



# ISSUE BRIEF

Project Win-Win  
at the Finish Line

BY THE  
INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER  
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# Leveraging the Associate's Degree to Increase U.S. Attainment

In recent years, national leaders have been touting the potential of community colleges to meet the growing demand for a more educated U.S. workforce. For far too many students, however, the two-year associate's degree remains just that: A potential achievement. Based on the best national estimates, only about 15 percent of students earn associate's degrees within six years of starting community college. Further, associate's degree completion rates for students who start in community colleges are less than one-third that of bachelor's completion rates for students who start in four-year institutions.<sup>1</sup> With more than one-third of all undergraduates enrolled in community colleges today,<sup>2</sup> the need to refocus on America's forgotten degree has never been clearer.

Fortunately, the populace of two-year students includes some “low-hanging apples” that suggest a fruitful path forward. For example, figures from the U.S. Census Bureau show that 22 percent of adults aged 25–64 in the United States—more than 36 million people—have earned some college, but no degree.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, studies by Cliff Adelman have shown that approximately 15 percent of “college dropouts” have earned significant numbers of credits and were in good academic standing when they left school.<sup>4</sup> Those who already have started down the road to an associate's degree represent a population ripe for return and completion.

Project Win-Win sought to test the potential of these would-be completers. Through the project, 61 two-year and four-year institutions tracked, sorted, contacted, recruited, and supported former students with the aim of helping them earn their associate's degrees. This brief, which summarizes a more detailed report by Adelman, charts the development, processes, and lessons of Project Win-Win, in hopes that this experience can help inform other efforts to boost college attainment.

<sup>1</sup> Radford, A.W., Berkner, L., Wheelless, S.C., & Shepherd, B. 2010. *Persistence and Attainment of 2003–04 Beginning Postsecondary Students: After 6 Years (NCES 2011–151)*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Spring 2010. *Enrollment Component*.

<sup>3</sup> Lumina Foundation. 2013. *A Stronger Nation through Higher Education: Visualizing Data to Help us Achieve a Big Goal for College Attainment*. Indianapolis, IN: Author. Retrieved from [http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/A\\_stronger\\_nation\\_through\\_higher\\_education-2013.pdf](http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/A_stronger_nation_through_higher_education-2013.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Adelman, C. 2004. *Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education, 1972–2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

# A Pioneering Effort: Project Win-Win

Between 2009 and 2013, 61 colleges in nine states (Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, and Wisconsin) joined together for Project Win-Win. Their mission: To locate former students, no longer enrolled anywhere and never awarded a degree, whose records qualified them for associate's degrees, and to award those degrees retroactively. Simultaneously, this effort identified former students who were no more than nine to 12 credits short of an associate's degree, and sought to find them, and bring them back to college to complete the degree.

"Win-Win" has been a partnership of the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), with principal funding from Lumina Foundation and, for Michigan, from the Kresge Foundation. The project expanded a pilot program sponsored by The Education Trust in the fall and spring terms of 2009–10 at nine of the 61 institutions. Other institutions joined the project in waves through fall of 2011.

