

**New England Transfer Guarantee Second Annual Enrollment Report**  
March 2024

by Julia Buchholz  
with Sarah Kuczynski, PhD

NEW ENGLAND BOARD  
*of* HIGHER EDUCATION





The New England Transfer Guarantee is a groundbreaking initiative, fully operationalized in the southern New England states of Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island in 2021. The program enables eligible community college graduates to transfer into participating four-year institutions - admission guaranteed. The implementation of pathways in the three northern New England states is underway—with first enrollments in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont expected in Fall 2024. The New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) receives support from the Teagle Foundation, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Davis Educational Foundation, and the Lloyd G. Balfour Foundation to carry out this work.



NEBHE promotes greater education opportunities and services for the residents of New England and its more than 270 colleges and universities. It works across the six New England states to help leaders assess, develop and implement sound education practices and policies of regional significance; to promote regional cooperation and programs that encourage the efficient use and sharing of educational resources; and to strengthen the relationship between higher education and the economic well-being and quality of life in New England.

NEBHE adopted a new mission and vision and set of strategic priorities in 2023:

#### **Our Mission**

The New England Board of The New England Board of Higher Education advances equitable postsecondary outcomes through convening, research and programs for students, institution leaders and policymakers. Higher Education advances equitable postsecondary outcomes through convening, research and programs for students, institution leaders and policymakers.

#### **Our Vision**

Our vision is that everyone in New England will have lifelong access to affordable, high-value postsecondary education.

#### **Our 2023 – 2027 Strategic Priorities**

*Affordability:* Advance innovative, strategic alliances to increase affordability and financial sustainability.

*Equity:* Expand equity-focused practices throughout postsecondary education.

*Alignment:* Expand connections between postsecondary education and high-demand talent needs.



Julia Buchholz is working with the New England Board of Higher Education as a data analyst consultant to advise on the New England Transfer Guarantee. In this role she has been responsible for the cleaning and interpretation of data received as part of the annual Guarantee program assessment. Julia holds a BS from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and an EdM from Harvard Graduate School of Education in Human Development and Education with a concentration in Global, International, and Comparative Education.



Sarah Kuczynski started at the New England Board of Higher Education in January 2022 and currently serves as the Director of Transfer Initiatives. In this role, Sarah is responsible for the facilitation of NEBHE's New England Transfer Guarantee. Prior to joining NEBHE, Sarah worked in student success at the collegiate and high school level. Sarah holds a BA from The George Washington University, a PhD in English from UNC-Chapel Hill, and an EdM in Education Policy and Analysis from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each of the state-specific admissions guarantees that, together, comprise The New England Transfer Guarantee is shaped by a singular central goal: to increase the salience of transfer statewide so that it is an attainable option for students at various stages of their academic journey. The thinking here has always been that the NEBHE Transfer Initiatives Team can serve a facilitating role in helping connect community college graduates—who we *know* often intend to complete their bachelor’s degrees—with the four-year transfer destinations where they can follow through on that intention by earning a baccalaureate credential.

In the time since the publication of the inaugural enrollment report, there has been a renewed emphasis on community college transfer at both the federal and state level—influenced by the challenges introduced by the Supreme Court decision banning the use of affirmative action in college admissions decisions and, more generally, the realization that the nation would fall short of the federal completion goals that were set over a decade ago. In Massachusetts, it has been rewarding to see the Guarantee cited in guidance issued by the governor and attorney general on how to meet diversity and equity goals in the wake of the ban on affirmative action ([link to source](#)). The partnerships that were forged between two and four-year institutions in this initiative have also been cited in a legislatively mandated feasibility study on free community college in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ([link to source](#)). As NEBHE embarks on a new chapter in its efforts to increase access to higher education in prison in the wake of the July 2023 reinstatement of Pell Grants for all eligible incarcerated learners, a focus on credit mobility has again raised the relevance of the networks built through the Guarantee. Now more than ever, it seems efficient and reliable transfer pathways will be key to achieving the equitable and affordable higher education system of the future.

It is with great excitement that I present this second-annual *Guarantee Enrollment Report* highlighting the successes of the program thus far and outlining the evidence of the work being done to accomplish the Guarantee’s central goal and serve students across New England. At a juncture when higher education, as a sector, is facing many challenges including a damaged public perception of higher education, the results of this still nascent transfer initiative keep me confident and committed to the value of this work.

As the program grows and data expands NEBHE hopes to one day be able to share associations between data elements that can shed light on this specific population, however more years of transfer data are required in order to responsibly report on any potential trends. That said, in this second enrollment report, we have been able to build on the insights shared in the inaugural report and provide a glimpse into the current cohort with the aim of equipping receiving institutions to best support these students. The data contained in this report reveals the strong accomplishments made in the first two complete academic years and goes beyond high-level aggregate insights to shed light on the nuances of the current cohort with specificity that could only be gathered through analyzing de-identified student-level data. Below I have listed some key findings that I believe are important to highlight:

### Key Findings

- **Overall Guarantee enrollment has remained consistent across time.** NEBHE was encouraged to see Guarantee enrollment remained consistent across the two academic years—with even a slight (2%) increase from the program’s first year to its

second. To date, a total of 786 unique students have transferred to receiving institutions since the program launched in Spring 2021, which represents a 67% increase in total Guarantee enrollment from the 470 unique students analyzed in the inaugural enrollment report.

- **Students participating in the Guarantee are maintaining impressive academic records pre- and post-transfer.** The average cumulative community college GPA for Guarantee students between Spring 2021 and Spring 2023 was a 3.30, which is well above the highest GPA threshold that participating institutions can select as Guarantee admissions criteria. This strong academic achievement has continued at the receiving institution, where Guarantee students have an average GPA of 3.55 at the end of their first semester.
- **Guarantee students are bringing diverse perspectives and identities to their transfer destinations.** The median age among Guarantee students is 26. 43% of Guarantee students reported on in the data participating institutions submitted to NEBHE for the Spring 2021 to Spring 2023 terms were identified as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).
- **Early insights into baccalaureate completion among Guarantee students are promising.** The central goal of the Guarantee remains to support students on their path to achieving a baccalaureate degree. For the 89 students who completed a bachelor's degree program through the beginning of Spring 2023, the average time to degree was four semesters and the average GPA at graduation was a 3.66.

## **Acknowledgments**

Facilitating a transfer initiative in six states is a massive undertaking. Any and all success is the product of top-notch collaboration. Many individuals and groups can rightfully lay claim to the Guarantee's achievements. Independent association state executives—from the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), the Maine Independent Colleges Association (MICA), the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts (AICU-Mass), the New Hampshire Council of Colleges and Universities (NHCUC), the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Rhode Island (AICU-RI), and the Association of Independent Colleges in Vermont (AVIC)—assist with liaising with institutional leadership and formulating the groundwork on which each state-wide transfer agreement is established. Community college and public higher education office partners in all six states ensure that information about the Guarantee is frequently updated and easily accessible for all students who are contemplating their next educational step. The investments from the Guarantee's generous funders—the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Balfour Foundation, the Davis Educational Foundation, and the Teagle Foundation—make this challenging work possible.

