

Student Transfer Trends

- *Building Bridges for Student Success*

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**WICHE
Commission
Meeting**

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Preview

- I. Why Transfer? Why Now?
- II. The Future is Here
- III. The Role of Transfer's "Silent Partner"
- IV. Creating Student and Institutional Momentum
- V. Policy Interventions

Why Transfer? Why Now?

- *“With the current emphasis on the [community] college as the institution which will presumably care for an increasing share of this nation’s college freshmen and sophomores, representatives from all types of four-year colleges and from all types of [community] colleges must use all means of enabling the greatest number of transfer students to have a satisfying and successful experience in the next institution... Too late, too much has been left to chance.”*

Political—

- ***“I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training. And dropping out of high school is no longer an option. It’s not just quitting on yourself, it’s quitting on your country – and this country needs and values the talents of every American ...”*** **President Obama**
(2009)

Economic—

- ***“The USA needs to increase its production of postsecondary education degrees and reduce gaps in achievement among racial and socioeconomic groups. Otherwise we will not be able to meet our workforce needs [or] maintain international economic competitiveness ...” Jobs for the Future (2008)***

Social—

- ***“One of the most productive ways to address our workforce and equity needs would be to expand opportunities for community college [transfer students]. They are already the institution of first choice for many student who are members of groups that have been historically underrepresented...” National Commission on Community Colleges (2008)***

II. The Future is Here

- Enrollment Trends
- Leading Indicators of Transfer
- Student Intentions

Enrollment

- Forty-four percent of all undergraduates attend community colleges.
- More students from underrepresented groups than any other segment.
- College enrollment hit an all-time high this past fall— fueled entirely by growth at CCs.
- Of all 18-24 year olds in the USA, ***one in 10 attend a community college.***

Leading (Transfer) Indicators

- **Full-time Students**—Constitute a significant part of growth in the past two years
- **Traditional-Aged Students**—Average age at many community colleges is decreasing
- **Middle-Class Students**—Leveraging their higher education resources by attending a community college first.

... ***These characteristics represent a profile of students likely to transfer***

Middle Class Interest

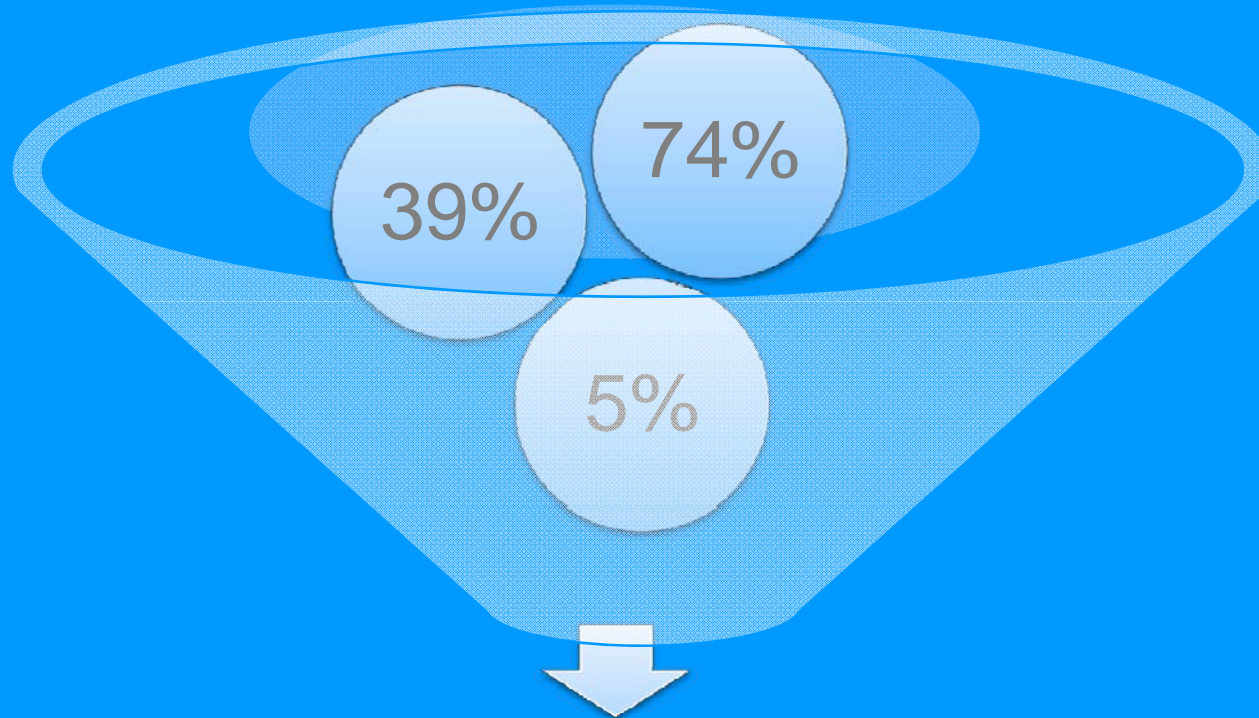
*“Confronted with high tuition costs [at four-year institutions], a weak economy, and increased competition for admission to four-year colleges, **students today are more likely than at any other point in history to choose to attend a community college.**” [emphasis added]*

