National Office of Community College Initiatives

Center for Innovative Thought

Winning The Skills Race Strengthening America's Future

Strengthening the Nation by Narrowing the Gap

Community Colleges Key to America's Economic Growth

SECOND CHANCE, Not Second Class
A Blueprint for Community-College Transfer

By Stephen J. Handel

We don’t want transfer students to feel as though they were second class. This American community college highly regarded for providing access to higher education 35 states, among those students who achieve associate degrees from community colleges are more likely to transfer to a four-year institution than those who begin at a four-year institution. The more students who transfer, the less likely they are to experience difficulty in their academic programs. A 2002 study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that students who begin at a community college are more likely to transfer to a four-year institution than those who begin at a four-year institution.

High School-to-Community College Transition

Message of East Access

Toward a Seamless Transition

Community College Counselor Sourcebook:
Strategies for Advising Transfer Students from Experienced Community College Counselors

Stephen J. Handel
National Office of Community College Initiatives

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www.collegeboard.com
Transfer—Whose Responsibility is it Anyway?

Stephen J. Handel

Dream Deferred: The Future of African American Education

Helping More Students Transfer from a Community College to a Four-Year Institution

Executive Director
Community College Initiatives and Higher Education Relationship Development

April 25, 2012
Los Angeles, CA
My bias…

- “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.”
I. Why Transfer? Why Now?

II. Concerns about Transfer Students

III. Enhancing the Transfer Pathway… (Advice From Your Peers…)

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Why Transfer? Why Now?

The Political
- The Eyes of DC
- $$$
- Non-Partisan

The Financial
- Recession & Re-evaluation
- Perception

The Inevitable
- Diversity is Destiny
- “Mind the Gap”
- Volatility in the high school graduation rate
Transfer Outcomes—How many students transfer?

Proportion that Transfer?

Answer…? Some number between 1 and 99…
Why Transfer? Why Now?

• Transfer Rate: There’s Room for Growth
  • About 25-33 percent of students who indicate a desire to transfer actually succeed.

• CC students less likely to earn a BA compared to 4-year institution students

• However...students who transfer successfully do as well as first-time, native students
Revised Perceptions…

“Confronted with high tuition costs, 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.”

Brookings Institute
II. Concerns about Transfer Students

“They don’t fit our profile…”

“They are not really interested in us…”

“They struggle on our campus…”
They don’t fit our profile…”

- **Age**
  - 72% (first-time stds) under the age of 23
  - 87% of those students want to transfer
  (College Board, 2011)

- **Ethnic Diversity**
  - 55% of Pacific Islanders
  - 53% of Native Americans
  - 52% of Hispanics
  - 47% of African Americans
  - 43% of Asian Americans
  (USDOE, 2010)

- **Other Diversity**
  - 45% 1st Generation
  - 43% Income under $20,000/yr
  (USDOE, 2010)
“They are interested in you…”

2006
(ATD/CCSSE)

- Primary Goal: 50%
- Secondary Goal: 21%

2008
(USDOE)

- Two-thirds enter with plans to earn a BA degree.

2009
(USDOE)

- “Strongly directed to transfer:” 56%
- “Moderately-directed:” 36%

2011
(College Board)

- Nearly two-thirds want to transfer and earn the BA degree
“They struggle on our campus…”

At State Universities: 15-18% more likely…

BA Degree

Flagship Universities: 7-10% more likely more likely…

“We have a very high graduation for transfer students. They graduate with distinction.”

Patricia McWade, Georgetown
“We believe that the superior graduation rates among transfers...reflect strong selection effects.