Former Director Emily Decatur saw the Guarantee implemented in three states and left large shoes to fill when she departed NEBHE in late October 2023. I am grateful for the support of all my NEBHE colleagues in the time since then. In particular, NEBHE Communications Director Peggy Hayes provided quality feedback on all of my written materials including this report. NEBHE President and CEO Michael Thomas supplied insightful guidance as I took the helm of this initiative. Amidst the time-intensive challenges the leadership transition presented, the impeccable work product of data consultant Julia Buchholz was a constant. It is no exaggeration

to say this report would not have been published without her. She wrangled—and made major advances in the analysis of—this very complex data set.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SK', written in a cursive style.

**Sarah Kuczynski**  
Director of Transfer Initiatives  
The New England Board of Higher Education

## **INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION**

In November 2019, The New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) received implementation funding from the Teagle Foundation and Davis Educational Foundation for a groundbreaking transfer initiative, the [New England Transfer Guarantee](#) (the Guarantee, for short). NEBHE – in partnership with independent college associations and public higher education systems – has since implemented systematic guaranteed admission pathways between community colleges and four-year independent colleges and universities in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. For a list of participating institutions in these three states, please refer to Appendix A.

To be eligible for vertical transfer via the Guarantee, a student needs just two things: an associate degree from a community college in the same state as the institution to which the student intends to transfer and a grade point average (GPA) that meets the minimum GPA requirement set by that receiving school. 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 the students there. The structure of the Guarantee also addresses fundamental barriers to transfer success. Participating receiving institutions agree to waive their application fee and guarantee the meaningful transfer of associate-earned credits to mitigate the credit loss that typically plagues transfer students when transitioning to independent institutions. These institutions also commit to making community college transfer students eligible for generous institutional merit aid in the form of grants and scholarships.

At the time of this report’s publication, NEBHE is working to operationalize state-specific Guarantees in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont—with the generous support of the Teagle Foundation, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Davis Educational Foundation, and the Balfour Foundation. This grant-funded project began in July 2022. Currently, the institutional Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been finalized and disseminated in each of the three northern New England states, and NEBHE is working to support institutions seeking to sign the MOA and begin accepting community college graduates in their state through the Guarantee. As individual institutions sign on, they are added to the list of participating institutions on the relevant state-specific Guarantee page, which is housed on the NEBHE website.

## **DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

The MOA that receiving institutions sign to participate in the Guarantee requires them to collect and submit anonymized student-level data to NEBHE on an annual basis. Each institution employs consistent unique student identification numbers to enable NEBHE to track Guarantee students across semesters of enrollment.

Annual data collection takes place in mid-April, a deadline developed in consultation with college and university Institutional Research (IR) personnel. Institutions submit data for the fall and spring semesters primarily. A select number of institutions have also submitted enrollment data for summer and winter semesters; this additional data has been included in the analysis for this report. As a result, the Spring 2021 through Spring 2023 window for this report should be understood as inclusive of data from all semesters that fall within that range (e.g., Summer 2022, Winter 2022, etc.).

In advance of making the 2023 data request, NEBHE worked closely with IR representatives from participating institutions to reformat the data collection template to improve the data

collection experience for IR personnel and enhance the quality and consistency of the data submissions to NEBHE. Revisions to the data collection template improved the granularity of the term-specific data that schools collect and created a more streamlined reporting process for participating institutions.

To facilitate data collection for this updated report, NEBHE provided IR contacts with the revised template and an institutional login to the secure platform for data submissions. The Transfer Initiatives team provided institutions with detailed instructions for navigating the new template and took individual meetings with institutional representatives as needed. In Connecticut, a staff member at the Connecticut Council of Independent Colleges (CCIC) culls the data and makes one combined, secure submission to NEBHE.

The analysis published in this, the second annual report has been strengthened by the improvements introduced in the revised data collection template and the additional year's worth of Guarantee enrollment data. That said, refining the data collection process for the program will necessarily continue going forward. While NEBHE is confident in this report, it is appropriate to mention the limitations of and constraints on the analysis. For example, not all participating institutions were able to report on every data element for every student they enrolled in the semesters covered in this report (Spring 2021 through Spring 2023). Appendix B shows the number of unique students for whom institutions reported on each individual data element. Appendix B also includes the percentage reported on out of the total population for both cycles of data collection. The 2023 data collection process saw increases in reporting percentages for certain data elements, e.g. 'First-Generation Student' status increased from 27% reported on in 2022 to 84% reported on in 2023. For ease of interpretation, NEBHE has included the percentage of reporting for each element that is considered relevant to analysis, as some fields were reported on by receiving institutions as 'N/A' or 'Unknown'. Additionally, when looking at reported financial aid, there were some inconsistencies in the reported time period; some institutions appear to have reported financial aid for the full academic year in a single semester, while other institutions broke financial aid up by semester. NEBHE has done extensive work to consolidate and validate the submissions from all receiving institutions to be able to present comparable analysis in this report. Credit applicability data was particularly difficult to meaningfully analyze because of widespread reporting inconsistencies across institutions for this set of data elements. How best to capture this information will be an ongoing conversation for the Transfer Initiatives team and their IR contacts.

With each passing year, enrollment data for the Guarantee expands. On the one hand, sample size is helpful for generating meaningful analysis. It is also true, however, that enrollment gains for the program render the data cleaning and analysis more complex and have the potential to introduce new challenges for interpretation. In the face of these potential challenges, NEBHE nonetheless remains committed to working with institutions to balance institutional capacity for reporting requests with the need for detailed data to confidently characterize the program's success.

For discussion of the multi-step data combining and cleaning process that NEBHE carried out, please see Appendix C.

## **METHODS**

This second annual Guarantee enrollment report features data from two full academic years of the program. An additional year's worth of program data enabled some early observations to be made. Nevertheless, readers will note that the content, on the whole, remains descriptive because not enough data has been gathered yet to confidently characterize program trends. In approach, this report builds on the findings published in the inaugural November 2022 Guarantee Enrollment Report and seeks to highlight any major changes between the two reporting periods, Spring 2021 through Spring 2022 and Fall 2022 through Spring 2023. At a high level, this report helps to illuminate the following about the students the Guarantee is serving:

- Enrollment Patterns
- Demographic Composition
- Academic Characteristics
- Financial Support

Because gaps remain in reporting on certain data elements, the number of observations (or  $n$ ) is provided for all reported averages and medians to indicate that “Null” responses have been omitted. In graphic displays of proportions, however, “Null” responses appear as a category of their own for maximum accuracy. Additionally, NEBHE classified as “Unknown” data that was not reported in an applicable or analyzable form (e.g., if a receiving institution reported “Unknown” or “Not Applicable” for a particular data element).