The Brookings Institute, 2009

Student Intentions

- One-half to two-thirds express a desire to transfer.
- Significant numbers of students elevate their aspirations after enrolling at a community college.
- Many more middle- and upper-middle class students enrolling in community colleges.

Transfer Outcomes—How many students transfer?



Proportion that Transfer?

Answer...? Some number between 1 and 99...

Do CC students earn BA degrees at the same rate as 4-year students?

- Pascarella and Terenzini:

“Beginning pursuit of a bachelor’s degree at a two-year rather than a four-year institution reduces the chances of ultimately earning that degree by 15 to 20 percentage points, even after statistical adjustments are made for students’ pre-college characteristics, including ability, socioeconomic status, and motivation” (2005, p. 592)

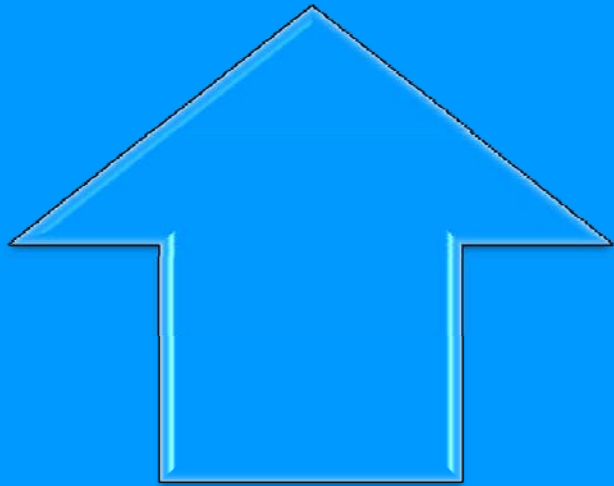
What happens to CC students who transfer four-year institutions?

- CC transfers do at least as well as “home grown” four-year college students.
- *Crossing the Finish Line* (2009):
 - Flagship Institutions: Transfers 7-10 percentage points more likely to graduate than comparable freshmen
 - State System Schools: Transfers 15-18 percentage points more likely to graduate than comparable freshmen

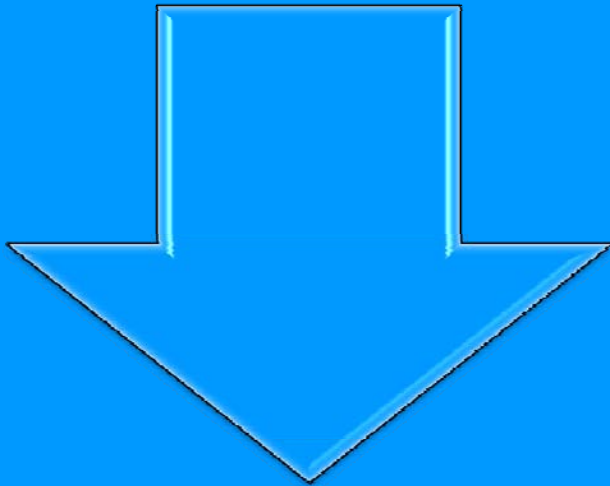
Crossing the Finish Line (2009)

- *“We believe that the superior graduation rates among transfers...reflect strong selection effects. That is, students who come to four-year institutions from two-year colleges have already successfully managed the transition from high school to one kind of college experience.*
- *“We strongly suspect that their subsequent success at four-year institutions...reflects differences in aspirations, maturity, social capital, and coping skills (including a demonstrated ability to “stay the course”).*
- *The two-year colleges, in short, are a “sorting mechanism” that works to the benefit of the four-year institutions to which their students transfer. “(p. 143)*

