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AACRAO National Learning Mobility Challenge: Improving Transfer Time-to-Decision

Juliette Price
Founding Director,
NASH Center for
Postsecondary Improvement
www.nash.edu/cpi

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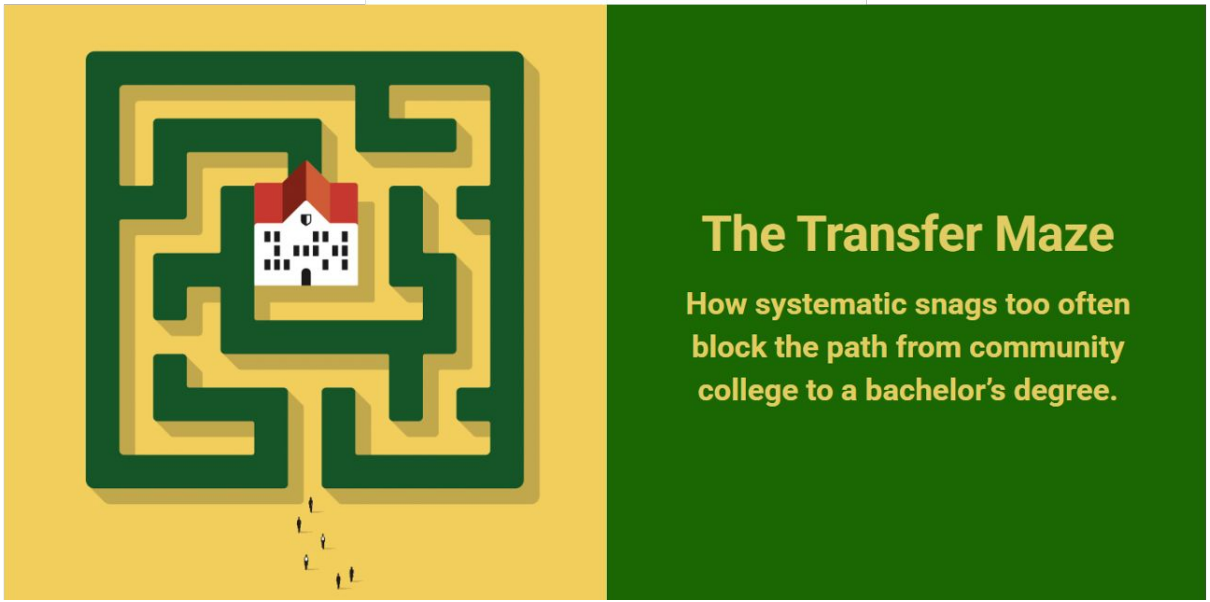
2024…

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



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2014…

Federal study finds nearly 40 percent of transfer students got no credit

by **JON MARCUS**
August 20, 2014

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2007…

February 25, 2007

Tussling Over Transfer of Credit

Whether U.S. should require accreditors to monitor colleges' transfer policies divides nonprofit and for-profit agencies.

By Doug Lederman

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1930…

ROUND-TABLE CONFERENCES

THE PROBLEM OF THE TRANSFER STUDENT

PROFESSOR H. T. SCOVILL, *Chairman*

THE topic assigned for consideration at this time implies that there is a problem confronting schools and colleges of commerce and business administration as a result of the transfer of students from one institution to another. We shall not take time, therefore, to establish the fact that there is a problem, but shall assume there is one and proceed to comment on the three major questions that would naturally arise in a discussion of such a subject, namely:

1. What is the problem confronting members of the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business with respect to the transfer student?

2. Is the problem of such a nature that the Association of Collegiate Schools of Business should assist in its solution or is it best to have each institution handle its own cases without the co-operation of the Association?

