Practice to Policy for Latino Student Success in Higher Education: Looking at Transfers

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TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

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Background

- Builds on the results and organizational ties established during the Latino Student Transfer Project, a collaboration between CCSSE, NSSE, and *Excelencia*.
- Funded by Greater Texas Foundation.
- Narrows focus to the 8 Texas institutions:

Alamo Colleges	University of Texas at San Antonio
Austin Community College	Texas State University
El Paso Community College	University of Texas at El Paso
Houston Community College	University of Houston

Purpose of Project

To translate transfer processes and practices at the Texas institutions, stakeholder perspectives, and emerging research into a set of actionable strategies for policy makers and institutions to consider as they articulate transparent pathways for Latino student success in postsecondary education.

Significance

Nationally:

- 56% of Latino undergraduates are enrolled in community college. (American Association of Community Colleges, 2014)

- 2 out of 5 transfer students lose all of their credits when they transfer. (Greater Texas Foundation, 2017)

Significance

In Texas:

- Only 35% of community college students actually do transfer. (Greater Texas Foundation, 2017)

- Latino community college students were less likely (20%) to transfer than other groups. (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2016)

- The majority of transfer students (78%) leave community college without a degree. (National Student Clearinghouse, 2016)

Methodology

- Reviewed artifacts from previous project
  - NSSE/CCCSE reports
  - Focus group findings

- Unstructured, open-ended interviews
  - "Transfer Teams" from Texas institutional pairs
  - Early college high school administrators
  - External stakeholders
    - Educate Texas, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas Association of Community Colleges, TG

Methodology

- **Member Checking**
  - Teams and individuals interviewed
- **Transfer Community Feedback**
  - 100+ representing public and private universities, community colleges, high schools, early college high schools, and community based organizations

➢ Feedback resulted in confirmation of strategies and additional tactics

Findings

Research and engagement process yielded 4 key issues and strategies:

1. Transferability of Credits

2. Financial Aid

3. Faculty Involvement

4. Data Sharing

Strategy #1: Transferability of Credits

Process must be transparent, consistent, and limit accumulation of excessive credit hours that leads to significant degree completion delays and increased financial burden for transfer students.

TACTICS
• Create degree plans that include sequencing and mapping of courses for timely degree completion.
• Require college credit earned in high school universal transferability to other community colleges and universities in the state.
• Require dual credit or early college high school MOUs to include transferability of credits advising for students.
• Offer transfer students one-stop holistic guidance, advising and support in academics and financial aid.
• Implement/enhance joint training on credit transfer and financial aid for practitioners at all levels.
• Implement common course numbering consistently across community colleges *and* universities.

Strategy #2: Financial Aid

Institutional financial aid must be prioritized for transfer students by integrating and aligning deadlines, forms, advising, and funding for equal access.

TACTICS
• Ensure deadlines and forms for institutional aid and disbursement timing are consistent for transfer students and native students.
• Standardize forms for financial aid and admissions across institutions.
• Advise transfer students and parents on funding availability, opportunities, and program limits.
• Develop institutional transfer-specific scholarships and promote actively to transfer students.

Strategy #3: Faculty Involvement

Faculty can mentor transfer students, engage students in and out of the classroom, and establish and enhance degree plans that facilitate the transfer process and ensure credit mobility.

TACTICS
• Incentivize institutions to include transfer student mentoring for faculty tenure process.
• Ensure faculty are provided professional development on the transfer process and given access to information they can share in the classroom of transfer opportunities and resources.
• Incentivize collaboration between faculty within academic disciplines at regional partner institutions to ensure transferability of courses for students.

Strategy #4: Data Sharing

Effective and systemic data sharing is needed to identify potential transfer students, track transfer student persistence, and document impact of transfer initiatives on transfer rates and credentials.

TACTICS
• **Encourage institutions to use persistence and completion rates of transfer students in their documented institutional success.**
• **Incentivize institutions to use data sources such as National Student Clearinghouse and/or NSSE/CCSSE to inform their transfer strategies.**

Next Steps

Actionable Practices

- Practitioner's Brief with strategies and tactics (to be published Fall 2017)
- Conversations: How do we scale-up strategies? Opportunities? Challenges?

Policy Implications

- What can we do now to affect next legislative session?
- How do we impact policy makers from different sectors?

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