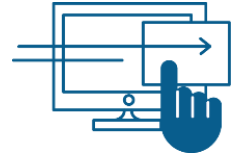


# KICK-OFF ACTIVITY



Imagine you are a student who is about to register for classes at your community college. You want to study business administration and transfer to the local four-year university so you can attain a bachelor's degree. Go to your college's website, and find the information that you need to select your community college courses and transfer successfully into the business program at the four-year institution. Then, go to the four-year university's website and try to confirm that you are taking the right classes. Think about the following questions from the perspective of a student.

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What classes will you need to take in your first semester if you want to transfer into the business program at the local four-year college? How easy or difficult was it to find this information? How many clicks did it take?

Is there a structured pathway—often reflected in a program map—to transfer to the four-year college and study business?

What career options are available to you after you transfer and complete the degree? What do salaries look like for these career options? Is this information available to you on either website?

Whom would you need to see to help you register for classes aligned to your transfer goal? Where would you go on campus to find that person? How easy or difficult was it to find this information on the website?

Look at the assessment tool that you completed for pre-work. Discuss the following questions in small groups.

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Where did your college score “minimal” or “beginning”?

What connections do you see between the practices with limited adoption and the gaps you saw on your website?

Where are the biggest gaps in your college's transfer processes?

# MAKING THE CASE FOR TRANSFER



Why do transfer and baccalaureate completion matter to your institution, your community, and your four-year partners? There are a number of different cases for transfer, including the equity case, the business case, the marketing case, and the political case. With your table, consider your assigned case. How would you make the case for increasing transfer and baccalaureate completion to your intended audience?

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**Making the Equity Case:** More than 80 percent of our students come to our colleges wanting to earn a bachelor's degree, but only 14 percent actually acquire what they desire and pay for. Far too many students are getting into our transfer programs and accumulating lots of credit hours but not transferring or completing the baccalaureate. Most of these are first-generation college-goers, minorities, and low-income students. They're just not being successful.

**Ask:** You are approaching your faculty to have a discussion about how your college can achieve better transfer outcomes for first-generation college-goers, minorities, and low-income students by adopting a guided pathways strategy.

How would you make a compelling equity case for improving transfer and baccalaureate completion to this audience?

Why is transfer and baccalaureate completion so important?

Why should you invest leadership in this topic, especially when so much else within the system needs to be addressed?

How can you influence your target audience?

Who else might your target audience listen to, or be influenced by, and how can you convince them to help? Consider secondary audiences both inside and outside the institution.

**Making the Business Case:** Health care and technology employers in your region need a growing number of registered nurses and cybersecurity workers, but they insist on hiring only entry-level employees with bachelor's degrees in these fields. Your college could expand its nursing and IT programs, but you need employers to help by (1) financially assisting the college to hire additional faculty and purchase new equipment for expansion, and (2) using their influence to urge the regional university to agree to accept your transfer graduates in these fields.

**Ask:** You are meeting with leading IT and health care employers in your region to seek their financial support and influence with the regional university so you can increase your capacity to enroll more students in nursing and cybersecurity.

How would you make a compelling business case for transfer and baccalaureate completion to this audience?

Why is transfer and baccalaureate completion so important?

Why should you invest leadership in this topic, especially when so much else within the system needs to be addressed?

How can you influence your target audience?

Who else might your target audience listen to, or be influenced by, and how can you convince them to help? Consider secondary audiences both inside and outside the institution.

**Making the Marketing Case:** To a relatively non-selective regional university, your college is seen as a competitor for student enrollments. Since universities earn much more of their revenue per student from freshman and sophomore enrollments, every third-year transfer student looks like lost funding to this university.

**Ask:** You have a meeting with the president of the regional university to talk about the value proposition for community college transfer to the university. You want to clarify how partnering with your college by accepting more third-year transfer students would benefit the university.

How would you make a compelling marketing case for transfer and baccalaureate completion to this audience?

Why is transfer and baccalaureate completion so important?

Why should you invest leadership in this topic, especially when so much else within the system needs to be addressed?

How can you influence your target audience?

Who else might your target audience listen to, or be influenced by, and how can you convince them to help? Consider secondary audiences both inside and outside the institution.

**Making the Political Case:** State budgets are constrained, and governors and legislators want higher college degree production in STEM fields at less cost to the state. But community colleges don't figure very prominently into the state's funding strategy regarding this issue.

**Ask:** You have a meeting scheduled with the governor's office to discuss STEM degree production. You want to convince the governor's office that enhancing community college transfer programs is the smartest strategy for the state to pursue.

