



BOOSTing Student Success Through Equitable and Affordable Transfer Pathways

Lessons Learned for Higher
Education Policymakers and
Practitioners from the
TransferBOOST Initiative



TRANSFER
BOOST

An initiative by:

 IHEP

**HCM**
— STRATEGISTS

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Over half of all “good jobs” (full-time positions with family-sustaining wages and benefits) in today’s economy require a bachelor’s degree.¹ Individuals with a college degree have greater employment opportunities, higher wages, and better access to benefits such as health care and retirement funds,² and college graduates and their families benefit from the increased social and economic mobility that a degree affords.

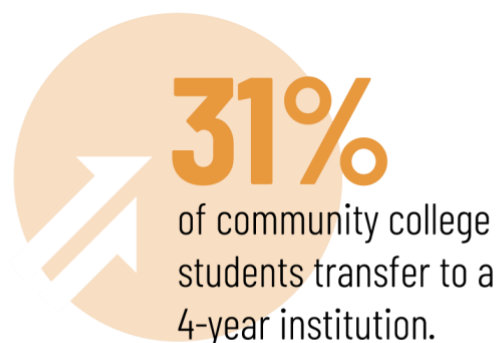
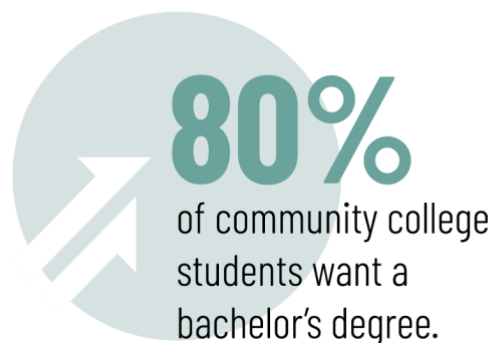
Research from the [Postsecondary Value Commission](#) found that increasing the postsecondary attainment rates of Black, Latinx and/or Hispanic, Indigenous, and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) students, students from low-income backgrounds, and women—as well as the intersectional identities within and across these groups—generates measurable economic and non-economic returns for individuals and their families, communities, and society writ large.

Despite these impressive benefits of a four-year degree, shortcomings in transfer pathways derail thousands of students from earning a bachelor’s degree each year, which is a loss for each student, their family, the workforce, and our shared future.³ For every 100 students who enroll in community colleges across the country, 31 transfer to a four-year institution and only 15 complete a bachelor’s degree within six years.⁴ Put another way, 80 percent of community college students intend to earn a bachelor’s degree, but only 15 percent do so.

Disaggregated data also reveal deep inequities. For example, completion rates for a bachelor’s degree within six years of entering a community college by race and ethnicity are: 26 percent for Asian students, 10 percent for Black students, 13 percent for Latinx and/or Hispanic students, and 21 percent for White students. White students are twice as likely to complete a bachelor’s degree within six years of entering a community college as Black students are.⁵

The ongoing health and economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic have made navigating the transfer landscape even more difficult for students, including Black, Latinx and/or Hispanic, and Indigenous students.⁶ While not everyone seeks to earn a bachelor’s degree, practitioners, institutional leaders, and state policymakers need to ensure that those who do seek the degree have the support needed to reach that goal and are no longer harmed by a broken and inequitable transfer system.

Enrollment declines are not the only challenge higher education institutions face. Public trust in American institutions has generally declined over the last 50 years,⁷ and the last few years have seen a stark deterioration in public confidence.⁸ For instance, only 55 percent of Americans believe that colleges and



universities are leading the country in a positive direction, down 14 percentage points in only two years.⁹ Alongside this declining confidence, adults without degrees are clear about what they want from higher education: career impact, affordability, and flexibility. They seek programs that make good use of their money, allow them to keep up with their busy lives, and generate a positive employment outcome in return for their investment of time and money.¹⁰

In 2021, to address the fact that unexpected, unaffordable, and untenable—yet solvable—challenges along the transfer journey derail too many students from their higher education goals, the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) and HCM Strategists (HCM), launched TransferBOOST (Bachelor's Opportunity Options that are Straightforward and Transparent), a pilot initiative to create equitable and affordable transfer pathways to meet the needs of today's student and today's economy.*

How the Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic Relates to Equity for Transfer Students

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 1.4 million fewer individuals have enrolled in undergraduate studies in the United States, and higher education has lost nearly 300,000 transfer students.¹¹ Community colleges continue to be hit hardest by these enrollment declines, especially among students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.¹² This impact on transfer enrollment and completion declines is a matter of equity. These learners, along with parenting students, adult learners, and other key populations, often begin higher education at community colleges, and then face burdensome barriers (e.g., unclear time to degree, ballooning costs, a lack of seamless credit transfer) that not only impede their successful transfer between two-year and four-year institutions but also their completion of a bachelor's degree.¹³ Ensuring these students have an opportunity to secure the benefits tied to bachelor's degrees is critical to advancing broader societal equity and workforce competitiveness.

