

# **Maine Transfer Guarantee Memorandum of Agreement**

**Between**

**New England Board of Higher Education  
Maine Community College System  
Maine Independent Colleges Association**

**and**

**Maine Four-Year Receiving Institution Signatory to the Guarantee MOA**

*December 2023*

## Maine Transfer Guarantee Memorandum of Agreement

### Sections

- I. Background
- II. Maine Transfer Guarantee
- III. Purpose
- IV. Roles and Responsibilities: Initiative Facilitator and Founding Partners
  - A. Initiative Facilitator: New England Board of Higher Education
  - B. Signatory Partner: Maine Community College System
  - C. Signatory Partner: Maine Independent Colleges Association
  - D. Advisory Partner: University of Maine System
- V. Maine Transfer Guarantee Steering Committee
- VI. Staff Roles and Responsibilities: Maine Transfer Guarantee Participating Four-Year Institutions
  - A. Guarantee Coordinator
  - B. Institutional Guarantee Cross-Functional Team
  - C. Institutional Research
  - D. Marketing and Communications
- VII. Articulation of the Maine Transfer Guarantee
  - A. Student Eligibility Criteria
  - B. Features and Benefits to Students
  - C. General Education Block Transfer
  - D. Majors Offered
  - E. Transfer Pathways
  - F. Additional Recommended Transfer Credit Policies
- VIII. Institutional Transfer Receptivity and Guiding Principles
- IX. Student Advising
- X. Institutional Scholarships and Financial Aid
- XI. Student Outreach and Promotion
- XII. Maine Transfer Guarantee Websites
  - A. New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) Site
  - B. Student-Facing Landing Page
  - C. Institutional Webpages
- XIII. Data Collection and Reporting
- XIV. Terms and Withdrawal Provisions
- XV. Other Provisions
- XVI. Signatories

### Appendices

- A. New England Transfer Guarantee Guiding Principles
- B. Designated Guarantee Coordinator & Guarantee Cross Functional Team Form
- C. Institution-Specific Transfer Policy Form

- D. Website Agreement
- E. Institutional Transfer Page Website Language
- F. Data Collection Form & Reporting Variables

## **I. Background**

In November 2019, the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) received a three-year grant, co-funded by the Teagle Foundation and the Davis Educational Foundation, to implement the New England Transfer Guarantee in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Fully operationalized in the southern New England states as of Fall 2021, the initiative enables eligible community college graduates to transfer into participating four-year institutions – admission guaranteed. The Guarantee is modeled on existing state-specific transfer policies, thereby unifying public and independent transfer in these three states and increasing access and opportunity for transfer students. The structure of the Guarantee also addresses fundamental barriers to transfer success. Receiving institutions agree to waive their application fee and guarantee the transfer of associate-earned credits to mitigate the credit loss that typically plagues transfer students—especially to independent colleges and universities. These institutions also commit to making community college transfer students eligible for meaningful institutional aid in the form of grants and scholarships. At the core of the initiative, then, is an unwavering commitment to equity, opportunity and access for all students in higher education.

In July 2022, NEBHE received three-year implementation grant awards from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Teagle Foundation, the Davis Educational Foundation and the Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation to expand the New England Transfer Guarantee to Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

## **II. Maine Transfer Guarantee**

NEBHE's implementation partners for the Maine Transfer Guarantee include the Maine Community College System (MCCS), the University of Maine System (UMS) and the Maine Independent Colleges Association (MICA). The Maine Transfer Guarantee is grounded in the foundational associate degree and general education transfer policies between the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System. Four-year independent institutions will align with select state policy and adhere to additional Maine Transfer Guarantee provisions. The result will be a seamless, unified system of transfer statewide and an expanded menu of transfer options for the state's community college students.

### *Four-Year Institutions*

With the goal of unifying guaranteed transfer of an associate degree statewide, both public and independent four-year colleges and universities are invited to participate in the Maine Transfer Guarantee. MOA submissions will be processed on a rolling basis; four-year receiving institutions may elect to participate at any time. Participating signatory four-year receiving institutions will demonstrate strong commitment to transparent transfer practices and promote a

transfer-receptive culture at their college or university. Participating institutions will adhere to all required policies outlined in this agreement, and embrace the best practices recommended herein.

The Maine Transfer Guarantee will ensure acceptance at participating four-year institutions for associate-degree-bearing students, regardless of degree type, who have met a minimum grade point average (GPA of 2.0, 2.5 or 3.0). Each individual participating four-year receiving institution will self-select a qualifying GPA for guaranteed admission from these options.

### III. Purpose

This Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Maine Community College System, the Maine Independent Colleges Association, the New England Board of Higher Education and Thomas College signed on 1-23-24 serves as the agreement for the Maine Transfer Guarantee. The MOA applies roles and responsibilities and terms and conditions to the signatories of this agreement. Signatories include the president of each organization or their designee.

### IV. Roles and Responsibilities: Initiative Facilitator and Founding Partners

#### A. Initiative Facilitator: New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE)

NEBHE was established in 1955 by the six New England governors and authorized as a regional higher education compact by Congress. NEBHE advances equitable postsecondary outcomes through convening, research, and programs for students, institution leaders and policymakers. NEBHE will serve as the administrator and facilitator of the Maine Transfer Guarantee. Under the Maine Transfer Guarantee, NEBHE will:

1. Serve as the administrator for the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, Teagle Foundation, Davis Educational Foundation and Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation grant awards.
2. Allocate resources from the grant sources to support the Maine Transfer Guarantee.
3. Coordinate the operation of the Maine Transfer Guarantee Steering Committee.
4. Coordinate all aspects of the Maine Transfer Guarantee in consultation with its primary partners - MCCA, UMS and MICA.
5. Plan and deliver all state convenings.
6. Develop all necessary documents to guide implementation.
7. Provide technical assistance to participating institutions.
8. Provide training to transfer advisors, admissions counselors, staff at community colleges and participating four-year institutions.
9. Develop press release templates for use by partners and participating institutions.

