

# Fourth Annual Forum LEAP TX

El Centro Community College

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## *Moving an Agenda: The Case of Transfer*

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# Goal: Increased Student Success

- \* Want more students to enroll, achieve, complete their degrees, and move on, equipped for life and work.
- \* Just exactly how do we make that happen? How do we move the agenda?

# Transfer student success

- \* Increasing importance due to increase in number of students transferring
  - \* Dual credit & early college high school
  - \* Affordability: free or nominal tuition
- \* Transferability and applicability of academic credits
  - \* “Lost” credits aren’t understood by public
  - \* NCES 2104 study: on average, transfer students lose 13 credits when they transfer; nearly 40% lose 27 credits

# Transfer student success cont.

- \* Student behavior contributes to lost credits
  - \* Change majors
  - \* “Swirling” (multiple campuses including on-line)
- Student behavior beyond our control
  - \* “Lost credits” reflect poorly on higher education
  - \* Perception that we don’t care
  - \* Could lead to legislative action

# Transfer student success cont.

One solution to “lost” credits:

Build academic pathways.

“If you follow this path, if you take these courses at your community college for two years, you can then transfer to a four year campus and finish a degree in the next two years by following the rest of the path.”

# Transfer student success cont.

## Academic pathways: essential but not sufficient

- \* Transfer student demographic, more likely
  - \* First generation
  - \* Ethnically/racially diverse
  - \* Lower SES
  - \* Older
  - \* Vulnerable to stress and pressure
  - \* Feel alone and isolated
  - \* Less likely to believe they belong

# Transfer student success cont.

To substantially increase the number of students who transfer successfully and go on to graduate, on time without extra credits, requires a comprehensive, holistic approach that addresses academic, social, personal, and cultural aspects of the transfer student experience.

# Transfer student success cont.

- \* Revamp orientation for the unique experience of transfer students
- \* Create an on-campus gathering spot with comprehensive services
- \* Establish a dedicated hot-line for 24/7 assistance
- \* Enhance campus culture as one welcoming to transfer students
- \* Embed remediation into courses by adding supplemental instruction
- \* Refine the process for reverse credit transfer
- \* Dedicate advisors to intentional advising for transfer students
- \* Institute early warning systems for transfer students “at-risk”
- \* Examine course availability with working students in mind
- \* Develop scholarships designed to support transfer
- \* Ensure high impact practices are available, e.g., internships, study abroad, leadership, undergraduate research



# Transfer student success cont.

- \* Great at generating goals & good ideas
- \* Not so good at implementation or execution or the ability to deliver
- \* Ability to get it done makes the difference between lip service to student success and ensuring positive outcomes

# Implementation\*

\*With thanks to Education Delivery Institute (EDI).

\*Adapted from Deliverology in Practice: How Education Leaders are Improving Student Outcomes by Michael Barber, Nick Rodriguez, and Ellyn Artis (2016, Corwin/Sage, available on Amazon). Handbook based on the consulting EDI did with K-12 and higher education in 100 education systems and organizations in the US.

# Implementation

1. What is your agenda? What are you trying to do?
2. How are you planning to move your agenda?
3. At any given moment, how will you know whether you're on track to succeed?
4. If you're not on the right track, what are you going to do about it?

# What is your agenda?

- \* Agenda: increasing transfer student success
- \* Choose strategies that will move that agenda
  - \* Must address issues for students transferring to your campus
  - \* Four year and two year colleagues must meet
  - \* Hold focus groups with current transfer students
  - \* Every strategy chosen needs an implementation plan

*Strategy: development and implementation of academic pathways beginning with the most popular transfer majors from their local community colleges*

# What is your agenda?

- \* Who is on your student success team? Subset to work on implementation of academic pathways?
- \* Who owns this strategy? Academic affairs
  - \* Need sponsorship by Provost
  - \* Need academic staff to coordinate
  - \* Need faculty buy-in
    - \* Academic pathways are curricular; curriculum is the province of the faculty

# What is your agenda?

- \* Need to articulate rationale for strategy that reflects a higher good
- \* Why? To address potential pushback
  - \* Concern that curriculum may be dumbed down or diluted
  - \* Concern that process may lower standards to ensure student success
  - \* Concern that process may compromise the integrity of the curriculum

# What is your agenda?

## What is the moral high ground?

- \* The need for more students to attain their degrees, on time and without extra credits, for the sake of students and the nation which is falling behind in the educational attainment of its citizens
- \* Simply wrong to offer a curriculum in a public institution that does not allow students to begin their academic career at a lower cost campus and then move to a four-year campus for upper division work
- \* Standards will not be compromised; curricular alignment does not mean lowering standards; it means that the content—the learning—is presented in such a way that students can move from one course to another in an appropriately sequenced and coherent manner.
- \* The point is for the curriculum to have more integrity, not less.