* See the two briefs that accompany this one, [BOOSTing Transfer Pathways through Strategic Finance and Affordability](#) and [BOOSTing Transfer Partnerships to Promote Equitable and Affordable Transfer Pathways](#).

The TransferBOOST Initiative

TransferBOOST was a student-centered, data-informed, and equity-driven partnership between community colleges and four-year institutions designed to respect students' investment of time and money into higher education.

TransferBOOST was part of [ECMC's Catalyzing Transfer Initiative](#), a national, shared learning and collaboration effort between high-impact nonprofit organizations. The initiative aims to build, manage, and activate new ways to increase successful transfer of postsecondary credits and timely bachelor's degree completion among marginalized racial and ethnic groups.

Institutional and state leaders from three states—Arizona, Illinois, and Virginia—piloted an approach to ensure that students can complete a bachelor's degree affordably and in a timely manner by clearly communicating and supporting them through a mapped pathway, guaranteeing that all credits apply to completion, providing clear costs, and streamlining time to degree. TransferBOOST provided students with a four-part transfer affordability approach:

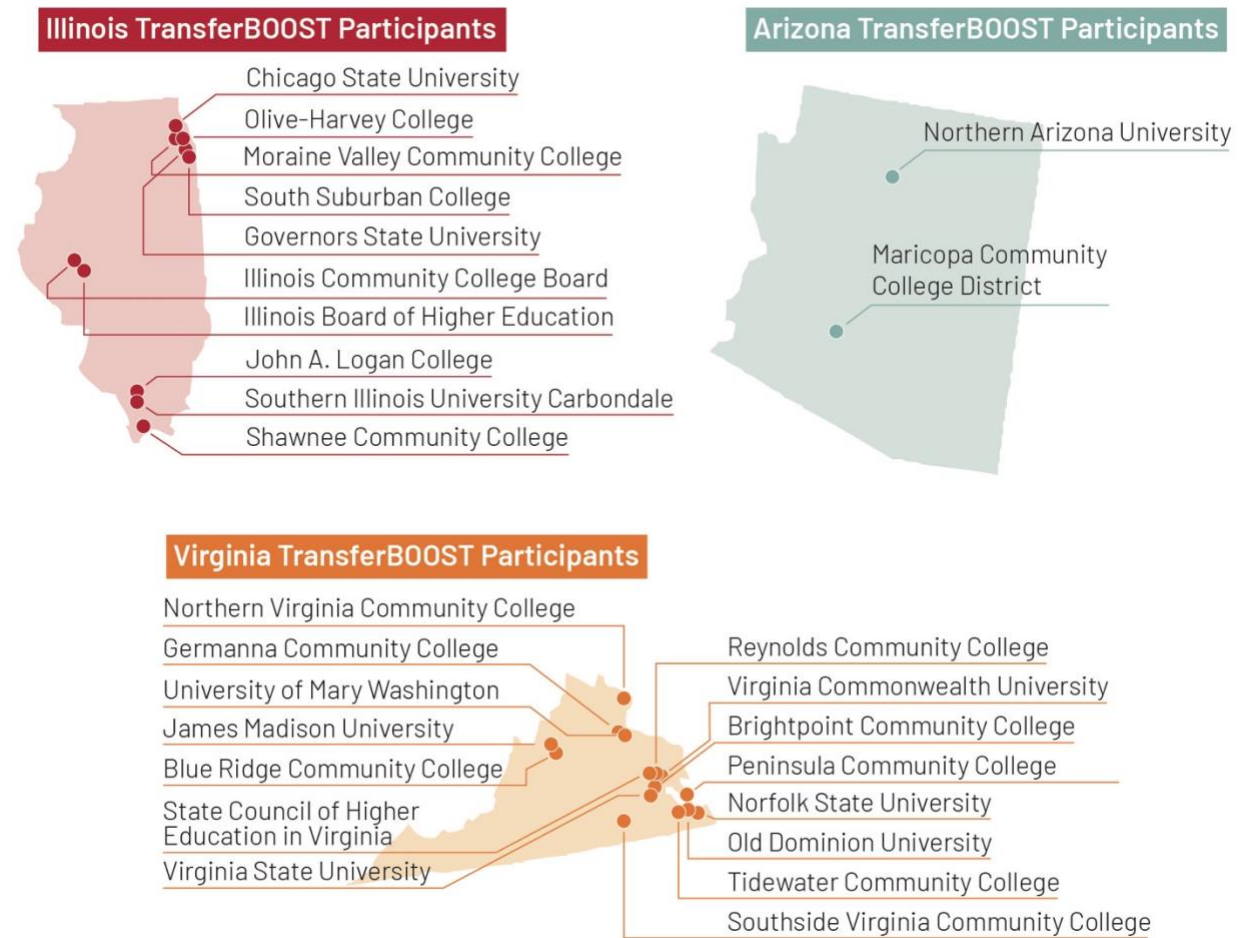
1. **Ensure All Credits Transfer and Apply Seamlessly:** On average, 43 percent of credits are lost nationwide through the transfer process.¹⁴ Recognizing that today's students strive to make good use of their time and money, the TransferBOOST initiative worked to ensure that credits transfer and apply seamlessly from a two-year to four-year institution.
2. **Provide Clear Costs:** Students can address financial barriers when they know the costs along the entire pathway, including non-tuition costs and the role of scholarships and financial aid. The TransferBOOST initiative sought to provide clear information on costs and the role of scholarships and financial aid.
3. **Streamline Time-to-Degree:** Institutions participating in the TransferBOOST initiative worked to streamline their time-to-degree as well as offer wraparound supports to help students complete both the associate's and bachelor's degrees in a timely manner.
4. **Communicate Clearly with Students:** Research demonstrates that clear information about a transfer pathway and its associated costs can help students complete their credential.¹⁵ TransferBOOST institutions developed clear, consistent, and direct messaging to connect with students and ensure both awareness of and participation in a degree pathway.

