

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stakeholders in Texas are discussing strategies to improve the transfer pathways to college completion. However, too often these discussions focus on segments and stakeholders to blame for breaks in the pathway. The purpose of this brief is twofold: 1) to reframe the options to improve college pathways from blame to shared ownership and action, and, 2) to support discussions translating effective institutional practices into policy strategies that can improve the transfer pathway for Latino and other post-traditional students in Texas.

*Excelencia* in Education worked with institutional practitioners as well as K-12 and public policy stakeholders in Texas to highlight four areas between and within institutions where state policy might improve Latino student transfer and success: 1) transferability of credits, 2) data sharing, 3) access to financial aid, and, 4) faculty involvement. The following is a summary of strategies and tactics.

**TRANSFERABILITY OF CREDITS:** The process for transferring college credits must be transparent, consistent, and limit the accumulation of excessive credit hours that lead to delays in degree completion and increased financial burdens for Latino and other transfer students.

### Tactics:

1. **Sequence and map** degree plans for all transfer students.
2. Require **advising** students of credits transferable to institutions being considered.
3. Implement **joint training** on credit transfer and financial aid for service providers.
4. Implement **common course numbering** consistently across institutions.

**DATA SHARING BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS:** Effective and systemic data sharing should be incentivized to identify potential Latino transfer students, track their persistence across institutions, and document impact of initiatives on students' transfer to completion.

### Tactics:

1. Incentivize institutions to **include data sharing in articulation agreements**.

2. **Publicize persistence and completion rates** as well as graduation rates by institutions.
3. Encourage institutions to **invest in the technical expertise for staff to use data** available of transfer students in their documentation of institutional success.

**ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL FINANCIAL AID:** Prioritize equal access to institutional financial aid for transfer students with native students by integrating and aligning deadlines, forms, advising, and funding.

### Tactics:

1. Ensure deadlines, and **disbursement timing** for institutional aid are consistent.
2. **Standardize forms** for financial aid and admissions across partner institutions.
3. **Advise** transfer students on funding opportunities, and program limits.
4. Develop **institutional transfer-specific scholarships**.

**FACULTY INVOLVEMENT:** Reinforce the role of faculty to mentor transfer students, engage students in and out of the classroom, and develop degree plans that facilitate the transfer process and ensure credit mobility for students.

### Tactics:

1. **Incentivize institutions** to include transfer student mentoring in the tenure process.
2. Ensure faculty receives **information on the transfer process** to use and share.
3. Incentivize **collaboration between faculty** within partner institutions.

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