



September 2014

Since 2011 the Presidents Council and Michigan Community College Association staff have increasingly worked together on statewide college readiness, access, transferability, and completion initiatives. These efforts were influenced by President Obama's goal of increasing college attainment to 60% by 2020 and pushed by national foundations and higher education organizations including National Governor's Association (NGA) and National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL). I would like to highlight some of our collaborative initiatives:

Michigan Transfer Agreement

Originally signed in 1972, the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO) agreement has been used successfully by many students to transfer their general education courses from community colleges to participating four year institutions. In 2012, the Michigan legislature included language in the community college appropriations bill calling for improvement in the transferability of college courses between Michigan community colleges and universities by revising the MACRAO agreement. Through a collaborative process, the Michigan Community College Association (MCCA), Presidents Council State Universities of Michigan and MACRAO developed the Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA).

After the MTA recommendations were finalized in spring 2013, MCCA and PCSUM staff have been working with MACRAO members on communicating the MTA, updating the articulation handbook, and creating FAQ for college personnel and students, and participation guidelines and signature form. They are gearing up for further work – called MTA 2.0, including how to help students who (a) take courses at multiple postsecondary institutions (or swirling students), (b) take dual and concurrent enrollment, or (c) want to transfer in military credit or prior learning credits. This past summer MCCA and PCSUM have also held meetings with faculty from the community colleges and universities to talk about their general education disciplinary courses and learning outcomes.

Credit When Its Due or Reverse Transfer Initiative

Reverse transfer is when a community college awards an associate degrees to a student when the student completes the requirements for the associate degree while pursuing a bachelor's degree. To acknowledge students and increase the number of college completers, in the FY13 university appropriations bill, the Michigan Legislature required universities to establish reverse transfer agreements with at least three community colleges by January 2013. As of August 2014, 132 agreements have been developed among Michigan's 28 community colleges and 15 public universities. Some of the agreements are consortia arrangements and others are single institution partnerships, but all are locally created.

In 2013, several foundations joined forces in the initiative, “Credit When It’s Due: Recognizing the Value of the Quality Associate Degree.” The initiative is designed to encourage partnerships of community colleges and universities. Michigan received one of the 12 state grants, and our grant is supported by the Kresge Foundation (Kresge is located in Troy, Michigan). The funding helped MCCA and PCSUM create a statewide reverse transfer consortium to collaborate on best practices to award associate degrees to students who transfer from community colleges to 4-year institutions without an associate degree. The grant ends this year but the consortium’s work will continue. As of March 2014, 425 students received Associate degrees through reverse transfer.

Michigan Transfer Network (MTN)

The Michigan Transfer Network was created in 2007, under the sponsorship of the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO). The Michigan Transfer Network is a centralized transfer course equivalency site for institutions of higher education in the State of Michigan. The site was created in response to the 2004 Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth, led by Lt. Governor Cherry. Students in the State of Michigan now have a convenient and accurate resource to consult when considering transfer from one Michigan college to another.

MACRAO provides funding for the system, and coordinates institutional participation. Special recognition is due to Michigan State University (MSU) for providing technical support needed to develop the MTN system. MSU is also hosting the network and providing ongoing technical support.

After seven years of operation, the MTN includes 68 public and private, two-year and four-year institutions in the State of Michigan and have loaded almost one million transfer course equivalencies into the network.

MCCA and PCSUM staff are working with a MACRAO sub-committee on developing a new, robust website that will guide and help students maneuver their postsecondary degree attainment including high school students taking dual or concurrent enrollment, adult student returning or transferring to another institution, and student Veterans transferring in military credit.

Liberal Education & America’s Promise (LEAP) and Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)

The university Academic Affairs Officers are beginning to collaborate through an American Association of Colleges & Universities’ (AAC&U) initiative on general education learning outcomes and assessments. The Liberal Education and America’s Promise or LEAP responds to the changing demands of the twenty-first century—demands for more college-educated workers and more engaged and informed citizens. AAC&U does this by working with postsecondary institutions on (1) national benchmarks and models for general education learning outcomes and assessment, (2) communicating the value of the knowledge, attitudes and skills developed through an integrated general education program to students, parents, legislators and employers, and (3) discussing ways in which the member institutions may help make the high school to college transition easier for students.