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TransferBOOST State and Institutional Partners

Arizona, Illinois, and Virginia were chosen to pilot this initiative based on diverse student enrollment and readiness at the state, regional/local, and institutional levels. After selecting the states, the IHEP and HCM teams supported key actors, including institutional leadership and state higher education agencies, to determine institutional partners.



Five Lessons from the TransferBOOST Initiative

The 24 institutions that worked to improve equitable transfer student outcomes during the TransferBOOST initiative have helped formulate lessons that other community college and four-year institutions, state partners for higher education, and leaders might use to increase prospective and current student trust in higher education as well as increase enrollment, retention, and completion.



Lesson 1

Ensuring Equity in Transfer Student Outcomes Requires Consistency and Intentionality



Black, Latinx and/or Hispanic, Indigenous, and AANHPI students and students from low-income backgrounds are disproportionately more likely to begin their postsecondary careers at community colleges and are therefore more likely to be harmed by the broken transfer system.¹⁶

TransferBOOST set out to identify and remove barriers in the transfer system in order to support these students and promote equitable outcomes. Committed leadership and consistency in the review of data and in policy and practice are needed to eradicate gaps in transfer outcomes.

At the outset, state and institutional leaders reviewed key data to understand which populations should be intentionally prioritized and which pathways could best provide access to high-demand and high-wage jobs. Data, especially disaggregated data, are key to identifying barriers to student success and opportunities for change at the institution, system, and state level. Data are just as important when evaluating, sustaining, and scaling transfer pathways as they are when creating them.

Equity remained the focus throughout the TransferBOOST initiative as state and institutional leaders grappled with how best to support students who are not well served by the current system. They began by collecting and analyzing early impact indicators related to student behaviors, experiences, and outcomes as well as their own communication and marketing strategies to better understand what is working, for whom it is working, and where changes may be needed.[†] They reviewed policies to see if they might have unintended consequences or pose barriers to success (e.g., setting an eligibility requirement for a scholarship or transfer pathway at a GPA that is not based in evidence about student success). By making this small change, institutions could increase access for a significant population of students. To be able to make such changes, leadership must clearly demonstrate support and prioritize a commitment to equity.

In short, setting a goal at the outset is not enough to ensure equity remains at the center. Consistent practices are required to create more equitable transfer pathways, such as using disaggregated data to drive decision-making and conducting policy audits to identify unintended barriers to success. Good transfer policies are data-informed, student-centered, and equity-driven.

[†] See Appendix B in [BOOSTing Transfer Partnerships to Promote Equitable and Affordable Transfer Pathways](#) for recommended questions that partnerships should explore to collect inclusive, representative data on the initiative and its outcomes.

NAU and SIUC Improve Access for Transfer Scholarships

The Northern Arizona University TransferBOOST team examined why so few community college transfer students received their transfer scholarship. They realized that the general application requirements, which required students to apply two semesters in advance of transferring to NAU, was serving as a barrier. Similarly, the Southern Illinois University Carbondale team noted the minimum GPA for their transfer scholarship was preventing access for many students. Both institutions are looking into revising these requirements to help make the transfer scholarship more accessible.



Lesson 2

Serving Transfer Students Well is an Essential Enrollment Strategy



As enrollment across all institution types continues to decline, institutions must diversify enrollment avenues.