10. Develop the scope and plan for a student-facing landing page, including creation, maintenance and updating.
11. Develop a public engagement plan for promoting the Maine Transfer Guarantee.
12. Develop and implement enrollment data collection.
13. Generate resources that support the sustainability of this initiative.
14. Seek additional grant funds through foundations and other means to support the Maine Transfer Guarantee if needed.

**B. Signatory Partner: Maine Community College System**

The mission of the Maine Community College System is to provide associate degree, diploma and certificate programs directed at the educational, career and technical needs of the state's citizens and the workforce needs of the state's employers. The system consists of seven colleges, with a shared set of goals, including creating an educated, skilled and adaptable labor force that is responsive to the changing needs of the economy of the state and promoting local, regional and statewide economic development. Under the Maine Transfer Guarantee, the MCCS executive office will:

1. Provide representation, in the form of one member, to the Maine Transfer Guarantee Steering Committee.
2. Advise on policy, resource development, program promotion and sustainability.
3. Provide critical information to community college presidents and academic leadership as well as to other key institutional staff such as transfer counselors.

**C. Signatory Partner: Maine Independent Colleges Association**

MICA represents 11 private, nonprofit colleges and universities throughout Maine and, in total, serves over 25,000 students on an annual basis. MICA works with its member institutions and state policymakers to strengthen higher education and support students across the state. Under the Maine Transfer Guarantee, the MICA executive office will:

1. Provide representation, in the form of one member, to the Maine Transfer Guarantee Steering Committee.
2. Advise on policy, resource development, program promotion and sustainability.
3. Promote the Maine Transfer Guarantee to its member institutions and other stakeholders in the state.

**D. Advisory Partner: University of Maine System**

The University of Maine System is the state's largest educational enterprise—comprising seven universities. UMS has an annual enrollment of nearly 30,000 students and positively affects the lives of hundreds of thousands of Mainers each year through its educational and cultural offerings as well as its outreach and public service to individuals, businesses, organizations and policymakers. Under the Maine Transfer Guarantee, the UMS executive office will serve in an advisory capacity:

1. Provide representation, in the form of one member, to the Maine Transfer Guarantee Steering Committee.
2. Advise on policy, program promotion development and sustainability.
3. Provide critical information to university presidents and academic leadership.

## **V. Maine Transfer Guarantee Steering Committee**

The Maine Transfer Guarantee Steering Committee serves to guide the successful implementation of the initiative. The Steering Committee includes representatives from MCCA, USM and MICA, along with additional representatives from individual community colleges and public and independent four-year receiving institutions. NEBHE facilitators and Steering Committee members will:

1. Provide strategic direction to NEBHE and its state partners in the adoption of the Maine Transfer Guarantee.
2. Provide input on various aspects of implementation, including but not limited to the Foundational Design and Guiding Principles, state meeting agenda building, implementation guidance, student-facing information and landing page, as well as promotion and public engagement.
3. Identify risks and challenges and offer advice to mitigate risks and surmount challenges.
4. Advise on institutional policy development and procedures, prioritizing actions that need to be taken by NEBHE and its state partners to implement the initiative.
5. Advise on reporting and success metrics.
6. Serve as the decision-making body on all aspects of the Maine Transfer Guarantee.
7. Serve as the arbiter of any issues that may arise during the implementation process.
8. The Steering Committee may elect to establish an Academic Deans and Provosts Subcommittee in order to ensure the successful implementation of the Maine Transfer Guarantee. If established, the committee will work in conjunction with the Steering Committee to provide recommendations for standardizing general education block transfer and will inform programmatic pathway development.
9. Upon the end of the grant period, the Steering Committee will advise on the formation of a permanent governance structure for the Maine Transfer Guarantee. Members of the current Steering committee will not be bound to serve as members of the permanent governance structure.
10. Advise on the development of a sustainability plan for the time period beyond the life of grant funding.

## **VI. Staff Roles and Responsibilities: Maine Transfer Guarantee Participating Four-year Institutions**

With the goal of unifying guaranteed transfer of an associate degree statewide, both public and independent four-year colleges and universities are invited to participate in the Maine Transfer Guarantee. MOA submissions will be processed on a rolling basis; four-year receiving institutions may elect to participate at any time. Participating signatory four-year receiving institutions will demonstrate a strong commitment to transparent transfer practices and promote a transfer-receptive culture at their college or university. Participating institutions will adhere to all required policies outlined in this agreement and embrace the best practices recommended herein.

### **A. Guarantee Coordinator**

Upon signing this MOA, the participating institution will designate a Guarantee Coordinator (GC), identifying this individual and their title using the form provided in Appendix B. At the institutional level, the GC will typically hold a title of Vice President of Enrollment, Dean of Admission; in some cases, a designated senior admissions representative who is well versed in transfer will assume the role. The GC will serve as

the primary institutional point of contact for the program and coordinate the implementation of the Maine Transfer Guarantee at the institutional level. GCs will be actively supported by NEBHE facilitators. The GC will:

1. Participate in all Maine Transfer Guarantee implementation convenings, workshops and trainings.
2. Participate in quarterly GC meetings facilitated by NEBHE.
3. Collaborate with NEBHE facilitators on all aspects of institutional implementation.
4. Assemble and chair an institutional Guarantee Cross-Functional Team focused on the implementation of the Maine Transfer Guarantee.
5. On an annual basis, coordinate with their Institutional Research department to submit Maine Guarantee enrollment data to NEBHE, to be incorporated into an annual report.
6. Assume responsibility for coordinating with institutional webmaster(s) to showcase clear and standard, NEBHE-supplied language about the Maine Transfer Guarantee on the institution's transfer webpage.
7. Assume responsibility for institutional promotion of the Maine Transfer Guarantee at college and transfer fairs.
8. Participate in optional professional development sessions offered by NEBHE.