How would you make a compelling political case for transfer and baccalaureate completion to this audience?

Why is transfer and baccalaureate completion so important?

Why should you invest leadership in this topic, especially when so much else within the system needs to be addressed?

How can you influence your target audience?

Who else might your target audience listen to, or be influenced by, and how can you convince them to help? Consider secondary audiences both inside and outside the institution.

# DATA DEEP DIVE



Break into groups of three or four people to become familiar with and begin to analyze your transfer data using the questions below.

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**(10 minutes) Look over your data independently. Think about:**

What surprised you about these data?

What seemed consistent with what you already knew?

What questions do these data bring up for you?

How do these data compare to the national findings of institutional performance in the *Tracking Transfer* report?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jenkins, D., and Fink, J. (2016). *Tracking transfer: New measures of institutional and state effectiveness in helping community college students attain bachelor's degrees*. Community College Research Center, Aspen Institute, & National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. Retrieved from: <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/tracking-transfer-institutional-state-effectiveness.html>

**(10 minutes) Have a small group discussion. Talk about:**

What surprised you about these data?

What seemed consistent with what you already knew?

How have you worked with data like these before? What did you look at? What resources and ideas can you share with the group?

What processes has your institution used to look at data like these? What resources and ideas can you share with the group?

What questions do these data bring up for you?

**(30 minutes) Work independently. Think about:**

What gaps do you see? What hypotheses do you have about these gaps?

What questions do you have?



What additional data do you think you'll need to answer these questions? How might you obtain those data?

How would you find more information regarding equitable transfer and baccalaureate completion outcomes?

How would you find out if students who transfer out with 30 or more credit hours do as well in baccalaureate attainment as associate degree graduates?

Based on what you know, what do you believe needs to happen next at your college to improve transfer and baccalaureate completion rates?

# STUDENT VOICES



Reflect on the following questions, using the student interviews and the assessment tool completed for pre-work.

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What surprised you most about the responses you heard from students? In what ways did the actual student experience diverge from the transfer process you believed your institution designed? What might account for these differences?

How certain were students of their major? Of their transfer destination? Of the ability to transfer their courses and credits?

Where did students get most of their transfer information?

Look at the transfer assessment that you completed for pre-work. In what areas did your college score highest? Lowest? What connection do you see between these areas and the answers you heard from students?

What specific parts of your transfer process could be improved to meet students' needs and improve their transfer experience?

How can your college further capture the student voice as you work to improve transfer processes? Who in your college is the best person to work with in order to capture the student voice and understand the student experience?



# CASE STUDY DISCUSSION

Your table will be assigned one of the two programs from the pre-reading—DirectConnect or Pathway to the Baccalaureate—to analyze and discuss. Using the organizer below, take *15 minutes* independently or with a partner to think about how your assigned transfer partnership demonstrates the essential strategies and practices discussed in *The Transfer Playbook*, recording any evidence of practices. Note that not every successful partnership will demonstrate every one of these practices. Think about what strategies or practices could be integrated into your assigned partnership to make the program even more effective.

<u>Strategy 1: Make Transfer Student Success a Priority</u>	Valencia College and FSU: DirectConnect	NOVA and GMU: Pathway to the Baccalaureate
Communicate transfer as a key component of the institution’s mission.		
Share data to increase understanding of the need to improve transfer student outcomes—and the benefits of doing so.		
Dedicate significant resources to support transfer students.		

<u>Strategy 2: Create Clear Programmatic Pathways with Aligned High-Quality Instruction</u>	Valencia College and FSU: DirectConnect	NOVA and GMU: Pathway to the Baccalaureate
<p>Work collaboratively with colleagues from partner institutions to create major-specific program maps.</p>		
<p>Provide rigorous instruction and other high-quality academic experiences to prepare students for four-year programs.</p>		
<p>Establish regular, reliable processes for updating and improving program maps.</p>		
<p>Design unconventional pathways, as necessary.</p>		

<u>Strategy 3: Provide Tailored Transfer Student Advising—Community College Advising Practices</u>	Valencia College and FSU: DirectConnect	NOVA and GMU: Pathway to the Baccalaureate
Clearly articulate students’ transfer options and help them determine, as soon as possible, their field of interest, major, and preferred transfer destination.		
Continuously monitor student progress, provide frequent feedback, and intervene quickly when students are off track.		
Help students plan for and access the financial resources necessary to achieve their goals.		
<u>Strategy 3: Provide Tailored Transfer Student Advising—Four-Year College Advising Practices</u>	Valencia College and FSU: DirectConnect	NOVA and GMU: Pathway to the Baccalaureate
Commit dedicated personnel, structures, and resources for transfer students.		
Assign advisors and clearly communicate essential information to prospective transfer students.		

