

AcademyOne CONAHEC Presentation 2007

A majority of states have instituted policies to facilitate transfer (ECS, 2001). Some 39 states have been identified as having some form of legislation pertaining to the transfer of credit between postsecondary institutions, and 40 states have established statewide articulation agreements. At the institution level, about 60 percent of postsecondary institutions (approx. 2,500 schools), have entered into voluntary transfer agreements with other institutions. In an effort to provide transfer information directly to the prospective transfer student (now numbering nearly 10 million), 26 states have developed transfer guides that describe system- or state-level transfer requirements and procedures. In many cases, students can access those guides through an institution's website or through a statewide portal.

On the surface, it appears that American higher education has the transfer issue well in hand. In reality, the problem is only growing in its intensity, creating real issues for students and their parents, who see investments in time and financial resources being wasted when credits, which would appear to be fully transferable, are deemed not to be. A sampling of states and institutions that have implemented various transfer strategies provides a veritable set of "lessons learned" about what is happening in the transfer "world." This sampling helps to identify continued "gaps" in the delivery of accurate, up-to-date transfer information and will form the basis for the CONAHEC presentation, by AcademyOne's CEO and Founder David Moldoff, addressing how policy is being used to address transfer issues in higher education.

Articulation Agreements (custom arrangements that are often formulated on a course-by-course, department-to-department or institution-to-institution basis)

Common Course Numbering (the use of a single and shared course numbering schema for the same course regardless of the type of institution (2-yr, 4-yr) to offer it)

Common Core (a common set of courses designed to transfer "as a whole" to fulfill specific graduation requirements at a prospective institution that recognizes the "core")

Statewide Transfer Guide (a vehicle for describing transfer requirements and helping students navigate the transfer process; often available on the web as PDF files, spreadsheets and/or equivalency tables)

Transfer Portals (websites designed to provide prospective transfer students with self-service access to transfer resources and information)

In summary, the transfer practices that are currently in place across the 50 states are fragmented and isolated efforts – often constrained by pre-existing policies and procedures. Postsecondary institutions, state governments, and the various education sectors within each state all play critical roles in solving the transfer problem, but there has been minimal effort to identify strategies that would facilitate interstate, or even international, transfer approaches. While there are many initiatives focused on student transfer, there is still a gap in transfer agreements between four-year to four-year institutions, between regionally and nationally accredited institutions, across state lines, and among for-profit and nonprofit institutions. Improving articulation to increase transfer is a complex task not likely to be resolved by state initiative alone – primarily because state policies ultimately are implemented at the system and institutional levels. The need is to develop sound collaborations among diverse colleges and universities, thus maximizing transfer of academic credit between higher education institutions.