#### *Transition procedure*

If or when the designated GC leaves their institution or assumes a new position that is incompatible with continued GC service, the participating institution is required to notify NEBHE facilitators no more than two weeks after the GC's departure. At that time, the institution must identify an interim GC or appoint a new permanent GC. The participating institution is responsible for onboarding the new GC, however, NEBHE facilitators will be available to provide an individual informational session and technical assistance, as needed.

#### **B. Institutional Guarantee Cross-Functional Team**

Participating institutions are required to assemble a Guarantee Cross-Functional Team (GCFT) at their institution. The role of the GCFT is to advise the institution's administration on related transfer policy and practice, train faculty and staff, recruit students, coordinate promotion and outreach, develop or solidify a transfer-receptive culture on campus, stay informed of best practices for transfer advising and data collection. Membership may include representation from: department leadership, faculty members (including faculty involved with general education requirements), registrar's office, admissions, financial aid, Institutional Research, communications, website administrators and advising staff. The GCFT shall be chaired by the GC, or an approved designee, and will:

1. Develop a communication structure to disseminate information about the Maine Transfer Guarantee to all pertinent faculty and staff.
2. Meet quarterly to discuss updates, challenges and best practices.
3. Coordinate with both academic deans and Institutional Research to ensure timely program implementation and enrollment data collection, respectively.

#### **C. Institutional Research**

Each institution is responsible for compiling student-level data on an annual basis for submission to NEBHE each April, relying on either their own Institutional Research (IR) personnel or, in the case of smaller independent institutions, IR personnel with whom their school contracts. During the initial submission year, NEBHE will host information sessions to prepare for data collection. An IR designee is required to attend one of the aforementioned sessions to ensure data submissions are timely and accurate.

#### *Transition Procedure*

Similar to the transition process for the GC (outlined above), if the IR staff member who typically completes annual data collection and submission for Maine Guarantee enrollment departs their position, the participating institution is responsible for notifying and providing a new point of contact to NEBHE facilitators within two weeks. It is also the institution's responsibility to provide sufficient onboarding to the new IR point of contact so that they can be clear on the expectations for annual data collection for Maine Guarantee enrollment.

#### **D. Marketing and Communications**

Marketing and/or communications staff are responsible for liaising with the GC and admissions in order to promote the Maine Transfer Guarantee to prospective transfer students.

### **VII. Articulation of the Maine Transfer Guarantee**

#### **A. Student Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for the Maine Transfer Guarantee, a student must have graduated with an associate degree from a Maine community college and have a minimum GPA of 2.0, 2.5 or 3.0. Participating four-year receiving institutions will self-select a qualifying GPA for guaranteed admission in Appendix C.

Admission is guaranteed given the student has met all eligibility criteria for the selected institution and the institution has available capacity within the intended major. Participating four-year institutions recognize that students who have completed an associate degree within the Maine Community College system have received a rigorous, high-quality education, and, thus, are prepared to succeed at a four-year institution.

The Maine Transfer Guarantee is, as described above, a guaranteed admissions model of community college transfer. It should be distinguished from a 2+2 model to the extent that the Maine Transfer Guarantee does not guarantee applicability of all credits transferred nor baccalaureate degree completion at the receiving institution within two years or 60 credits. While the structure of the Maine Transfer Guarantee aims to maximize the efficiency of credit transfer for community college graduates, it should be noted that institutional advising and pathway development will be key to ensuring that credits accepted result in credits productively applied to a student's baccalaureate program of study.

## **B. Features and Benefits to Students**

The unique features of the Maine Transfer Guarantee include:

1. No application fee.
2. No required admission essays, high school transcripts<sup>1</sup> and/or standardized testing scores.
3. Guaranteed admission - given the student has met all eligibility criteria for the selected participating Maine Transfer Guarantee institution, and the institution has available capacity within the intended major.
4. Guaranteed transfer of the general education core at select institutions.
5. Guaranteed transfer of credits for all associate degree courses that were successfully completed (with credit applicability ultimately dependent upon the alignment between the development of pathways to connect the associate degree program with the baccalaureate degree program in which the student enrolls).
6. Automatic consideration for institutional aid, in the form of scholarships or grants.
7. Access to an institution that has committed to promoting a transfer-receptive culture.

## **C. General Education Block Transfer**

Depending on the institution, the Maine Transfer Guarantee can provide students with the added benefit of block transfer of the general education core. Under this agreement, institutions may elect to receive the general education core as a block and will indicate this in Appendix C. Block transfer of general education requirements is the recommended practice, however, this agreement takes into consideration the varying stages of transfer preparedness of individual institutions. NEBHE facilitators will aid institutions who seek to prepare for future block transfer of MCCS general education requirements. Moreover, institutions who do not initially sign on to accept the general education block are asked to make a good faith effort to receive all general education credits in order to minimize credit loss and time to degree for students.

The General Education Transfer Block is based on an agreement between UMS and the Maine Community College System (MCCS), which allows students who have completed at least 34 credits in the associate in arts degree or at least 21 credits in the associate in science degree, with grades of C- or better in all courses, to meet the general education requirements at an MCCS campus to apply those credits toward the general education requirements at the receiving institution as a block (rather than as one-to-one course equivalencies.) If the receiving institution's general education requirements exceed the 34 credits that constitute the General Education Transfer Block, the receiving institution may require the student to complete no more than 12 additional credits (or four three-credit-hour or three four-credit-hour courses).

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<sup>1</sup> High school transcripts are not a requirement for admission; however, students may be asked to submit high school transcripts as part of an application for federal financial aid.

Institutions with general education requirements more than 34 credit hours should contact NEBHE facilitators to determine the best path forward prior to signing this agreement. In the southern New England states where the Guarantee is already implemented, religiously-affiliated institutions, for example, have worked with NEBHE to shift specific courses typically included in the general education block to graduation requirements to preserve the relevance of the block transfer of the community college general education core.

