Improving Transfer Outcomes

Achieving the Dream
Data and Analytics Summit

September 14, 2017

Josh Wyner, Founder & Executive Director
The Aspen Institute, College Excellence Program
The vast majority of students who enroll in a community college plan to one day earn a bachelor’s degree.

Most never make it.
1.7 Million new students enroll in a community college each year

80% plan to get a bachelor’s degree or higher
We tracked 720,000 community college students who started in the fall of 2007 in pursuit of a college credential.

Only 100,000 earned a bachelor’s after 6 years.
Too few students manage to make the leap

Just 33% of students who started community college in fall of 2007 transferred to a four-year school
Even when they transfer, we’re still failing them

Of the students who successfully transferred, only 42% went on to get a bachelor’s within 6 years of starting.
Transfer Students Struggle to Earn a Bachelor’s Degree

80% of new community college students aim to earn a bachelor’s.

33% of these students transfer to a 4-year college within 6 years.

14% earn a bachelor’s within 6 years of starting college.

For more information, see Tracking Transfer: New Measures of Institutional and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students Attain Bachelor’s Degrees (New York, NY: Community College Research Center).
WEBSITE EXERCISE

Imagine you are a student about to register for classes at a community college. You want to study marketing and transfer to the local four-year university. Go to the community college’s website, and find the information that you need to select your courses and transfer successfully. Try to figure out what courses you will need to in order to transfer and enter the marketing program at the four-year institution. Then, go to the four-year university’s website and try to confirm that you are taking the right classes.

Think about the following questions:

- **As the student:** What marketing programs are available at the university? What career options are available to you after you transfer and complete the degree? What do salaries look like for these career options? Is this information available to you on either website?

- **As the student:** What are the requirements for admission to the university’s marketing programs? What classes will you need to take at the community college if you want to transfer into a marketing program at the university? How easy or difficult was it to find this information? How many clicks did it take?

- **As the student:** Who would you need to go at the college to get information on transfer in marketing? Where would you go on campus to find that person? How easy or difficult was it to find this information on your website?
THE TRANSFER PLAYBOOK:
ESSENTIAL PRACTICES FOR
TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES
# The Transfer Playbook: Essential Practices for Two- and Four-Year Colleges*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Community College</th>
<th>Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>• Front Range CC</td>
<td>• Colorado State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>• Manchester CC</td>
<td>• Eastern Connecticut State U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>• Broward College</td>
<td>• Florida International U</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Florida Atlantic U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>• LSU-Eunice</td>
<td>• U of Louisiana - Lafayette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass.</td>
<td>• Holyoke CC</td>
<td>• U Mass Amherst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>• Everett CC</td>
<td>• University of Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Western Washington U</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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* Wyner, Deane, Jenkins & Fink, May 2016.
Essential 2- and 4-Year College Transfer Practices

1. Prioritize transfer student success
2. Create clear program pathways with aligned high quality instruction
3. Provide tailored transfer student advising

+ Build strong transfer partnerships

*Wyner, Deane, Jenkins & Fink, May 2016.*
STRATEGY 1: Prioritize Transfer

- Communicate importance of transfer to mission
- Share data on outcomes and consequences
- Dedicate significant resources to transfer
STRATEGY 2: Create Clear Programmatic Pathways with Aligned High-Quality Instruction

- Create major-specific program maps.
- Provide rigorous instruction and extracurriculars.
- Establish a reliable process to update and improve maps.
- Design unconventional pathways.
STRATEGY 2

For this program of study,

• What learning outcomes are essential in the first two years so the student can transfer to a four-year college with junior standing?

• What essential elements of the “native” freshman and sophomore learning experience may be hard to replicate for community college transfer students?

• What alternatives to these hard-to-replicate learning experiences can be provided so that the students’ junior-year standing is not compromised?
Select an area of interest

Program description

Select a major map for course sequence and prerequisites to finish in two years

https://mymajor.fiu.edu/
STRATEGY 3: Provide Tailored Transfer Student Advising

**Questions:**

- Will I be accepted to the four-year college?
- Will my credits transfer?
- Will they count toward my major?
- How many years will it take to complete my degree?
- How much will it cost?
- What jobs can I get with my degree?
STRATEGY 3: Provide Tailored Transfer Student Advising

- Help students determine, as early as possible, their field of interest, major, and preferred transfer destination.
- Continuously monitor student progress, provide frequent feedback and intervene quickly when students are off-track.
- Help students access the financial resources necessary to achieve their goals.
STRATEGY 3: Provide Tailored Transfer Student Advising

- Commit dedicated personnel, structures, and resources for transfer students
- Assign advisors and clearly communicate essential information to prospective transfer students
- Strongly encourage transfer students to choose a major prior to transfer
- Replicate elements of the first-year experience for transfer students
- Exercise fairness in financial aid allocation
What Can I Do Next?

Complete a Self-Assessment

Transfer Playbook Self-Assessment

Explore your institution’s stage of adoption across transfer practices and think through key questions and next steps.
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Explore Key Data Metrics

Tracking Transfer Measures

- Transfer Out Rate
- Transfer With Award Rate
- Transfer Out with Bachelor’s Attainment Rate
## Explore Key Data Metrics

### Table 1. Student Counts, Name withheld (sample report)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All students</th>
<th>Lower-income</th>
<th>Higher-income</th>
<th>Age: 18-20</th>
<th>Age: 21-24</th>
<th>Age: 25+</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entering Students in Cohort</strong></td>
<td>1460</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>1193</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer Students</strong></td>
<td>568</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who transferred with an award from this CC</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer students who completed a bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Explore Key Data Metrics

**Table 2.** Transfer-out Rates: Percentage of students in your entering community college cohort who ever enrolled at a four-year institution for at least one term after their first term at your community college, within six years of first enrolling at your community college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Transfer-out Rate</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name withheld (sample report)</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Average</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**National Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Transfer-out Rate</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Average, All CCs</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average, Urban CCs</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Urban CC</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average, Rural CCs</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Rural CC</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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Understand the Student Experience

Three Focus Groups

- First-year students
- Liberal arts students at the 45-credit mark
- Post-transfer students

Key Questions:

- How many students in each group have chosen a major/transfer destination?
- What information was used in their major/transfer destination decision-making process?
- How do students in the post-transfer group fare at their new 4-year institution?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

a) In what ways is your institution effective in serving transfer students?

b) Where do you need to improve?

c) Is there any low-hanging fruit that would help improve outcomes?

d) What longer term improvements do you think are necessary?
Resources

• *Tracking Transfer: New Measures of Institutional and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students Attain Bachelor’s Degrees*

• *The Transfer Playbook: Essential Practices for Two- and Four-Year Colleges*
  https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/transfer-playbook/