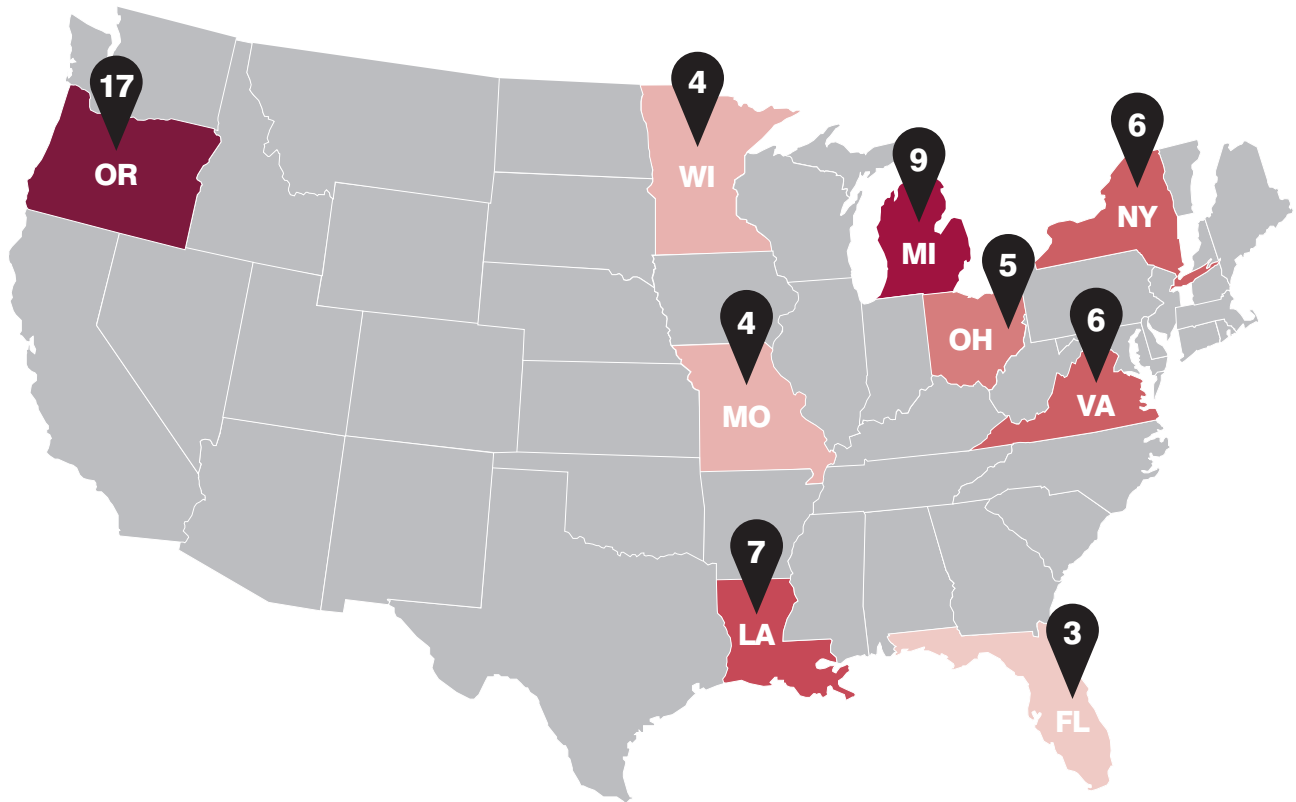
Research conducted by Cliff Adelman in the mid-1990s, when he was a senior research analyst for the U.S. Department of Education, laid the foundation for Project Win-Win. Working with the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS:88) and other datasets, he discovered that among traditional-age students in any cohort, 15 percent had earned more than 60 credits with a grade point average above 2.5, yet eight to 10 years later held no degree whatsoever and were no longer enrolled anywhere.<sup>5</sup>

In 2009, amid mounting calls for degree attainment, Margarita Benítez (then director of higher education at The Education Trust) recalled Adelman's research. Benítez asked the National Association of System Heads (NASH) to sponsor the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) to design and manage the pilot, dubbed Project Win-Win. The project eventually grew to involve 10 four-year institutions that award associate's degrees and 51 community colleges and other two-year institutions that grant associate's degrees (**SEE APPENDIX A FOR LIST OF INSTITUTIONS**). Central authorities from states or systems of higher education recruited all Win-Win institutions, and in several states, the central office performed some of the key Win-Win analyses on behalf of the schools.

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<sup>5</sup> Adelman, C. 2004. *Principal Indicators of Student Academic Histories in Postsecondary Education, 1972–2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

## INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN PROJECT WIN-WIN



SEE APPENDIX A FOR FULL LIST OF CHARACTERISTICS (p. 14–15)

As of August 2013, 60 of the 61 Win-Win participants had identified nearly 130,000 students in the universe of interest, completing degree audits for the nearly 42,000 students remaining after removing those who reenrolled or earned degrees elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> More than 6,700 students emerged eligible for the retroactive award of the associate's degree, and more than 4,500 have received degrees to date. Of more than 20,000 students identified with fewer than 12 credits to completion, almost 1,700 have returned to college and another 400 have signaled their intent to return.

Projecting those numbers across U.S. public community colleges and four-year colleges that award associate's degrees suggests a roughly 15 percent increase in the number of associate's degrees awarded.<sup>7</sup> This is a considerable down payment on our national goal to significantly increase postsecondary degree attainment in the United States.

Equally important, however, Win-Win institutions learned how to better serve their current students. They delved into their own data systems, checking how well their student record data matched with those of the state and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). The institutions also grappled with how to locate students, define college-level mathematics, account for course substitutions in degree audits, appraise residency and recency, and handle state and local bureaucracies. This brief summarizes those lessons.