Several community colleges utilize the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP), which is very similar to LEAP. Michigan public universities are applying to AAC&U to become a LEAP state and the universities are asking the community colleges to join the effort.

Career & College Readiness

Currently, the Presidents Council is collaborating with Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Community College Association on communicating and ensuring the resources are there for K-12 students to be college and career ready. Because of these efforts, last year Michigan was asked to join the College and Career Readiness Partnership that is sponsored by State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). This partnership is allowing K-12 and postsecondary to collaborate on addressing issues that reside at the intersection of K-12 and higher education. In fact, this Friday the three groups are hosting two meetings: One will be the first time high school teachers or curriculum developers and postsecondary faculty talk about math and English composition standards and learning outcomes. The other meeting is a focus group of teacher preparation faculty to learn how they are helping the future teachers and leaders be prepared to educate students in college and career readiness.

Consortium of Michigan Veteran Educators

The consortium was founded by Central Michigan University in 2010. In 2011 the Presidents Council State Universities of Michigan and the Michigan Community College Association began work to formalize the consortium. In early 2012, the Consortium joined with other key partners including the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency to create a statewide network to improve the support and services to our active military and Veterans populations.

The primary goal of the Consortium of Michigan Veteran Educators is to increase the number of service members, and their families, who take advantage of the educational benefits that are available to them such as the G.I. Bill. As part of this critical goal, the members of the consortium are also focused on ensuring Veterans that enroll in Michigan's public postsecondary institutions receive the support they need to successfully complete a credential that will lead to gainful employment and productive lives. A secondary goal of the Consortium is to serve as a convener of college and university staff to provide for professional development opportunities and sharing of best practices to better support the student Veteran population.

Lastly, MCCA and PCSUM staff are starting collaborative efforts with our university higher education doctoral programs in conducting research on several of these initiatives.

In addition, MCCA and PCSUM work closely on other initiatives including the (1) pre-kindergarten through postsecondary education (P-20) longitudinal data system, which is administered by the Center for Education Performance Improvement (CEPI) and housed in the State Office of Management & Budget, and (2) State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement or SARA, which allows our institutions to offer online learning and specific on the ground programs across state lines. A bill is drafted and will be introduced shortly in the Senate for Michigan to join SARA through the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.

September 24, 2014

Dear Michigan Competitive Committee Members:

Michigan's fifteen public universities have long had excellent working relationships with the state's community colleges. We believe that an expansion of those collaborations is the most efficient way to provide Michigan residents with the four-year degree programs that some community colleges want to offer in their districts. What the community colleges are suggesting would be the most expensive and least efficient way to meet that need, the substantial costs for which would, in any event, be borne solely by students and local taxpayers. There is a better way.

The Presidents Council on behalf of Michigan's 15 public universities have pledged to collaborate with our community college colleagues and will provide locally any new baccalaureate or degree completion program for which there is a need within that community college district. This pledge is identical to the commitment we made during the last legislative session.

Allowing community colleges to offer bachelor's degree programs will unnecessarily raise the operating costs at the community colleges. This will mean higher tuition, higher property taxes, or cuts in services to other students.

Michigan's students are already very well served by the collaborative efforts of universities and community colleges. As the included map and attachment show, Michigan's universities are working hand in hand with community colleges to meet the needs of students on community college campuses.

In all, nearly 15,000 students are enrolled in more than 300 four-year degree programs offered by Michigan's universities at community colleges. This does not include the many other course offerings made in collaboration with community colleges through University Centers and online, which allow community college students to complete most, if not all, of their course work in their local community.

This continuous pledge by our member universities ensures that duplication and waste will be avoided, can be implemented immediately, and is far less costly – which is exactly what our elected officials have been asking from public agencies at all levels.

HB 4148 is simply unnecessary, duplicative and expensive. Michigan's universities and community colleges have a long history of crafting and implementing collaborative programs. This legislation only threatens to undermine the myriad of collaborative programs and partnerships between our two-year and four-year institutions.