Adult students and students of color account for large portions of the pandemic-induced decline in transfer students,¹⁷ and transfer students are an incredibly valuable population that is often forgotten in institutional conversations. However, these are the same students higher education served poorly prior to the pandemic, so institutional changes at community colleges and four-year institutions transfer pathways (e.g., vertical, reverse, and lateral) should be strengthened in ways that facilitate student success. Beyond tuition dollars, states and institutions must recognize the many benefits of enrolling transfer students including diversifying the student body with additional life experience, cultural perspectives, and insights gained by navigating multiple institutions.

Talking with Academic Departments Can Raise Awareness of the Value of Transfer Students

The institutional lead at James Madison University helped to raise awareness about the value of transfer students on their campus. JMU created a one-pager on the TransferBOOST initiative and met individually with academic departments to discuss current enrollment trends and transfer student pipelines. These data-informed one-on-one conversations helped departments see how transfer students could help increase enrollment numbers, educate a diverse and skilled regional workforce, and build employer relationships. In doing so, the lead raised awareness about the value of transfer students and of understanding transfer pathways among department heads.

Key personnel in some institutions do not fully understand the affordability challenges facing their transfer students. **Northern Arizona University** and **Maricopa Community College District** created a "Price is Right" activity for a TransferAZ presentation, where they asked attendees about the cost of a transfer pathway. This activity helped attendees see how hard it is to estimate the cost of transferring across institutions, highlighting affordability—and lack of transparency around costs—as a real impediment to students in the state.





Lesson 3

Institutions Can Make Pathways More Affordable and Improve Their Own Financial Stability

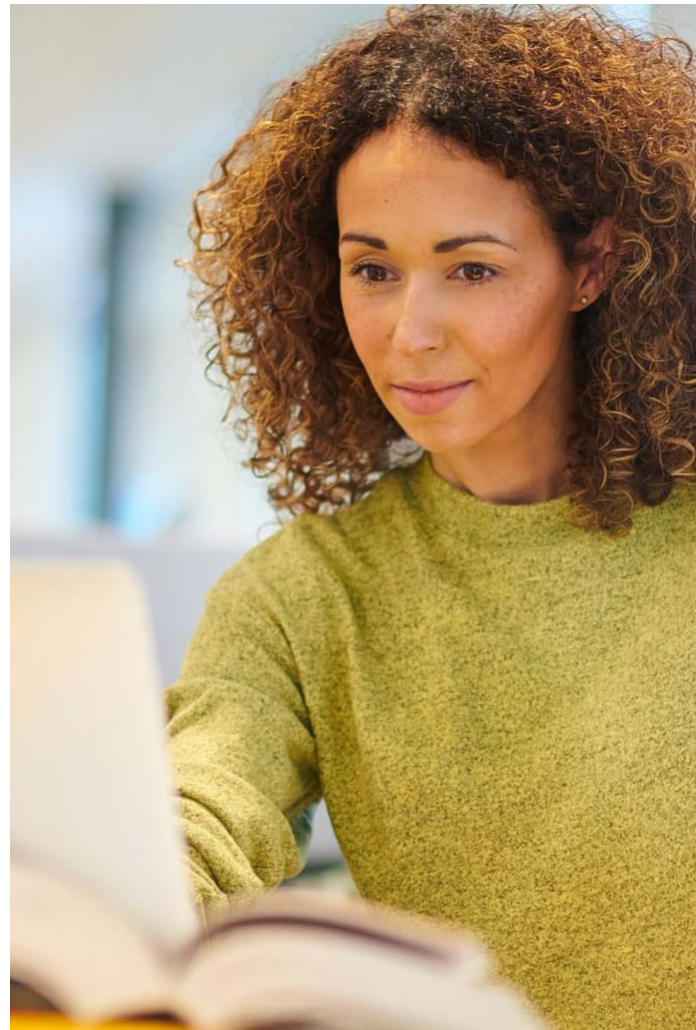


The TransferBOOST initiative tested how innovative strategies, including improving affordability of transfer pathways, can benefit students, higher education institutions, and states. To address both student affordability and financial sustainability for the institution and state, institutional and state leaders should do two things:

Intentionally address affordability challenges faced by transfer students. Institutions and states should seek to thoroughly understand the financial challenges facing transfer students, which include both affordability and clarity about expected expenses. In some cases, even when institutions do have affordable pathways—often built through financial aid structures—lack of clear communication means students are less able to access them. Examples of affordability reforms from TransferBOOST partnerships include:

- Streamlining access to transfer scholarships either by removing stringent requirements and/or promoting and automatically awarding the fund.
- Reducing cost at the four-year institution by offering a tuition discount or transfer scholarship.
- Ensuring that the financial aid packaging order of funds is providing the maximum funding available to cover non-tuition costs.
- Offering a free summer course and/or reducing costs for books.
- Articulating applied associate's degrees to ensure that all coursework counts, thus reducing time to and total cost of the bachelor's degree.