3. In either case what is the solution?

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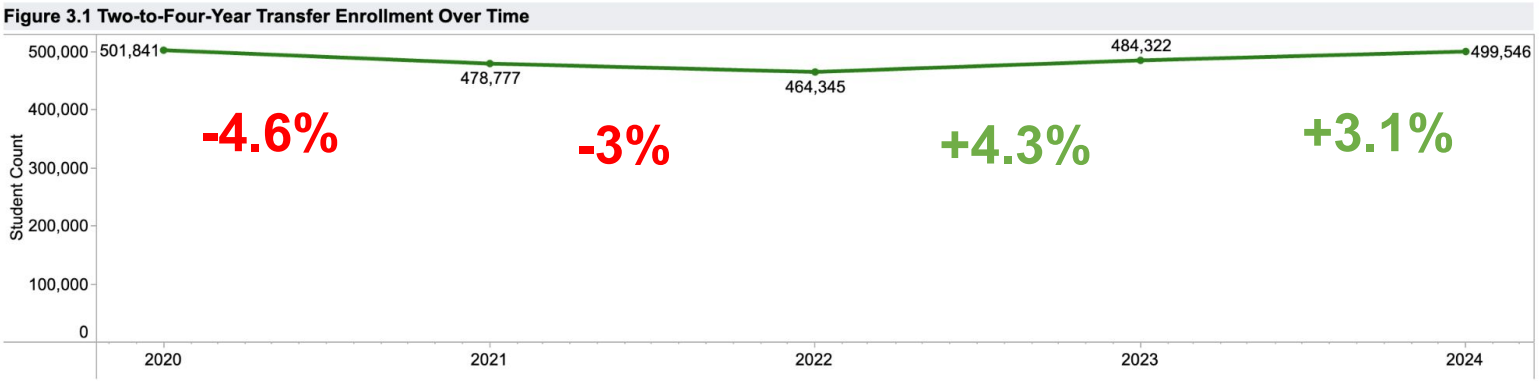
Trends in 2-to-4 Year Transfer Rates



"In the fall of 2024, nearly 500,000 students moved from a two-year to a four-year institution, **a number that is now comparable to 2020 numbers (-2,300, -0.5%)."**

Transfer Enrollment and Pathways Report, *Fall 2024 Report, National Student Clearinghouse*

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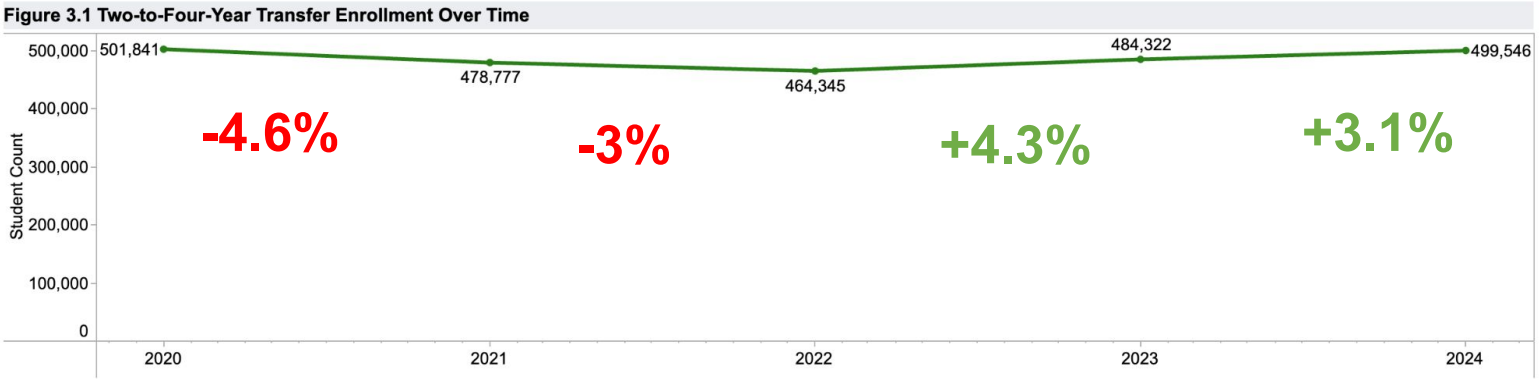
We must ask ourselves…
…is this the best we can do?

NASH Improvement Community Results



- In Illinois, at UI-Urbana Champaign, the institution increased transfer enrollments by **22% campus-wide over two years.**
- In Texas, Prairie View A&M University implemented a suite of improvements that resulted in a **16% increase in transfer student enrollments between Spring ‘22 and Spring ’23.**
- In Kentucky, a partnership between sender-and-receiver institutions SKY-CTC and Western Kentucky University resulted in a **57% increase in first-time transfer student enrollment** between the two institutions between Spring ‘23 and Spring ’24.