#### **D. Majors Offered**

Through the Maine Transfer Guarantee, participating institutions commit to offering admission, via the above stipulated eligibility criteria, to all bachelor's programs outside of two special cases:

1. Exclusions: select competitive majors (e.g., nursing) may be excluded from eligibility.
2. Exceptions: select majors may be permitted to require additional admissions materials from students, e.g., an art portfolio, higher GPA, writing sample or specific prerequisite coursework prior to transferring.

In the rare case that a student who has completed an Associate of Applied Science degree in a skilled trade, or some other major that is typically considered a terminal degree path, wishes to utilize the Maine Transfer Guarantee to transfer to a four-year receiving institution, they should be advised about the potential challenges of this route on a case-by-case basis early on in the transfer process (preferably while the student is still enrolled at the community college). This approach will ensure maximum credit applicability for all such students who proceed with transferring to a four-year institution.

The Maine Transfer Guarantee aims to standardize the transfer process, therefore both exclusions and exceptions should be kept to a minimum. Institutions are required to complete the accompanying Excel sheet titled "Maine Transfer Guarantee: Offered majors" at the time of MOA submission. Using this sheet, institutions must identify all majors they plan to offer as well as exclusions and exceptions; the information submitted via this sheet will be used to populate the Maine Transfer Guarantee website. Revisions and/or changes to the programs offered or the exclusions and exceptions necessitate submitting an updated form to NEBHE facilitators.

#### **E. Transfer Pathways**

Outside of the General Education Transfer Block, participating Maine Transfer Guarantee institutions may receive major requirements and other electives at their discretion, while guaranteeing a minimum of associate degree credits and advanced class standing.

Existing articulation agreements will be honored under this agreement. To maximize clarity for prospective students, existing programmatic (major) articulation agreements and/or guaranteed admission programs between Maine community colleges and receiving institutions that have signed MOAs to participate in the Maine Guarantee will be referred to under the broader umbrella of the Maine Transfer Guarantee. This

necessitates marketing the Maine Guarantee rather than continuing to market individual articulation agreements that have been absorbed under this larger community college transfer heading. If an institution is considering signing an MOA but is anticipating challenges related to honoring existing agreements or programs (e.g., if they have an articulation agreement for a program that must remain distinct due to narrow admissions parameters such as a student age or due to its ties to a specific funding stream), they should reach out to NEBHE facilitators for technical support. If an institution does not have any extant articulated pathways, they are encouraged to develop mapped pathways in order to streamline the transfer process.

#### **F. Additional Recommended Transfer Credit Policies**

Community college students frequently take courses and receive credit from multiple institutions or through credit for prior learning including, but not limited to Advanced Placement (AP) exams, International Baccalaureate Programme (IB), dual enrollment, national standardized exams such as the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), challenge examinations, Joint Service Transcript analysis for veterans or current members of the military or online coursework. The determination to award credit from other institutions or for credit for prior learning is made through a transfer audit and a graduation audit carried out at the community college. These audits serve to ensure that all associate degree earners have fully met degree requirements at the community college. While all relevant documentation in the form of score reports and transcripts will be forwarded to the receiving institution, receiving institutions who sign on to participate in the Maine Guarantee agree to honor the community college graduation audit for credit issued. It is also recommended that institutions perform a credit evaluation upon application, rather than admission, in order for students to make informed decisions in a timely manner.

The recommended minimum course grade for transfer under the Maine Transfer Guarantee is C-. Institutions may, however, elect to use the current course grade for transfer stipulated by the institution's existing policy.

Receiving institutions are encouraged to take into consideration the transfer slump many students experience and to develop academic good standing policies that wait until the end of the academic year to determine a transfer student's placement on academic probation.

#### *Institution Specific Transfer Policies Form*

Keeping in mind the above policy recommendations, institutions will need to stipulate any specific transfer policies using the Institution-Specific Transfer Policy Form located in Appendix C.

### **VIII. Institutional Transfer Receptivity and Guiding Principles**

The Maine Transfer Guarantee promotes transfer receptive culture at both the two-year and four-year level. Institutions are able to better serve transfer students by focusing on developing

an inclusive transfer receptive culture – a framework developed by a team of practitioners from California led by Dimpal Jain, who link critical race theory and transfer.

According to Jain et al., the five elements of transfer receptive culture are:

Pre-transfer

1. Establish the transfer of students, especially nontraditional, first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students, as a high institutional priority that ensures stable accessibility, retention, and graduation.
2. Provide outreach and resources that focus on the specific needs of transfer students while complementing the community college mission of transfer.

Post-transfer

3. Offer financial and academic support through distinct opportunities for nontraditional/reentry transfer students where they are stimulated to achieve at high academic levels.
4. Acknowledge the lived experiences that students bring and the intersectionality between community and family.
5. Create an appropriate and organic framework from which to assess, evaluate, and enhance transfer-receptive programs and initiatives that can lead to further scholarship on transfer students.<sup>2</sup>

The spirit of these foundational elements informs the New England Transfer Guarantee Guiding Principles, which are enumerated in Appendix A.

## IX. Student Advising

Community college transfer advisors will provide information and guidance to students pre-transfer through review of all transfer opportunities, including opportunities available through the Maine Transfer Guarantee.

Pre-application and post-transfer, participating four-year receiving institutions will provide robust student support and wrap-around services. Services will include, but are not limited to: orientations, academic guidance and counseling, academic support, peer advising, personal guidance and counseling, career services and supplemental services.

## X. Institutional Scholarships and Financial Aid

Maine Transfer Guarantee partner institutions are committed to providing access through need-based financial aid as well as merit-based and/or Guarantee scholarships. Institutions are encouraged to offer incentives with clear criteria (i.e.: GPA-based merit aid) and to provide detailed information about how incentives discount the total cost of attendance. Institutions may establish their own incentives or discounting rates for the Maine Transfer Guarantee. All institutional incentives and pertinent financial aid information will be posted on the institution's Maine Transfer Guarantee webpage and on the student-facing statewide landing page in order to provide maximum transparency for students and families.

