



## Tab AA Student Information Portal

Coordinating Board for Higher Education  
March 8, 2018

### BACKGROUND

One of the tactics included in the Blueprint for Higher Education's affordability goal is "implement a web-based student portal that will serve as a one-stop shop for information about higher education, including applications, FAFSA rules, state student aid eligibility, transfer policies, reverse transfer, transfer course library, and other information to help students plan for higher education and complete a degree in less time and at less cost."

In addition, legislation signed into law in 2016 calls on the department to create a website to provide information and resources to help students and their families prepare for college. Section 173.035, RSMo, requires the department to "develop, maintain, and operate a website containing information of public and private institutions of higher education in this state directing students to resources including, but not limited to, academic programs, financial aid, and how academic course credit may be transferred from one institution of higher education to another."

### CURRENT STATUS

#### **Student website**

In September 2017, MDHE staff used existing resources to develop a student-focused website to provide general information about planning and paying for college and finishing a degree. The Journey to College website ([journeytocollege.mo.gov](http://journeytocollege.mo.gov)) was developed with responsive design so it is accessible from various electronic devices. Content is added and updated on a regular basis.

#### **Interactive website features**

The department needed external assistance to complete the interactive features of the site. The general assembly appropriated \$500,000 for the project in FY 2017, but expenditure of those funds was restricted before work began. The \$500,000 appropriation was included in the FY 2018 budget, and those funds are supporting the work currently underway.

Department staff identified four interactive features to add to the Journey to College website to provide students with additional information specific to their individual college and career plans. Those features were broken into phases and prioritized.

#### ***Phase 1: College and Degree Search***

MDHE's existing College and Degree Search will be redesigned using responsive design so it is easily accessible from any electronic device. The new search tool will provide more information to help students make an informed choice when selecting a higher education institution. It also will allow students to compare up to four schools side by side at one time.

Students will be able to search for Missouri colleges and degree programs based on:

- Career interests
- Location
- Certificate and degree programs offered
- School type (two year, four year, public, private, specialized/technical, theological, or proprietary)

- Program delivery (classroom, online, hybrid, or competency based)
- Admissions requirements for each certificate or degree program
- Cost (tuition, fees, books, and supplies for each certificate or degree program)

### ***Phase 2: Course Transfer Tracker***

A search function will allow students to see how general education courses they have completed at a Missouri public college or university will transfer to another public college or university in Missouri. The Course Transfer Tracker is based on the Core 42 Curriculum. The tool will provide specific information about course transfer that can help students avoid having to “retake” courses, saving time and money as they work toward a degree.

### ***Phase 3: State Financial Aid Portal***

Enhancements to the department’s current financial aid portal would enable the department to provide more detailed, personalized information about state financial individual students might be eligible to receive.

### ***Phase 4: Student Workspace***

A new student workspace feature would allow students to create a secure account where they could save information related to their specific plans for college, including information from the College and Degree Search, the Course Transfer Tracker, and the State Financial Aid Portal.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Work on Phases 1 and 2 is currently underway and is on track to be completed by June 30, 2018. Phases 3 and 4 will require additional resources. The Governor’s recommended budget includes a \$500,000 appropriation out of the department’s guaranty agency operating fund to support this additional work.

Department staff will promote the upgraded website through the channels they already use to promote the Journey to College student website, including social media; publications; outreach events including college fairs, financial aid nights, Apply Missouri, FAFSA Frenzy, and Decision Day events; and communication with high school counselors, college and university admissions and financial aid advisors and college access organizations.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

This is an information item.

## **NO ATTACHMENTS**