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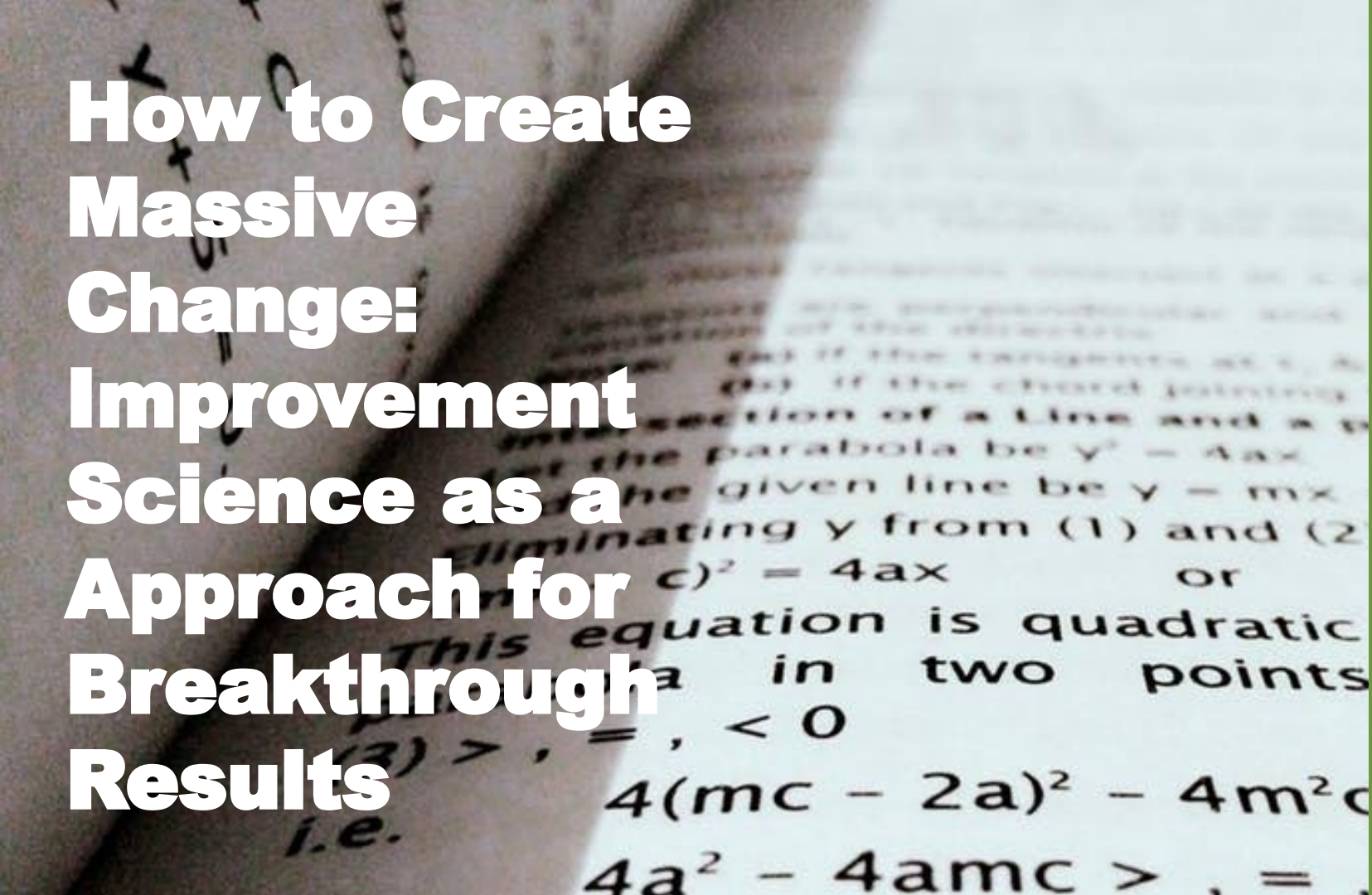
How to Create Massive Change: Improvement Science as a Approach for Breakthrough Results



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The Work of Improvement

The difference between the knowledge that something can work

and

Knowledge of how to actually make it work reliably over diverse contexts and populations.

