Reduce Time & Accelerate Success

*Significantly increasing college completion is possible only when states and institutions get serious about the problem of time.*

Strong policies and strategies should contain provisions to:

**✓ Set a strong student expectation that graduation is the goal.**

- Require formal, on-time completion plans for every student upon enrollment, updated annually.
- Require all students to declare a major by the end of their freshman year.
- Require classroom attendance be taken and recorded – at least during the freshman year.
- Establish student incentives to attend college full-time (e.g., flat rate tuition for students taking 12 or more credit hours).
- Link financial aid to successful progression toward a certificate or degree (e.g., continuous enrollment, GPA, credits successfully completed).
- Present part-time students with a full accounting of their financial aid package should they attend on a full-time basis (evidence suggests that such information can increase full-time participation).

**✓ Reduce unnecessary course-taking and the number of credits to degree.**

- Enact credit caps of 120 credit hours for a Bachelor’s degree and 60 credit hours for an associate degree so students do not earn excessive numbers of credits to complete a degree (allow exceptions only when necessary to maintain program accreditation).
- Conduct credit audits annually to identify degree programs that exceed credit caps and require colleges to comply with the policy or petition for an exception.
- Charge students more for taking excess coursework of more than 12 additional credit hours beyond of the credit caps (e.g., charging students out-of-state tuition for credits exceeding the caps) and/or reduce or eliminate state appropriations for credits that exceed the caps.
✓ **Create a common general education core to provide consistency and equivalency in course content and curricula.**

- Require a common lower-division college general education core.
- Require common course numbering.

✓ **Establish a clear and effective student transfer policy.**

- Require transferability of the common general education core.
- Require the most frequently taken lower division undergraduate courses (e.g., 25 courses) to transfer statewide (a core transfer library can facilitate this).
- Establish joint admission or guaranteed admission between the community colleges and the four-year universities for students completing the common college general education core.
- Require that students transferring with associate degrees have junior-level status at the four-year universities.
- Establish a comprehensive online course audit and advising system for students to ease transfer across colleges.

✓ **Adopt policies for alternative pathways for students to earn college credits.**

- Offer prior learning assessments that allow students to demonstrate mastery of college-level content and test out of and/or earn credits for demonstrated mastery.
- Require dual enrollment and/or Advanced Placement programs in every public high school and require colleges to give credit to students scoring a 3 or higher on AP exams.
- Reduce seat time by integrating online learning in traditional course delivery.
- Require a certain number of credit hours be taken through online courses.
- Make better use of time by offering accelerated competency based courses.
- Make better use of the whole school year by providing incentives to take summer classes, short courses over breaks and intensive courses.