Throughout the visualizations and text that comprise this report, numbers, including percentages, are rounded to the nearest whole number at the final stage of calculations.

## **ENROLLMENT PATTERNS**

Enrollment data captures student enrollment at participating four-year receiving institutions over the course of the Spring 2021 through Spring 2023 period (inclusive of students whose initial enrollment occurred during a summer semester) In keeping with the methodology of the November 2022 report, enrollment patterns are reported at the state-level only and institution-level comparisons are eschewed to safeguard the privacy of student data.

Overall, 27 of the 35 participating institutions (77%) have enrolled students through the Guarantee at the time of publication for this report, reflecting the addition of 5 institutions who have started enrolling students since the previous report. NEBHE expects the number of participating institutions that are actively enrolling Guarantee students will continue to grow as the Guarantee becomes an increasingly established and trusted option for community college students interested in transferring to complete their baccalaureate degree. Indeed, as efforts are being made to expand the program to Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, NEBHE is also working to increase the salience of the Guarantee in the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, where it is already established—in support of the goal of achieving active Guarantee enrollment at 100% of participating institutions in the future. For details regarding which participating institutions enrolled students between Spring 2021 and Spring 2023, please see Appendix D.

## State Enrollment Totals and Trends

Based on the data institutions submitted for the most recent reporting period, total Guarantee enrollment increased by 67% from the prior reporting period in which 470 unique students enrolled in participating institutions through the Guarantee. The updated enrollment data indicated that 436 students enrolled in the Spring 2021 through Fall 2022 time period, so moving forward each published enrollment report will rely mainly on the data collected during the relevant cycle and will report any major discrepancies or changes between enrollment reports. This publication analyzes a total of 786 unique students. In total, Connecticut has enrolled 201 unique students between Spring 2021 and Spring 2023 while Massachusetts has enrolled 546 unique students over the same period. Rhode Island has enrolled 39 students between Fall 2021 and Spring 2023.

The majority of students who have enrolled in the Guarantee to date have followed traditional enrollment cycles, first enrolling at their transfer destination in a fall or spring semester. A small handful of students, 19 overall (or 2% of total enrollment) have a reported initial enrollment term that is a summer semester (8 students enrolled in Summer 2021 and 11 in Summer 2022). For ease of analysis, summer enrollees were included as part of the following academic year's cohort (e.g., Summer 2021 enrollees were included in the 2021-2022 Academic Year total).

Looking at enrollment across the two academic years for which there is reporting, NEBHE was encouraged to see overall enrollment remained consistent from year one to year two. Massachusetts and Rhode Island each saw increases in statewide enrollment in the second full year of the Guarantee. Connecticut saw a 26% decrease in Guarantee enrollment from the prior academic year. Some variation in enrollment is to be expected between academic years; however, NEBHE will continue to work closely with receiving institutions in all states to monitor enrollment changes over time. The table below shows state-level year-over-year enrollment trends.

### Consistent overall enrollment observed across academic years

State	Time Period			% Change Between AY	Total Unique Students	
	Spring 2021	AY 2021 - 2022	AY 2022 - 2023		Count	Percentage
CT	25	101	75	(26%)	201	26%
MA	69	222	255	15%	546	69%
RI	-	19	20	5%	39	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: NEBHE New England Transfer Guarantee student-level enrollment data, Spring 2021 - Spring 2023

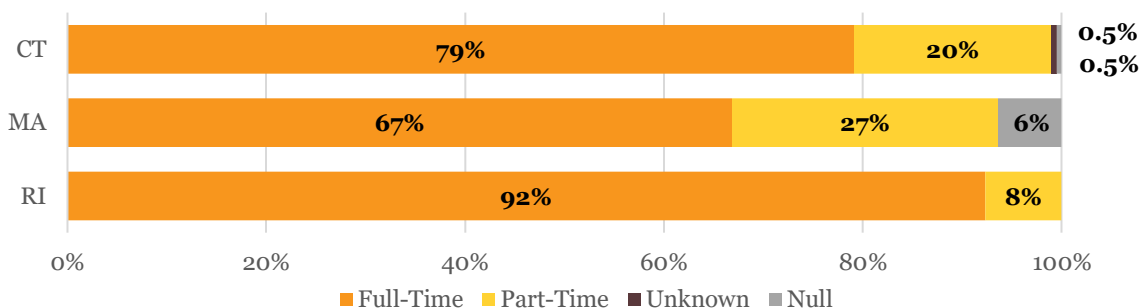
## Enrollment Intensity

During the Spring 2021 through Spring 2023 Guarantee reporting period, ~71% of Guarantee students were enrolled full-time in their bachelor's degree program ( $n = 750$ ).

The three-state, full-time enrollment rate was significantly affected by data from Massachusetts, where part-time enrollment was comparatively high—comprising 27% of all Guarantee enrollment during the reporting period. Connecticut saw a shift in its full-time enrollment rate. In the November 2022 report, full-time students comprised 93% of total enrollees in that state; however, when the analysis was updated to reflect the addition of another year of enrollment data, Connecticut's full-time enrollment rate went down to 79%, moving closer in line with trends seen in Massachusetts. In Rhode Island, the full-time enrollment rate topped 92% of total

enrollment, consistent with the 94% full-time enrollment rate for that state seen in the prior report.

### Massachusetts reported a higher percentage of part-time Guarantee students; Connecticut saw an increase in part-time student enrollment



**% of statewide Guarantee enrollment, SP 21 - SP 23**

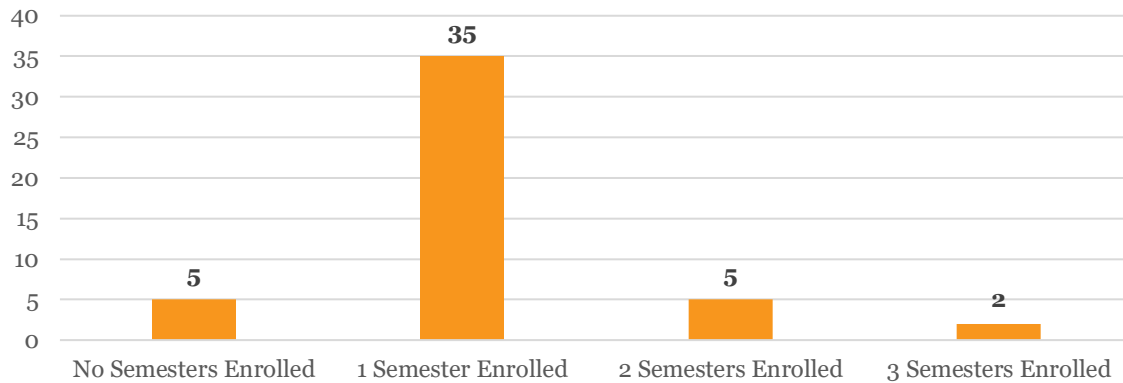
Source: NEBHE New England Transfer Guarantee student-level enrollment data, Spring 2021 - Spring 2023

### Student Withdrawals

As the Guarantee has now been active for five semesters, NEBHE is able to share preliminary observations regarding Guarantee students who have withdrawn from the receiving institutions to which they transferred. Withdrawals comprise a very small portion of the total student population with only 47 students withdrawing to date (6% of the 786 unique students reported on in this second annual enrollment report). All the same, with the interests of student success top of mind, NEBHE feels strongly that achieving clarity on withdrawals through additional analysis may yield useful observations for institutions seeking to better support Guarantee students on the path to graduation.