Strongly encourage transfer students to choose a major prior to transfer.		
Replicate elements of the first-year experience for transfer students.		
Exercise fairness in financial aid allocation.		

Consider the following questions in small groups.

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What were the strengths in the implementation of this partnership? What stood out to you as a key practice or strategy that made this partnership successful?

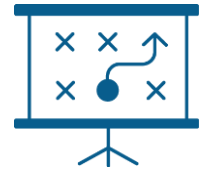
What next steps would you recommend this college take to improve transfer outcomes for its students?

What partnerships or programs for transfer currently exist at your college? What practices or strategies from this case study could be used to strengthen those partnerships or programs?

What was the role of the community college president in the partnership? What strategies did the president use when working with the four-year college or the K-12 system? How did the president market the college as a solution provider to outside partners?

What leadership lessons can you gain from this case study?

# PRIORITIZATION AND GOAL SETTING



Often, community colleges may have several four-year college partners to which students transfer. You can use this activity to consider which four-year colleges will be the best suited for developing deeper partnerships. Take 40 minutes to independently reflect on the following questions.

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List all of the four-year colleges that are transfer destinations for your students. Roughly how many students transfer to each destination each school year? For the top five transfer destinations, complete the columns for overall four-year graduation rate and graduation rate for your college's students who transfer there.

College	How Many Students Transfer Each Year?	Overall Four-Year Graduation Rate?	Graduation Rate for Your Students Who Transfer There?



**Among those with relatively strong student outcomes, consider the following:**

Where do you already have strong relationships with presidents and provosts?

Where do faculty and administrators at your college already have strong relationships?

Who has shown signs that they care about and are prioritizing transfer student outcomes? How do you know?

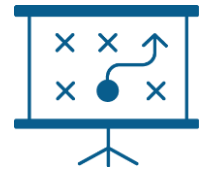
Where is there a rising demand for workers with bachelor's degrees? In what fields? In what regions? Which of the four-year partners has strong programs in high-demand fields? Which partner is located in a region with a high demand for workers with bachelor's degrees?

What do you know about how each partner has managed change initiatives in the past? Which partner institutions seem amenable to change?

Ask yourself the following two questions: Which partner institution seems most ready and willing to partner to improve transfer outcomes? Where do you think students will have the best post-graduation outcomes? Then, ask yourself, **Which four-year partner do you think would be the best to reach out to first to begin this process?** Write that partner in the chart below. Once you have selected your top choice for a partner, list the people you would meet with to begin this relationship.

Partner college:
People to Meet With

Imagine that you are meeting with the president of this university. What SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Timebound) would you hope to achieve as a result of this partnership? (Here's an example: Five years from now, an additional 100 students in each of our top five transfer majors will successfully transfer to State University A.)



# PRE-MORTEM ANALYSIS

After reading Gary Klein’s article “Performing a Project Premortem” from the *Harvard Business Review*, work with your table group to complete the following pre-mortem analysis.

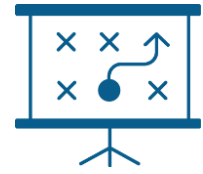
Consider the goal for outcomes of a transfer partnership that you created in the previous activity. Assume that, five years from now, you have failed to achieve that goal (or, if it is a long-term strategy, have failed to achieve the elements you expected to have achieved in five years).

On the chart below, identify the likely major causes of that “mortality.” What specifically might happen that could derail the effort? Who are the actors? What are their motivations? For each cause, delineate specific leadership strategies you will employ to anticipate and avert or address the challenges.

Cause of “Mortality”	Leadership Strategy to Employ

Find a partner and provide each other with feedback. What causes of mortality did you or your partner miss? What feedback can you offer one another on suggested leadership strategies?

# PROPOSING A TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP



Take 20 minutes to independently prepare talking points for a meeting with the president of the four-year college that you prioritized as a partner in the earlier activity. Consider the questions below as you draft your talking points.

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Put yourself in the shoes of the four-year college president. What problem might his or her institution have that could be solved by partnering with you?

What are your goals for this partnership? How might those goals appeal to the president of the four-year college? Which goals in particular might overlap with or complement the goals of the four-year college?

Why should the four-year college care about improving transfer and baccalaureate completion outcomes?

What resources would your college provide that would be useful to the four-year college?

What specifically will you ask for?