Institutions can use the [Transfer Affordability Financial Tool](#), developed by [rpk GROUP](#), to estimate the institutional revenues that increased transfer enrollments will generate, in order to inform decisions about funds that can be redirected into student affordability mechanisms.†



† See [BOOSTing Transfer Pathways through Strategic Finance and Affordability](#) for additional information on how to use the tool.

Fund affordability efforts from sustainable sources.

Institutional and state partnerships require sustainable funding sources to address affordability issues for transfer students in a way that ensures that they will be prioritized long-term. State and institutions can support sustainable funding sources for students by:

- Collaborating with the institution's foundation on dedicated philanthropic support for transfer scholarships.
- Engaging with a broad leadership team to use the [Transfer Affordability Financial Tool](#) to examine anticipated revenue and direct new revenue to improving affordability for transfer students.
- Building a coalition to pursue improved state-funded grant or scholarship support for transfer students.

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GSU Invests in Improving Affordability for Transfer Students

Using the [Transfer Affordability Financial Tool](#), Governors State University analyzed anticipated enrollment and retention data and reviewed expenses associated with TransferBOOST pathways. They invested projected ROI in transfer students by committing \$2,500 per student as additional scholarship funds.





Lesson 4

**Partners Should
Jointly Communicate
the Pathway with
an Emphasis on
the Benefits**



Many TransferBOOST partnerships felt transfer pathways were some of the “best kept secrets” on their campuses. They recognized that they had a communication challenge: students did not benefit from transfer pathways because they did not know about them, or institutions did not provide meaningful and accurate information about transfer requirements, or the transfer process was unpredictable or unaffordable. Institutions knew that students could benefit from the streamlined programming, location, and reduced costs that their transfer pathways offered. Clear communication from the institutions was needed for students to truly benefit.

Campus stakeholders often found it difficult to clearly explain the multitude of transfer pathways available, especially given frequent changes. TransferBOOST institutions received guidance from [Kinetic Seeds](#) and came to this overarching conclusion: to avoid confusion, two-year and four-year stakeholders should connect, coordinate, and collaborate to employ joint messaging about the total cost or savings and benefits for the entire pathway instead of separate messaging from each institution.

Craft clear communication about transfer opportunities. Time and energy are precious commodities, for students and staff alike. To design exceptional transfer experiences, everyone across the two-year and four-year ecosystem must work in concert—in a student-centric way—to provide clear and coherent information, consistently formatted.

To start, transfer partners from each institution need to work together with their communication and marketing teams to develop short, student-facing descriptions that highlight the pathway’s primary value proposition. Then, partners can craft clear and concise positioning and messaging statements that target specific student populations. Partners can realize new strategies together to reach, for instance, place-bound adult learners in their service areas who would benefit from earning a baccalaureate degree. (See the Appendix for an example of how this can be communicated to students via email).

Present a consistent, unified vision to prospective transfer students. Developing joint strategies for communication plans sends an intentional, consistent message to both campuses as well as outgoing and incoming students. Ask both two-year and four-year institutions what the core tenet of the transfer partnership is. Is it lowering the cost? Streamlining the academic journey? Offering a pathway leading to high-wage and/or in-demand jobs?

By aligning communications, partnerships can foster trust and recognition in both campus brands, leading to sustainability of the program, and increased student success. It can also encourage interdepartmental camaraderie so that prospective and current students feel a sense of engagement and attachment to their cross-campus journey. Using the same voice across institutions communicates to stakeholders and students that the partnership has a strong core identity, lending credibility to the transfer process. Clarifying how each department will communicate ensures a consistent, central message through marketing materials so that one department or program or pathway does not overshadow another or send a mixed message to students and stakeholders.

Build confidence through testimonials. Students weigh many factors during the college transfer process and want to know their time and money will be well spent in the program or at the institution they choose. By sharing success stories from current and already graduated students, partnering organizations can demonstrate the return on investment prospective students can expect. Increasing communication and visibility around transfer student success, challenges, and opportunities will serve to promote both the transfer experience between two-year and four-year institutions and the value and benefits of receiving a baccalaureate. Be mindful to use transfer-inclusive language, rather than leading with language that centers on first-time students.

Use clear, brief, language. Building an effective brand partnership between two distinct institutional brands takes time. With limited communication budgets, it can be difficult to conduct a thorough evaluation of each institution's portfolio in order to construct a strong brand partnership. Communicators often rely on clever naming strategies to promote new programs, processes, or service offerings; try to use plain language when describing new pathway opportunities to students. If presented with multiple names, even creative and memorable ones, students may have difficulty sorting out all the pathway opportunities presented to them. Simply highlight the key attributes of the partnership.