The majority of Guarantee students who withdrew to date (35 of the 47 total) did so after only one semester of enrollment at their transfer destination. This observation lends some credence to qualitative and quantitative data concerning the initial challenges that community college transfer students may face adjusting to a four-year institution. As receiving institutions look to increase student retention this early data suggests that there might be particular value in enhancing supports for Guarantee students during the initial semester post-transfer.

**~75% of withdrawals occurred after one semester at the receiving institution**



**Number of semesters enrolled before withdrawing**

Source: NEBHE New England Transfer Guarantee student-level enrollment data, Spring 2021 - Spring 2023

**DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION**

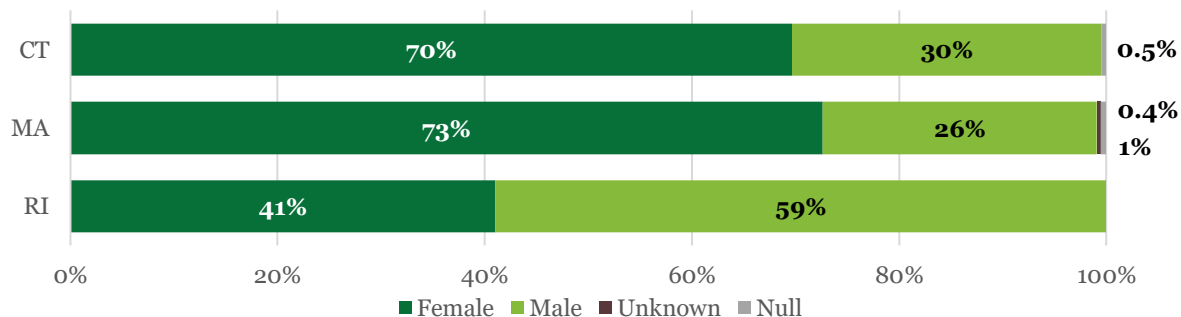
State and program-wide demographic data continues to help NEBHE better understand who the Guarantee is and is not serving two years into the program.

**Gender**

For gender/sex, as for many other data elements, the data participating institutions submitted to NEBHE originated in their Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) collection. As such, this enrollment report, like the November 2022 report, is limited to reporting on gender using the two, sex-based categories—female and male—collected by IPEDS.

Female students made up 70% of the Guarantee students who enrolled for the five semesters for which data exists (Spring 2021 through Spring 2023) (*n* = 782). There is noteworthy variation in gender composition by state with male Guarantee students making up nearly 60% of enrollment in the Rhode Island Guarantee compared to just 30% and 26% of program enrollment in Connecticut and Massachusetts, respectively.

**Rhode Island reported significantly more male Guarantee students**



**IPEDS reported gender breakdown by state SP 21 - SP 23**

Source: NEBHE New England Transfer Guarantee student-level enrollment data, Spring 2021 - Spring 2023

## Race/Ethnicity

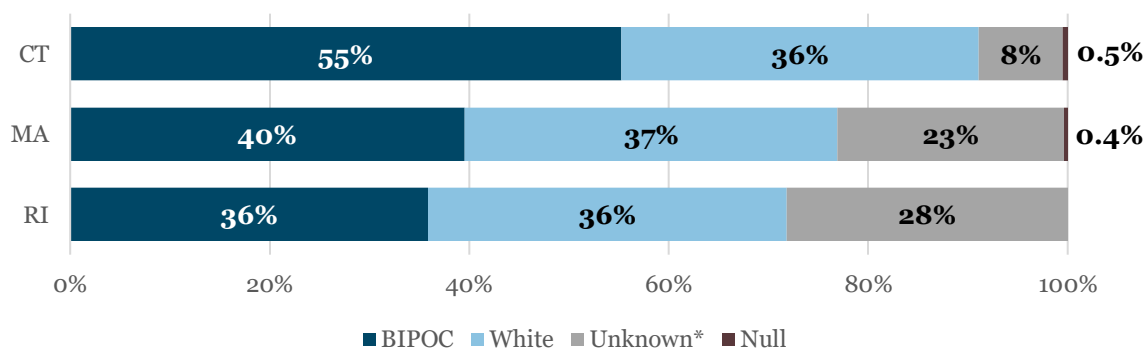
Participating institutions reported on the race/ethnicity of Guarantee students with IPEDS-collected data. The racial and ethnic diversity of Guarantee students is a logical point of interest for participating institutions. In recent years, community college transfer has been touted as a way to increase student diversity at bachelor's-degree-granting institutions. As was referenced in the executive summary, the Supreme Court's decision on affirmative action has only increased this emphasis on community college transfer as a mechanism for diversifying campuses in the absence of previously utilized admissions tools.

To gauge student diversity among the current group of Guarantee students, this report uses the percentage of Guarantee students who identify themselves as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). To maintain internal consistency across NEBHE, this report uses the definition of BIPOC that is used by NEBHE's North Star Collective Faculty Fellowship program wherein BIPOC encompasses individuals who identify as Black/African/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, Native/Indigenous, Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial.

Overall, 43% of Guarantee students who enrolled in the three southern New England states between Spring 2021 and Spring 2023 identified as BIPOC. As such, the Guarantee has maintained a similar level of diversity from the previous reporting period captured in the November 2022 report, where this percentage was 44% ( $n = 783$ ).

There is notable variation in this indicator of student diversity across the three states with Connecticut having the highest proportion (55%) of BIPOC students enrolling through the Guarantee between Spring 2021 and Spring 2023. By comparison, both Massachusetts and Rhode Island had BIPOC student enrollments below the tri-state average (at 40% and 36%, respectively).

