# MapMyPath

# UNDERSTANDING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE TO IMPROVE PATHWAY TOOLS AND POLICY

The MapMyPath project is designed to make undergraduate degree pathways more transparent and streamlined for students across higher education institutions. The project consists of a research component and the development of a tool to aid students and advisers in navigating higher education transfers:

**First, it seeks to understand student experiences transferring between education institutions in order to provide new insights into the challenges that undergraduate students confront when transferring course credits between programs and institutions. These insights informed the policy recommendations designed to improve undergraduate transfer experiences.**

**Second, the MapMyPath project will use the insights gathered through this research to develop a sustainable, web-enabled product to serve students and educators in understanding credit transferability across institutions and postsecondary degree and certificate program requirements.**

Long-term success of the project will result in reduced excess credit accumulation, increased persistence and attainment, and lower costs for students, their families, and the state. The data created and reported for the project will also enable new research and insights about the design and delivery of undergraduate education across higher education institutions.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

*All public institutions of higher education should be required to develop recommended course sequences for each of their degree programs and to make those recommended course sequences readily accessible.*

Navigating course selection for on-time graduation is complex for both students and advisers. Clearly communicating recommended course sequences for degree programs would improve degree transparency and help students select courses that both transfer and apply to their major, minimizing excess credit hours.

*All public institutions of higher education should participate in automated reverse transfer through the National Student Clearinghouse.*

Working across multiple institutions can further complicate pathway planning and degree completion. Automated reverse transfer awards associate degrees to students as soon as they have the required credits, regardless of whether they transferred out of the community college before completing the credential. Reverse transfer can be a motivating factor for students to continue their studies and would allow higher education institutions to better track student outcomes.

*Support institutions in the development of online tools and resources designed to make transparent pathways for students completing postsecondary degrees and certificates.*

In order for students and advisers to select courses that count for their degree or certificate pathway, the information must be readily available and accessible. Higher education institutions should invest in technology and tools that make complex degree information easily consumable, allowing students to make informed decisions about their degree path.

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