

Improving success of students who transfer to four-year institutions is an important objective of West Virginia Northern Community College's Strategic plan. It is critical to fulfilling the vision of the West Virginia Community and Technical College System of West Virginia (CTCS) and to achieving national goals for improving upward social mobility and economic vitality. It is particularly important for economically and/or academically disadvantaged students because starting at a community college and transferring to a four-year institution may be the only viable path to a baccalaureate degree for these students.

Improving baccalaureate completion for community college students requires improving both transfer-out rates and bachelor's completion rates. WV Northern currently reports the rate at which our students transfer to other institutions as part of the required federal Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) "Student Right-to-Know" statistics. However, there is room for improvement regarding how we track these students. Given our students' proximity to Ohio and Pennsylvania we cannot merely rely on transfer reports from WV Higher Education Policy Commission and in the past our partner four-year institutions have not consistently participated in the National Student Clearinghouse. Therefore, we will also explore possible utilization of the National Student Loan Data System.

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness will partner with the Registrar's Office and the Office of Financial Aid to improve accuracy in tracking how many of our students transfer to other institutions and we will also begin to capture a critical outcome for transfer students; whether they succeed in earning bachelor's degrees.

We propose the following four measures:

- transfer-out rate (2-year) – the rate at which our degree-seeking students transfer to another two-year institution.
- transfer-out rate (4-year) - the rate at which our degree-seeking students transfer to a four-year institution.
- transfer-with-award rate - the rate at which our students earn a credential (either an occupational certificate or an associate degree) before transferring to a four-year institution.
- transfer-out bachelor's completion rate—the rate at which our students who transfer to a four-year institution earn a bachelor's degree from any four-year institution within six years of entering higher education.

To establish a baseline for accessing the effectiveness of actions items included in the college's 2015-2020 strategic plan we will determine these measures for the past five years starting with the Fall 2012 cohort.

Reference: Community College Research Center (2016)
<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/tracking-transfer-institutional-state-effectiveness.pdf>