



## Reverse Transfer

AACRAO encourages Congress to support the Reverse Transfer Efficiency Act, S. 2379, H.R. 4533. The legislation would establish a new exemption under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to allow the sharing of student information between institutions to facilitate increased college completion rates. It includes language that increases the flexibility to complete an assessment of student records while still adhering to FERPA standards.

### **The National Need to Increase Education Attainment**

- As the nation works toward increasing higher education attainment, the higher education community is looking for ways to increase successful degree completion rates for students enrolled in higher education.
- The American Action Forum estimates that at the current production rate in higher education, our economy will face a shortage of over 8.5 million workers with the necessary education and training by 2029.<sup>1</sup>
- The concept of “reverse transfer” has been gaining traction as institutions and states seek new ways to recognize credits that students have earned that did not result in the awarding of a degree or certificate.
- The incorporation of reverse transfer as a practice within the higher education community would provide a much needed flexibility to increase college education attainment levels and prove to be beneficial to meeting future workforce needs.
- The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) has identified over four million individuals that have completed enough credit hours at a four-year institution to be eligible for an associate’s degree, but instead withdrew without a degree or certificate.<sup>2</sup>

### **Good Jobs Require More Education**

- Across the nation, good jobs have shifted toward associate’s degree holders and away from workers with a high school diploma or less. The share of good jobs held by high school graduates declined in the vast majority of states between 1991 and 2015.<sup>3</sup>
- Moreover, 65 percent of all jobs now require postsecondary education and training beyond high school, up from 28 percent in 1973.<sup>4</sup>
- To meet future workforce needs, many experts suggest that we need to increase the percentage of Americans with high quality degrees, certificates, or other post-secondary credentials to 60 percent.
- This goal cannot be reached without innovative ways of increasing degree completion.

### **What is Reverse Transfer?**

- “Reverse Transfer” is the transfer of credits from a four-year institution to a two-year institution from which a student previously attended for the purpose of facilitating the awarding of a degree or certificate.

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<sup>1</sup> American Action Forum, “Projecting Future Skill Shortages Through 2029,” July 18, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> National Student Clearinghouse, Reverse Transfer Project, <https://reversetransfer.org/>.

<sup>3</sup> Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, “Good Jobs That Pay without a BA: A State-by-State Analysis,” July 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, “Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020,” June 2013.



- Currently, there are no processes or guidelines for sharing student credit information from four-year to two-year year institutions for the possible award of degrees or certificates from a two-year institution.

### **AACRAO Recommendation Regarding Reserve Transfer**

- AACRAO supports bipartisan Reverse Transfer Efficiency Act, which would create a new exemption under FERPA to permit the disclosure of students' postsecondary coursework and credit information to an institution the student was previously enrolled at for the purpose of applying such coursework and credits toward completion of a recognized degree or credential.
- The proposed legislation includes the following amended language:

**Amend Section 444 (b) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. §1232g(b)(1) in the following manner:**

**In paragraph (I) and subparagraph (K)(ii) by striking “; and” and inserting a semicolon; and in subparagraph (L) by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and” and insert the following language after subparagraph (L)**

*“an institution of postsecondary education in which the student was previously enrolled, to which records of postsecondary coursework and credits are sent for the purpose of applying such coursework and credits towards completion of a recognized postsecondary credential (as that term is defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102)), upon condition that the student provides written consent prior to receiving such credential.”*

- Such language represents a responsible means of sharing student information between a student's four-year and two-year institution for the goal of conferring a degree.
- This language would also meet FERPA requirements as institutions would need to receive “consent” from the student before conferring a degree to the student and “record” the sharing of this data, so it would be part of the student record.

### **About AACRAO**

Founded in 1910, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) is one of the oldest nonprofit higher education associations in the nation and represents approximately 11,000 higher education admissions and registration professionals who represent more than 2,600 institutions and agencies in the United States.

Our mission is to provide guidelines and standards for the higher education community regarding record management, admissions, enrollment management, administrative information technology and student services.

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