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<sup>2</sup> Dimpal Jain , Alfred Herrera , Santiago Bernal & Daniel Solorzano. (2011). *Critical Race Theory and the Transfer Function: Introducing a Transfer Receptive Culture*. Community College Journal of Research and Practice. (p. 258)

## **XI. Student Outreach and Promotion**

NEBHE, its partners and all participating institutions will co-promote the Maine Transfer Guarantee through internally consistent outreach in the form of messaging, branding and information deployed across all promotional platforms including: press releases, marketing materials, social media channels and other avenues that disseminate information to students, faculty and staff. NEBHE will provide all institutions with promotional materials in the form of logos and templates. Participating institutions are encouraged to promote their Maine Transfer Guarantee offerings through their regularly scheduled transfer recruitment efforts.

## **XII. Maine Transfer Guarantee Websites**

The Maine Transfer Guarantee will have a highly visible and impactful web presence across multiple platforms and tailored to different audiences.

### **A. NEBHE Site**

The NEBHE Maine Transfer Guarantee landing page will be hosted under the permanent New England Transfer Guarantee section of [nebhe.org](http://nebhe.org). The primary audience for this site includes NEBHE stakeholders, such as State Higher Education Executive Officers, legislators and institutional leaders. This landing page will also host signed MOAs and link to the student-facing landing page.

### **B. Student-Facing Landing Page**

The Maine Transfer Guarantee student-facing landing page will provide students with a one-stop-shop transfer experience. This landing page will be hosted on the existing MCCS website. The creation and maintenance of the pages will be funded by NEBHE through the New England Transfer Guarantee grant award. Additionally, the page design and features of the pages will be agreed upon by NEBHE and MCCS and executed by the MCCS staff. Additional details will be outlined in an agreement between NEBHE and MCCS (see Appendix E).

The webpages will include, but not limited to, a landing page with a clear description of the Maine Transfer Guarantee, eligibility and features, a program and institution search function, as well as a campus directory. NEBHE will be responsible for providing content to MCCS, as well as updating information on participating institutions and pathways for the life of the grant and beyond.

Institutions are responsible for submitting website content via survey to NEBHE within two weeks of signing this agreement.

### **C. Institutional Webpages**

Institutions are required to establish Maine Transfer Guarantee-specific pages on their websites within 30-60 days of signing this MOA. NEBHE will provide institutions with specific language, along with the state's official program logo (see Appendix F).

### **XIII. Data Collection and Reporting**

Four-year receiving institutions are required to collect student-level enrollment data for all Maine Transfer Guarantee students. Institutions use a state-specific spreadsheet, which they download, complete and submit to NEBHE via a secure platform (Appendix G). Each institution employs consistent unique student identification numbers to enable longitudinal tracking of otherwise deidentified Guarantee students. Data is submitted to NEBHE on an annual basis in April, a deadline developed in consultation with Institutional Research personnel. Institutions submit data for the fall and spring semesters only. NEBHE cleans and analyzes this data and then publishes state-level findings in an annual enrollment report each fall.

### **XIV. Term and Withdrawal Provisions**

This agreement takes effect upon the signature of authorized representatives of each party and shall remain in effect for the foreseeable future. A party to the MOA may withdraw from the agreement by providing written notification to the other parties at least one year in advance of such withdrawal. For any institution that seeks to withdraw, this would require expunging all language pertaining to the institution's participation in the Maine Transfer Guarantee from the student landing page, institutional websites and marketing materials.

### **XV. Other Provisions**

This MOA expresses the entire agreement of the parties and shall not be modified or altered except in writing executed by the authorized written agreement of all parties.

### **XVI Signatories**

#### **Maine Transfer Guarantee Four-Year Receiving Institution**

Institution Name: Thomas College

Signator Name and Title: Laurie Lachance, President

Signature: 

Date: January 23, 2024

**Other Signatories to the Agreement**

**New England Board of Higher Education**

Signator Name: DocuSigned by: *Michael E. Thomas, President & CEO*  
Signature: *Michael E. Thomas*  
Date: February 1, 2024

**Maine Independent Colleges Association**

Signator Name: DocuSigned by: *James D. Herbert, President*  
Signature: *James D. Herbert*  
Date: February 4, 2024

**Maine Community College System**

Signator Name: DocuSigned by: *Janet Sortor, Vice President and Chief Academic Officer*  
Signature: *Janet Sortor*  
Date: February 2, 2024

## Appendix A: New England Transfer Guarantee Guiding Principles

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The New England Transfer Guarantee promotes transfer-receptive culture at both the two-year and four-year level. By focusing on enhancing existing inclusive institutional practices, colleges and universities are able to meet the unique needs of New England's highly diverse community college population. Participating institutions commit to a student-centered approach to transfer by providing eligible students with greater access, opportunity and affordability.

**The New England Transfer Guarantee is guided by the following principles:**

1. Leadership commits to establishing community college transfer as an institutional priority, both academically and administratively.
2. Community college graduates enrich the student body of four-year receiving institutions, bringing diversity of thought, background and life experiences.
3. The shifting demographics and declining birth rates in New England make community colleges, and their student bodies, essential to sustaining higher education as an economic engine in the region.
4. State-wide unification of the guaranteed transfer of an associate degree is prioritized. Therefore, where available, the established public-to-public model will be utilized for state-specific transfer policy alignment.
5. Liberal arts education is essential, as it fosters critical thinking and cultivates an informed citizenry.

**Four-year receiving institutions will:**

1. Acknowledge the varying needs of transfer students and take special care to provide tailored support to nontraditional, first-generation, low-income and underrepresented students.
2. Recognize that eligible community college graduates are academically prepared, and graduate at a rate equal to or more likely higher than incoming high school graduates.
3. Offer financial and academic support through distinct opportunities for community college transfer students where they are stimulated to achieve at high academic levels.
4. Acknowledge the lived experiences that students bring and the intersectionality between community and family.
5. Provide high-quality advising including academic guidance and counseling, academic support, peer advising, personal guidance and counseling, career services and supplemental service to all transfer students.
6. Create an appropriate and organic framework from which to assess, evaluate, and enhance transfer receptive programs and initiatives that can lead to further scholarship on transfer students.<sup>1</sup>

**Two-year public institutions will:**

1. Provide outreach and resources that focus on the specific needs of transfer students while complementing the community college mission of transfer.
2. Provide students with the full range of public and independent four-year institution transfer options and take into account aspirations, goals, best fit, and affordability.