Are We Serving Everyone Well? *The Good News Could be Better...*

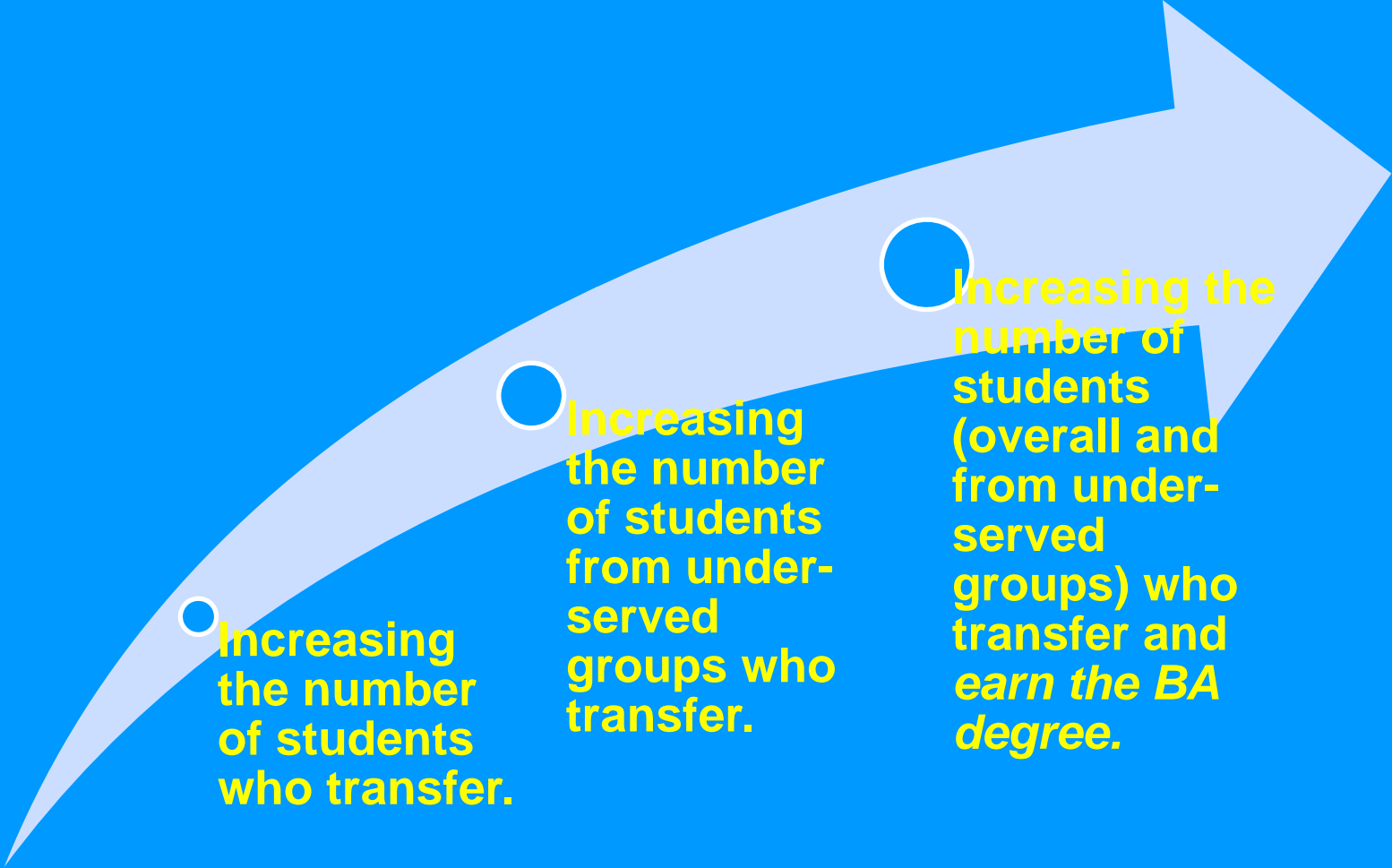


Many transfers are traditional age students and come from middle/upper-class backgrounds. They are well-prepared and have determined BA aspirations.



Well-prepared students who attend community colleges succeed but marginal students who can *only* attend a community college may not.

Meeting national transfer goals means...



Increasing the number of students who transfer.

Increasing the number of students from under-served groups who transfer.

Increasing the number of students (overall and from under-served groups) who transfer and *earn the BA degree.*

How will we achieve these goals?

- Improving community college completion rates

“Community colleges’ most attractive asset—the commitment to student access—must now be matched with a commitment to student success. To compete globally, our nation needs a highly-skilled middle class – one in which the majority of Americans must have some college-level education and training” (College Board, 2008)

- What else?

III. Transfer's “Silent Partner”

- Community colleges get most of the blame for low transfer rates.
- Yet...four-year institutions admit transfer students, award financial aid, and accept (or not) community college courses.
- If we want to improve transfer, we need to consult the four-year institution.

