

Transfer Data Convening Summary

Leaders from the NC Community College System Office, UNC System Office, North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, myFutureNC, the Transfer Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Belk Center met on July 13, 2020 to discuss opportunities for collaboration to support transfer students in the state of North Carolina.

Prior to the event attendees were asked to reflect using an online questionnaire on the greatest needs in terms of transfer for students and institutions, as well as the most pressing unanswered questions. Attendees shared the increased urgency to facilitate stronger transfer processes given the onset of the Covid-19 global pandemic. When asked to consider the greatest challenges that are faced by students and institutions, respondents highlighted the need for transparency and consistency within the system. This includes clarity around the transfer pathways available to students, well-defined Baccalaureate Degree Plans, understanding of which credits students can expect to be awarded, and the consistency of credits awarded across all UNC institutions. Additionally, respondents reflected on the most pressing unanswered questions around transfer. Their responses suggested opportunities to better understand transfer credit award policies, what types of transfers programs and policies are most effective, and equity in transfer student outcomes.

During the convening, attendees participated in cross-sector breakout groups. These groups were asked to discuss 4 main questions:

- What data needs exist to better understand equitable transfer policies and practices?
- What are the most pressing questions around equitable transfer policies and practices?
- How can the state prioritize racial equity in transfer?
- What should be the main goals and priorities of a working group like this moving forward?

Breakout groups then reported out to the larger group the potential next steps they felt were necessary to promote equitable transfer. These next steps fell into three key categories:

- **Prioritizing strategies that are best for students**

In order to prioritize students groups suggested creating policies and practices that remove existing barriers and friction for students entering the transfer pipeline and those currently navigating the pipeline. Furthermore, these policies and practices should be evaluated to the extent to which they are equitable, anti-racist, compassionate, and flexible.

- **Using shared data to make decisions**

Multiple groups expressed a need to use shared data to understand the current transfer landscape. One group shared the metaphor of the current systems standing on the shores of a lake looking across to each other with students in the middle of the lake. They are looking at the same students, but their views are different. Suggesting that a lack of shared data and common measurements are preventing them from supporting students. Groups also recognize that data already exists that identifies the existing opportunities to make transfer outcomes more equitable for historically underserved students, including Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, and thus the initial focus should be around how to use these data to identify potential solutions to support students.

- **Engaging across the educational pipeline from K-12 to community colleges to 4-year institutions**

Action is needed across the pipeline from K- 12 to community colleges to universities. College access and career development work in high schools must be aligned to support students in their initial decisions around postsecondary. Furthermore, the work to improve the transfer ecosystem must include an evaluation of who is entering the pipeline and the extent to which access is equitable for students who have been historically underserved in the state. Within the pipeline continued efforts to support policy and practice changes that further collaboration between community colleges and 4-year institutions is needed, This included improved advising, standardized format of BDPs, and mitigated credit loss through better credit articulation processes.

Next Steps

There was a shared understanding across the groups that the work of this group should focus on action including the focus on improved implementation of policies and practices that are proactive in supporting students. The next steps for this work include:

- Use a collective action framework to formalize the partnership between the attending organization. We believe a collective action framework is ideal for this

work as it will allow us to focus our existing efforts to establish shared goals and measurement systems to track to further equitable transfer outcomes. In order to do this we would recommend identifying co-chairs from partner organizations with the Belk Center continuing to serve as the convening organization.

- Create working groups that focus on implementation of key policies and practices including credit for prior learning, BDPs, and transcript evaluation.
- Identify 2-3 state level policies that are shown to improve transfer in other states (e.g. common course numbering or a common course reference guide).
- Bring together two representatives from each organization to focus on data and identify 3-5 specific research questions related to the topics suggested in the [2019 TAC report](#) to the NC legislature. Work together to co-author responses to the research questions across organizations.