# How are you going to implement?

Need a team **focused** on this strategy  
made up of **members** who have the  
**influence to move it forward**



# How are you going to implement?

- \* Focus is critical; can't be derailed by fires to put out, other priorities, distractions
- \* Need sense of urgency that this strategy is a priority for moving the agenda forward
- \* Ideally Provost will lead, but need to have members who can step in to lead meetings, articulate the strategy, and keep the team on task
- \* Schedule weekly meetings to generate plan

# How are you going to implement?

- \* Gather data: transfer grad rates, number of credits at exit from 2 year, number of credits at graduation from 4 year, number of semesters enrolled, most popular majors, where most transfers are coming from/where they are going
- \* Identify which departments/programs are already working on curriculum with 2 year/4 year partners—what have they learned?

# How are you going to implement?

- \* Need to convene meetings of four-year faculty from each of the programs with popular majors to meet with their counterparts from the two-year feeder programs
- \* Need to bring their program requirements, their syllabi, and their learning outcomes for each course
- \* Need to sit down with one another to see whether a 2+2 program can be constructed as an academic pathway
- \* Need to build relationships over time

# How are you going to implement?

Desired outcome is not just an articulation agreement.

Desired outcome is a collaborative partnership between campuses that supports student progress on academic pathways leading to on-time degree completion without extra credits.

# How are you going to implement?

Team needs to address questions:

- \* Who should approach which campuses and when?
- \* Should we have both 2 year and 4 year representatives on our team?
- \* Should we consult with the faculty senate or work through colleges?
- \* What is our desired timeframe for the entire project?
- \* Which programs should we begin with?
- \* Do we need all of the program faculty or will representatives do?

# How are you going to implement?

- \* When in the semester should we schedule meetings?
- \* How long should the meetings be?
- \* Should we pay faculty to attend?
- \* Who should facilitate the meetings? Who will have credibility with the faculty?
- \* Where should we hold the meetings?
- \* What resources do we have to cover expenses (rental for sites, travel, and coffee/lunch)?

# How are you going to implement?

- \* How should we handle recommended changes to curriculum?
- \* Could we develop an expedited curriculum change process for these recommendations?
- \* Are there academic policies in place that might help/hinder curricular changes?
- \* How can academic plans be kept up to date?
- \* What obstacles can we envision? How will we deal with those obstacles?
- \* How can we evaluate our approach and revise if needed?

# How are you going to implement?

- \* How should we communicate our plan? (need a communication plan--message, mode, timing)
- \* Should we have a quiet phase before we launch?
- \* How can we convey a sense of urgency?

*“Every semester that goes by without academic pathways in place is another semester for students to lose their way.”*

- \* From whom do we need input before we launch?

**The answers to these questions are your plan.**



# How are you going to implement?

## The implementation plan:

- \* Does not have to be formally drafted in narrative
- \* Can be a list of bulleted points
- \* Must be codified, so it can be pointed to, modified as needed—it is a living document

**The team should believe that the plan will move the agenda.**

# At any given moment, how will you know whether you're on track to succeed?

- \* Long term: tracking whether more students are completing their degrees on time without extra credits
- \* Short term: tracking the number of academic pathways completed
  - \* Monitor and communicate progress on a website
  - \* Academic pathways should be posted & kept up to date
  - \* Commit to honor all posted pathways (analogous to the catalog commitment)
  - \* Students need to be able to print web shots as evidence

# At any given moment, how will you know whether you're on track to succeed?

## Monitoring needed:

- \* That academic pathways are being honored
- \* That courses and prerequisites are available in sequence
- \* That advisors are given accurate and up-to-date information
- \* That transcripts & awarding of credits is in keeping with posted academic pathway commitments

# If you're not on the right track, what are you going to do about it?

- \* Team needs to be diligent in monitoring progress & quick to identify obstacles
- \* Problem may require intervention at higher levels
- \* Programs may need urging from the Dean or peers
- \* May skip a difficult program and hope that they will want their program listed among completed pathways

Most importantly . . . .

# Transfer Student Success

Establishing and honoring academic pathways needs to become part of the culture of the place.

***Academic pathways are roadmaps for transfer students; they make it clear that the campus and the faculty are concerned with the progress and success of students.***

# Transfer Student Success

Changing the culture requires commitment for the long haul— that is why a ***sound implementation*** process is so important.

# Transfer Student Success

To move an agenda requires that every strategy you choose must be implemented with care.

- \* Focus
- \* Leadership
- \* Sound plan, monitored and revisited
- \* Sense of urgency

# Transfer Student Success

Thank you!

Questions/Comments?