



# TRANSFER VIRGINIA

Through high-level collaboration among all institutions of higher education, *Transfer Virginia* will reform the transfer experience and enable the Commonwealth to make measurable progress on student success and equity.

Although most Virginia students who start community college aim to receive a baccalaureate degree, less than a third of them ever transfer. Students aiming to transfer must navigate cumbersome processes, often lose credit for work completed at prior institutions, and face other obstacles. To become the best educated state by 2030—a goal articulated in the Virginia Plan for Higher Education—the Commonwealth must address these barriers.

*Transfer Virginia* is a collaborative partnership between the State Council of Higher Education, the Virginia Community College System, the Aspen Institute, HCM Strategists, and Sova. It embraces the growing need for seamless transfer among the Commonwealth's institutions by:

- Engaging key stakeholders to improve communication and facilitate collaboration.
- Engaging faculty across institutions to better align academic expectations at two-year and four-year schools.
- Developing program maps that will guide students from high school to community college to university degree completion.
- Streamlining transfer articulation agreements and improving guaranteed admission agreements.
- Creating models for regional dual-admission and co-enrollment programs.
- Developing an online transfer portal that serves all students.

## MAKING TRANSFER WORK FOR EVERYONE

## THE CASE FOR CHANGE

In a 2012 cohort of Virginia community college students intending to transfer, only 1,989 out of 20,000 students earned a baccalaureate degree, resulting in a success rate of under 10 percent. Removing barriers to efficient transfer will make the Commonwealth's system of higher education:

- **More affordable.** Two years spent at a community college costs a Virginia student about \$17,000 less than attending a four-year school.
- **More efficient.** The typical community college student who transfers to attain a baccalaureate degree earns 133 credits, 13 more than is required for most programs—the equivalent of an extra semester of expenses and time.
- **More equitable.** Because community college is the most accessible entry point into higher education, improved transfer will close equity gaps in baccalaureate degree attainment.
- **More relevant.** Improving transfer improves the economic outlook for the Commonwealth, given the projected growth in careers that require a baccalaureate degree.

## TRANSFER VA GOALS

*Transfer Virginia* focuses on one overarching goal: Improve the efficiency of the transfer system, while closing the gap for underrepresented populations and Pell Grant recipients. If this goal is met, the higher education institutions in Virginia will award an additional 6,600 baccalaureate degrees to transfer students each year. Other goals include:

- **Gateway barriers:** Increase the share of students successfully completing gateway math and English in the first year of community college enrollment from 35 percent to 75 percent.
- **Mobility and timeliness:** Increase the percentages of community college students who transfer after two years from 35 percent to 40 percent and from 48 percent to 55 percent for those who transfer after three years. Improve time to transfer without reducing the number of students who complete an associate's degree before transfer.
- **Degree attainment:** Increase the baccalaureate degree completion rate for students completing within two years of transfer from 26 percent to 40 percent, within three years of transfer from 63 percent to 70 percent, and within four years of transfer from 75 percent to 80 percent.
- **Credit efficiency:** Reduce the average number of degree credits earned by transfer students to be comparable to the number earned toward the same degree by native students.

## TRANSFER VA PARTNERS

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) are the in-state lead organizations for *Transfer Virginia*. The national partners—the College Excellence Program at the Aspen Institute, HCM Strategists, and Sova—aim to foster the conditions in three states (Virginia, Minnesota, and Texas) for scaled and measurable improvements in attainment rates for baccalaureate-seeking community college students. The partners will work with SCHEV and VCCS over the next three years to approach the work comprehensively, incorporating policy, practice, leadership, research, and strategic communications tailored to Virginia's needs.



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