“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)
III. Expanding the Transfer Pathway…Advice From Your Peers…

Improving Student Transfer from Community Colleges to Four-Year Institutions — The Perspective of Leaders from Baccalaureate-Granting Institutions
A College Board Transfer Case Study

- Interviewed nearly two-dozen four-year institution leaders
- Institutions included flagships, public/private institutions, highly- & moderately-selective, research & liberal arts
- Interviews were taped and transcribed and form the core of the final report.
Transfer Case Study: Institutions

• Georgetown University (DC)
• Iowa State University
• Syracuse University (NY)
• Texas A&M University
• University of Arizona
• UCLA

• University of Central Florida
• University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
• University of North Texas
• University of Southern California
• Virginia Tech
• Wheaton (MA)
Issues and Recommendations

- Strategic Focus: Leadership
- Admissions & Outreach: Preparation & Commitment
- Financial Aid: Understanding their financial aid future
- Student & Academic Affairs: Building a transfer-affirming culture
Strategic Focus and Something More…

- Strategic Focus and Something More…
- Outreach
- Admission
- Financial Aid
- Student and Academic Affairs
- Parting Thoughts—Looking Ahead
Who is truly the voice for transfer students at your institution? Who are your champions? Is there an institutional commitment to transfer students? Is it a part of the institution’s values? *If it is not, you’re just spinning your wheels.*”

Marc Harding, Iowa State University
Strategic Focus…

• Mercenary Admissions?

“Without a long-term, strategic commitment, several leaders candidly argue that an institution’s commitment to transfer students is nothing more than a mercenary process designed to enroll students as backfill for an otherwise unsuccessful freshman recruitment season.”

“I think at some institutions there’s a serious orientation toward transfer students to balance the ledgers.”

Marc Cutright, University of North Texas
...Authentic Commitment

• What Transfer Students Bring to the Four-Year Campus

“The obvious advantage in admitting transfer students is that you obtain representation of students from different communities who have different life experiences. I think one of the goals of higher education is to prepare students to compete and perform well in the real world — to be able to change that world in ways that matter. Having students come from a variety of areas — whether it is geographic, cultural, ethnic, age — is a critical factor in that preparation.”

Alfred Herrera, UCLA
...Authentic Commitment

• What Transfer Students Bring to the Four-Year Campus

“My argument has always been that if a transfer student can juggle a full-time job, a full community college class load, and family responsibilities, and still perform at a reasonably high academic level, there’s no reason why they couldn’t be successful at this institution.”

Alfred Herrera, UCLA
Reaching Out to Transfer Students...

- Why Transfer? Why Now?
- Strategic Focus and Something More…
- Outreach
- Admission
- Financial Aid
- Student and Academic Affairs
- Parting Thoughts—Looking Ahead
Outreach: Powerful and Clear...

The outreach message should be purposeful, concise and clear...

...and focus on academic preparation...

“If you want transfer students to be successful, academic preparation should not be an afterthought,”
Timothy Brunold, USC
It’s harder than it looks. Why?

- No cohort uniformity
- Uneven time-to-degree (or no degree at all)
- Preparing to transfer to multiple four-year institutions

“...[Y]ou can take care of a first-year student in a minute and then your next appointment is a community college transfer student and you’re talking about an hour. **There are no rules that apply adequately to the personal circumstances of these students.** You have to fit a program together to meet each student’s strengths and gaps.”

Steve Farmer, UNC, Chapel Hill
What to do?

• What kind of preparation?
  • General Education vs. Major Preparation
  • Math/Writing

“We know from our research here that no matter the students’ major, if they have not fulfilled math, they are not going to do as well compared to students who have.”

Kasey Urquidez, University of Arizona
Math & English
Probability of Meeting Educational Goals
(Moore, Shulock, & Offenstein, 2009)
What to do? Make a Commitment

• Admission Guarantees/Dual Enrollment

“Community college students [should not] have to gamble with their educational future. They [should] know what they need to do to transfer”

Frank Ashley, Texas A&M

“We can’t get students to make the sacrifices we think they must make unless we promise them that their work is going to pay off. Our program is designed to promise the student something that he or she willing to [make a] sacrifice for.”

Steve Farmer, UNC, Chapel Hill
Admitting and Enrolling CC Students…

- Why Transfer? Why Now?
- Strategic Focus and Something More…
- Outreach
- Admission
- Financial Aid
- Student and Academic Affairs
- Parting Thoughts—Looking Ahead
“Community college students [should not] have to gamble with their educational future. They [should] know what they need to do to transfer”

Frank Ashley, Texas A&M

“I am not one who wants to get hung up on the philosophical issue that our definition of a liberal education is better than someone else’s. That’s a big problem we just need to get over and accept more courses, frankly.”

