



MASSACHUSETTS INDEPENDENT COLLEGE TRANSFER GUARANTEE

Systematic transfer pathways critical for the future of independent institutions

About the Massachusetts Independent College Transfer Guarantee

Supported by a three-year grant, the New England Board of Higher Education and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts, in partnership with the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges and the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, are developing systematic transfer pathways between Massachusetts' community colleges and four-year independent institutions.

The Massachusetts Independent College Transfer Guarantee (Massachusetts Guarantee) builds upon the foundation of the state's existing transfer policy, with the intention of unifying transfer in the state and expanding transfer options for Massachusetts' community college students. The Massachusetts Guarantee will ensure acceptance at a participating Guarantee institution for associate degree holding students who have met a minimum GPA requirement of 2.5. At the core of the Massachusetts Guarantee is an unwavering commitment to equity, opportunity and access for all students in higher education.

The Transfer Student Benefit

According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, more than half of all the nation's bachelor's degree awardees received some credit from community colleges. Community college students bring a rich diversity of life experiences to a four-year campus, as well as racial and socio-economic diversity, adding to the dynamism of campus life. Moreover, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's report, Persistence: The Success of Students Who Transfer from Community Colleges to Selective Four-Year Institutions found that graduation rates of community college transfer students match or exceed those of students who start at four-year selective institutions as freshmen.

Reducing Barriers to Successful Transfer

Community college transfer students are faced with myriad barriers along the path to degree attainment, the most prominent of which is credit loss. A 2017 national report from the General Accounting Office, found that transfer students lost an average of 43% of their credits while community college transfers to four-year institutions lost 26%. Credit loss hinders student success, unfairly disadvantaging transfer students by impacting time to degree and increasing costs of completing a degree. The Massachusetts Guarantee eliminates excessive credit loss through the systemization of transfer pathways, which incorporate clear credit transfer policies.

Massachusetts Guarantee: A Critical Enrollment Strategy

The Massachusetts Guarantee seeks to resolve existing transfer challenges through the development of clear and transparent transfer pathways that benefit both the receiving institution and transferring community college graduates. By design, the Massachusetts Guarantee will buoy independent institution enrollment and improve graduation rates. Modeled after the state's transfer policies, current community college transfer coordinators can readily advise students about their four-year public and independent institutional options. The Massachusetts Guarantee also outlines research-based Guiding Principles for participating institutions to increase the likelihood of student success, such as pre-application and post-acceptance support services.

Prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic's disruption of higher education, many higher education institutions within the region were already faced with recruitment challenges and concerns about the future. With the additional uncertainty for the upcoming fall, institutions are seeking further information on how to best respond to these challenges. The Massachusetts Guarantee uniquely positions participating institutions to face these challenges head-on, while providing continued support and increased access to the state's current and future community college graduates.

MA GUARANTEE COMMITMENT

ACCESS
EQUITY
OPPORTUNITY

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

ASSOCIATE DEGREE
+
MINIMUM GPA OF 2.5

PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY COLLEGES

ALL 15
MASSACHUSETTS
INSTITUTIONS

MA COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFERS IN 2018

11,000 STUDENTS
TRANSFERRED INTO
INDEPENDENT
COLLEGES IN MA