

THE WASHINGTON STORY

LEADING STUDENT SUCCESS

"Washington is a state with a large community college sector and a comparatively small number of baccalaureate institutions. Thus, successful transfer plays an important role in helping students attain bachelor's degrees."

*Andi Smith
Associate Director for the Academic Affairs
Division of the Higher Education Coordinating Board*



ESTABLISHING DEGREE PATHWAYS

In January of 2005, House Bill 2382 charged the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) with convening workgroups to develop a master plan for promoting efficient transfer between two year and four year public institutions across the state.

Washington's use of degree pathways reflects the increasing use of transfer as a route to a bachelor's degree and acknowledges that students at community colleges who have the goal of attaining a bachelor's degree often do not have the same access to advising resources as students who start their education at a four year institution.

Better student preparation reduces the likelihood of students completing credits that will not transfer or count towards completion of a degree. Washington estimated that even if transfer students completed only .5 fewer credits each year, the state could save 2.5 credits per student within five years.

If the approximately 7,000 transfer students who complete transfer degrees each year were to take 2.5 fewer credits, the state could enroll and graduate 77 more students each year without increasing the number of funded Full Time Equivalency (FTE) students.

PILOT PROJECT

The pilot in Washington focused on two public institutions with an established history of promoting transfer, Bellevue Community College and the University of Washington, Seattle. AcademyOne used its web portal, CollegeTransfer.net as the tool for pulling all of the student's information together into one location.

First, AcademyOne created a secure web interface that enabled Bellevue students to download a copy of their courses and grades. Armed with an electronic copy of their course history, Bellevue students were then able to request Transfer Planning Guides from the University of Washington.

The University of Washington's automated degree audit system was accessed through another secure interface created by AcademyOne and used to translate the student's courses and grades at Bellevue into the equivalent courses at University of Washington. Students then had access to an accurate evaluation of their coursework against the degree requirements for specific majors at the University of Washington.

Finally, AcademyOne's system also enabled students to share their information with anyone they chose. So, students are able to solicit advice from friends, family and mentors through an email that provides a direct link to viewing all of the student's information through the CollegeTransfer.net portal.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Hundreds of Bellevue students took advantage of the web advising system during the pilot. The participants were so pleased with the outcome that the pilot project has been extended through the end of 2007. Findings from the pilot are being used to in a request for allocation of funds in the 2008 state budget. HECB's goal is the extension the web advising system to include all public two and four year institutions state-wide.