<sup>6</sup> Two schools could not complete the entire Win-Win sequence. One school's data was removed from the calculations completely as a result; the other school's data was completed through the degree audit phase.

<sup>7</sup> In the 58 Win-Win public associate's degree-granting institutions, 5,947 students were judged associate's degree eligible for an average of 102.5 per public Win-Win school. Multiplying by the additional 1,188 public associate's degree-granting institutions nationally equals 121,770 degrees, which would represent a 16 percent one-time increase over the number of degrees awarded in 2011–12. Private institutions were excluded from these calculations.

## KEY OUTCOMES FROM PROJECT WIN-WIN<sup>8</sup>

### Step 1: Identify Students in the Universe of Interest

**128,614**



### Step 2: Remove Students Receiving Degrees or Reenrolling Elsewhere (or Other Local Exclusions)

**86,925**

(68 percent of universe)



### Step 3: Evaluate Students for Degree Audit<sup>9</sup>

**41,710**

(32 percent of universe)



#### # of "Eligibles"

**6,733**

(5 percent of universe)

#### # of "Neithers"

**14,872**

(12 percent of universe)

#### # of "Potentials"

**20,105**

(16 percent of universe)



#### # of Eligibles Awarded Degrees

**4,550**

(4 percent of universe)

#### # of Potentials Returning to School

**1,668**

(1 percent of universe)

<sup>8</sup> 60 of 61 institutions reporting through degree audit; 59 reporting number of eligibles awarded degrees and potentials returning to school.

<sup>9</sup> Some students were identified for degree audit after the matching process; others' degree audits could not be completed, for a total of 41,710 students evaluated through degree audit.

# The Work of Project Win-Win

All Win-Win schools followed a core sequence of tasks, as described below:

**Step 1:** Identify the “universe of interest.”

**Step 2:** Remove students who receive degrees or reenroll elsewhere.

**Step 3:** Perform degree audits to identify “eligibles” and “potentials.”

**Step 4:** Award degrees to “eligibles,” reenroll “potentials,” or both.

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## Step 1: Identify the ‘universe of interest.’

Each institution determined a set of parameters for reviewing its student records to extract an initial universe of interest. The default set of parameters consisted of five markers:

- The student’s first date of attendance at the institution was the fall term of 2002 or later to minimize problems with old credits.
- The student’s record indicated 60 or more additive credits earned.
- The student’s cumulative grade point average was 2.0 or higher, depending on the institution’s degree requirements.
- The student never earned a credential from the institution.
- The student had not been enrolled for the most recent three semesters or their equivalent.

In other words, students in the universe of interest were at or close to degree qualifications, yet had earned no degree, and hadn’t attended the institution for a while, hence were assumed to be dropouts.

Win-Win institutions differed in their parameters for the universe of interest. The first date of attendance marker ranged from the fall term of 2000 to the fall term of 2005. Student “catchment periods,” or time between the first and most recent dates of attendance, varied from five to 8.5 years. The threshold credit level ranged from 45 to 64 across institutions, with most using 60 or higher; some changed thresholds during the project. At least one institution included students who had earned a certificate, but another institution excluded such students. Some institutions used residency requirements, financial holds, disciplinary holds, and curricular requirements to exclude students from the universe of interest. While some of these parameters were necessary, others might have needlessly excluded students at this early stage of the process as these are issues that the institutions could address if students were later found eligible for degrees.

Challenges abounded in producing an initial universe of interest. Some institutions could not easily manipulate their databases to produce the five variables of the parameters because key internal databases were not linked or held conflicting or duplicate information. Others did not have all requisite variables in their student-level data files and had to create them. Data request and approval procedures slowed others in building their analysis files. Some institutions changed data systems at some time during the catchment period, without fully reconciling the systems. The upshot: More than half of the Win-Win institutions had to rerun their universe of interest, at least once, to obtain a usable population for the project.

The total number of students in the initial universe of interest across 60 Win-Win institutions came to total 128,614.

## Students in Motion

For the universe of interest, each institution was asked to determine both the number of students who transferred into their respective institutions and the average number of credits these transfers-in brought with them. These data tell a story of student mobility that permeates the Win-Win population.

For many institutions, this task proved daunting. Some institutions found that their student-level databases did not have transfer flags, and had to create them. Others contended with data systems that recorded blocks of courses for transfer students with no credit indicators attached. Still others had to determine decision-rules for whether and how to count Advanced Placement and dual enrollment credits for transfer students.