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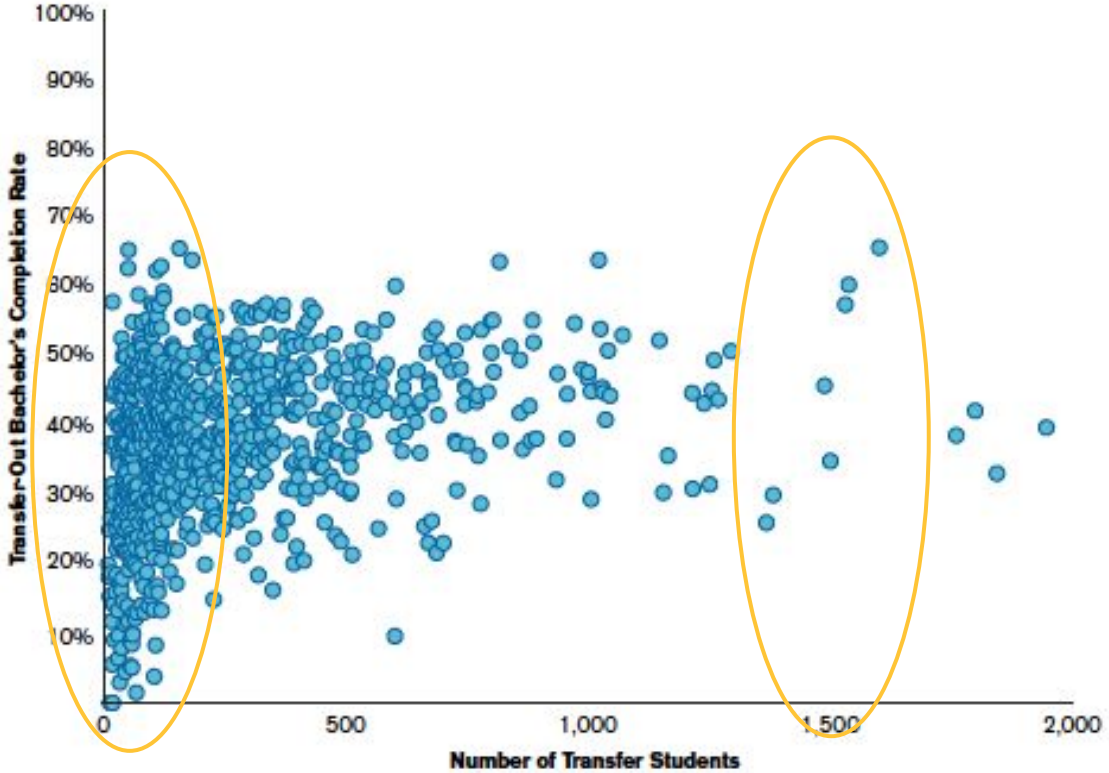
Figure 5. Transfer-Out Bachelor's Completion Rates by Number of Transfer Student in Fall 2007 Cohort



Note. Community colleges with fewer than 10 transfer students ($n = 30$) were excluded, as were community colleges with more than 2,000 transfer students ($n = 4$).

Jenkins, D., Fink, J. (2016). Tracking Transfer, New Measures of Institutional and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students Attain Bachelor's Degrees. Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University

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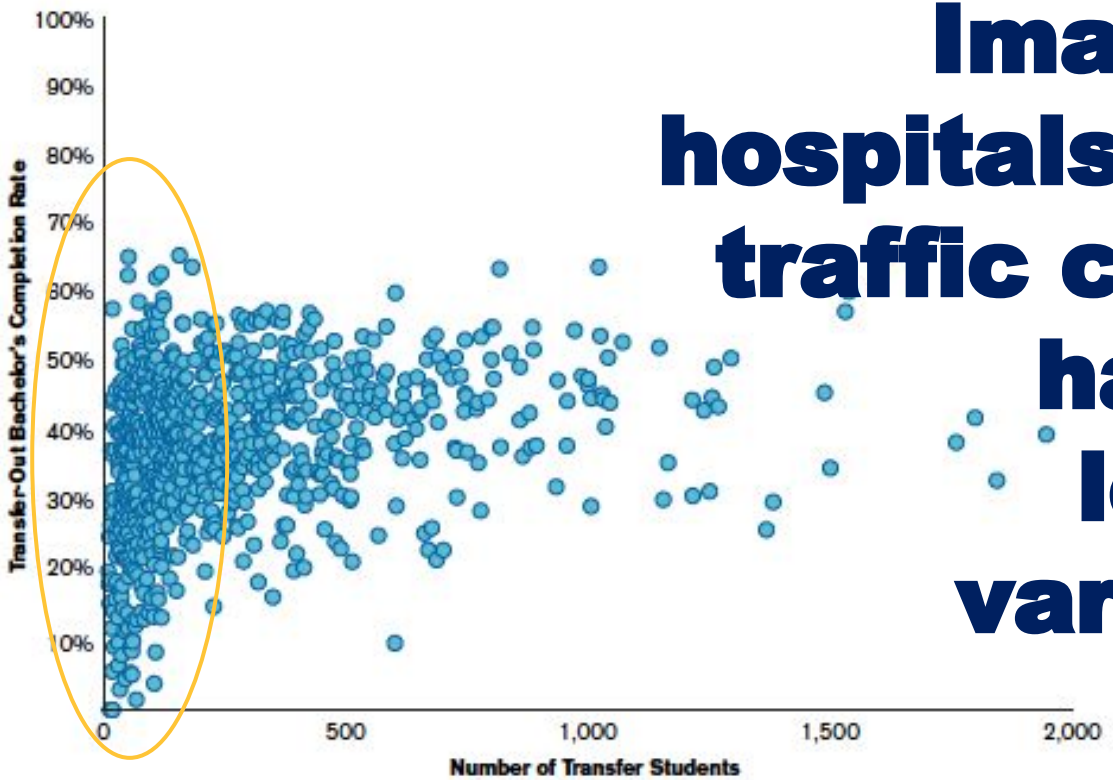