Jerry Lucido, USC
Taking the Plunge

A Strategic Response Requires:
- Mastering the Art of Articulation
- Creating Transparent Transfer Credit Policies
- Identifying Transfer Targets
- Creating Admissions Preferences
...Taking the Plunge

• The Art of Articulation: Most Important...

“Creating good articulation means keeping the student at the center.”

Laura Doering, Iowa State University
...Taking the Plunge

• The Art of Articulation

“The articulation agreement is crucial, but it’s not enough,” says Steve Farmer. “And if it’s used too narrowly or legalistically — as a treaty that maintains the demilitarized zone between two empires — then it can actually work against the interest of students.”

“I am not one who wants to get hung up on the philosophical issue that our definition of a liberal education is better than someone else’s. That’s a big problem we just need to get over and accept more courses, frankly.”

Jerry Lucido, USC
Taking the Plunge

• Creating Transparent Credit-Transfer Policies

“It is not uncommon for students to be two, three or four months into their first semester at the senior institution before they get an evaluation of the transferability and applicability of their credits from the community college.”

“Would you be interested in buying a car if you signed a contract and the dealer said, ‘We’ll get back to you in three months with the price’?”

Marc Cutright, University of Central Florida
Taking the Plunge

• Identifying Transfer Targets

“When we discuss enrollment goals … there are always two transfer numbers,” says Lora Doering [Iowa State]. “An overall number for transfers and a number for Iowa community college transfers. **That’s a constituency we go after very specifically.**”

• Creating Admissions Preferences

*Why shouldn’t transfers be first in line for consideration?* asks Marc Cutright. “Why should they be last in line? These people have proven they can succeed in college.”
Providing Financial Aid...

- Why Transfer? Why Now?
- Strategic Focus and Something More...
- Outreach
- Admission
- **Financial Aid**
- Student and Academic Affairs
- Parting Thoughts—Looking Ahead
Increased Costs at Four-Year Institution

Inexperience with the Financial Aid Process

Last in line...

“We have not figured out a way to serve transfer students well in the area of financial aid.”

Youlonda Copeland-Morgan
...It’s Not Just the Money

Unique Financial Aid Issues for Transfer Students:

- Increased Costs Associated with Four-Year Institution
  - CC tuition/fees, on average, about 2/3rds less than four-year institutions
- Inexperience with the Financial Aid Process
  - A large proportion of transfer students never applied for financial aid at their community college
- Complexity of Backgrounds
  - Dependent? Independent?
Financial Aid: Opportunities

Help Them Understand their Financial Aid Future

Build Four-Year—Community College Partnerships

Make Work Study Work for Transfers
Student and Academic Affairs...

- Why Transfer? Why Now?
- Strategic Focus and Something More...
- Outreach
- Admission
- Financial Aid
- **Student & Academic Affairs**
- Parting Thoughts—Looking Ahead
Creating a Transfer-Affirming Culture

“If you’re going to enroll transfer students...there should be a critical mass on campus—not a token presence.”

Janina Montero, UCLA

“People say transfer students will take care of themselves. The reality is they won’t. If you really want to help them get the baccalaureate degree, you’ve got to have services for them when they get to the four-year institution.”

Mark Allen Poisel, University of Central Florida
Creating a Transfer-Receptive Culture

- Dueling Academic Cultures?
  - Transfer Going & Transfer Receptive Institutions
  - Institutional Differences
    - Size
    - Cost
    - Procedures (e.g., Quarters vs. Semesters)
- Differences in World View
  - Academic Expectations (e.g., LD vs. UD courses)
  - Part-time and Full-time Enrollment
  - Competition
Creating a Transfer-Receptive Culture

“People say transfer students will take care of themselves. The reality is they won’t. If you really want to help them get the baccalaureate degree, you’ve got to have services for them when they get to the four-year institution.”

Mark Allen Poisel, University of Central Florida

“Our transfers are either USC Trojans or they’re not. I don’t want a bunch of students running around with a ‘Scarlet T.’ on their chest.”