Some institutions had to limit how they defined transfer students due to deficiencies in their databases. For example, Oregon defined transfers-in in such a way that the institutional reference was only to other Oregon community colleges, and Florida had missing data on transfers-in from its four-year sector due to a prior data sharing agreement that was not fully executed.

Excluding Oregon, and counting only the 42 institutions for which these data are available, 39 percent of the universe-of-interest students were transfers-in, and brought with them an average of 36 credits. Including Oregon, those figures average 31 percent transfers-in and 37 credits. From these numbers, it is obvious that more horizontal transfer is happening at the two-year level than is widely known.

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### Step 2: Remove students who receive degrees or reenroll elsewhere.

Originally, Win-Win institutions were asked to match the list of students in the universe of interest to two external sources in order to determine who earned a degree after leaving the cognizant institution or who was currently enrolled elsewhere. The institutions were to drop both these degree earners and current enrollees from further consideration under Win-Win. The college was to first match its list with the central state data authority, and then send the residual names to NSC for a further check. Subtracting those two groups of matches from the original universe of interest would yield the population subject to degree audit and determination of Win-Win status.

Not all Win-Win institutions followed the planned sequence. Apart from institutions in the two states that performed the matching sequences for the institutions (and the one state that has no central database), half of the Win-Win institutions used state data systems in the matching process, and half did not. Of the institutions that used state data, several reported duplicate records and several others had to reprogram student IDs in order to match the data due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) concerns. Of those that did not use state data, nearly all cited lack of responsiveness by state data authorities, excessively long turnaround times in delivery, incompatible data formats, or deep holes in state data such as the lack of inclusion of private institutions.

Win-Win institutions reported more satisfaction with the NSC data. More than 3,500 institutions nationwide report student-level enrollment and degree data to NSC. The National Student Clearinghouse offers a turnaround time for matching of less than one week, the inclusion of data from private institutions, and help in writing formulas that will yield outputs that go beyond core matching information. Its drawbacks include a three to four month lag in its information database (no worse than state databases though), and NSC cannot provide matches for institutions that either have never reported to them or have not reported several years of degree awards. Moreover, NSC does not produce any data on credits earned or attempted, which is also lacking in some state databases.

Additionally, some 6,000 students were eliminated based on matches from unidentified sources. Another 3,000 were excluded from subsequent Win-Win analysis for “local reasons” such as their death, disciplinary actions against them, residence abroad, or because their technical degree programs were not flexible enough for awarding retroactive degrees.

In total, the matching process eliminated 86,925 students out of 128,614, or two-thirds of the universe. This matching figure reveals more mobility in the student population than expected, hence the difficulty of obtaining clean data. Indeed, 39 percent of the universe of interest represents transfers-in; add to that about two-thirds representing transfers-out. Even if those populations overlap, it is likely that half of those who start in associate’s degree-granting institutions and remain long enough to accumulate 60 credits are multi-institutional attendees.



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### Step 3: Perform degree audits to identify ‘eligibles’ and ‘potentials.’

By far, the degree audit was the most difficult and time-consuming Win-Win task. Institutions had to examine students’ records to determine whether to award them an associate’s degree, or, if they had fewer than nine to 12 credits to earn, to invite them to return. Following the audit, students fell into one of three categories: **Eligible** for associate’s degree award, **potential** completer requiring fewer than nine to 12 credits, or **neither**.

Completing the degree audit required assembling the right team. The registrar was central, but some Win-Win institutions also hired temporary, part-time employees such as retired deans to help handle the load. Win-Win institutions also cited their use of various software for reviewing student records, Degree Works, DARS (Banner), CAPP, Jenzibar, Datatel, and local productions. Yet nearly all institutions that employed these tools supplemented their findings with hand-and-eye readings, and a subset of schools used nothing but hand and eye. With academic integrity on the line, “you can’t let a machine award degrees,” as one Win-Win registrar noted.

Reviewing a student record requires defining two parameters. First, auditors must determine which degree to focus on: The default transfer degree, that is, associate of arts (A.A.), associate of science (A.S.), associate of general studies (A.G.S.), or one of the applied associate of science degrees. Secondly, those reviewing records must decide which catalog is in force: The current one, the catalog at the time the student first enrolled, or the catalog in the term of the student’s last attendance.