### Connecticut has the highest percentage of Guarantee students who identify as BIPOC



#### IPEDS race/ethnicity breakdown SP 21 - SP 23

Source: NEBHE New England Transfer Guarantee student-level enrollment data, Spring 2021 - Spring 2023

\* Unknown includes all data reported as 'Race and Ethnicity Unknown', 'U.S. Nonresident', and 'Declined to Answer'

In subsequent analysis, it would be useful to contextualize this demographic data to discern whether Guarantee students are, on average, more or less diverse than the overall

undergraduate population at these independent institutions. Transfer receptivity underpins the model of community college transfer advanced through the Guarantee. As such, understanding how, if at all, Guarantee students might differ in racial or ethnic identity from the overall undergraduate population is a useful reference point for institutions looking to ensure they have the supports in place for students to feel welcome on campus and succeed in their coursework. Because the diversity of overall undergraduate enrollment at participating institutions likely varies a fair amount, NEBHE facilitators will explore how best to make this demographic comparison in these state-level annual reports. It could be of use to compare the state-level Guarantee demographics data with aggregated, state-level demographic data for participating institutions, if such information is readily available.

### **Median Age**

Student birthdates were used to calculate approximate age at the time of initial enrollment using generic enrollment dates for each semester; for example, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 was designated the date of enrollment for the Spring 2021 term. Median age was used instead of average age to lessen the effect of outliers. In the program overall, the age at time of enrollment ranged from 18 to 64 in the five-semester enrollment period. In Connecticut, age at time of enrollment ranged from 18 to 61 versus 18 to 64 in Massachusetts. Rhode Island saw a narrower age range, spanning from 18 to 38, which may reflect Rhode Island's smaller overall Guarantee enrollment numbers.

As might be expected, median age varied—both overall and at the state level—based on a student's enrollment status (part-time versus full-time). Overall, the median age for Guarantee students who enrolled between Spring 2021 and Spring 2023 was 26 at the time of enrollment ( $n = 783$ ). When disaggregated by enrollment status though, the median age at time of enrollment was 24 for full-time Guarantee students versus 33 for their part-time counterparts.

Similar patterns emerged at the state level. For example, the median age at time of enrollment for Guarantee students in Connecticut was 25 overall; however, the median age for full-time students was 23 years old in this state, compared to 32 years old for part-time enrollees. In like manner, the median age for part-time Guarantee students in Massachusetts was nearly a decade older than that of full-time Guarantee students (with median ages for these two enrollment groups coming in at 34 years old and 25 years old, respectively). In Rhode Island, where student enrollment was significantly lower during the reporting periods analyzed here, a more muted trend was observed. As the sample size increases, however, the data is trending towards what is being observed in the larger sample sizes. Based on the November 2022 report, in Rhode Island the range between median full-time age and median part-time age was 3 years (23 full-time versus 26 part-time), whereas with the refreshed data, which encompasses the entirety of program enrollment to date, there is a 6-year age span (21 years old for full-time median age versus 27 years old for part-time median age).

### **First Generation Status**

The prevailing thinking is that community colleges, as a sector, enroll more first-generation college students than four-year institutions do. Although the data collection template is kept as consistent as possible from year to year, first-generation status was added to the institutional report form after it had already been introduced to institutions. As might be expected then, the initial round of data collection, featured in the November 2022 report, saw only ~27% reporting on first-generation status. Reporting on this metric has greatly improved in the second reporting

period; indeed, reporting on first-generation status rose to 84% in the refreshed, two-year dataset (664 unique students in the total population of 786). Of the students for whom first-generation status was reported, 34% (225 unique students out of 664 total) were identified as first-generation college students. In subsequent reports, effort will be made to compare how the first-generation percentage among Guarantee students compares to first-generation students as a portion of overall undergraduate enrollment at participating institutions.

## **ACADEMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

### **Community College GPA**

Because students must meet a certain cumulative GPA threshold to be eligible for guaranteed admission through the Guarantee, the average community college GPA for those who do enroll is of interest to NEBHE facilitators and institutional representatives alike. Of the 779 students for whom cumulative community college GPA was reported, the average GPA at the time of transfer was 3.30. Only 3% of enrolled students to date have transferred in with a GPA below a 2.5 and 70% of all enrolled students transferred with GPAs above a 3.0, the highest threshold a participating institution can set for guaranteed admission through the program.

As the goal of the Guarantee is to increase access to four-year institutions, NEBHE shares this GPA information not to advocate for setting the threshold for admission higher but rather because this data speaks to the impressive academic records of students who transfer through the Guarantee.

Of course, the Guarantee is still in its early stages, with only two full academic years of the initiative at the time of this report. One might expect early adopters of an initiative like this to have significant overlap with academically strong students, since students who are more engaged with their coursework also tend to be more engaged with opportunities for next steps and advancement beyond the earning of their associate degree.

### **Early Academic Achievement**

While GPA only represents a small glimpse into the success of students on a college campus, it can gesture toward how a student is making the transition from a community college to a four-year institution. Receiving institutions reported on cumulative GPA at the start of each semester, thus looking at the average cumulative GPA for students entering their second semester at an institution will shed light on their early academic standing. As mentioned in the prior section, it was observed that students transferring through the Guarantee held high GPAs at their community college. The term-specific data that institutions have started submitting in their annual reporting to NEBHE shows that Guarantee students are maintaining their impressive academic records post-transfer. Overall, students maintained a high-level of academic standing with an average cumulative GPA of 3.55 at the start of their second semester enrolled at their transfer destination. Looking at the state breakdown of average cumulative GPA at the start of a student's second semester of enrollment, Connecticut students earned a 3.60, Massachusetts students earned a 3.53, and Rhode Island students earned a 3.42.

### **Liberal Arts Majors**

The Guarantee focuses on the development of liberal arts pathways for all participating institutions. As was explained in the November 2022 report, the three state-specific steering committees – along with institutional leadership and our partners – made the decision during

