



In 1996, the Arizona Legislature charged the state's universities, community colleges, and Board of Regents to collaborate to develop ways for students to seamlessly transfer from community colleges to universities. The Academic Program Articulation Steering Committee (APASC) was formed as the cooperative body to carry out this charge. This year APASC agreed to change its name to AZTransfer

During the 2012-2013 academic year, 10,315 Arizona community college transfer students entered Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, and Northern Arizona University (figure 1). This is an increase of 22% since 2006-2007.

Students are waiting to transfer. There is a direct correlation between the numbers of credits completed before transferring and baccalaureate degree completion. The number of students who completed 60 or more credit hours at transfer increased significantly since 2006-2007 (figure 2). Since 2006-2007, transfer students completing an associate's degree prior to transfer have increased by 81% through 2011-2012.

Students are ethnically diverse. AZTransfer and Arizona's postsecondary institutions serve an ethnically diverse set of students (figure 3). Transfer students represent a broad cross section of our state's population with ethnic minorities accounting for 38% of new community college transfers in 2012-2013.

AZTransfer outreach efforts this year continue to promote the concept of community college to university transfer and that AZTransfer has tools to make every credit count. With funding from grants from both the Governor's Office and the Lumina Foundation's Getting AHEAD project, AZTransfer has been able to reach tens of thousands of students and their parents through targeted e-mail and advertising campaigns that include television, outdoor, and online advertising.

E-mail marketing in particular was very successful and resulted in a significant increase of visits and visitors to the AZTransfer website (figures 4-5). Open rates and click-through rates for these e-mail messages far exceed industry standards—the average open rate for these was 10.43%, while the education industry average is 7-10%. Click through rates averaged at 16.1%, which outperformed the education industry average of 3-7%. Success is also measured by data gathered through Google Analytics, which reveals large bumps in site usage immediately after each mailing.

Increased outreach. As a member of the Arizona School Counselors' Association College Relations Council, AZTransfer staff participated in the Fall High School Visitation Tour again this year and directly interacted with thousands of high school students and their families.

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Arizona's transfer system depends upon participation by faculty and advisors from each of Arizona's colleges and universities. This year, 1,722 individuals are actively participating in Articulation Task Forces (ATFs) by working with curriculum and exam equivalencies. ATFs are the heart of AZTransfer. Faculty from over 40 disciplines convene each year to examine articulated courses and make formal recommendations for changes in the published documentation. This year, AZTransfer staff has supported these activities with tools to manage faculty recommendations in real time. This ensures that the hundreds of recommendations made are captured and acted upon in a timely manner.

AZTransfer.com features several interactive tools to help students, families, and advisors with the transfer planning process. AZTransfer staff constantly gather feedback to improve the usability of these tools, including the possible development of a community college to community college course equivalency guide. Due to life situations, adult students will often need to study at more than one community college prior to transfer to a university.

In spring 2013, AZTransfer conducted focus groups with students in rural and urban regions of the state to gather feedback on how well the website works from a student user perspective. The feedback from those groups was used to enhance the site's navigation and presentation of information to deliver a product more suited to the student user's needs (figure 6).

Six years ago, the Steering Committee invited an external evaluation firm, Hezel Associates, to evaluate the goals, objectives, tools and successes of Arizona's Transfer System. This year, in collaboration with Getting AHEAD, AZTransfer again contracted with Hezel Associates to provide evaluative feedback and to conduct a study on progress toward building and supporting an extraordinary statewide transfer system. Final approval and public release of that study will happen early in 2014.

Using data collected and preliminary information from the Hezel study, the AZTransfer Steering Committee embarked on a strategic planning effort. The mission was refined, new goals were identified, and values statements were crafted. When the final Hezel information is presented, conclusions and recommendations from the study will be used to finalize the strategic plan. The AZTransfer Steering Committee will release this plan in early 2014.

