



Description of the Win-Win Initiative

Nationally, Win-Win engages 64 community colleges and four-year institutions in nine states. The initiative is carried out in a partnership with the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) serving as evaluators, and is funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education. Michigan received a generous grant from the Kresge Foundation to participate in this important student success initiative.

The Win-Win model allows us to learn from other states provides a proven framework, expert assistance and a clear process to follow. Together, 9 Michigan Community Colleges supported by the Michigan Community College Association Center for Student Success, work to identify former and un-enrolled students without a degree, whose records qualify them for an associate’s degree, then award a degree. Simultaneously, we identify former students who are academically short of an associate’s degree, find them, and bring them back to complete a degree. These students have many credits but no degree, as illustrated in Figure 1 (at right), adapted from the *Student Persistence and Completion Initiative* graphic by Oregon CCWD, another state participating in Project Win-Win.

As we near the end of the two-year project we have audited 22,554 student academic records and found hundreds of students with sufficient credits to qualify for an associate’s degree. Community college stakeholders recognize this opportunity to use Win-Win as a vehicle to learn about their internal policies and practices related to awarding credentials. Each college group designed their own operational path to reach out to students and manage academic records, identifying strategies that worked best for their institution.

Focus on Systemic Change: Policies and Practices

To get at the root of barriers to completions, college leaders convened internal work groups and asked such questions as, “What policies may negatively impact the process of awarding of degrees? Can we change or eliminate that policy? What practices have developed over time? Who is involved? How efficient are the steps? What can we do to improve?” These and other inquiries lead to identification of barriers. Some teams focused on policy barriers, others on college databases and data systems. A few keyed in on campus culture and behavioral aspects. Most used a combination of these activities.

The degree award policy was analyzed most. Prior to Win-Win, the majority of community colleges relied on an opt-in policy – students were required to apply to receive a credential. A number of colleges are now using an opt-out policy – a degree is awarded unless the student declines the degree. Some college are also implementing an institutional override policy – as soon as a student earns the degree, it is awarded. Nationally, opt-out and institutional override policies are being analyzed and re-defined to ease the process of awarding degrees. Many colleges also analyzed residency requirements, especially in light of the Credit When It’s Due Reverse Transfer project under development state-wide.

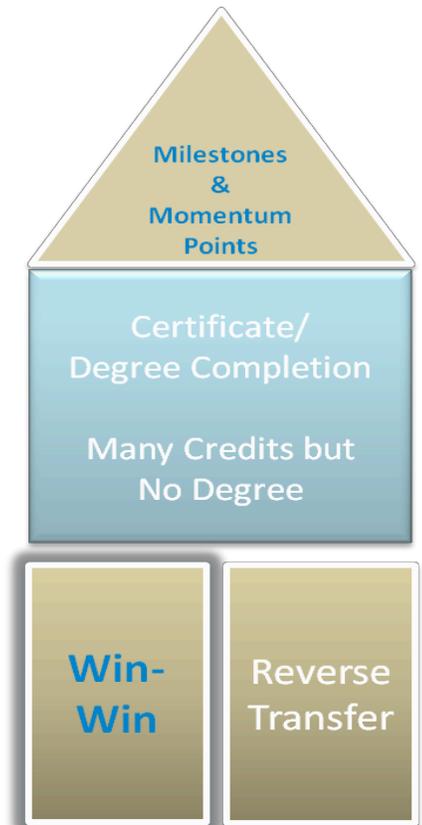


Figure 1: Win-Win targets students with many credits but no degree.

Other challenges have been more institution specific. Some college found their degree audit software paved the way for easy transcript evaluation *and* degree awarding. Other colleges automated their information systems to track student outreach methods to see which work best. Colleges identified and updated their residency and recency of credits policies. Staff have worked to optimize their degree completion policies and practices and enhanced their student-centered customer service. Some colleges are working to eliminate the fee and application required for graduation.



Participants reported the Win-Win process has led to internal culture shifts, updated policies, better inter-departmental cooperation and enhanced practices. These stories illustrate how community college teams are already focused on removing obstacles on the road to graduation and pave the way with policies and practices that support student success.

Contribution to Student Success

Defining, measuring and advancing student success is a multi-faceted challenge. In response to this challenge, the Michigan Center for Student Success has worked to support and recognize the many forms and various paths of success and ways to measure student progress toward educational goals. These activities use milestones and momentum points to show different rates of degree and goal attainment by a diverse and complex student body. Milestones include earning a certificate or degree, transferring to a four-year institution or completion of a program. During college, these accomplishments provide momentum, propelling students toward milestones. Together milestones and momentum points reveal patterns of student progress.



Win-Win supports student success, most notably students with “many credits but no degree” as shown in Figure 2 (at left), an excerpt adapted from the *Student Persistence and Completion Initiative (CCWD)*. Win Win supports these students with a new pathway to completion.

Connection to State and National Efforts

The Win-Win process aligns with Michigan Community College’s vision of increased success and completion rates. It complements other state projects such as Credit When It’s Due (CWID). To read more about Michigan’s student success activities, see the MCSS at <http://www.mcca.org/content.cfm?m=47&id=47&startRow=1&mm=0>.

Figure 2: Win-Win targets students with many credits but no degree.

Win-Win supports Lumina’s goal to increase citizens’ degree attainment to 60 percent by 2025 and helps meet the Nation’s 2020 Goal to increase the number of college graduates and supports the MCSS Completion and Success priority area of inquiry and action. For more information contact:

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