Different Win-Win institutions addressed these requirements differently. For instance, one state used a customized software program to apply the transfer degree requirements as the default for degree eligibility, and then returned an audited list of students to the institutions for a local assessment. Other institutions performed “progressive audits,” taking each student record and working backwards through changing catalog requirements or majors with a set of decision rules based on advantage to the student. With an average of 81 semester-equivalent credits per student, one participant remarked: “There has to be a degree in there somewhere, but we never looked for it.”

Degree audit judgments must also take into account residency and recency policies. Residency requirements stipulate the number of credits students must have earned at the cognizant institution; recency requirements indicate when students must have earned those credits to earn degrees with some institutions requiring that students are enrolled in the term in which degrees are awarded. In an era of student mobility, both sets of policies

presented challenges for Win-Win institutions, some of which were resolved through local policy changes, but others would have required state or accreditation policy changes.

With 60 of 61 Win-Win institutions reporting, the degree audit process identified 6,733 eligibles, 20,105 potentials needing fewer than nine to 12 credits, and 14,872 neithers. Out of 41,710 students completing degree audit,<sup>10</sup> more than 15 percent were deemed eligible to earn associate’s degrees and nearly 50 percent were considered as potential reenrollees.

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### Step 4: Award degrees to eligibles and reenroll potentials.

Of the 6,733 students who were deemed eligible for an award after the audit process, 4,550 of them had received degrees by the conclusion of Project Win-Win. Thousands of new degree recipients represent a win, but other eligible students have not yet received their degrees as institutions fail to find students, opt-in policies pose barriers, and other state and institutional policies block the path to a diploma.

Win-Win institutions had three degree award policies:

- “Opt in” means the student must accept the degree (and, in most cases, file an application for the degree, often with a small fee).
- “Opt out” signifies that the student is notified that the degree will be awarded on the date of the next commencement, unless the student responds declining the degree.
- “Institutional override” means the institution awards the degree on its books without asking the student, notifies the student, and delivers the diploma only upon the student’s request.

Two-thirds of institutions were opt in, about one in five were opt out, and the rest chose institutional prerogative. Notably, nearly 25 percent of the eligibles could not even be located to answer the question about their degree. A majority of these students were from opt-in institutions, so their opportunity for a degree is permanently lost barring a change in institutional policy. Several institutions did change to opt-out policies as a result of Win-Win.

To award degrees to eligibles, institutions had to change or circumvent other policies on recency, residency, graduation applications and fees, and missing transcripts from prior institutions. In order to navigate these policies, institutions often had to temporarily “open the window” to award degrees. Opening and closing the degree window was also necessary in cases where the degree

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<sup>10</sup> 41,689 students were initially sent to degree audit; some students were later added to the degree-audit pool, and some students’ degree audits could not be completed. In the end, 41,710 students’ records were subjected to degree audit.

in question was no longer offered. Win-Win institutions also had to contend with state review processes that affect whether students actually receive the degrees for which they are eligible. Finally, some students reportedly declined the degrees offered to them in the mistaken belief that accepting an associate's degree would close the financial aid window or trigger a repayment schedule for federal student loans, if these students returned to college.

### **Reenrolling the potential students**

There were 20,105 potentials identified in Win-Win schools, of which 1,668 had returned as of this academic year for a return rate of less than 10 percent. Additionally, participating institutions found that a small number of students returned of their own accord.

Unfortunately, the first three steps of the Win-Win process took more time than expected such that too few weeks remained for institutions to meaningfully engage potentials. Just as with the eligibles, institutions faced the challenge of first locating their potential completers so as to contact them about finishing the associate's degree, discuss a plan for doing so, and support them through the necessary steps. At the end of the project, about a quarter of potentials were reported as unlocatable.

The experience of Win-Win participants suggests several strategies for engaging the potentials:

- Divide the potentials group by the number of credits they are “academically light,” with students needing four or fewer credits to complete receiving the most immediate attention, followed by credit brackets five to nine, and 10 to 12.
- Flag all potentials with past-due balances and bad debts and waive them, if possible; or if the amounts are significant, place these students at the bottom of the contact priority list.
- Set aside students who are missing college-level mathematics in their records, unless the requirement can be flexibly met with course substitutions. While data from the institutions are incomplete, they suggest that about 25 percent of the potentials are missing the math requirement for an associate's degree.

