This document is being publicly released in June 2024 in preparation for the AB928 Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Implementation Committee’s (hereafter “AB928 Committee”) public meeting on June 13, 2024. 

The document reflects the work completed to date in an effort to develop a comprehensive communications plan and guidance on student-centered outreach to inform students about the ADT pathway. The communications plan should ensure prompt and accurate information is communicated across four-year postsecondary educational institutions, the California Community Colleges, and elementary and secondary education, pursuant to AB928. Specifically, this document outlines the primary components of the proposed communications plan, including the intended audiences, messages, and messengers, as well as additional considerations and discussion questions for the AB928 Committee.

Student-Ready Strategies (SRS) is supporting the committee in the development of the communications plan and produced this document for the committee’s consideration.
The AB928 legislative language\(^1\) that outlines the purpose and requirements for the communications plan is fully excerpted below:

“(h) On or before December 31, 2024, the committee shall achieve all of the following:

(3) (A) Develop a comprehensive communications plan and guidance on student-centered outreach to inform students about the ADT pathway and to ensure prompt and accurate information is communicated across four-year postsecondary educational institutions, the California Community Colleges, and elementary and secondary education.

(3) (B) The plan developed under subparagraph (A) shall include, but not be limited to, guidance to community college counselors and articulation officers on their role in communicating the value of the ADT pathway, guidance to high school counselors on incorporating the ADT pathway into their menu of college options, and templates that can be customized for outreach in local contexts. The communications plan shall also address how updates about the ADT pathways, including new majors and new participating four-year postsecondary educational institutions, will be communicated to four-year postsecondary educational institutions, the California Community Colleges, and high schools.

(3)(C) The plan developed under subparagraph (A) shall address how updates about the ADT pathway will be regularly communicated to four-year postsecondary educational institutions, the California Community Colleges, and high schools so that counselors, advisers, and student support staff engaged in educating students about their college options, participating four-year postsecondary educational institutions, and degree options, have the most current information about the ADT pathway, and are aware of updates to the program such as new majors or new participating four-year postsecondary educational institutions.

(4) Provide feedback for the regular review and identification of updates needed to the ADT internet website maintained by the California Community Colleges to ensure current information and updates are communicated to students, families, and student support staff engaged in educating students about their college options, participating four-year postsecondary educational institutions, and degree options.”

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**GLOSSARY:** A glossary of key terms, such as “Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT)” and “Transfer Model Curriculum (TMC),” can be found in the C-ID Handbook (Fall 2022 Revision) available for download at: https://c-id.net/page/

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SECTION I: GUIDING PREMISES

The following premises have guided the work in developing this draft of a communications plan and reflect the input and feedback of AB928 Committee members as shared during one-on-one meetings with SRS and at public meetings on January 25 and March 28, 2024. The guiding premises also incorporate the committee’s previous work and its 2023 Final Report and Recommendations. ³

- California’s transfer system remains unnecessarily complex and contains too many contingencies to be considered universally accessible. ³
  - This complexity and lack of accessibility is reflected in the transfer patterns of California's students, where only one in four students who start at a community college with a transfer goal successfully transfers within five years. ³

- To increase the number of students who successfully transfer, California’s education systems and institutions need to provide students with clear and straightforward information and guidance on how to navigate California’s transfer system.
  - There are resources available to students with information about navigating the transfer process, but the resources are disjointed (particularly across California’s different higher education systems), not always up-to-date, and often present information in a way that is not easily accessible, digestible, or clear to students.
    - It’s relatively easy to find some information (e.g., a two-year and four-year campus match for a given program, admissions applications). ⁴
    - Other information is harder to find (e.g., courses to take for Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) and UC transfer pathways are not readily available online; while guarantees (e.g., the ADT) are well promoted, it is less obvious that there are limitations on those guarantees). ⁴


The ADT internet website referenced in the legislation includes information about CSUs, AICCU institutions, partner HBCUs, and online out-of-state institutions, while UC information is housed on a separate website.5

Communications about California’s transfer system must be tailored to different audiences and incorporate actionable, engaging, and culturally responsive messaging.

- General, system-wide campaigns are often too generic and do not provide students and other audiences with the specific information they need that is relevant to their particular situation.
- Information about transfer must be communicated through channels and platforms that are already present in students’ daily lives, such as short-form videos on social media and advertisements on streaming services.
- There are pervasive, unacceptable inequities in transfer outcomes based on race, region, and income. For example, according to an analysis by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), 56 percent of freshmen who enrolled in a California Community College in 2016 were Latine, African American, or Native American, but only 47 percent of CSU transfers and 32 percent of UC transfers were from these populations.3 The communications plan should include an intentional focus on messaging to reach members of marginalized and historically minoritized populations.

Communications improvements alone will not solve all challenges related to transfer; the postsecondary ecosystem itself must be simplified for communications to be straightforward and effective.