Then, find a partner and practice your talking points with one another for 20 minutes. Role-play, with one partner acting as the community college president, and the other acting as the president of the four-year college. Provide one another with feedback on the talking points. What worked well? What could be better tailored to the audience?

# DILEMMAS OF A COLLEGE PRESIDENT



For your assigned dilemma, draw on the strategies, practices, and next frontiers for improving transfer outcomes that we have discussed. Take 30 minutes to discuss the scenario and think of next steps for the president to take, using the questions below.

---

## Scenario A:

Dear College Excellence Guru:

Over the past several years I have worked hard as a college president to provide leadership at my institution to increase four-year college transfer as a priority. We have developed stronger relationships with several regional universities, and our transfer enrollments and transfer rates have increased substantially.

Recently, we noticed that significant numbers of students are transferring without completing the associate degree. I have been making the case to our students and to leaders at the regional universities that it is best for students to earn the AA/AS degree prior to transfer because they are much more likely to be successful and complete the baccalaureate than if they transfer before graduating. "Associate degree first!" has been my mantra. When I looked at the post-transfer success rates of our students, I found that indeed AA/AS degree holders complete the bachelor's degree at much higher rates than students who transfer after completing less than 30 credit hours. But I also found that students transferring with 30 or more credit hours who did not graduate with an associate degree did better than transfer students who earn our associate degree first. Our non-graduate transfers with 30 or more hours actually did better than our graduates!

This makes no sense to me. Why is this happening? Should I quit trying to make the case that transfer students should earn the "associate degree first" before transferring? Is there something we are doing at the college that is contributing to this outcome? Maybe the associate degree isn't as important as I thought.

**What should be the role of the president in this situation?**

**What are the right kinds of questions the president should be asking, and to whom should the president be addressing these questions?**

**How can the president help the college understand the "why" in dealing with this issue?**

**In what ways should the president help the college keep the end goal in mind?**

**Should the president be thinking though issues of scale, resources, sustainability, and outcomes? If not, how does the president make sure these issues are addressed?**

---

**Scenario B:**

Dear College Excellence Guru:

Over the past several years I have worked hard as a college president to provide leadership at my institution and in my state to increase four-year college transfer as a priority. We have developed stronger relationships with several regional universities, and our transfer-out to four-year institution rates have increased substantially. We have even negotiated a statewide agreement between community colleges and state universities, which provides that students who earn the AA/AS degree from a community college and earn grades of C or better will be granted 60 semester hours of credit, will have junior standing, and will have met general education core requirements. However, when I examined the post-transfer success rates of our students, I found that community college graduates who transfer and attend a state university full-time take an average of three years and an additional 82 credit hours to complete the baccalaureate.

I don't believe it! After all the time and effort made to secure an effective "2 + 2" agreement statewide, the universities are making our students enroll for an extra year! I'm thinking of taking this issue up with my local legislative delegation and requesting that the legislature require the universities to create two-year completion pathways for community college graduates. I don't know what else to do. Our students deserve better.

**What should be the role of the president in this situation?**

**What are the right kinds of questions the president should be asking, and to whom should the president be addressing these questions?**

**How can the president help the college understand the "why" in dealing with this issue?**

**In what ways should the president help the college keep the end goal in mind?**

**Should the president be thinking through issues of scale, resources, sustainability, and outcomes? If not, how does the president make sure these issues are addressed?**

---

**Scenario C:**

Dear College Excellence Guru:

Over the past several years I have worked hard as a college president to provide leadership at my institution to increase four-year college transfer as a priority. We have developed stronger relationships with several regional universities, and our transfer enrollments and transfer rates have increased substantially.

Recently, as my colleagues and I looked over our students' post-transfer outcomes, we noticed that we were graduating and transferring three times more students with majors in the social sciences as we were in STEM fields. And, even more disproportionately, virtually none of our African American and Latino students were transferring into program majors such as cybersecurity, computer science, engineering, or mathematics. We recognize that this is not a local issue peculiar to our region and that the supply of STEM graduates is critical to our nation's future. So, one step we are taking is that we are enhancing STEM career awareness for all of our entering students. But, as the college's president, I'm not sure what more I can do. What do you recommend?

**What should be the role of the president in this situation?**

**What are the right kinds of questions the president should be asking, and to whom should the president be addressing these questions?**

How can the president help the college understand the “why” in dealing with this issue?

In what ways should the president help the college keep the end goal in mind?

Should the president be thinking through issues of scale, resources, sustainability, and outcomes? If not, how does the president make sure these issues are addressed?