Note. Community colleges with fewer than 10 transfer students ($n = 30$) were excluded, as were community colleges with more than 2,000 transfer students ($n = 4$).

Imagine if hospitals or air traffic control had this level of variation.

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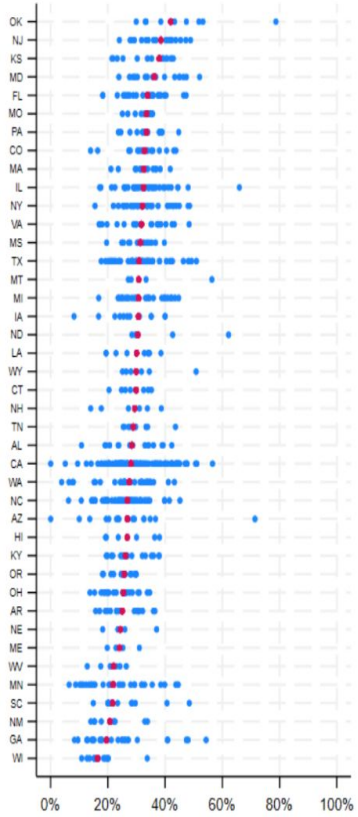
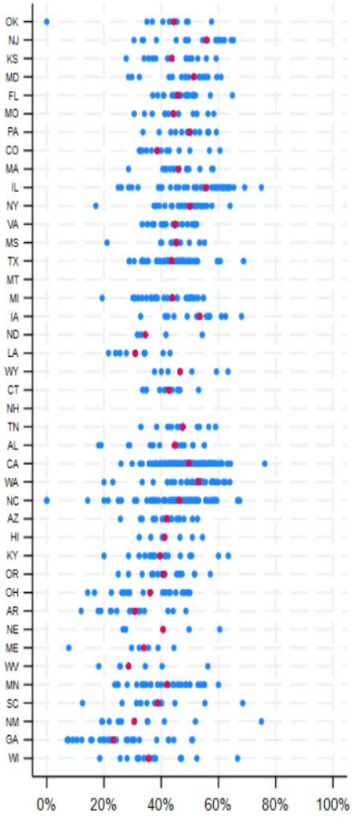


Transfer Out



Transfer Out BA Completion

- Community College rate
- Median rate

CCRC
COLLEGE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM
aspen institute

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Current Approach to Change

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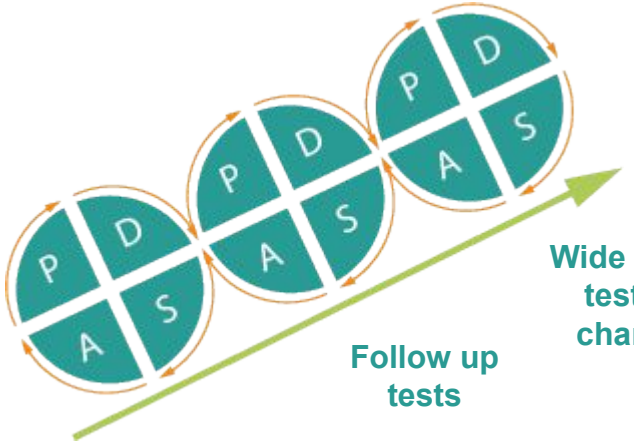
Improvement Science Approach to Change



Ideas for change
(generated bottom-up and by using best available knowledge of what works)

Very small test of change

Follow up tests

Wide scale test of change

Implementation of change idea at scale without failure

Changes that produce quality with reliability at scale

"Let's do that again"

"What other problems can we solve?"