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<sup>1</sup> [Dimpal Jain , Alfred Herrera , Santiago Bernal & Daniel Solorzano. \(2011\). Critical Race Theory and the Transfer Function: Introducing a Transfer Receptive Culture. Community College Journal of Research and Practice \(p. 258\).](#)

**Appendix B:**

**Designated Guarantee Coordinator and Guarantee Cross-Functional Team Form**

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**Guarantee Coordinator**

Participating New England Transfer Guarantee four-year receiving institutions shall designate a Guarantee Coordinator (GC). At the institutional level, the GC will hold the title of Vice President of Enrollment, Dean of Admission in some cases, the GC may be a designated senior admissions representative who is well versed in transfer. The GC will serve as the primary point of contact and main coordinator for the implementation of the Guarantee at the institutional level. GCs will be actively supported by NEBHE facilitators. The GC will:

1. Participate in all implementation convenings, workshops and trainings.
2. Participate in quarterly GC meetings facilitated by NEBHE.
3. Collaborate with NEBHE facilitators on all aspects of institutional implementation.
4. Assemble and chair a Guarantee Cross-Functional Team focused on the implementation of the Guarantee.
5. Coordinate with Institutional Research to submit Guarantee enrollment data to NEBHE on an annual basis.
6. Responsible for coordinating with institutional webmaster(s) to showcase clear and standard language (provided by NEBHE) about the Guarantee on the institution's transfer webpage.
7. Responsible for institutional promotion of the Guarantee at college and transfer fairs.
8. Participate in optional professional development sessions offered by NEBHE.

*Transition Procedure*

If or when the designated GC resigns or assumes a new position, the participating institution is required to notify NEBHE facilitators no more than two weeks after the GC's departure. At that time, the institution must identify an interim or new permanent GC. The participating institution is responsible for onboarding the new GC, however, NEBHE facilitators are available to provide an individual informational session and technical assistance.

**Please identify your institution's GC below:**

Institution: Thomas College

Name: Abby Dooley

Title: Director of Admissions

Email: abby.dooley@thomas.edu

Phone: 207-859-1228

### **Guarantee Cross-Functional Team**

Participating institutions are required to assemble a Guarantee Cross-Functional Team (GCFT). The role of the GCFT is to advise the institution's administration on related transfer policy and practice, train faculty and staff, recruit students, promote and outreach, develop or solidify a transfer-receptive culture on campus, and use best practices for transfer advising and data collection. Membership may include representation from the following: department heads, faculty members (including faculty involved with general education requirements), registrar's office, admissions, financial aid, Institutional Research, communications, website administrators and advising staff. The GCFT shall be chaired by the GC or their designee and will:

1. Develop a communication structure to disseminate information on the Maine Transfer Guarantee to all pertinent staff and faculty.
2. Meet quarterly to discuss updates, challenges and best practices.
3. Coordinate with both academic deans and Institutional Research to ensure timely program implementation and enrollment data collection, respectively.

The GC is responsible for providing assurances to NEBHE facilitators that a designated GCFT has been or will be assembled at their institution within 30 days of submission of this document to NEBHE. The GC shall retain and provide, if requested, the names and titles of the GCFT members.

**Appendix C:**  
**Institution-Specific Transfer Policy Form**

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**Minimum Institutional GPA For Guaranteed Acceptance**

To be eligible for the Maine Transfer Guarantee, a student must have graduated with an associate degree from a Maine community college. Participating institutions must select a standard minimum GPA for acceptance from the three tiers listed below:

- 2.0
- 2.5
- 3.0

**General Education Transfer Block**

Accept the General Education Transfer Block as a whole, thereby waiving the general education requirements at the receiving institution. Note: the receiving institution may require the student to complete no more than 12 additional credits (or four three-credit or three four-credit hour courses).

- Yes
- No

If no, please provide reasoning in the space below:

The General Education Transfer block does not align with the Thomas College General Education Core. Courses will be reviewed individually for transfer eligibility.

If yes, and if the general education block contains a course with letter grade lower than a C-, but the student meets the GPA requirements, the block will still be accepted as complete.

- Yes
- No

If no, please provide reasoning in the space below:

**Institution Specific Transfer Policy**

Community college students frequently take courses and receive credit from multiple institutions or through credit for prior learning including, but not limited to Advanced Placement (AP) exams, national standardized exams such as CLEP, or online coursework. The determination to award credit from other institutions or for credit for prior learning is made in a community college transfer audit and a graduation audit. The receiving institution agrees to honor the community college graduation audit for credit issued.

Please confirm your institution will adhere to the following transfer policies by indicating Yes or No below:

1. Accept a C- as the minimum course grade for transfer credit.

Yes  
 No

If no, please provide your institution's minimum course grade for transfer credit below: Minimum grade for transfer is C.

2. Accept previous credits earned from AP Exams that have been applied to the completion associate degree.

Yes  
 No

3. Accept previous credits earned from CLEP that have been applied to the completion of the associate degree.

Yes  
 No

4. Accept previous credits earned from other exam sources that have been applied to the completion of the associate degree.

Yes  
 No

5. Accept academic credits earned through the evaluation of military occupation, training, experience and coursework that have been applied to the completion of the associate degree.

Yes  
 No

6. Accept academic credits earned through dual enrollment, that have either been applied to the completion of the associate degree or comprise the entirety of an associate degree completed through an in-state community college.