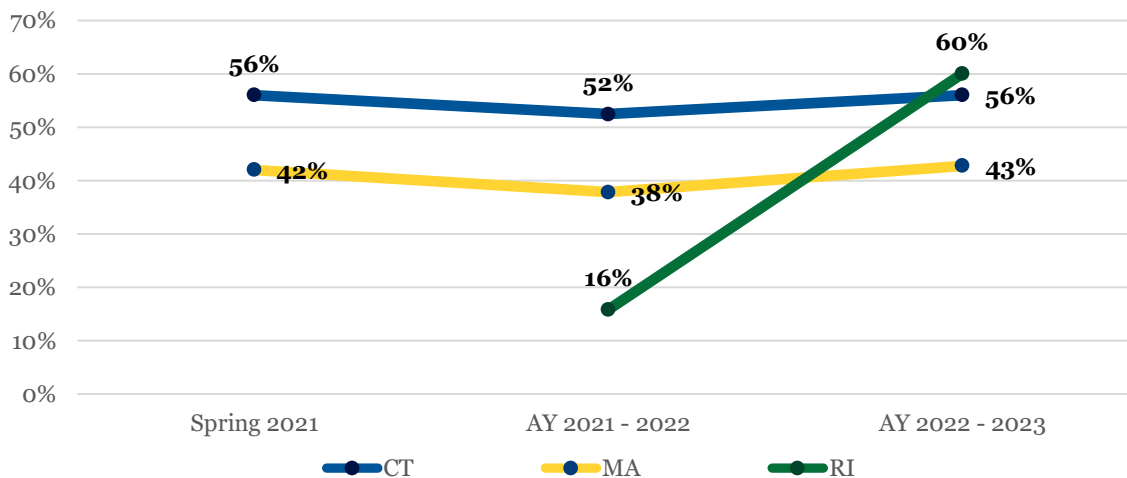
implementation to extend the program offering to include additional majors. The decision was made because it aligned with the Guarantee’s commitment to reduce barriers to transfer through standardization and streamlining. Widening the pool of eligible majors was seen as necessary to hedge against the creation of two separate systems of transfer for liberal arts majors and non-liberal arts majors at some point in the future. That said, the emphasis of the Guarantee remains on the liberal arts.

The proportion of Guarantee students who enrolled in liberal arts majors at receiving institutions was calculated using the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code stem, the first two digits of CIP code majors, to identify students who were enrolled in liberal arts and non-liberal arts majors. The list of qualifying majors appears as Appendix E.

Through this process, it was determined that liberal arts students comprise 44% of students overall who enrolled in the program between Spring 2021 and Spring 2023 ( $n = 767$ ). There was some variation observed at the state-level. In Connecticut, 54% of all Guarantee students were enrolled in a liberal arts major compared to only 41% of students in Massachusetts. With the increase in enrolled students in the state of Rhode Island, there was a change observed. The prior report concluded that of the 17 students enrolled during the two-semester reporting cycle 53% of them were enrolled in liberal arts majors, however when looking at all 39 students who have enrolled between Fall 2021 and Spring 2023 the enrollment in liberal arts majors has dropped to 38%.

Looking at the year-over-year breakdown in liberal arts majors, in the 2021-2022 academic year the Guarantee saw 41% of liberal arts majors, and in the 2022-2023 academic year (AY) this percentage rose to 47% liberal arts majors. The focus of the Guarantee remains on liberal arts and being aware of the fluctuating trends in enrollment will help the program strengthen recruiting efforts. The chart below shows state specific year-over-year breakdowns.

### All three states saw an increase in Liberal Arts enrollment from AY 21-22 to AY 22-23



**Year-Over-Year Liberal Arts Enrollment**

Source: NEBHE New England Transfer Guarantee student-level enrollment data, Spring 2021 - Spring 2023,

Given the workforce development focus at the community college level, both nationally but also with particular fervor in the New England region, it is not entirely surprising that there would be a large number of community college students who seek out business or STEM-focused majors. Of course, these trends will need to be monitored longitudinally. In 2023, headlines related to the demise of liberal arts degree programs were common in Massachusetts, so this could affect enrollment patterns going forward. Although it is not currently captured in institutional reporting to NEBHE, another facet of this major-related puzzle involves students who change their major at some point post-transfer.

To provide a deeper level of analysis the chart below shows the top enrolled majors by CIP code stem. In line with what was previously mentioned, business and STEM-related subjects appeared in the top majors for all three states. Having detailed insight into which majors Guarantee students are choosing can equip receiving institutions to better serve this student population, therefore, NEBHE plans to provide further granular analysis on this data in private, individualized institutional reports.

### Business and STEM related majors appeared in the top enrolled majors for all three states

Top Enrolled Majors	% of Guarantee Students Enrolled
<b>Connecticut</b>	
Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	14%
Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences	14%
Visual and Performing Arts	9%
Psychology	9%
Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities	8%
Security and Protective Services	8%
<b>Massachusetts</b>	
Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences	25%
Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	13%
Psychology	12%
Public Administration and Social Service Professions	12%
Education	8%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	
Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	56%
Security and Protective Services	10%
Architecture and Related Services	10%

Source: NEBHE New England Transfer Guarantee student-level enrollment data, Spring 2021 - Spring 2023, 'CIP2020Code' and 'CIP2020Title' as reported in the 'CIP 2020 to SOC 2018 Crosswalk' download retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/resources.aspx?u=55>

### Initial Completion Data

The facilitators of the Guarantee are thrilled to be able to report on the first group of Guarantee students who have earned a baccalaureate degree through the program. As of the middle of the

Spring 2023 term, a total of 89 students were reported as having completed. It is possible that more completed students would have been captured in this report had the window for data collection extended to the end of the spring term. Of course, those additional completed students will be captured in the next annual report.

Initial completion data shows Guarantee students maintained a high-level of academic performance throughout their time post-transfer. Indeed, students graduated from their baccalaureate programs with higher average GPAs than they achieved at their community college. Across all states, the average GPA for completed students went from 3.31 at time of transfer to 3.66 at the time of bachelor's degree completion. It was additionally encouraging to see that, on average, it took students approximately four semesters at their transfer destination to complete their baccalaureate degree. This is a statistic of particular interest to facilitators of the Guarantee because it indicates that the transfer pathways that are available through this initiative are meeting the gold standard of efficiency, which is completion of a bachelor's degree after two-years of full-time work at the receiving institution. While this initial completion data is promising, it will be important to observe what trends emerge as more Guarantee students begin to graduate.

The total credits earned at graduation is another important metric for program facilitators. Based on the initial completion data, Guarantee students across all three states graduated with an average of 122 total credits. This data suggests that the Guarantee is providing efficient vertical transfer pathways because 120 credits is the ideal number of credits accumulated for most baccalaureate degree awards. That being said, beneath these averages, it is important to note that 82% of students who graduated through the Guarantee thus far did so with credits in excess of 120. It is possible that excess credits are being accumulated prior to transfer; indeed, in Connecticut the formal associate degree actually consists of 61 not 60 credits. It is also possible that there are certain inefficiencies present in receiving institutional pathways that result in additional accumulation of credits. NEBHE does not currently collect data on students who change majors post-transfer—another potential source of excess accumulated credits. Further analysis will be conducted to better understand the origin or, more likely, origins of this phenomenon.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

### **Pell Grant Status**

Because receiving a Pell Grant is often used as a proxy for being low-income in the analysis of higher education data, NEBHE collects on this data element for Guarantee students. 353 students were identified as Pell Grant recipients in their first semester of enrollment, which is 45% of all Guarantee enrollment through Spring 2023 ( $n = 753$ ).

