Developing Systematic Independent College Transfer in New England: Early Lessons
Curricular Alignment or Degree Pathways, Partnerships and Collaboration

The New England Independent College Transfer Guarantee (The Guarantee) is an initiative led by the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), where systematic transfer pathways have been developed for community college graduates into independent institutions in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. This session highlights lessons learned, including: the cultivation of institutional and state participation and collaboration, strategies for state-wide transfer unification, and improved student-focused pathway development.

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New England Independent College Transfer Guarantee
Early Lessons Learned

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1. Introduction and setting the stage
2. What problem are we trying to address?
3. What is the Guarantee?
   a. Agreements and Methodology, Foundational Design and Guiding Principles
4. Challenges and Solutions
5. Benefits to all institutions and initiative sustainability
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<th>Addressing the Barriers</th>
<th>The Guarantee Solution</th>
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<td>• Credit loss</td>
<td>• Unify systematic state-wide transfer</td>
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<td>• Lack of systematized transfer to independents</td>
<td>• Promote a student-centered approach and transfer receptive culture</td>
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<td>• Transparency</td>
<td>• Provide greater access, opportunity, and affordability</td>
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<td>• Best fit</td>
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<td>• Affordability</td>
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<td>• Credentials and skills gaps</td>
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<td>• Insufficient institutional transfer student support systems</td>
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Moving away from one-to-one agreements towards "block transfer" and master agreements

Providing Gen Ed core waivers, flexible credit applicability, and a streamlined transparent processes

Meeting the moment and reevaluating outdated transfer policy

"A DEGREE IS A DEGREE"
What is the Guarantee?

State-specific systematic transfer for guaranteed admission between community colleges and four-year independent institutions in CT, MA and RI.

GUARANTEED ADMISSION ELIGIBILITY
- Associate degree
- Eligible GPA

BENEFITS AND FEATURES
- Application fee waiver
- Financial / Scholarship Incentives
- Guaranteed transfer of credit

PARTICIPATING INSITUTIONS
- 100% of community colleges
- 60% of independents

PARTNERS
- Independent College Associations
- Public Higher Ed Systems
# Agreements + Transfer Methodology

**BUILDING UPON STATE TRANSFER POLICY FOR UNIFICATION**

## State-Specific Memorandums of Agreement
- Master document: roles, responsibilities, transfer methodology, policies and practices, recommendations, student support, incentives
- Key appendices: Institutional transfer policy alignment, Guiding Principles

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<tr>
<th>Connecticut</th>
<th>Massachusetts</th>
<th>Rhode Island</th>
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<td>Tiered GPA (2.0, 2.5, 3.0)</td>
<td><strong>Single GPA (2.5)</strong></td>
<td>Tiered GPA (2.0, 2.4, 3.0)</td>
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<td>Gen Ed waiver</td>
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<td>Mapped pathway templates</td>
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<td>Alignment with state pathways</td>
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Guarantee Foundational Design

Key Features
- Guaranteed admission to institution
- Associate's degree
- Eligible GPA
- Application fee waiver

Mapped Pathways
- Scholarships and incentives
- Guiding Principles
- Gen Ed Waiver
The Ethos of the Guarantee
Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles advocate for students by outlining a commitment to wrap-around services, transparency and fostering a transfer receptive institutional culture.

1) Community college graduates bring to a receiving four-year institution a different perspective from their life experiences, persistence, diversity, and the academic preparation necessary to be able to graduate at a rate equal to or more likely higher than incoming high school graduates.

2) Student-centered, taking into account life experiences, financial and support service needs, interests, aspirations, and/or cultural backgrounds.

3) Pre-application and post-acceptance support services are critical to the successful transition of community college graduates into four-year institutions.
Challenge #1

Fostering collaboration and buy-in across public and independent sectors
Solutions

Fostering collaboration and buy-in across public and independent sectors

- Begin with an **exploratory** phase prior to implementation
- Utilize a **top-down and bottom-up approach**
- Encourage **discussion, feedback and an open dialogue** during development
- Develop **organizational structures** that promote collaboration and vehicles for getting input and advice
- Place **students at the front and center**
- Communicate **institutional benefits** to department heads and faculty
Challenge #2

Unifying state-wide transfer and promoting standardization
Solutions

Unifying state-wide transfer and promoting standardization

Unification
- Align with state policies when possible
- Benefit of meeting state credential attainment goals and economic impact

Standardization
- Master agreement rather than separate transfer agreements
- Guaranteed admission to institution and gen ed core transfer

Re-evaluate institutional transfer policies
- Encourage institutions to re-examine their legacy transfer practices

Flexibility
- Encourage mapped transfer pathways, but see value in flexible credit applicability
- Promote the flexibility of degree requirement substitutions in the transfer process
Challenge #3

Enhancing transparency and improving transfer websites
Solutions

Enhancing transparency and improving transfer websites

- Simplify!
  - Cohesive and clear messaging
  - Keep the transfer audience in mind
- Build a cohesive and user-friendly one-stop transfer website
  - Collaborate with public systems website
  - Focus on clarity and user-friendly pages
- Improve institutional transfer web pages
  - Provide guidance and templates
Challenge #4

Increasing visibility and effective promotion
Develop an overarching, simplified message which promotes transfer program
  ◦ Simple and effective messaging
  ◦ Brand strategy guidebook
  ◦ Materials for virtual channels
• Survey focus groups
• Utilize established institutional recruitment and outreach channels
How all institutions benefit

- Fostering collaboration and partnership across public and private sectors
- Increasing transparency
- Placing students at the center of the discussion
- Fostering an ecosystem of healthy competition
- Thinking holistically and beyond individual institution or program articulation agreements
- Collaboration to create policies and practices that benefit all students
Sustainability

Culture of collaboration

Data collection and metrics for success

Systems that work for all, not some