Yes  
 No

**Other:**

List any additional institutional transfer policies pertinent to the Maine Transfer Guarantee below:

Thomas College requires submission of official score reports (AP, CLEP, etc.) and official transcripts from all colleges attended to review for eligible credit.

**Appendix D:**  
**Website Agreement**

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**Agreement Between**  
**New England Board of Higher Education**  
**and**  
**Maine Community College System**

**Maine Transfer Guarantee Student-facing Landing Page Partnership Agreement**

This Agreement is entered into by and between the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) with an address of 45 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111 and the Maine Community College System (MCCS), with an address of 323 State Street, Augusta, Maine 04330, for support of the construction and maintenance of web pages on the MCCS website highlighting the Maine Transfer Guarantee.

**I. Background**

The New England Board of Higher Education was established in 1955 by the six New England governors and authorized as a regional higher education compact by Congress. NEBHE's mission is to advance equitable postsecondary outcomes through convening, research and programs for students, institution leaders and policymakers. In November 2019, the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) received a three-year grant, co-funded by the Teagle Foundation and the Davis Educational Foundation, to implement the New England Transfer Guarantee in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Fully operationalized in the southern New England states as of Fall 2021, the initiative enables eligible community college graduates to transfer into participating four-year institutions –admission guaranteed.

In July 2022, NEBHE received three-year implementation grant awards from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Teagle Foundation, the Davis Educational Foundation and the Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation to expand the New England Transfer Guarantee to Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. NEBHE is partnering with the MCCS and the Maine Independent Colleges Association (MICA) to establish the Maine Transfer Guarantee, which is modeled on existing state-specific transfer policies, thereby unifying public and independent transfer and increasing access and opportunity for transfer students. Moreover, the structure of the Guarantee addresses fundamental barriers to transfer success. Receiving institutions agree to waive their application fee and guarantee the transfer of associate-earned credits to mitigate the credit loss that typically plagues transfer—especially to independents. These institutions also commit to making community college transfer students eligible for meaningful institutional aid in the form of grants and scholarships. At the core of the initiative, then, is an unwavering commitment to equity, opportunity and access for all students in higher education.

**Maine Transfer Guarantee**

The goal of the Maine Transfer Guarantee is to create a uniform and seamless system of transfer that expands transfer options for Maine's community college students. The program will ensure acceptance at participating four-year institutions for associate degree holding students

who have met a minimum GPA requirement of 2.0, 2.5 or 3.0. The minimum GPA requirement will vary by institution.

## **II. Purpose of the Maine Transfer Guarantee Student-facing Landing Page Partnership Agreement**

The purpose of this Agreement is to detail a scope of work that will be undertaken by MCCS at the bequest of NEBHE. In addition to a scope of work, the Agreement delineates parties to the contract, roles and responsibilities of each party, a projected timeline and payment provisions.

## **III. Scope of Work**

MCCS will construct and maintain web pages on the MCCS transfer site for the Maine Transfer Guarantee. The web pages are described in the specifications and content section below and will include:

1. Maine Transfer Guarantee home page (description, eligibility, features, FAQs)
2. Filter (by major, area of study, institution, GPA tier)
3. Institution-specific content blocks

NEBHE is responsible for providing content to MCCS, as well as updated information on participating institutions and transfer majors available for community college graduates for the life of the grant (2025) and beyond. Institution and program updates will be provided to MCCS on an agreed upon basis after the initial upload.

## **IV. Web Page Specifications and Content**

1. Maine Transfer Guarantee homepage
  - a. Program description, logo, eligibility criteria, features and benefits (provided by NEBHE).
2. Program page with filter functionality
  - a. Filter by institution
  - b. Filter by area of study
  - c. Filter by major
    - a. Majors with mapped pathways (articulation agreements) will be denoted.
  - d. Filter by GPA tier
  - e. Filter by location
3. Participating institution-specific content blocks, which will include:
  - a. Description of the institution
  - b. GPA minimum for guaranteed admission
  - c. Scholarship and/or financial aid information
  - d. Transfer admissions contact information
  - e. Institution transfer webpage link
  - f. Tuition and fees
  - g. Institution-specific transfer policies
  - h. Optional items may include:

- a. Undergraduate enrollment and transfer graduation rate, any other additional transfer requirements, link to institution's net price calculator

## **V. Roles and Responsibilities**

- A. The New England Board of Higher Education shall perform the following:
  1. Provide suggestions and feedback for the following web pages:
    - a. Landing page, filters, and institution-specific content
  2. Provide data and content for all web pages, which include:
    - a. Landing page, searches, and institution-specific content
  3. Provide updates and/or changes for all Maine Transfer Guarantee data and content to ensure the accuracy of posted information. Content will be provided on a rolling basis during first Academic Year (set to start in the spring semester of 2024). Following updates will be provided on an agreed upon schedule.
  4. updates to the web pages will be provided quarterly.
  5. Develop a public promotion and engagement plan.
- B. MCCS shall perform the following:
  1. Provide a point of contact for Maine Transfer Guarantee web page development.
  2. Develop all related Maine Transfer Guarantee web pages, including:
    - a. Landing page, filters and content blocks (content provided by NEBHE).
  3. Submit newly developed web pages to NEBHE for review and approval prior to publication.
  4. Develop a protocol for receiving Maine Transfer Guarantee updates and/or changes.
  5. Execute updates and/or changes for all Maine Transfer Guarantee data and content to ensure the accuracy of posted information. Content will be provided on a rolling basis during first Academic Year (set to start in the spring semester of 2024). Following updates will be provided on an agreed upon schedule.
  6. After the initial loading of content, post Maine Transfer Guarantee content within 10 working days of the receipt of the data.
  7. Provide NEBHE with access to Google Analytics for Maine Transfer Guarantee pages.

## **VI. Website and Web Page Ownership**

The MCCS website and content therein shall at all times remain under the control of MCCS and shall remain the sole property of the organization.