"I'd like to lead the next round"

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NASH Improvement Community (NIC): Transfer Student Success

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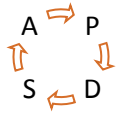
NIC Structure

Phase 1: Assessment & Preparation

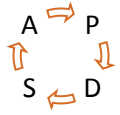
Phase 2: Workshops & Improvement Cycles

Workshop 1



Action Period 1

Workshop 2



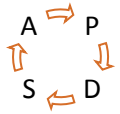
Action Period 2

Workshop 3

Phase 2: Workshops & Improvement Cycles

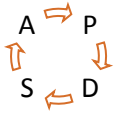
Phase 3: Reporting & Reflections

Workshop 4



Action Period 3

Workshop 5



Action Period 4

Symposium

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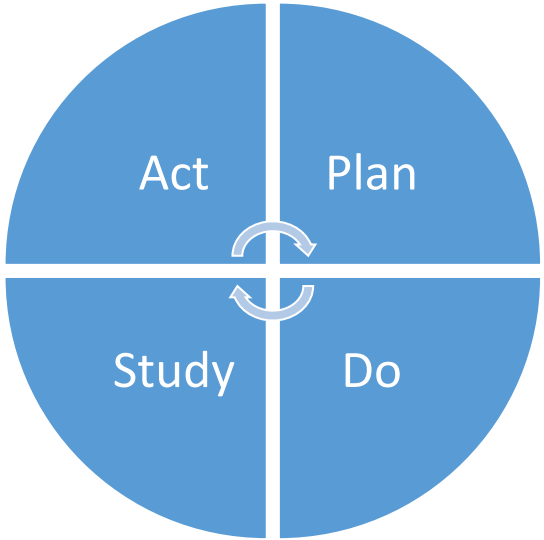
Model for Improvement

What are we trying to accomplish?

How will we know a change is an improvement?

What change can we make that will result in improvement?



Langley, Moen, Nolan, Nolan, Norman, Provost (also known as "Associates in Process Improvement").
The Improvement Guide: A Practical Approach to Enhancing Organizational Performance

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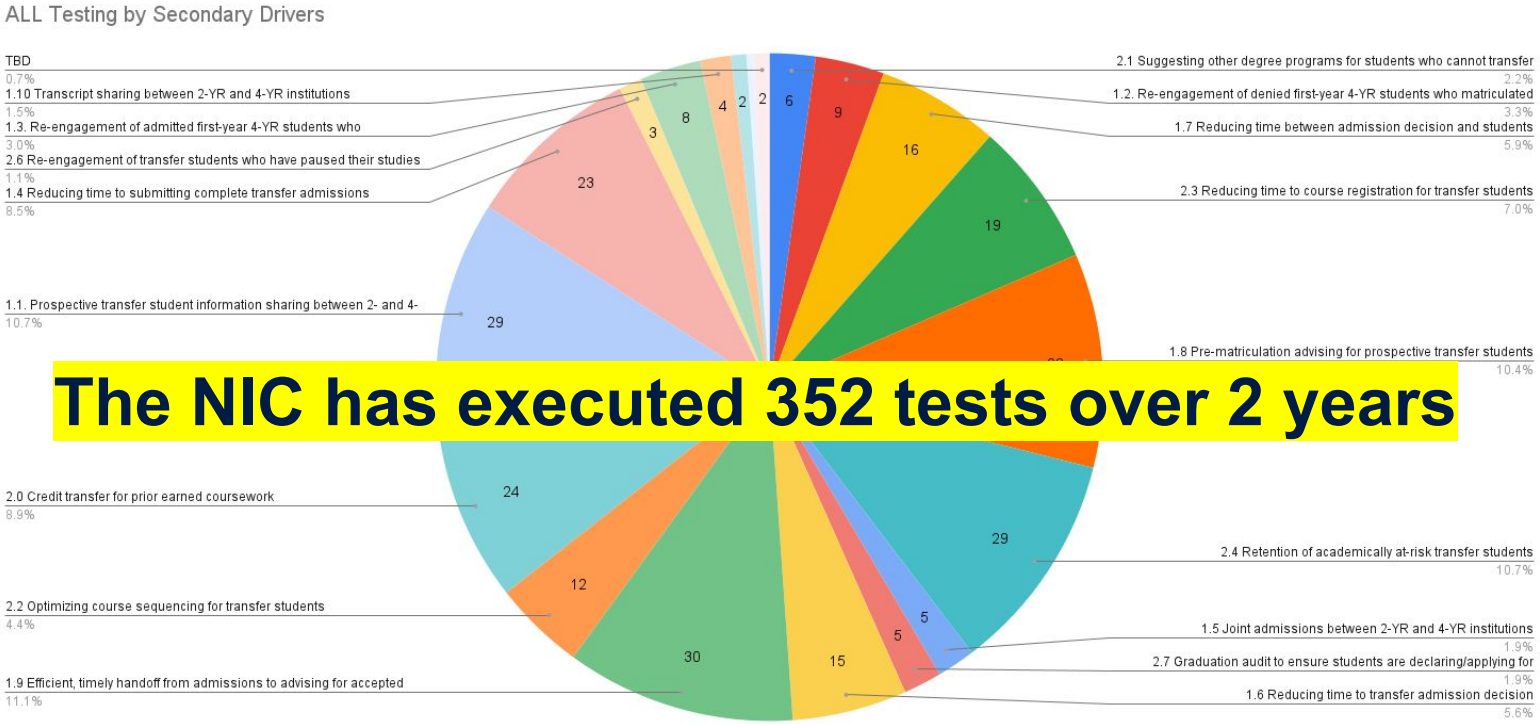
Testing Across the NIC



