Addendum to Original MOU

Houston GPS
Guided Pathways to Success for Houston-area College Students

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding is entered into by and between Complete College America and the University of Houston, the University of Houston Downtown, the University of Houston Clear Lake, the University of Houston-Victoria, Houston Community College, Lone Star College System, San Jacinto College District, Texas Southern University, and Wharton County Junior College to establish an agreement for collaboration and consultation in support of the implementation of Houston GPS.

All signatories to this agreement understand that Houston GPS is an integrated system of cohesive strategies that must be implemented collectively in order to accomplish the full benefits of the effort, namely significant improvement in college completion rates and substantial narrowing of attainment gaps. Accordingly, all institutions participating in Houston GPS will apply maximum effort toward implementation of all of the component strategies listed below.

Further it is understood that a steering group composed of the chancellors and presidents of the participating institutions will in consultation with Complete College America, make the final decisions relative to the development of the comprehensive strategies that will guide Houston GPS. Chancellors and presidents will designate working groups that will operationalize and implement the strategies.

This agreement shall be effective beginning with the date of the last signature provided and ending upon the satisfactory implementation of Houston GPS.

Houston GPS participants shall implement:

**ALIGNED MATHEMATICS**

- All programs of study will contain mathematics most appropriate for success in associated careers. Programs that do not require Calculus should not include College Algebra.
- Mathematics aligned to programs will be embedded in fully transferable degree plans shared by all 2- and 4-year institutions.

META-MAJORS

- Students who are uncertain about majors will choose among 5-7 meta-majors in which to begin their first semester. All meta-majors will contain a credit-bearing course and/or specific experiences designed to provide students broad overviews of specific majors within the meta-major, including workforce outcomes and career opportunities.

- All degree plans will be designed so that students complete their gateway mathematics and English courses in their first year.

- Two-year students will make informed choices of specific majors no later than the end of their first semester and will be placed onto the appropriate degree plans. Students in four-year programs will choose specific majors no later than the end of their first year.

REMEDIATION

- Most remedial students will be enrolled in college-level, gateway English and mathematics courses with mandatory, built-in support; including the following examples:
  
  ➢ Most remedial students will start in single semester college-level gateway courses with corequisite support.
  
  ➢ The least prepared students will start in college-level gateway courses stretched over two semesters.
  
  ➢ Certificate programs will align remediation to skill levels necessary for success in chosen fields.

DEFAULT DEGREE PLANS

- All degrees/majors will be structured into degree plans containing properly sequenced courses that lead most students to on-time completion. Academic advisors and/or faculty will create the degree plans based on the requirements established by the appropriate faculty and, if applicable, advisory committees and degree plans will be included in appropriate institutional publications. Approval of all degree plans will be done according to individual institutional policies and procedures.
• Degree plans will be aligned with career goals and workforce outcomes, including requiring leading area employers to review degree plans as they are designed to ensure workforce relevance, strengthen employer engagement and encourage internships, apprenticeships and other cooperative education opportunities.

• All degree plans will be designed to significantly increase timely credit accumulation, incentivize more full-time enrollment, and whenever possible, ensure on-time completion. To do so, degree plans will be offered in three options: 1) at least 15 credits per semester for fall and spring semesters each calendar year, 2) at least 12 credits per semester for fall and spring semesters and at least 6 credits for summer session(s) each calendar year, and 3) as sequenced, guaranteed courses aligned with critical credit accumulation milestones (15, 30, 45, 60 and so on). Recognizing that data clearly reveals that the vast majority of part-time students never graduate from college, degree plans must be designed to encourage and enable more students to attend full-time. Even with these efforts, full-time attendance will still not be possible for some students; therefore, degree plans which clearly indicate the courses students must complete by critical credit accumulation markers (option 3) will provide part-time students clear pathways to graduation.

• Degree plans will be capped at no more than 120 credits for bachelor’s degrees, 60 credits for associate degrees, and 30-45 credits (or the equivalent) for certificates – unless licensure or accreditation requirements dictate otherwise.

• Degree plans will be structured around properly sequenced “critical path” courses, the most essential courses for completion of specific programs of study.

• Institutions will guarantee that all critical path courses are offered during the semesters indicated in degree plans.

• In programs with elective courses, students will choose among those guaranteed to count toward on-time completion of degrees.

• Students will in conjunction with their advisors be registered into critical path courses each semester.

ARTICULATION

• All 2-year AA and AS degree plans will fully articulate into 4-year degree plans.

• Upon completion of AA and AS degrees, community college students will enter 4-year institutions with junior-level status.
INTRUSIVE ADVISING ENABLED BY TECHNOLOGY

- Institutions will collectively choose and deploy technology to manage degree plan structure, student enrollment and progress through degree plans, and early warning systems that signal student struggles to enable just-in-time advising interventions.

- Student effort and success will be tracked in real-time as they progress on their degree plans. This information will be readily available to students, faculty and administrators.

- Students deemed to be in danger of sliding “off-track” in their degree plans will be automatically required to see an advisor and be blocked from further enrollment until an advisor releases all “academic holds.”

CAREER AND ACADEMIC ADVISING CONSOLIDATION

- Career advising will collaborate with academic advising to better inform choices of meta-majors and majors and strengthen workforce relevance in degree plan design.

STRUCTURED SCHEDULES

- To add predictability and ease school/work scheduling challenges, especially for non-residential students, colleges will work to schedule courses in consolidated and compressed time blocks, consistent from term to term.

TRACKING STUDENT PROGRESSION: DATA FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

- Participating institutions will track the progress and outcomes of cohorts of entering students grouped by meta-major using key milestones of progress such as rates at which students: complete 15 college credits in 1 term, complete 30 credits in 1 year, are retained from term 1 to term 2 and from year 1 to year 2, and complete a credential.

- Community colleges will track the rates at which students transfer to a four-year institution (by receiving institution) and, among those who transfer, the percentage who complete a bachelor’s degree. It is important for colleges to track transfers by their community college meta-major and to identify the majors fields in which students earn bachelor’s degrees. This will help to inform efforts to strengthen transfer pathways for key program areas, and provide a baseline against which to measure performance improvements over time.

Modifications
This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended only by written agreement signed by each of the signatories and by Complete College America.
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[Signature]
President, Texas Southern University

3/23/2017
Date
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[Signature]
President, University of Houston-Victoria

7/26/17
Date