Get creative with communication channels. The amount of information students receive during the transfer process can be daunting. Partners should consider ways to increase awareness. Examples from TransferBOOST included letters co-written by both presidents; emails from both schools to show students that they will have a place at both institutions; use of social media; and regular visits by four-year transfer staff and departmental faculty to two-year colleges to both recruit students and acquaint them with the next steps of their journey. See the Appendix for examples from the messaging framework. Some states also offer a statewide online portal to support information-gathering for transfer students.

Share the benefits of transfer with other gatekeepers to reach more students. There are clear benefits of improved transfer pathways that can be shared with policymakers, institutional leaders, philanthropists, and other stakeholders. For instance, through improved transfer pathways, institutions will have reliable student pipelines and will be able to serve more students, especially those not served well, while states can build a more prepared and prosperous workforce to meet employer demands.



Three Tips for Crafting Student-Facing Messaging

TransferBOOST partnered with Kinetic Seeds to craft student-facing messaging. Here are three tips to consider when working towards clear and compelling messages:

1. **Summarize the initiative or pathway and include the high-level value proposition.**

For instance:

- *A new way for aspiring community college students to confidently and affordably earn higher-wage, in-demand bachelor's degrees.*
- *A new way to confidently and affordably turn your associate's degree into a bachelor's degree.*

2. **Identify and summarize the primary student benefits.** Messages can focus on elements that we know are critically important to students. For instance, through a particular pathway, students can realize real return on the money, time, and energy invested in education:

- *Predictable and streamlined journey, supported by both institutions.*
- *Predictable costs and financial support on a pathway to four-year degree.*
- *Predictable outcomes that increase income and career opportunities.*

3. **Address student concerns and reinforce the benefits of the pathway.** For instance, a positioning statement might look like this:

The path to opportunity just got a whole lot easier. Boost your associate's degree with a bachelor's degree from [school name]. Two great schools. Two powerful degrees. One very affordable journey.

Supporting messaging statements might include:

Benefit A: Predictable journey

Start here. Finish there. Now you can move through to the next stage of your educational and career goals in a predictable and streamlined way.

There is no one way to be a college student. Together we can create a pathway to a four-year degree that fits into your life and your schedule.

Benefit B: Predictable costs and financial support

Paying for college is an investment in your future. That investment may be less than you think and the outcome greater than you anticipate.

Yes, you can build your way to an affordable four-year degree, and we'll show you how.

Benefit C: Predictable outcomes

Take your two-year degree to the next level and boost your career and income with a four-year degree from [school name].

Boost your salary and land a high-wage, in-demand job when you combine your associate's degree skills with bachelor's degree know-how. (How does \$___ to start sound?)



Lesson 5

Strong State and Institutional Partnerships Drive Transfer Work



One of the main lessons learned from the TransferBOOST initiative is that states and institutions are more impactful when they work together.

Partnerships between the two institutional partners and state agencies are the key to identifying and addressing inequities in transfer student outcomes. To help build these types of strong partnerships, TransferBOOST partners learned it is valuable to:

Use state and institutional data to uncover inequities.

Strong statewide and institutional data infrastructures and campus-to-campus data-sharing agreements help states and institutions understand their transfer student populations, improve equitable transfer student outcomes, increase enrollment at both the community college and four-year institution level, and ensure critical jobs within the state are being filled.

Collaborate between transfer partner institutions.

Joint advising, joint communications, joint ways of addressing affordability challenges, joint wraparound support services, and more all help transfer students feel a greater sense of belonging on both campuses. Collaboration also helps institutions address inequities in their transfer student outcomes and ensure that students are prepared for careers post-graduation.

Engage cabinet-level leadership to address affordability.

Leadership commitment to and engagement with transfer student success is imperative for the success of this work. When leadership prioritizes affordable transfer pathways in strategic plans, metrics, and performance discussions, it helps create buy-in and allows key stakeholders to understand their role in the success of the work. While this is important at both the state and system levels, it is especially important for cabinet-level leadership at the institution level. The TransferBOOST initiative also demonstrated that better collaboration between cabinet-level leadership and those providing service, such as advisors and financial aid officers, can improve understanding, review gaps, and help holistically address affordability.

The Articulation of Applied Associate's to Bachelor's Degrees Can Lead to Strong Transfer Student Outcomes

The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree, which prepares students to enter a career immediately after graduation, is often considered a terminal degree. However, these degrees provide a strong academic foundation and specialized knowledge to prepare students well for bachelor's degrees, which can help students achieve greater career advancement and higher salaries. Through review of their data, partnerships in Illinois and Virginia recognized this potential. They worked to define pathways so that students in AAS degree programs could seamlessly articulate into bachelor's degree programs at an affordable cost, with a shorter time to degree completion.