Four-Year Institutions & Transfer

- Lawmakers, researchers, policymakers have not consulted well with four-year institutions.
- What are their challenges? Limitations? Enthusiasms? Prejudices?
- We need to change the course of this relationship from something that is furtive, often suspicious to a relationship that focuses on one thing: student completion.

IV. Creating Student and Institutional Momentum

- What are the factors that support transfer and BA attainment?
- Two Types of Variables:
 - Student-Centered Variables (“good academic behavior”)
 - Institutional Variables

Factors Relevant to BA Completion (all)

High School Variables Predicting Completion:

- Quality and intensity of the HS Curriculum
- Doing well in that curriculum (upper 40%)
- No delay between enrollment in high school and college

College Variables Predicting Completion:

- Completion of 20 credits in first year of college
- Strategic use of summer sessions
- Cumulative math credits
- Full-time enrollment
- Continuous enrollment
- Rising GPA trend
- Completing 80 percent of courses attempted

Adelman's "Academic Momentum" (2005, 2006)

These same factors are *negatively related* to community college attendance

Community college students often start with a deficit...

- (Low) Intensity of HS Curriculum
- (Not) Doing well in that curriculum (upper 40%)
- (Delay) between enrollment in high school and college
- (No) Participation in summer sessions
- (Less than) Completion of 20 units in first year of college

Factors Relevant to BA Completion

CC Variables Predicting Transfer

- Cumulative math credits
- Strategic use of summer sessions
- Continuous enrollment
- Completing 80 percent of courses attempted
- Demonstrated transfer aspirations

“Dropping 20% or more of courses attempted reduces degree completion by half...”

CC Variables Predicting Transfer & BA Completion

- Everything above
- Junior transfer
- Full-time status
- English composition

Creating *Institutional* Momentum

- **No Substitute for Inter-Institutional Relationships**
 - K-12 and four-year Institutions must be engaged partners with local community college(s) and the students who attend them.
- **Take the Long View**
 - Tactical vs. Strategic Responses
 - Involve the Silent Partners
- **Incorporating Reasonable Policy Interventions**

V. Policy Interventions: *Articulation*—

- Common Policy Instruments
 - Common course numbering
 - GE Blanket AA Degrees
 - LD Blanket AA Degrees
 - Transfer AA Degrees
 - Articulation Data Systems
- Necessary, but not sufficient...

Other Policy Interventions

- Admit transfers as juniors
- Provide community college students with priority over four-year transfers
- Build in incentives for full-time or continuous enrollment (and provide the financial wherewithal for students to do so)
- Create incentives for two- and four-year institutions to boost transfer
- Develop a reasonable part-time policy
- Limit late registration and no-penalty drops and withdrawals

No Time to Lose...

- *“With the current emphasis on the [community] college as the institution which will presumably care for an increasing share of this nation’s college freshmen and sophomores, representatives from all types of four-year colleges and from all types of [community] colleges must use all means of enabling the greatest number of transfer students to have a satisfying and successful experience in the next institution...Too date, too much has been left to chance.”*

Leland L. Medsker, UC Berkeley

1960

Community Colleges

For Students



Whether you're a high school student considering a community college or a community college student preparing to transfer to a four-year college or university, you'll find information on strengthening your skills, finding colleges, majors and careers, and how financial aid works.



For Community College Educators



Counselors, transfer center directors, faculty advisors, admissions directors and enrollment managers, financial aid officers, chancellors and presidents, and institutional researchers: get information here to help you serve your students and your institution.



Community colleges constitute one of the largest sectors of American higher education. Today more than 6 million students attend approximately 1,200 public and independent community colleges throughout the United States.

Since their inception 100 years ago, community colleges have provided students from all backgrounds with an opportunity to attend college. The College Board understands that advancing the work of community colleges means connecting millions of students to college success and opportunity. That's why we have established this website: to link students, their families, and community college professionals with information and programs that serve their needs.

About the National Office of Community College Initiatives

The College Board has established the National Office of Community College Initiatives to connect students with college success and opportunity. Helping students prepare for college requires effective partnerships among K-12 schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities. The College Board is one of the few not-for-profit national organizations that brings together all of these constituencies in the service of students, families, counselors, and other student service professionals. For more information on this initiative, contact Stephen J. Handel, National Director, Community College Initiatives at shandel@collegeboard.org.

[The Community College Advisory Panel](#), a committee of community college leaders from around the country, helps guide the College Board's work with community colleges. The Panel advances the voice of these institutions within the College Board by encouraging other colleges to become members and by developing partnerships that serve students, their families, and community college professionals.

For more information...

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