If an institution has isolated a promising subset of the potentials for return, what kind of package might it offer? Win-Win participants suggested several options:

- Transfer in credits earned at other institutions since the student was last enrolled.
- Provide a tailored list of courses that would satisfy degree requirements.
- Accept prior learning assessment and other credit by examination.
- Offer institutional financial aid contingent on performance.

In the final stage, the principal players shift from the registrars, institutional research officers, and academic deans to admissions officers and counselors, who can help students deal with procedural and psychological hurdles. For those who express interest in returning, the principal conflict turns out to be work. Institutions can mitigate the problem by offering online or flexible courses, financial aid, or both.

# Project Win-Win Results at the Finish Line

Amid the complexities of Win-Win, its numerical results are relatively clear:

- **128,614** students were identified in the universe of interest across 60 institutions.
- **86,925** students were eliminated from the universe (or two-thirds), because they had either earned degrees or were currently enrolled elsewhere (or because their institutions decided to exclude them).
- **41,710** students total, or one-third of the universe, completed degree audit.
- **6,733** students were deemed as eligibles, which was 16 percent of degree-audited students and 5 percent of students in the universe.
- **4,550** students, or two-thirds of eligibles, received their associate's degrees.
- **20,105** potentials were identified, which was nearly 50 percent of students who completed degree audit and more than 15 percent of the universe. To date, **1,668** potentials, or about 8 percent, have returned to college and another **408** have signaled their intent to return.
- **14,872** students were found neither to qualify for a degree nor to be in range, which is about 12 percent of the universe.

Despite the effort required by participants, nearly two-thirds of the students who made it through degree audit were deemed either eligible or potential, confirming Win-Win's assumption that there was a substantial pool of former students without degrees. That sizeable proportion should encourage other institutions and systems to engage in similar efforts. Some might also argue that Win-Win is about numbers, not about content. Yet, the project didn't sacrifice academic standards to improve outcomes that make institutions look better, but eased and, in some cases, removed procedures and rules that posed artificial barriers to student completion.

# Project Win-Win in Retrospect

Project Win-Win's attempt to help as many students as possible to earn their academic degrees revealed much about the promise and pitfalls of efforts to increase degree completion, the lessons from which are shared here.

## Executing Project Win-Win

Many issues can affect the ability of systems and institutions to execute Win-Win projects in a timely manner, including staff capacity constraints and turnover as well as competing state and institutional priority and policy changes. Nevertheless, below are several recommendations for improving future iterations of Win-Win.

**Get the right team in place.** Make sure that the team includes at least one person with the authority to fully access student-level data without undue bureaucratic burden. Ideally, a team might include an institutional researcher, a chief academic officer, and the registrar as the lead. Retired registrars and deans hired part time can provide invaluable support; advisors and admissions officers should be on standby.

**Assess and build capacity from the start.** Be ready to construct a universe of interest. States can help identify the universe, conduct the matching, and in some cases, handle initial degree audits. However, local institutions can better handle the non-default degree audit, which might require knowledge of course content.

**Proceed with all deliberate speed.** Plan to assemble the universe of interest in less than a week. The longer it takes, the more likely are changes in student status (including returning to school), with a resulting need to rerun the numbers. Save time by going directly to NSC for matching. Reduce the overall length of the project from 24 months to 18 months to both shorten the process and avoid duplication.

**Request feedback from students.** Ask eligible and potential students questions that might shed light on institutional policies and procedures that hamper college completion: Why they left, why they refused the offered associate's degree (if applicable), and why they haven't returned to school.

**Record time spent.** Document the number of staff hours and other resources spent or reallocated on a project like Win-Win to permit later cost-benefit analysis.

## Specifying and Refining the Universe of Win-Win Students

**Plan to track data.** Assess the institution's capacity to produce the data needed to track students who leave without a degree and create a plan for missing variables, linking relevant datasets, or requesting data from other sources as needed.

**Ease data sharing.** Ensure that data can be shared across levels as well as sectors of institutions within a state, while protecting privacy. States should also support full memberships for institutions in NSC so that students can be located nationally.

**Reconcile data across systems.** Clean state databases of duplicates and other problems such as degrees recorded by the state but not the institution (and vice versa) to more accurately track students.

**Plan to comply with privacy laws.** Prepare for the legal steps needed to meet the requirements of FERPA.

**Refine the parameters to better focus the search.** Increase the time since a student's last date of enrollment from 12 to 18 months to capture true college dropouts; keep students in the universe despite institutional policies that might bar their degrees; and include GPA in major in the initial dataset.

