undergraduate Programs, Dakota State University
- Kim Harding, Marketing Instructor and Advisor, Southeast Technical College
- **Gregory L. Heileman, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Professor, Dept. of Electrical & Computer Engineering, University of Arizona**
- Sierra Heppler, Director of Institutional Research, Dakota State University
- **Rebecca Hoey, Provost, Senior Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs, Dakota State University**
- Fenecia Homan, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Southeast Technical College
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- **Jeff Thies, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Pima Community College**
- Michael Tulino, Director of Registrar Operations, Pima Community College
- Alex Underwood, Registrar, University of Arizona
- **Benjamin Valdez, Vice President of Academic Affairs (former), Southeast Technical College**

- Erik Vanlaecken, Chief Information Officer, Southeast Technical College
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About WICHE

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) is a regional interstate higher education compact of 15 Western states and the U.S. Pacific Territories and Freely Associated States. Since 1953, WICHE has focused on its mission of expanding educational access and excellence for all residents of the West. By promoting innovation, cooperation, resource sharing, and sound public policy, WICHE strengthens higher education's contributions to the region's social, economic, and civic life.

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