For example, Chicago State University and South Suburban improved a health care pathway that builds from medical coding to an Associates of Applied Science to Bachelor's in Health Information Administration. Governors State University worked with its partners at Moraine Valley Community College and South Suburban Community College to improve the transferability and applicability of AAS credits, a key aspect of affordability. They worked to map out clearly defined pathways from an AAS to a BA, reducing excess credits to ensure that students were able to complete the bachelor's degree with only 120 credits.

Leverage state partners to help institutions navigate policies. Institutions looked to state partners to help them understand and navigate policies as well as evaluate what policy changes could better serve transfer students. In Illinois, for example, institutions noted that several state policies provide important building blocks for transfer improvements (Truth in Tuition, MAP grant, Aim High scholarship, Common Application, and Transfer Articulation Initiative). State leads helped institutions navigate tuition policies as they designed their affordability approaches for the TransferBOOST initiative. In a similar vein in Virginia, the statewide transfer scholarship, transfer navigation portal, and G3 workforce funding in the community colleges are critical policies in Virginia. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), Illinois Board of Higher Education and Illinois Community College Board have helped institution navigate these policies, including where there are opportunities for policy improvements.

Partnerships between the two institutional partners and state agencies are the key to identifying and addressing inequities in transfer student outcomes.



Upending the Status Quo Through Sustainable Transfer Pathways

TransferBOOST demonstrated that, when working together towards a shared goal, two-year institutions, four-year institutions, and states can implement more transparent, affordable, efficient, and effective transfer pathways that make it possible for more students to reach their educational and career goals. Participating institutions have laid strong foundations by building robust partnerships, mapping out transfer pathways, clarifying communications, and offering key student supports.

To ensure that students—especially students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and adult learners—reap the returns of these partnerships, institutions and states will need to sustain their efforts and maintain their commitment to a collaborative approach. Doing so will provide students with greater opportunities for economic mobility by creating a more prepared and prosperous workforce within the community, region, and state.

Continuing the status quo in transfer policy and practices will not address long-standing inequities. Higher education is at a precipice. To address enrollment declines, low trust in higher education, institutional financial instability, and more, state and institution partners must be innovative in their approaches and strong, affordable and equitable transfer pathways must be a part of the solution.