Timothy Brunold, USC
Creating a Transfer-Receptive Culture

• Connecting Transfer Students to the Four-Year Campus:

“Most of the students who come from community colleges have not really experienced an on-campus student life. We want their experience at UCLA to be full, even if it is only for two years.”

Janina Montero, UCLA
Creating a Transfer-Receptive Culture

• Orientation

“At many four-year institutions, freshman orientation lasts two or three days, but transfer orientation is only a few hours. What’s wrong with this picture?”

Alfred Herrera, UCLA

• Transfer Centers

“Don’t always treat transfers as a special case. Develop a program for them, create a home for them, and then get them in the main-stream with everything else, and all of a sudden you’re looking in a classroom where you don’t know the difference.”

Mark Allen Poisel, UCF
Creating a Transfer-Receptive Culture

• Transfer Housing

“There’s a belief that transfer students don’t live in campus housing. It’s not true.”

Bonita Jacobs,
University of North Texas
Transfer Affirming Cultures

Envision transfer as a shared responsibility between community colleges and four-year institutions

View transfer and attainment of the bachelor's degree as expected and attainable

Offer curricula and academic support services that make transfer and degree completion possible

Leverage the social capital that students bring to college in service to their educational goals

Include transfer as an essential element of an institution's mission and strategic vision goals
Parting Thoughts—Looking Ahead

Create an institution-wide vision that includes transfer students.

Treat transfers in outreach, admission, and academic and student affairs with a devotion similar to that of first-year students.

Understand that the needs of transfer students may be different than those of first-year students.
Parting Thoughts…

Be an active and authentic partner

Be intentional and strategic (rather than simply opportunistic)

Help create transfer-affirming cultures
“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.”
Winning

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We don’t want to enroll transfer students who we want to serve them...

of The Nation

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Transfer Student Support for UC Success
UC Welcomes Transfer Students

- 90% of all admitted transfer students are from a CCC
- 1/3 of UC bachelor’s degrees go to transfer students
- UC offers a space to every UC-eligible CCC student
- Select campuses offer transfer admission guarantees
- The University increased its new transfer enrollment targets by 500 two years in a row
- Long-term plan is slow growth of new transfer students
“We at UC will actively partner with the CSU and the community colleges to help students understand that the transfer option is achievable and affordable."

- UC President Mark Yudof, March 2010
Transfer Preparation Programs

- Campus-based Transfer Preparation Programs increase opportunities for community college students to transfer to four-year institutions by providing comprehensive academic guidance and support for prospective transfers.

- MESA seeks to raise the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enter college with well-developed math and science skills.

- PUENTE focuses on college preparatory English skills.
Services include…

- Summer and Residential Programs
- Community College and High School Support
- Peer Mentoring
- Personal Advising and Motivation
- Counselor Professional Development
- Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG)
  – Select Campuses
Transfer Specific Support Services on a UC Campus

• Campus Centers for Transfer Students
  – Discover resources, transfer-specific student organizations, peers, and staff

• Transfer-specific support programs
  – Offered at various campuses - for student parents, military veterans, re-entry, or nontraditional age students, commuters

• Transfer Student Housing

• Transfer Student Associations

• Scholarships for Transfer Students
Investing in Innovation

• **Transfer Admission Preparation Tools**
  – TAG Online Application
  – ASSIST “The Next Generation”

• **Transcript Evaluation Service**
  – Using high school transcripts for early identification and strengthening links between high school and transfer prep program
## UC Prep Programs for Transfer Pathway Students

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Co-Admission Program

University of Nevada, Reno
What is Co-Admission?