The NIC has executed 352 tests over 2 years

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Aim

By May 2030, the percentage of in-state students enrolling at two year institutions who transfer and complete baccalaureate degrees within six years will increase by 7%.

Primary Drivers

Primary Driver #1:

2-yr to 4-yr Transfer Rate

(How many students who begin at 2-yr who intend to transfer to a 4-yr successfully transfer to 4-yr institution)

1.1. Prospective transfer student information sharing between 2- and 4-YR institutions

1.2. Re-engagement of denied first-year 4-YR students who matriculated into a 2-YR institution

1.3. Re-engagement of admitted first-year 4-YR students who matriculated into a 2-YR institution

1.4 Reducing time to submitting complete transfer admissions application

1.5 Joint admissions between 2-YR and 4-YR institutions

1.6 Reducing time to transfer admission decision

1.7 Reducing time between admission decision and students acceptance

1.8 Pre-matriculation advising for prospective transfer students

1.9 Efficient, timely handoff from admissions to advising for accepted transfer students

1.10 Transcript sharing between 2-YR and 4-YR institutions

1.11 Increasing program/major declaration for 2-YR students

1.12 Re-engagement of 2-YR degree graduates to transfer/re-enroll for upskilling/career advancement

Aim	Primary Drivers	Secondary Drivers
By May 2030, the percentage of in-state students enrolling at two year institutions who transfer and complete baccalaureate degrees within six years will increase by 7%.	Primary Driver #2: Transfer-in Success Rate (i.e. How many students who vertical transfer into a 4-yr complete degree in 2 yrs and/or without extraneous credits at degree)	2.0 Credit transfer for prior earned coursework 2.1 Suggesting other degree programs for students who cannot transfer into their originally-selected program 2.2 Optimizing course sequencing for transfer students 2.3 Reducing time to course registration for transfer students 2.4 Retention of academically at-risk transfer students 2.5 Warm handoff of academically dismissed transfer student back to 2-YR institution for remediation 2.6 Re-engagement of transfer students who have paused their studies 2.7 Graduation audit to ensure students are declaring/applying for graduation as soon as eligible

Generating New Knowledge with Improvement Science

- Improvement Science is built for **testing ideas in cycles** to figure out **what works** to deliver the results we are aiming for.
- Once an idea shows promise of improving outcomes, teams engage in **sequential testing**, which helps us answer the question “Does this solution work across multiple contexts/ populations?” (ex. A team may test an intervention at a department level, then spread to 3-5 departments, and so on)
- After sequential testing and examining the results of the tests, teams begin to identify **practices that have a high degree of belief**, meaning we’re fairly certain that the practice can be replicated elsewhere, in another context, and deliver results.
- This is **new knowledge.**

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Interventions with High Reliability

1. Prospective transfer student information sharing between 2- and 4-year institutions (18 tests)
2. **Reducing time to transfer admission decision (11 tests)**
3. Efficient, timely handoff from admissions to advising for accepted transfer students (17 tests)
4. Reducing time to course registration for transfer students (18 tests)

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Taking Results to Scale with AACRAO

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Phase 1: Collecting Your Baseline Data

- Contribute to a National Dataset on Transfer Student Admissions

- We're launching the nation's first-ever dataset focused on the critical "time-to-admit" for transfer students. Your institution will simply share its current baseline data on how long it takes to process a transfer student application from submission to decision. It's a simple step with enormous potential.

