Facilitating Transfer Decisions Through the Use of Web-Based Tools

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Why articulation and transfer?

Assuming the baccalaureate is increasingly the “entry point to the workforce for the majority of students, ...improving the effectiveness of 2/4 transfer will be the key to national progress in closing the gap among racial groups in degree attainment since more minorities enter higher education through community colleges.”

(Wellman, 2002)
Intersecting Interests of the Lumina Foundation for Education

- Lumina Foundation for Education: efforts to improve educational outcomes, including degree completion
  - *KnowHow2Go*
  - *Achieving the Dream*
  - *Making Opportunity Affordable*
- President Obama is investing in community colleges and stressing associate’s degree completion
- Articulation and transfer is the bridge between associate’s and bachelor’s degree completion
Our Study

- **Best Practices in Statewide Transfer and Articulation Systems**
- **Focus on 2 to 4 transfer**
- **Inform policy development and guide practice**

**Methods:**
- Literature review
- Review of state policies and statues
- Surveys and interviews (48 states)
- Web portal research
Essential Elements of A&T Initiatives

- Collaboration
  - statewide committees
  - models for engaging faculty
- Communication
  - transfer associations/groups
  - transfer fairs and summits
  - websites/web portals
  - encouraging student feedback
Essential Elements of A&T Initiatives

- **Academic Policy**
  - transfer credit blocks
  - course equivalencies
  - general education cores
  - common course numbering systems
  - major-specific transfer guides/matrices
  - Little evidence that states utilizing these elements fare better than those that don’t

- **Measurement, data collection, assessment**
  - Few examples of states doing this effectively
“Statewide” Approaches

- States can be placed on a continuum...
- from complete lack of statewide approach (Michigan)
- to a comprehensive, integrated statewide approach (Florida)
- All other states fall in between
Examples of committees:

- Massachusetts’ Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group includes representatives from 2-year and 4-year institutions, including faculty members, CAOs, transfer directors and coordinators.
- Florida’s Standing Postsecondary Committee on Articulation and Transfer includes faculty and administrators from 2-year and 4-year institutions and representatives from FACTS.org and the DOE’s workforce unit.
Collaboration Good Practices

Examples of models to engage faculty:

- Arizona has numerous Articulation Task Forces, including discipline specific task forces, an admissions and records task force, academic advising task force and a general education task force
- Wyoming provides incentives to support faculty work on transfer so that travel and other costs are not barriers to collaboration
Examples of statewide transfer advising associations:

• Kentucky’s Academic Advising Association is a professional network for academic advisors to expand effective transfer advising

• North Carolina’s College Transfer Program Association helps campus academic leaders and advisors stay informed about A&T in NC
Communication Good Practices

Examples of encouraging feedback:
- Alaska has an anonymous email and phone number for students to submit complaints
- Missouri’s appeals process allows advisors to submit complaints on behalf of students
WICHE Survey on Websites/Web Portals

- Survey target: State agencies, higher education systems and institutions
- Survey target: Sites includes tools, services to help students navigate the transfer process from 2-yr to 4-yr
Survey Areas

- The tools to help with transfer decisions/options
- Funding issues – budget, sources of funding
- Site usage statistics and other ways measuring value of the site
- Comprehensiveness of transfer information or multiple sites with partial representation of institutions
Web-based Transfer Tools

- Degree audit types of tools such as:
  - Course to course equivalency comparisons
  - Credit transfer information for specific majors/degrees
- Gen Ed requirements & transfer eligibility
- Transcript services
- Online applications
Home-grown or 3rd Party Providers

- Academy One
- Decision Academic
- u.select
- XAP
- Docufide
- National Student Clearinghouse
Website or Web Portal?

- Will investigate how these sites refer to themselves – website or web portal
- Portal – create personal account, track personal usage, obtain customizable credit transfer information
- Or – static tables/matrics, links to campus transfer web pages
Where’s the beef?

- Underlying the tools -- state and institutional policies and agreements (e.g. articulation agreements)
What’s next?

- **Best Practices Guide** will be published in Jan/Feb 2010
  - Will include more examples of good practices and recommendations to guide further development of A&T policy

- **Presentations throughout 2010**
  - First at NISTS, Jan 27-29, Addison, TX

- [http://www.wiche.edu/stas](http://www.wiche.edu/stas)