INTERSTATE PASSPORT

OVERVIEW

WHAT

Based at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), Interstate Passport® is a national program facilitating block transfer of completed lower-division general education based on student learning outcomes, rather than on specific courses and credits. Students who transfer with a Passport to another member institution are recognized as having completed all lower-division general education requirements prior to transfer, regardless of course titles and credits.

WHY

“...[T]he most pressing [barrier to completion is] the loss of credits that community college students experience when they transition to four-year institutions. ...[E]nsuring that students can transfer credits efficiently has the potential to substantially raise college attainment.”

Thirty-eight percent of all students transfer at least once, and over 370,000 graduates in 2013-14 previously had attended college in another state—a transition that is especially fraught with loss of credits.

A Passport can be a confidence-building milestone for students, as well as a signal to employers about the knowledge and skills students have achieved early in their college experience.

HOW

Interstate Passport builds on the learning outcomes work of individual campuses and their related general education reforms. It is also consistent with and integrates well with campus-guided pathways work.

An institution determines if its own learning outcomes for lower-division general education are congruent with and cover the same range of learning as the 63 Passport Learning Outcomes (PLOs) included in the nine knowledge and skill areas. The institution identifies the courses and lists of choices (Block) by which students can achieve the PLOs, awards a Passport to students who earn it, and reports the awards to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). Participating institutions also report academic progress data on transfer students to NSC, which sorts the data and sends reports about their former students to each sending institutions for use in continuous improvement efforts.

WHO

Over 38,800 students earned Passports by May 2019. For the 472 Passport earners who transferred to other Passport institutions in AY 2018-19, grade point average (GPA) after transfer was consistently higher compared to those who transferred without a Passport in the same cohorts, regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, age, low-income (Pell), active military or veteran, first-generation, GPA before transfer, or credits earned before transfer.

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ENDNOTES

4. Data represents academic progress two terms post-transfer for 472 students who transferred with a Passport to a member institution.

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