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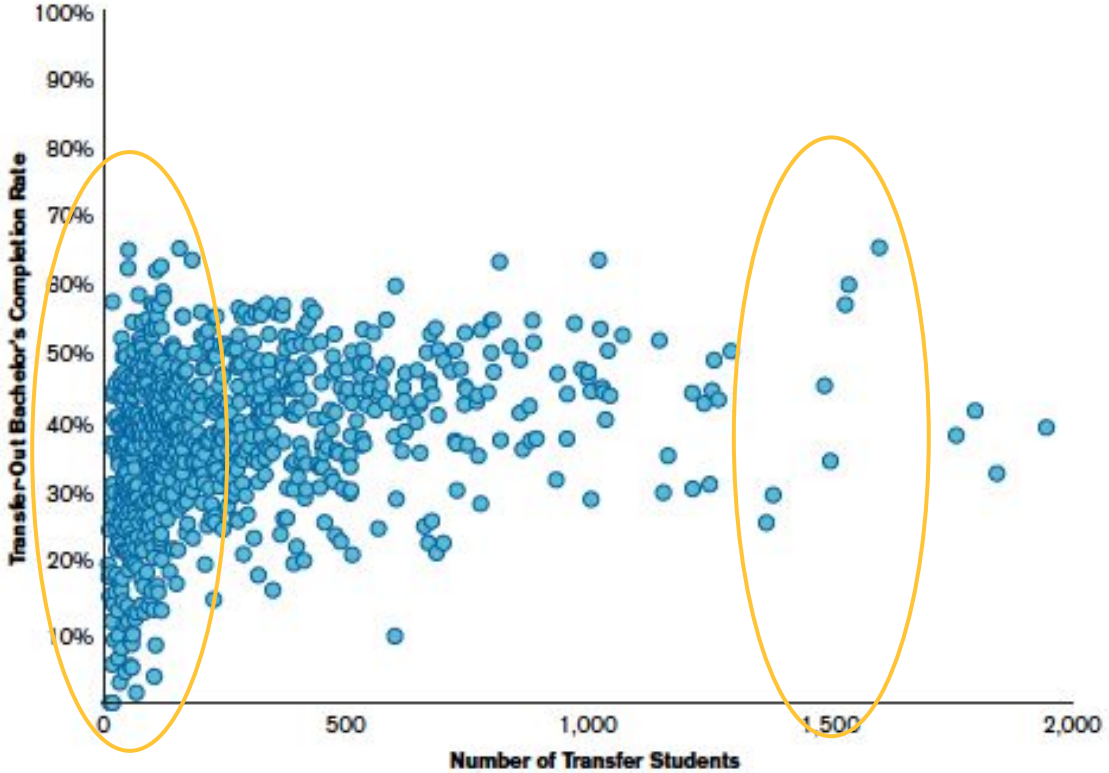

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Phase 1: Collecting Your Baseline Data

Why is this game-changing for you?

- See Where You Stand: Gain unprecedented insights into national variation in transfer admissions processes, instantly understanding your institution's position.

- Pinpoint Improvement Areas: Analyze your baseline against a national picture to uncover hidden inefficiencies or bright spots within your operations.

- Empower Decisions with Real Data: Move beyond assumptions. This initiative provides meaningful measures, offering concrete insights into what's actually happening on the ground.

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Defining the Data Point

- “Time to Decision”
- **Who:** Transfer Students
- **What:** The elapsed time (in calendar days) between the submission of a completed transfer application and the date the admission decision is communicated to the applicant.
- **How:** Time to Decision = Date of admission decision notification −Date of completed application submission
- **When:** Measured for each applicant in a given admissions cycle (NOTE: for Phase 1 reporting, we are focused on the Spring 2025 cycle, which means decisions your institution rendered from 1/1/2025-6/1/2025). Reported as the mean (average) number of days for the cycle.
- **Why:** Reflects efficiency and responsiveness of the admissions process. Shorter admit times improve student experience, reduce uncertainty, and support smoother transfer enrollment planning.