- A bridge from the Nevada Community Colleges to the University of Nevada, Reno
- Students will work with advising specialists from both the community college and the University
- Expanded opportunities for taking classes and access to services
- More likely to complete associate’s degree and enroll at University
Requirements

- Must begin college career as a new student at a Nevada Community College and have earned between 12-30 credits
- Must complete at least one college-level English and math course
- Expected to be full-time student at the community college and complete 18 transferable credits each school year and maintain minimum 2.0 gpa
- Agree to allow exchange of transcript data between the community college and the University
- Three year maximum in co-admission program
- Must submit associate’s degree plan and enroll in approved coursework
Benefits

- Receive personalized, one-on-one academic advisement from both institutions
- Transcripts are exchanged twice per semester with no additional charges
- Access to University facilities and events
- Least costly path to Bachelor’s degree
- Increased opportunities for internships
- Invitations to campus transfer events
California Community College Perspective on Transfer
California Community College Overview

- Largest higher educational system in the nation
- 72 districts
- 112 colleges
- 2.9 million students
- $46 per unit *(summer 2012 rate)*
- Open access
How Transfer Fits in California

- The California Master Plan for Higher Education specifies—UC and CSU are to establish a lower division to upper division ratio of 40:60 in order to provide transfer opportunities into the upper division for community college students.
- More than half of CSU graduates and one third of UC graduates begin their college career at a community college.
- Transfers earn GPAs equal to or better than native UC or CSU students and graduate at rates comparable to native UC and CSU students.
- 7 of 9 UC’s have guaranteed transfer programs.
Reasons Why the CCC Path May Work for Some Students

- Another chance for the 1st Choice University – CSU & UC give highest priority admissions to CCC students, and there is sometimes less impaction for transfers.
- More time to find the right university – Transfer gives students time to develop their priorities and research schools that meet their needs.
- Financial – Affordability of the community college.
- Readiness – When a student is not ready to go to a four-year institution, move away from home, is undecided on academic or career goal, or needs to sharpen their academic preparedness.
- More options – More options can open up for students when they start at the CCC.
Common challenges of CCC First Generation African American College Students

• More likely to be low-income

• Sometimes less prepared academically than non-first generation students.
  ◦ Tend to have lower college entrance examination scores (if taken)
• More familial responsibilities and have a hard time managing their time.

• More financial obligations and barriers which may affect their retention rates.

• Unfamiliar with the process of applying for financial aid.

• May not receive much family support, and often they must learn how to navigate two cultures.

• Elevated risk for academic failure.
Common traits

According to the research, once they began college first generation college students may take on a common set of characteristics.\textsuperscript{2}

- Lower first semester and first year GPA than classmates
- More likely to drop out during the first year
- More likely to attend classes part-time and work full-time
• Experience cultural difficulties in the transition; may feel marginalized by the culture they are leaving behind and the one they are joining

• Encounter lower faculty expectation and have lower self-esteem.

• More likely to enroll in a two-year institution or community college (especially for African-Americans)

• More likely to leave without a degree.

➢ All students bring their own personal characteristics but when you add the one’s above with them, first generation African-American students do have a disadvantage as they try to reach their academic goals.
Current challenges facing CCC students

- Budget Reductions
- Capping of Enrollments: Decline in community college enrollment in all areas of the nation
- More affluent students attending community colleges
- Community colleges focus on “workforce development” less on transfer
- Transfer process in California very complicated: local area, impaction, new transfer degrees, limited articulation, legislation (209)
Resources at the CCC Focused on Helping Students Transfer

- Transfer Centers: (Tours, college fairs, Rep visits)
- Honors Transfer Programs – Priority Admission Consideration with specific universities
- TAG – Transfer Admission Guarantees (7 UC’s)
- MESA – Math, Engineering, & Science Achievement
- UMOJA– CCC’s educational and economically disadvantage (27)
- FYE – First Year Experience
- TEP – Teacher Education Programs
- EOP&S/CARE
- Other programs which are unique to each campus
Transfer Opportunity Program
Orange Coast College

- The original goal of the Transfer Opportunity Program (TOP) is to recruit, retain and transfer historically underrepresented students to four–year institutions. Founded in fall 1991.

- Students are provided a support system that enhanced their probability of transfer.

- Services provided:
  matriculation/orientation, academic support, workshops, TOP study center with computer station and copier, counseling by TOP counselors, peer advisors, four–year campus tours, counseling class
Working Together for Student Success

High Schools

CA Community Colleges

Universities

STUDENT SUCCESS!