- Communication about transfer can only be as simple and straightforward as the system it describes.
- The goal is not to affirm existing processes, but rather to look forward to a new vision for the state.6
- The communications plan must be reactive to systemic changes in transfer infrastructure; this work ties to the AB928 Committee’s 2023 Recommendations and the 2024 legislative charge to regularly update the ADTs.

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SECTION II: DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN OUTLINE AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR DISCUSSION

This section outlines the primary components of the communications plan and includes considerations and discussion questions for the AB928 Committee.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN OUTLINE

1) Purpose
This section will summarize the purpose and intent of the communications plan, to include the legislative provisions.

Discussion Questions:
- The AB928 Committee has been tasked with developing a "comprehensive communications plan." The legislation does not specify who should own or implement this plan. As you think about drafting this recommendation to the legislature:
  - What organization(s) should the AB928 Committee recommend will own the plan and be responsible for implementing and maintaining it?
  - What will the funding mechanism be to support it?

2) Audiences
This section will identify and describe the intended audiences for the communications plan and their role in the transfer process.

Consideration 1. The communications plan audiences should include:
- Direct entry students
- Adult students (24+)
- Students who earned an ADT but did not transfer
- Adult education providers
- Articulation officers
- College- or university-based counselors
- College- or university-based instructional faculty
- Community organizations
- Employers
- High school guidance counselors
- Parents/guardians/trusted adults
Discussion Questions:

- Is this the appropriate list of audiences?
  - Are there too many, too few, or the right number of audiences?
  - Are there additional audiences that should be included in the communications plan?
  - Are there any listed audiences that should not be included in the communications plan?

3) Customized Content and Guidance

**Consideration 2.** For each identified audience above, this section of the plan should include:

a) Targeted messages
   i) Messages should include specific, actionable information about what students need to do at different milestones within their associate degree pathway (e.g., 0-15 units, 15-45 units, 45+ units) to successfully transfer.
   ii) Messages must also speak to the value of the ADT pathway to meet the requirements of AB 928.

b) Identification of messengers, including:
   i) Affinity and community groups and organizations
   ii) College-or university-based counselors
   iii) College-or university-based instructional faculty
   iv) Family, friends and trusted adults
   v) High school staff
   vi) Peers/other students
   vii) Public figures and influencers
   viii) Student organizations

c) Channels for the flow of communications, including:
   i) Videos
   ii) Social media
   iii) Email
   iv) Websites
   v) Advertisements (TV, radio, billboards, streaming services, etc.)
   vi) Printed materials (brochures, posters, etc.)
   vii) In-person sessions
d) Templates for communications and outreach that can be customized for local contexts (institution branding and specific information/nuances)
   i) The templates will be tailored to each audience and appropriate for the most likely messengers and channels, with informative, engaging, and interactive content.
   ii) Each template will include a specific next step or call to action.

Discussion Questions:
- What is the value proposition for students to complete the ADT?
- What are the most important messages that need to be communicated to each of these audiences?
- To what extent should the communications templates be tailored to state/system-wide communications versus institution/school-level communications?
- Are discipline-specific templates important?

4) Plan Implementation

Consideration 3. This section should include suggestions about effective outreach to the identified messengers for each audience and guidance on the use of the communications templates provided in the previous section.

Discussion Questions:
- Will professional development be provided to the identified messengers? If yes:
  ○ Who will be responsible for providing the professional development?
  ○ How will the professional development be funded?
- What is the expectation of system offices and institutions to produce communications campaign materials using the templates?
- Are there sufficient resources within education systems and institutions to produce communications collateral using the templates?

5) Cadence and Channels of Communication for ADT Program Updates

Consideration 4. This section should specify how and when ADT program updates will be communicated to the audiences identified above to ensure students are receiving the most current and accurate information.
Discussion Questions:

- Should updates be communicated to the field at a predetermined and regular cadence, or just-in-time as program updates and changes are implemented?
- What would be the most effective mechanism to communicate these updates (website, email, etc.)?
- Do the communications templates discussed in Section 3 need to be responsive to these ADT updates? Or should they be “evergreen”? This may depend on whether any templates are discipline-specific.

6) Recommendations for State/System-Level Web Content

Consideration 5. This section should include recommendations for how transfer information is presented online at the state and system levels, including the specific program requirements. It must specifically provide recommendations for http://icangotocollege.com (the website referenced in the legislation).

Discussion Questions:

- What are the most useful components of existing websites, such as those referenced in previous meetings or the panel on June 13, 2024?
  - http://icangotocollege.com
  - ASSIST.org
  - UC TAP
  - Inspirame/Teco Guide
  - System websites
  - Institution websites
- Should all the information be housed in one centralized website?
- If centralized:
  - What organization will own it and be responsible for maintaining it?
  - What will the funding mechanism be to support it?
- How can a centralized website create different entry points, views, and messaging for differentiated audiences? If decentralized, how will the information be presented in a way that is consistent across systems? What data sources will be necessary?
RESOURCES AND TOOLS