### **Institutional Award Amounts**

One of the major innovations of this initiative is the degree to which it opens up community college transfer students for consideration for substantial institutional scholarships and aid. Guarantee students who enrolled between Spring 2021 and Spring 2023 were awarded, in sum, over \$12.4 million in institutional scholarships and grants. For all full-time students in Connecticut, the average annual-financial award was \$18.5 thousand with the state's maximum annual institutional award for full-time students in the 2022-2023 academic year coming in at ~\$69 thousand and its minimum coming in at \$0. In Massachusetts, the average annual

institutional award for all full-time students was \$12.3 thousand with a maximum annual award in the 2022-2023 academic year of ~\$70 thousand and a minimum annual award of \$0. For part-time students in Connecticut and Massachusetts, the average annual awards were \$3 thousand and \$3.1 thousand, respectively. In Rhode Island, full-time Guarantee students saw an average annual award of \$23.3 thousand with a maximum annual award of ~\$51.5 thousand in the 2022-2023 academic year and a minimum annual award of \$0 for that same time frame. Further follow-up will be needed to assess specific cases where full-time enrollees were marked as receiving no institutional scholarship award despite attending an institution that had a track record for generous awards more generally.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Looking to the future, the NEBHE Transfer Initiatives Team plans to continue its efforts to employ a data collection process that meets the rigor of analysis while being streamlined to minimize the time investment by receiving institutions. The ultimate goal of these annual enrollment reports is to understand the students who are participating in the Guarantee and how best to support them while also seeking to expand the program as a reliable and efficient option for students in New England. To deepen the insights gained from annual enrollment data, NEBHE will be launching individualized institutional reports that provide relevant data for an individual school's eyes only.

### **Data Collection**

As the program continues to expand, the data collection process must evolve to balance the effort required to collect necessary data with the depth of analysis needed to accurately assess the Guarantee program. As such, NEBHE will be instituting an annual process for reviewing the required data with Institutional Research representatives at receiving institutions—making use of the quarterly meeting structure for institutional liaisons (called Guarantee Coordinators) that was introduced in Fall 2023. This review meeting for all IR representatives in each state will follow the release of a detailed instructional video regarding the data collection and submission processes. Through this additional technical assistance to participating colleges and universities, NEBHE hopes to ensure the receipt of more standardized data across all institutions, which will, in turn, reduce the time required to complete data cleaning—freeing up time and resources for more strategic work related to NEBHE facilitation of this community college transfer initiative.

### **Credit Applicability**

NEBHE collects student-level credit applicability data, NEBHE collects student-level credit applicability data, which is rare in the context of research on transfer. While there was significant improvement in reporting on these data elements from the inaugural report to this second annual one, there continues to be inconsistencies across institutions that requires additional validation before NEBHE can responsibly provide credit applicability analysis. Credit applicability data can be quite complex to interpret because institutions, especially smaller institutions, frequently hand-audit transcripts to generate this information. In addition, there are those within the transfer research space—The City University of New York's Alexandra Logue being one of them—who argue that [static assessments of credits applied are less useful](#) because the applicability of credits changes over a student's career, e.g., when they change majors.

### **Institutional Outputs**

NEBHE recognizes the effort undertaken by the Institutional Research personnel and other university faculty and staff to collect this data. As such, NEBHE will be providing insights

similar to those shared in this report on an institutional level. These outputs will be shared only with the institutions on which they are reporting and will be circulated through a secure platform. It is the Transfer Initiatives Team's hope that these institutional reports will provide participating colleges and universities with further clarity on the specific transfer students each institution is serving. With the increased granularity of these reports, it may be possible for institutions to glean potential enrollment trends that will help them better support current Guarantee students and could assist future institutional efforts to market the program.

### **Programmatic**

Beyond the refinement of specific aspects of the data collection process, the Transfer Initiatives Team is working to increase access to information about the savings that are associated with earning a bachelor's degree through the Guarantee. Because NEBHE only collects institutional award amounts at present, the question remains as to whether additional financial information will be needed in order to accurately convey the net price of attendance for prospective community college transfers. NEBHE has begun conversations with community college leadership in the southern New England states to determine what kind of informational materials would be most vital to supply to transfer advisors.

## **APPENDIX A - List of Participating Institutions**

### **Connecticut:**

Albertus Magnus College  
Goodwin University  
Mitchell College  
Sacred Heart University  
Quinnipiac University  
University of Bridgeport  
University of Hartford  
University of New Haven  
University of Saint Joseph

### **Massachusetts:**

Assumption University  
Bay Path University  
Boston Baptist College  
Cambridge College  
College of Our Lady of the Elms  
Curry College  
Dean College  
Eastern Nazarene College  
Fisher College  
Gordon College  
Hampshire College  
Laboure College  
Lasell University  
Lesley University  
Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences  
Merrimack College  
Nichols College  
Quincy College  
Regis College  
Springfield College  
Suffolk University  
Wheaton College  
William James College

### **Rhode Island:**

Bryant University  
Roger Williams University  
Salve Regina University

## APPENDIX B – Number of Observations (n) for Each Data Element

Number of Reported Elements (n) – indicates if receiving institutions reported on a data element in some form, either providing requested data or including some classification that the data was not available, in the report analysis this is listed as 'Unknown'. Null indicates that no applicable data was reported on for a requested data element.

% Analyzable – indicates the percentage of the data that NEBHE was able to perform meaningful analysis with, does not include any data elements reported as ‘Unknown’, ‘N/A’, etc.

NEBHE has also included the percentage of reported on elements from the Inaugural 2022 enrollment report to show the improvement in collected data elements between years.

Data Element - Table 1	Number of Reported Elements (n)	% Analyzable out of Total Unique Students (786)	% Reported on out of Total Unique Students (786)	% Reported on in 2022 Enrollment Report
Student ID No. Randomized Unique Student Number	786	100%	100%	100%
Date of Birth	783	100%	100%	99%
Gender/Sex	782	99%	99%	100%
IPEDS Reported Race	783	83%	100%	96%
First-Generation Student	664	83%	84%	27%
Enrollment Intensity	750	95%	95%	100%
Cohort Term	786	100%	100%	100%
Sending Community College Name	783	100%	100%	100%
Community College Degree Type	758	85%	96%	97%
Community College Program Name	706	80%	90%	88%
Community College GPA	779	97%	99%	86%
CIP Code for Enrolled Guarantee Program	767	97%	98%	99%
Number of Credits Received from Sending Institution	782	99%	99%	91%
Number of General Education Credits Accepted	696	75%	89%	69%
Complete General Education Received/Waived	715	75%	91%	63%
Number of Credits Applied Towards Guarantee Program (Major Electives)	762	84%	97%	76%
Number of Credits Applied to Open Electives	704	76%	90%	69%

Source: NEBHE New England Transfer Guarantee student-level enrollment data, Spring 2021 – Spring 2023

Data Element - Table 2	Number of Reported Elements (n)	% Analyzable out of Total Unique Elements (2,183)	% Reported on out of Total Unique Elements (2,183)	% Reported on in 2022 Enrollment Report
Student ID No. Randomized Unique Student Number	2,183	100%	100%	New Data Field
Term	2,183	100%	100%	New Data Field
Enrollment Status	2,172	99%	99%	New Data Field
Pell Grant Status	2,018	83%	92%	95%
Scholarship or Financial Aid Award Amount	2,011	82%	92%	88%
Cumulative GPA	1,993	58%	91%	New Data Field
Completed Guarantee Program*	89	100%	100%	New Data Field
Completion GPA*	89	100%	100%	New Data Field
Number of Credits Obtained at Time of Graduation*	89	100%	100%	New Data Field

Source: NEBHE New England Transfer Guarantee student-level enrollment data, Spring 2021 – Spring 2023

\* = percentages for these fields were calculated using 89 as the total unique students where data was reported for the completed or graduated data fields.

