

# Metro Connect 2 within 4 Partnership

Streamlining Degree Pathways

# Collaborators/Presenters

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# National View

- Student retention, ease of transfer, graduation rates and time to completion of degree: targets for higher education action.
- Two-four transfer: single most important means for low-income and minority students to attain their baccalaureate degrees (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education).
- Supportive articulation and transfer policies, advance planning, save time and money so students make best use of their credits to meet their goals and graduation requirements without excessive student loan debt.

# What is Metro Connect?

- Nearly 97% of students transfer to Metro State to complete their four-year degrees. Most transfer earlier credits from two-year colleges in the Minnesota State system.
- Metro Connect, a collaboration among Metro State and partner Minnesota State two-year colleges, aims to strengthen student success.
- Metro Connect targets Improved retention and graduation rates for all students, but particularly students of color, a third or more of students on partnership campuses. Among them: immigrants from Africa, southeast Asia and Central America and 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students.
- Metro Connect also extends opportunities for credit for prior learning and competency-based education, important for adult learners and employers, areas where Metro State is recognized as a national leader.

# Metro Connect: Staged Process

- Cobranded “Welcome” letter a month into their first semester at the community or technical college
- Follow-up letter when they complete 22 credits, encouraging them to continue with their program and meet with an advisor about four-year options.
- Option for dual admission when they complete 45 credits; they may at this point take university courses that also apply to their associate’s degree.

# Partnership: Student side

- Streamlined admissions includes dual/concurrent admission, seamless transfer and reverse transfer
- Cross-institutional advising helps students plan their 4 year degree while completing their 2 year degree (including attention to prerequisites)
- Greater accessibility includes variety of delivery options (online, hybrid and accelerated courses and courses scheduled on partnership campuses) so students can complete their degrees nearer where they live or work.
- Collaborative financial aid processes enable students to apply aid from their primary institution to pay tuition at partnership institutions.

# Partnership Infrastructure

- Formal articulation agreements identify institution-specific course equivalencies at the 2 and 4 year levels, typically core courses for business and other majors.
- Blanket articulation agreement for College of Individualized Studies (CIS) accepts up to 70 technical credits from system schools for the B.A.
- Improved marketing, including social media, informs students of possibilities for attaining their educational goals throughout partnership campuses.
- Sharing resources (including computer labs and classrooms) saves money and improves access.

# Why partner?

- Saves students time and money as they progress toward completing degrees making best use of their credits.
- Saves institutions money by reducing duplication and enhancing efficiency.
- Improves accessibility to education students need.



# Your collaboration ideas

- Serving students
- Infrastructure Innovation

# Partnership Groundwork

- Formal partnership agreements grew out of informal collaborations.
- These make clear the responsibilities and opportunities of the participating institutions.
- Developing and maintaining partnerships strengthens important institutional commitment, administrative and leadership support.
  - (Ashley and Miki-Twin Cities “corridor”)
  - (Tara and Carol-RCTC/CIS)

# Growing your partnerships

- With whom might you collaborate?
- What informal collaborations already exist? (Shared facilities? Articulation agreements? Advising?)
- How might you build on that?
- How do you balance or take into account both standardization (greater efficiency/shared resources) and individualization (creativity and distinctive approaches)?

# Next steps?

- What ideas do you have for next steps?