## Identifying the Eligible and Potential Win-Win Students

**Audit the degree audit system.** Assess the state of your degree audit system to support Win-Win analyses, including ensuring that program templates and course data are up to date.

**Set aside unlikely completers.** Consider setting aside students with significant past-due balances and bad debts, as well as those with major unmet course requirements, if those can't be easily addressed by waiving or changing institutional policy. Devote the most audit time initially to degree-less former students with the largest number of credits.

**Set more inclusive course requirements.** With about a quarter of eligibles missing college math, consider revising the traditional requirement to include not only Algebra but finite math, statistics, combinatorics, and game-theory, as well as Calculus and its precursors, to enlarge the pool of potential completers.

**Set clear rules for set asides.** Decide how and when to drop students from the degree audit and document local decisions accordingly.

### **Awarding Degrees and Reenrolling Win-Win Students**

**Automatically award earned degrees.** Shift from opt-in to opt-out award policies to increase the number of associate's degree awards.

**Remove non-academic barriers.** Cut any institutional “red tape” that might stand in the way of awarding degrees from a swimming requirement, to parking tickets, library fines, and fees for graduation, apart from tuition.

**Rethink residency and recency.** In an age of student mobility, institutions seeking to help former students should work with states to find ways to keep residency and recency requirements from becoming barriers to college completion.

**Assemble a package of incentives.** Offer potential completers a package with a policy for transferring in credits earned at other institutions, an individually tailored list of courses to meet degree requirements, options for awarding credit based on prior learning assessments, and tuition waivers contingent on completion of outstanding credits with a passing grade.

**Muster a support team.** Help former students deal with anxiety, time conflicts, and procedural hurdles that might pose barriers to completing a degree. Personal letters and phone calls let the Win-Win students know that the “institution cares,” as one participant remarked.

### **Do Unto Current Students as Win-Win Students**

**Make degree audits standard practice.** Use degree audits to furnish current students with helpful information on transfer credits, repeated courses, credit duplication, and internships, as well as residency and recency requirements.

**Set triggers for degree audits.** Have all current students who are candidates for any associate's degree receive, review, and sign off on a degree audit at 45 credits to improve the response of both institutions and students.

**Inform students early of graduation deadlines.** Automate the graduation process for current students, with notifications three to four months ahead of deadlines—and repeat one month before the door closes—to boost the odds of degree completion.

At its finish line, Project Win-Win has been an extraordinary learning venture for U.S. higher education. The project has produced thousands of degrees and helped some former students complete college. It also illustrates the work required to achieve quality data, quality accounting, and service to students. Project Win-Win participants have witnessed both that challenge and the joy of students when problems are overcome. The people behind Project Win-Win deserve plaudits for their commitment to increasing access to the associate's degree in institutions nationwide.

## APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATING IN PROJECT WIN-WIN AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