## **APPENDIX C – Data Cleaning Details**

For the second annual enrollment report, data was cleaned and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. First the data from all the separately submitted institutional reports was combined into two separate tabs, one for “Table 1 – Initial Student Enrollment Data” and one for “Table 2 – Term-Specific Data”. The total number of enrolled students at each receiving institution was validated against the number of students reported on in the inaugural report to validate that the second enrollment report has the same or higher number of Guarantee students, reflecting the additional semesters of the program. In some cases, data from the prior reporting cycle was incorporated to ensure that all students enrolled since the inception of the program were included in this report. Going forward NEBHE will continue to work with IR personnel to ensure forthcoming enrollment reports capture all students who have transferred through the New England Transfer Guarantee Initiative.

After the data was combined, several calculations were performed to standardize the naming conventions for each data field in order to accurately perform calculations and present descriptive data visualization. As each separate report was submitted by the receiving institution, there was some variation in data output (e.g. ‘Fall 2021’ and ‘2021 Fall’ as reported for the ‘Cohort Term’ data element of Table 1). NEBHE converted all formatting to align with the descriptions included in the ‘Definitions’ tab in the data collection template. Blanks were converted to “Null” in the final cleaned dataset, so they could be distinguished from responses of “UN”, “Unknown”, “N/A” etc. throughout.

Once the data naming conventions were standardized, NEBHE created additional classifications to further breakdown the student data. Student age at time of enrollment was calculated using the birth date provided and assuming the start of each semester as follows; a Winter semester beginning the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, a Spring semester beginning the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, a Summer semester beginning the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, and a Fall semester beginning the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. To determine if a student identified themselves as Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), NEBHE used the IPEDS reported race/ethnicity data. To maintain internal consistency across NEBHE, the analysis used the definition of BIPOC from NEBHE’s North Star Collective Faculty Fellowship program which encompasses individuals who identify as Black/African/African American, Latinx/Hispanic, Native/Indigenous, Arab/Middle Eastern, Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander, and Multiracial. To determine the Enrolled Guarantee Program major title, NEBHE converted the provided CIP codes to their corresponding major title using the ‘CIP2020Code’ and ‘CIP2020Title’ as reported in the ‘CIP 2020 to SOC 2018 Crosswalk’ download retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/resources.aspx?y=55>. For the CIP code stems, the first 2 digits of the CIP code were converted using an export from the National Center for Education Statistics, <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/searchresults.aspx?y=55&sw=1,2&ct=1>.

The two tables were validated against each other to ensure the students captured in Table 1 of the data request also appeared in Table 2. This was done by cross referencing data entries using the unique student IDs, after ensuring that there were no duplicate student IDs across the institutions. Next the student dataset was audited to verify that students had transferred from an eligible sending institution (i.e. a public community in the same state as the receiving institution) and that they had indeed enrolled at the receiving institution for at least one semester. 13 students were removed from the data as they were never reported to have enrolled in a semester at the receiving institution. 27 students were removed for transferring from an ineligible sending institution. After this audit was performed, 786 students remained,

constituting the total number of unique students who enrolled through the Guarantee during the Spring 2021 to Spring 2023 reporting period.

## APPENDIX D – Enrollment at Participating Institutions, Spring 2021 through Spring 2023

State	Name	Enrolled Students
CT	Albertus Magnus College	Yes
CT	Goodwin University	No
CT	Mitchell College	Yes
CT	Quinnipiac University	Yes
CT	Sacred Heart University	No
CT	University of Bridgeport	Yes <sup>1</sup>
CT	University of Hartford	Yes
CT	University of New Haven	Yes
CT	University of Saint Joseph	Yes
MA	Assumption University	No
MA	Bay Path University	Yes <sup>1</sup>
MA	Boston Baptist College	No
MA	Cambridge College	Yes
MA	College of Our Lady of the Elms	Yes
MA	Curry College	Yes
MA	Dean College	No <sup>2</sup>
MA	Eastern Nazarene College	No
MA	Fisher College	Yes
MA	Gordon College	Yes
MA	Hampshire College	Yes
MA	Laboure College	No
MA	Lasell University	Yes
MA	Lesley University	Yes
MA	Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences	Yes <sup>1</sup>
MA	Merrimack College	Yes
MA	Nichols College	Yes
MA	Quincy College	No
MA	Regis College	Yes
MA	Springfield College	Yes
MA	Suffolk University	Yes
MA	William James College	Yes
MA	Wheaton College	Yes <sup>1</sup>
RI	Bryant University	Yes
RI	Roger Williams University	Yes
RI	Salve Regina University	Yes <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institutions who have started enrolling students since the publication of the inaugural report.

<sup>2</sup> While Dean College did report enrolling one student in the Spring 2021 through Spring 2022 period, during the data cleaning process described in Appendix C, it was discovered that that student did not transfer from an eligible community college, therefore, that student was eliminated from the dataset before analysis was performed. At the time of the second annual report's publication no students have enrolled at Dean College.

## **APPENDIX E – Eligible Liberal Arts Majors**

### **Humanities:**

Classics  
Criminal Justice  
English  
Foreign Languages  
History  
Literature  
Linguistics  
International Studies  
Philosophy  
Pre-Law  
Religious Studies

### **Creative Arts:**

Architecture and Design  
Fine Art  
Theater  
Speech  
Creative Writing

### **Social Sciences:**

Anthropology  
Economics  
Finance  
Geography  
Geology  
Political Science  
Psychology  
Sociology

### **Mathematics:**

### **Sciences:**

Astronomy  
Biology  
Chemistry  
Computer Science - Information Technology;  
Information Systems  
Exercise Science  
Forensic Science  
Physics

N.B. The following majors are explicitly excluded from Liberal Arts Majors:  
Business/Management/Accounting, Education (i.e. Early Childhood Education); Medical (i.e. Nursing), Social Work, and Engineering