Florida Department of Education Awaiting Limited Access / General Freshman Convening

Executive Summary and Implementation Plan

Background

On September 10, 17, and 18, a group of academic, workforce and management information system (MIS) leaders from Florida College System (FCS) institutions convened to develop definitions and best practices for the identification of, reporting on, and tracking of students working toward the qualifications required for admission to certain career and technical education (CTE) programs. These students have not been formally admitted to their CTE program of interest by their FCS institution. For the purposes of the convening, FDOE used the term "pre-CTE students" to identify this group of students. Through feedback in the convening, the final documentation identified them as "CTE Flagged Students" instead of "pre-CTE" students. Traditionally, these students were being reported with a designation of awaiting limited access.

Unified Definition: CTE Flagged Students (as identified in the convening)[1]

The following definition was proposed at the Collaborative Lab Convening (September 2020)

- A student who declared the *intent* to complete a CTE degree program and is taking courses that will lead to admission/selection into the limited access portion of the program.

Additional characteristics and implementation steps were identified by a sub-group during the convening:

- Students **will be coded into their intended CTE degree program from the start** but flagged as not yet meeting the criteria for the limited access portion of the program (indicator on DE 2005).
- **Student flag will be removed based upon institutional policy** when they meet the criteria for application to the limited access portion of the program.
- Students not accepted into the limited access portion of the program will have their active program ended and the student would need to declare a new program of study.
- Students who are flagged will not be counted within the completion calculation.
- Awaiting Limited Access (ALA) is no longer needed – replaced with new CTE Flagged
- General Freshman (GF) needs a similar review as this but should not be connected to this newly defined group

Best Practices & Support Structures

The convening group also developed information on best practices and support structures that could be used to engage, track, support and convert students across the FCS. Among the most popular idea was the following:

- Tracking, Monitoring and Support of Students
  - Annual program reviews for all departments and added a category to determine retention of these students.

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[1] This is the exact summary presented by Collaborative Labs as part of their summary of all engagements.

- o "Built in mechanisms" that are looking at student progression points (systematically) and identifying milestones that denote the student is engaged in the pathway and the course taking behavior reflects that.
- Mentoring
  - o Mentoring is so important when they are denied access to a program; reaching out to them at this critical point when they feel like it's a failure.
- Statewide milestone
  - o Establish a Statewide milestone to trigger advising students of alternate pathways/programs.
- Get Well Plan
  - o Help students understand they can reach their goal, but it may not look the way they thought it would; may need to fix grades or take a longer, windy path but you can still get there.
- Career Advising
  - o Demystifying what a career entails; as a state we have access to these resources; offer more opportunities for students to hear from SMEs/working professionals; could be some efficiencies across institutions pulling together same resources

See **Appendix** for summarized version of engagement discussions/issues.

FDOE Implementation Steps and Timeline

1. Confirm elements of the definition with Council of Workforce Education and Council of Instructional Affairs at October 2020 meeting and discuss implementation questions
2. Request USDOE confirm that students who are flagged as CTE and taking requisites would be eligible to receive Title IV financial aid (because they are enrolled in the program)
3. Develop FDOE proposal for amended data element and supplemental information required for implementation.
4. Present and discuss with college MISATFOR at their November 9-10, 2020 meeting
   a. Present draft data element and definitions
   b. Discuss required edits
   c. Develop supplemental reports on new reporting
   d. Discuss options for data quality checks for college reporting
5. FDOE presentation of data element change to internal Data Governance council
6. Amend 2021-22 FCS Student Data Manuals to include new reporting requirements for implementation beginning with the Summer 2021 term.

APPENDIX

Case Study Reviews – Key Discussion Points/Concepts from these discussions

- For students in limited access programs and taking pre-requisites

- o For limited access, one of the problems is that there are these baseline classes that students must take for admission into specific programs. Traditionally, they are called prerequisites.
- o But they're not really prerequisites; they're really requisites. When we call those prerequisite classes or talking about those students as pre-admission, then the financial aid folks felt like they were not part of the program.
- o This got us to the idea that we really need to start thinking about changing the narrative and the way we discussed these classes – that they are not just meaningless first steps or boxes to be ticked, but acquisition of fundamental skills that will help the students along the path and that we need to stress not only how those fundamental skills are going to be applied inside their target career, but also how they might be transferable into alternative careers.
- o The next question we dealt with was helping students have a map of the way to go, and we all spoke highly of clear pathways. But the other piece of having that clear pathway is understanding why the class is on the list, not just that there's a list, but that the list is structured a specific way for academic reasons and that all of those things lead them to the program.
- For students who have completed pre-requisites and space is limited below the level of potential admittances as well as students who did not meet the criteria for admission after completing the required coursework
  - o An ideal cross-departmental team to address the students for whom space was still not available after meeting the course prerequisite criteria would include the following:
    - ▪ dean and the program faculty,
    - ▪ advising,
    - ▪ enrollment,
    - ▪ office of the registrar,
    - ▪ career assessment, and financial aid
  - o The team could assess what can be done with these two groups and talk about what's next for them.
  - o Another recommendation is to do a focus group with students who were awaited limited access and also alumni so that we could have feedback from those who graduated to see what their experience was and offer this group more insight from a student perspective.
  - o The college can do a career assessment to see what their interests are and what alternatives that we can provide these students based on the skill set.
  - o From the institutional research perspective, need to discover how we monitor student progression and have analytics inform us to be more proactive while advising students. In addition, it's important to look at the success rates of students who completed an alternative program.
  - o Overall, we want to see what happens to students who are not accepted into the program because a lot of times they just go by the wayside and we never know what's happening with these students

- One focus was on how we could use advising to help students look at alternate programs and set some realistic expectations, including looking at persistence and retention and if the student was full time or part time.
- For these students, success would mean looking at persistence, retention, and graduation rates for all these three groups (those admitted, those qualified, those not meeting qualifications)
- For the reporting structure for these populations, the discussion focused on what the key research question would be, what are the current reporting structures and what would future reporting looks like (internal reporting and state reporting) to make sure we accurately report these to the state.

- For students who degree/certificate intent has changed since their initial enrollment:
  - The institutional practices that affect the ability of the college to maintain current information by term include:
    - First and foremost, it was financial aid – do students select a program of study based on financial aid eligibility?
    - Internal system structures including problems with holds and the fact that there is nothing that prevents a student from taking classes outside their path.
  - For data system reports that could be used to flag students who may have altered their degree intent:
    - Some colleges may have advisors who receive a weekly report of who changed their major which is mapped to their actual assigned advisors that the advisor can give them a reach out and confirm why they're changing it.
    - It was discussed that it would be a best practice to have some sort of a tracking system when a student changes their major but with the understanding that some colleges may have barriers to implementing a system-wide change.
  - For processes that could be initiated to ensure data reporting for students' degree credential intent is current:
    - Institutions need to create those stop gaps.
    - Colleges can run degree audits for all students to make sure that they're on point with their classes.
    - Some internal systems include dashboards (My Explorer)
    - Messaging to students to ensure information is correct. Each and every term in a perfect world, that program of study change would be owned by the student and checked by us.
    - Each term records be reviewed for consistency and reporting

For a complete copy of the convening summary document prepared by Collaboration Labs, please email Tara Goodman at tara.goodman@fldoe.org.