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## College Board Report Highlights the Perspective of 4-Year Institution Leaders on Enrolling and Educating Transfer Students from Community Colleges

### New Report Reveals the Increasingly Vital Role that 4-Year Colleges and Universities Play in Helping Students Transfer from Community Colleges to 4-Year Institutions

NEW YORK — At least 50 percent, and in some cases up to 80 percent, of all incoming community college students seek to transfer to and earn a bachelor's degree at a four-year institution. This U.S. Department of Education statistic is just one of many highlighted in a new report released this month by the College Board regarding the importance of the transfer pathway from public community colleges to four-year universities. The report, [\*Improving Student Transfer from Community Colleges to Four-Year Institutions – The Perspective of Leaders from Baccalaureate-Granting Institutions\*](#), is especially relevant given that community colleges enroll more than seven million students — nearly 44 percent of all undergraduates in the United States — according to the American Association of Community Colleges.

The new report is unique in that it focuses on the challenges and opportunities facing four-year college and university leaders as they work with their community college colleagues to fashion a more efficient transfer pathway for students. The report includes the perspective of 21 higher education leaders based at 12 four-year institutions across the U.S.

“Community colleges are often criticized for not transferring more students,” said Stephen J. Handel, the report's author and executive director of Community College Initiatives at the College Board. “But four-year institutions are at least equal partners in the success of the transfer pathway. This report begins to identify the issues and concerns four-year institution leaders face in attempting to serve more community college transfer students on their campuses.”

According to the report, the transfer process is an important part of the higher education landscape, but it has never achieved its full potential in providing access to a bachelor's degree for many students, especially those from underserved communities. The report finds that, based on demographic shifts, economic climate and global competitiveness, higher education leaders have a renewed commitment to the transfer pathway in ways that better support public institutions and the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

“This report is practical, timely and critically important,” said Youlonda Copeland-Morgan, Assoc. VP, Enrollment Management, Syracuse University, and one of the four-year institution leaders interviewed for this report. “It elevates the transfer student conversation and illuminates the best practices of four-year institutions to improve access, retention and graduation rates.”

The four-year institution leaders interviewed in this report shared several strategies to strengthen the transfer pathway, including:

- Creating an institution-wide vision that includes transfer students;
- Treating transfers in outreach, admission, and academic and student affairs with a devotion similar to that of first-year students; and
- Understanding that the needs of transfer students may be different than those of first-year students.

The report also suggests the following key recommendations to initiate or improve transfer at four-year colleges and universities. However, these recommendations are not meant to be exhaustive, and not all will be appropriate for every institution. Based on the four-year institution leaders interviewed in the report, a summary of the recommendations include additional focus on the following areas:

- Institution leadership and commitment to the transfer pathway
- Outreach and preparation for staff and students
- Admission and enrollment ease of use
- Financial aid options
- Student and academic affairs engagement

The 12 institutions represent only a fraction of the colleges and universities that recruit, admit and serve transfer students in the U.S. The purpose of the report was not to inventory the work of every four-year institution, but to highlight the work of representative schools engaged successfully in the transfer pathway.

The four-year institutions profiled in the report include Georgetown University; Iowa State University; Syracuse University; Texas A&M University; the University of Arizona; University of California, Los Angeles; the University of Central Florida; the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; the University of North Texas; the University of Southern California; Virginia Tech; and Wheaton College.

For copies of the report or additional information about the College Board's community college initiatives, visit: <http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/admission-completion/community-colleges>.

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