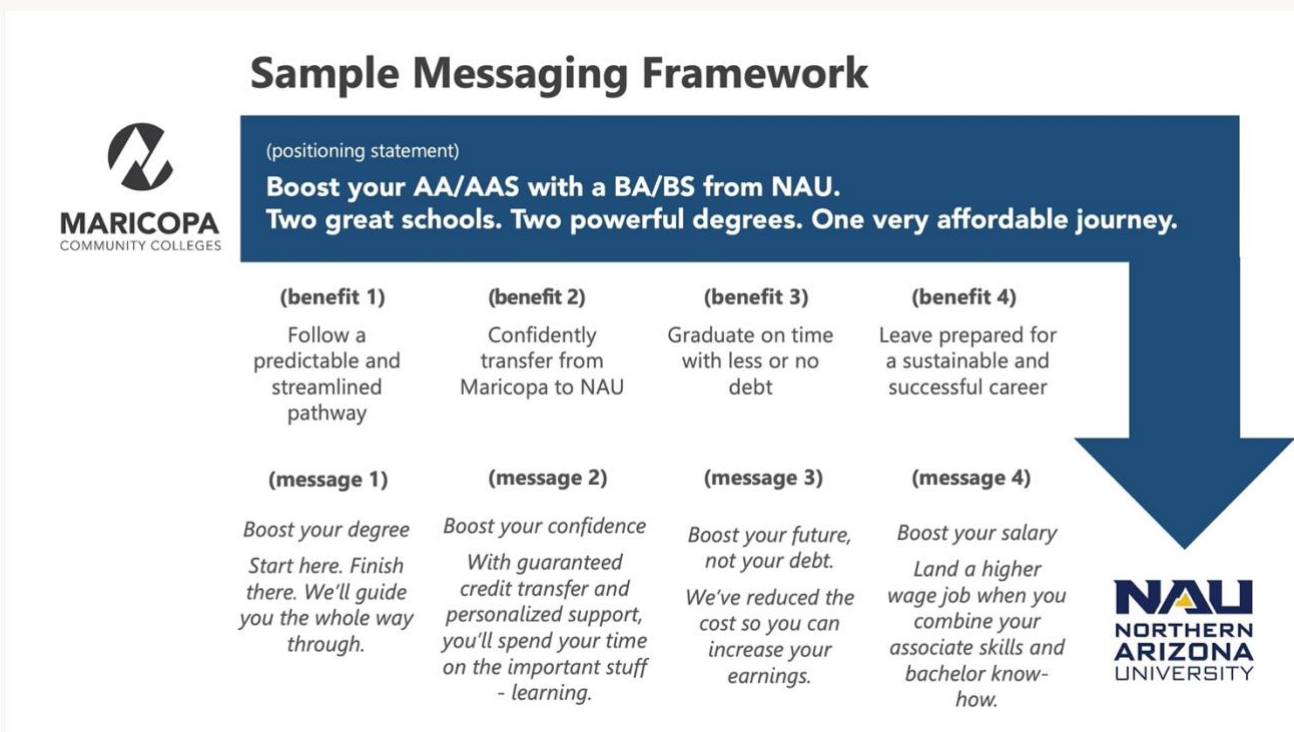


Appendix

Sample Messaging Framework

Value-based messaging frameworks like the one in **Figure 1** represent a strategic way of communicating the transfer value proposition to prospective students. By focusing on the “how”—for example, how student problems are solved or how opportunities are fulfilled—partnerships are able to identify what’s most important and then target students with appropriate messages.

Figure 1



Sample Joint Recruitment Email to Current Student

Structured communications are vital to clarify what comes next in the transfer process, separate fact from fiction, and forge success for the next leg in the student journey. In this sample recruitment email below, the communication lays a foundation for the combined future success of the pathway. By promoting continuity, both two-year and four-year institutions ensure that the right messages are communicated and reinforced to minimize potential anxieties for students, boost potential earnings, and retain talented students.

Subject: Boost your AA/AAS with a BA/BS from NAU

Dear [student]

I'm writing to tell you about an exciting partnership between Maricopa and NAU. But first, congratulations! Your hard work is paying off, and soon, you will complete your associate's degree, a major milestone to new career opportunities. As you wrap up your coursework and think about what's next, I want you to know that the learning does not have to end. Your path to a bachelor's degree is now within reach.

Sounds interesting. Tell me more.

Maricopa has teamed up with NAU to help you boost your AA/AAS with a BA/BS. That's right. Two great schools. Two powerful degrees. One very affordable journey.

How does it work?

Through a streamlined pathway designed just for you, you will:

1. Confidently transfer from Maricopa to NAU knowing that 90 credits will apply to your bachelor's degree.
2. Follow a predictable, eight-week schedule rotation with a group of NAU students in your degree program.
3. Graduate on time with less or no debt. We help you navigate the bounty of available scholarships which can significantly reduce the cost. And if you earn less than \$65,000 a year, tuition is free.
4. Leave prepared for a successful career. When you combine your AA/AAS skills and BA/BS know-how your growth and salary potential significantly increase.

Sounds too good to be true.

It's not. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, median weekly earnings for those with an associate's degree is approximately \$862 per week, or \$44,824 per year while bachelor's degree holders earn approximately \$1,198 per week, or \$62,296 per year.

Count me in! How do I get started?

It's easy. With personalized program assistance, we're here to help you explore BA program opportunities based on your AA degree while navigating scholarship and aid opportunities that build your future, not your debt load. Call/email [insert contact information here].



Acknowledgements

The TransferBOOST initiative is the product of hard work and thoughtful contributions from many individuals, organizations, state agencies, and institutions. We are deeply grateful to the state leads, institutional partners, and steering committee/transfer action committee members in our three partner states, Arizona, Illinois, and Virginia. All of these partners are deeply committed to boosting equity in student transfer outcomes within their spheres of influence, even as they juggle the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their students, institutions, and institutional and state budgets. Without their partnership, this initiative would not have been possible.

We also express our gratitude to the ECMC Foundation, which funded this project as part of its Catalyzing Transfer Initiative (CTI). Its support for projects and research across the nation working to eliminate barriers and build clear pathways between two- and four-year programs will help the postsecondary education system achieve more equitable outcomes for today's community college students who seek to complete a bachelor's degree. We also appreciate our fellow CTI participants, including the Education Commission of the States (ECS), who led and convened this group, for their thought partnership and brainstorming sessions.

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While we are thankful for the many contributions that our internal and external partners have made to this brief, the authors are solely responsible for the final content of the guidebook, including any errors or omissions.



Endnotes

¹ Carnevale, et al. defines a good job as one paying a minimum of \$35,000 and \$45,000, respectively, for workers between the ages of 25 and 44 and 45 and 64. In 2016, median earnings were: \$56,000 for workers without a bachelor's degree; \$75,000 for workers with a bachelor's degree or higher; and \$65,000 for all good jobs. Carnevale, A. P., Strohl, J., Ridley, N., & Gulish, A. (2018). *Three educational pathways to good jobs: High school, middle skills, and bachelor's degree*. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/3pathways/>. See also Carnevale, A., et al. (2015). *The economic value of college majors*. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce; Carnevale, A., et al. (2015); and *Good jobs are back: College graduates are first in line*. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/goodjobsareback/>

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