## **VII. Projected Timeline**

The website and associated pages will be established in conjunction with the Maine Transfer Guarantee Memorandum of Agreement release, which is slated for October-November of 2023. Assuming a project initiation by August 25, 2023 MCCS will have the three web pages ready for content loading at this time.

## **VIII. Term**

This Agreement shall become effective as of the date of signature by both parties and continue in full until either party moves to terminate this Agreement by written notice to the other party one year prior to actual termination. This agreement may be modified or extended by mutual agreement of the parties.

**IX. Payment Provisions**

A payment of \$50,000 shall be made by NEBHE to MCCS in two equal payments. The first payment of \$25,000 shall be made by NEBHE upon the execution of this agreement by both parties. The second payment of \$25,000 shall be made upon the satisfactory completion of the Maine Transfer Guarantee web pages described in the Scope of Work. MCCS shall not be required to reconcile funds or provide any other documentation to NEBHE that funds allocated to develop the Guarantee web pages were used strictly for that purpose. The completed web pages shall serve as the only required documentation.

**X. Maine Transfer Guarantee Student-facing Landing Page Partnership Agreement**

**Maine Community College System**

Project Lead: Noel Gallagher, Director of Communications and Public Affairs

**New England Board of Higher Education**

Project Lead: Emily Decatur, Director of Transfer Initiatives

**Appendix E:**  
**Institutional Transfer Page Website Language**

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Participating institutions are required to establish Maine Transfer Guarantee specific pages on their websites within 30-60 days of signing this MOA. NEBHE will provide institutions with specific program description language (see example below), along with the official Maine program logo. Both will be delivered via email to the institution's GC.

**Maine Transfer Guarantee – Standardized Program Description**

The Maine Transfer Guarantee is a transfer partnership between the Maine Community College System and participating four-year colleges and universities. Eligible Maine Community College graduates are able to transfer seamlessly - admission guaranteed!

**Maine Transfer Guarantee Logos**



**MORE  
OPTIONS,  
MADE EASY**

**Appendix F:**  
**Data Collection Form and Reporting Variables**

**Data Collection and Reporting**

Four-year receiving institutions are required to collect student-level enrollment data for all Maine Transfer Guarantee students. Institutions use a state-specific spreadsheet, which they download, complete and submit to NEBHE via a secure platform. Each institution employs consistent unique student identification numbers to enable longitudinal tracking of otherwise deidentified Guarantee students. Data is submitted to NEBHE on an annual basis in April, a deadline developed in consultation with Institutional Research personnel. Institutions submit data for the fall and spring semesters only. NEBHE cleans and analyzes this data and then publishes state-level findings in an annual enrollment report each fall.

**DEFINITIONS**

<b>Table 1 - Initial Student Enrollment Data - To be completed for the first semester of enrollment for all Guarantee students.</b>	
<b>Table 1 should contain 1 row/record per student entering your institution for the designated data collection period. Each student should only be represented once.</b>	
<b>Student ID No. Randomized Unique Student Number</b>	Student ID number (or a consistent randomized unique student number to protect confidentiality)
<b>Date of Birth</b>	mm/dd/year
<b>Gender/Sex</b>	Male/Female
<b>IPEDS Reported Race</b>	Nonresident alien, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Two or more races, Race unknown
<b>First-Generation Student</b>	Y/N to whether student is classified as first-generation
<b>Enrollment Intensity</b>	Full-time, Part-time designation for student's initial term of enrollment at the receiving institution
<b>Cohort Term</b>	The semester and year that the Guarantee student begins attending the receiving institution
<b>Sending Community College Name</b>	Name of institution where student earned their AA/AS/AAA/AAS
<b>Community College Degree Type</b>	AA (Associate of Arts), AS (Associate of Science), AAA (Associate of Applied Arts), AAS (Associate of Applied Science) and Other
<b>Community College Program Name</b>	Program/major of awarded degree
<b>Community College GPA</b>	Grade Point Average (GPA) upon degree conferral

CIP Code for Enrolled Guarantee Program	The 6-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code for program/major the Guarantee student is enrolled in. For undeclared students with no intended major, please leave cell blank.
Number of Credits Received from Sending Institution	Total number of credits accepted for transfer
Number of General Education Credits Accepted	Total number of credits accepted from the student's general education core/block
Complete General Education Received/Waived	General Education requirements/core accepted as a block Y/N
Number of Credits Applied Towards Guarantee Program (Major Electives)	Total number of credits accepted and applied towards Guarantee program/major
Number of Credits Applied to Open Electives	Total number of credits accepted and applied as open or free electives

<b>Table 2 - Term-Specific Data - To be completed for each term the students in Table 1 attended your institution.</b>	
Table 2 should contain 1 row/record for each term the students in Table 1 attended your institution. A new row should be used to represent each enrolled term for a student in Table 1.	
Student ID No. Randomized Unique Student Number	Student ID number (or a consistent randomized unique student number to protect confidentiality)
Term	The enrolled term on which you are reporting the term-specific data elements.
Pell Grant Status	Y/N to whether student is receiving financial assistance from the Pell Grant Program in the enrolled term.
Scholarship or Financial Aid Award Amount	Total of Federal Work Study, grants, scholarships, tuition waivers, tuition discounts, provided to students to meet expenses in the enrolled term. Does not include loans. Please use a blank to indicate when information is not available and a "0" to indicate when zero dollars were awarded.
Enrollment Status	Please use the following to characterize enrollment status: Enrolled, Completed, Not Enrolled, Withdrawn

Cumulative GPA	Cumulative GPA at the start of the specified term. If student is in their first term with the institution, please use "N/A" to indicate a Cumulative GPA does not yet exist.
Completed Guarantee Program	Name of Guarantee program/major associated with degree award. This column will only be filled in during the term when a student's enrollment status is "Completed."
Completion GPA	GPA upon degree conferral award. This column will only be filled in during the term when a student's enrollment status is "Completed."
Number of Credits Obtained at Time of Graduation	Total number of credits upon degree conferral award. This column will only be filled in during the semester when a student's enrollment status is "Completed"