| STATE             | INSTITUTIONS   | 2011-12 ENROLLMENT (ROUNDED TO 100) | 2011-12 ASSOCIATE'S DEGREES AWARDED | WIN-WIN YEARS |
|-------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>OR</b><br>(17) | Blue Mountain Community College  | 2,700                               | 301                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Central Oregon Community College   | 7,100                               | 652                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Columbia Gorge Community College   | 1,200                               | 188                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Chemeketa Community College  | 12,600                              | 1,284                               | 2011-13       |
|                   | Clackamas Community College  | 7,900                               | 712                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Clatsop Community College  | 1,300                               | 101                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Klamath Community College  | 1,400                               | 138                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Lane Community College   | 12,800                              | 1,201                               | 2011-13       |
|                   | Linn-Benton Community College  | 6,300                               | 656                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Mt. Hood Community College   | 9,900                               | 1,060                               | 2011-13       |
|                   | Oregon Coast Community College   | 500                                 | 48                                  | 2011-13       |
|                   | Portland Community College   | 34,600                              | 3,232                               | 2011-13       |
|                   | Rogue Community College  | 5,800                               | 525                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Southwestern Oregon Community College  | 2,100                               | 274                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Tillamook Bay Community College  | 500                                 | 25                                  | 2011-13       |
|                   | Treasure Valley Community College  | 2,600                               | 344                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Umpqua Community College   | 3,100                               | 414                                 | 2011-13       |
| <b>MI</b><br>(9)  | Bay de Noc Community College (Bay College)   | 2,700                               | 422                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Henry Ford Community College   | 17,700                              | 1,498                               | 2011-13       |
|                   | Lake Michigan College  | 4,700                               | 455                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Mott Community College   | 11,800                              | 1,736                               | 2011-13       |
|                   | North Central Michigan College   | 3,000                               | 308                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Northwestern Michigan College  | 5,200                               | 731                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Oakland Community College  | 29,200                              | 2,415                               | 2011-13       |
|                   | Southwestern Community College   | 3,000                               | 359                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | St. Clair County Community College   | 4,600                               | 553                                 | 2011-13       |
| <b>LA</b><br>(7)  | Bossier Parish Community College   | 7,100                               | 630                                 | 2009-11       |
|                   | Delgado Community College  | 20,400                              | 1,253                               | 2009-11       |
|                   | McNeese State University *   | 8,800                               | 119                                 | 2009-11       |
|                   | Northwestern State University of Louisiana *                                       | 9,200                               | 869                                 | 2009-11       |
|                   | Nunez Community College  | 2,400                               | 160                                 | 2010-12       |
|                   | Southeastern Louisiana University *  | 15,400                              | 62                                  | 2009-11       |
|                   | South Louisiana Community College  | 3,900                               | 284                                 | 2011-13       |
| <b>NY</b><br>(6)  | Alfred State University *<br>(State University of New York College of Technology)  | 3,600                               | 826                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill * | 2,500                               | 342                                 | 2011-13       |
|                   | Clinton Community College  | 2,300                               | 323                                 | 2010-12       |
|                   | Monroe Community College   | 17,700                              | 2,703                               | 2009-12       |
|                   | Orange County Community College  | 7,300                               | 761                                 | 2010-12       |
|                   | Suffolk County Community College   | 26,800                              | 3,438                               | 2009-12       |

| STATE            | INSTITUTIONS  | 2011-12 ENROLLMENT (ROUNDED TO 100) | 2011-12 ASSOCIATE'S DEGREES AWARDED | WIN-WIN YEARS |
|------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>VA</b><br>(6) | Germanna Community College  | 7,800                               | 656                                 | 2011-13       |
|                  | New River Community College   | 5,200                               | 482                                 | 2011-13       |
|                  | Northern Virginia Community College                                     | 50,000                              | 5,452                               | 2011-13       |
|                  | Thomas Nelson Community College   | 11,000                              | 879                                 | 2011-13       |
|                  | Tidewater Community College   | 32,100                              | 2,923                               | 2010-12       |
|                  | Virginia Western Community College                                      | 8,600                               | 670                                 | 2010-12       |
| <b>OH</b><br>(5) | Clark State Community College   | 4,900                               | 446                                 | 2009-11       |
|                  | Kent State University regional campuses-Stark, Trumbull, and Tuscarawas | 10,800                              | 555                                 | 2010-12       |
|                  | Lakeland Community College  | 9,500                               | 926                                 | 2009-11       |
|                  | Northwest State Community College                                       | 3,600                               | 360                                 | 2011-13       |
|                  | Rhodes State College  | 4,100                               | 616                                 | 2011-13       |
| <b>MO</b><br>(4) | Columbia College *  | 18,100                              | 1,520                               | 2010-12       |
|                  | DeVry University, Kansas City *   | 1,400                               | 71                                  | 2011-13       |
|                  | Metropolitan Community College (district)                               | 5,200                               | 1,889                               | 2011-13       |
|                  | St. Louis Community College (district)                                  | 29,200                              | 2,113                               | 2010-12       |
| <b>WI</b><br>(4) | University of Wisconsin Colleges (13)                                   | 14,400                              | 1,751                               | 2010-13       |
|                  | University of Wisconsin-Green Bay *                                     | 6,700                               | 20                                  | 2010-12       |
|                  | University of Wisconsin-Platteville *                                   | 8,300                               | 4                                   | 2010-12       |
|                  | University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point *                                 | 9,500                               | 167                                 | 2010-12       |
| <b>FL</b><br>(3) | Broward College   | 42,200                              | 6,218                               | 2011-13       |
|                  | Indian River State College  | 17,500                              | 2,691                               | 2011-13       |
|                  | St. Johns River State College   | 6,200                               | 882                                 | 2011-13       |
|                  | <b>TOTALS</b>   | <b>628,000</b>                      | <b>62,693</b>                       |               |

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

\*Historically bachelor's degree-awarding institutions that also award associate's degrees.

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