

Barriers and Opportunities

The Transition from 2 to 4-year Institutions

Pamela Brown
New York City College of Technology,
City University of New York

The National Academies
September 11, 2013



Community Colleges increasingly serve as the gateway to post-secondary education as well as employment

- ~43% of the nation's 17.6 million undergraduates attend a community college (fall 2009; NCES, 2011)
- In many cases 2-year colleges are geographically closer to students than 4-year institutions
- Average annual tuition - public in state (AACC, 2012)

community colleges: \$2,963

4-year colleges: \$8,244



Transfer from 2 to 4-year Institutions

- **1. Preparation for transfer**
- **2. The transfer process – articulation agreements, joint degree programs, collaborations**
- **3. Adjustment to the new campus**
- **4. The growing trend of community colleges offering 4-year degrees**

Preparation for Transfer – Opportunities - Collaborative partnerships between 2-year colleges and 4-year institutions

- **Programs that align credentials between 2- and 4-year schools and provide support through the transfer process can increase the success rate for students in STEM fields.[Briefing book, p. 161]**
- **Courses at the community college vetted by university faculty provide the necessary intellectual rigor for transfer credit and higher education.**

Preparation for Transfer – Opportunities - Collaborative partnerships between 2-year colleges and 4-year institutions

- **Alliances between community colleges and research universities enhance the availability of research experiences to students at community colleges; Shaffer, Alvarez et al. (2010); Wei and Woodin (2011)[Briefing book, p. 153]**
- **Collaborations allow students to develop relationships with faculty prior to transferring, utilize university resources and participate in cultural and athletic events, helping them more easily integrate into campus life upon successful transfer. [Briefing book, p. 161]**
- **Successful completion of intermediate outcomes such as passing gatekeeper courses and earning an associate degree enhance the probability of transfer of community college students (Adelman 2005; Roksa & Calcagno, 2010).**

Preparation for Transfer – Opportunities – Funding Agencies to Encourage Collaborations

- **Development of important partnerships between community and technical colleges and employers in the private sector to encourage scientific research and engineering design exchanges across 2- and 4-year institutions. the Department could be supported by the Department of Labor's Career Pathways Innovation Fund or expansion of the mission of the Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training initiative could be expanded**
- **NSF's ATE program could also be more focused on cross institutional collaborations. The pathways could provide authentic STEM experiences for community college students on the 4-year campus.[Briefing book, p. 161]**



Preparing for Transfer – Barriers - Community colleges have some success at reversing the negative effects of inadequate academic preparation, but there is room for improvement

- **~42% of students at public 2-year institutions have taken a remedial course (NCES, 2011)**
- **~25-39% of students that enroll in community colleges transfer to baccalaureate institutions in 4-6 years; ~20% of students that initially enroll with remedial needs transfer (Lumina, 2009).**

The Transfer Process - Opportunities

- **Programs that align credentials between 2- and 4-year schools and provide support through the transfer process can increase the success rate for students in STEM fields.[Briefing book, p. 161]**
- **Statewide formal and legally based articulation agreements increase the number of credits transferring to baccalaureate degree programs (Anderson, Sun & Alfonso, M, 2006)**
- **Arizona's transfer and articulation system helped transfer students decrease the number of credits at graduation by approximately 12 credits, over a 5-year period (Hezel, 2007)**



The Transfer Process - Opportunities

- Large state systems, such as the University of California and California State University systems, have long-standing programs like MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) that create partnerships between 4-year universities and neighboring 2-year colleges to align curricula and work with students to ensure that they are well-prepared for the transition to bachelor's degree programs in STEM disciplines.[Briefing book, p. 161]
- Six-year degree completion rates for students who transferred all of their credits to a four-year institution were 40% higher compared to those who had only some of their credits transferred (82 % for all credits transferred vs. 42% for some credits transferred). (Doyle, 2006)

The Transfer Process - Barriers

- **The transition from a 2-to 4-year college can be difficult, especially for members of groups underrepresented in STEM fields. For example, a recent study of women of color in STEM disciplines found that transfer rates are low for women of color, and retention rates of transfer students in STEM programs at 4-year institutions are even lower. [Briefing book, p. 161]**
- **Transfer students are not tracked by the US Dept. of Education through the Integrated Postsecondary Education data System (IPEDS) and may be overlooked by campus administrators (McIntosh & Nelson, 2012)**

Adjustment to the New Campus - Opportunities

- **Community college students who transfer to baccalaureate programs are just as likely to graduate as students who began at four year colleges and universities. (Melguizo & Dowd, 2006).**
- **The most significant predictor of transfer students thriving was their amount of interaction with faculty, followed by their level of campus involvement(McIntosh & Nelson, 2012).**

Adjustment to the New Campus - Barriers

- **“Transfer shock” (McIntosh & Nelson, 2012) – dip in grades during 1st semester at the receiving institution, diminished opportunities to form social connections, increased time to graduation and lower satisfaction than native peers.**
- **Part-time students are particularly at risk of leaving college before completing a degree. At 2-year colleges the one-year retention rate for all full-time students is 61%, but only 40% for part-time students. At 4-year institutions one year retention for all full-time students is 77%, but only 46% for part-time students (NCES, 2011).**

The Growing Trend of Community Colleges Offering 4-year degrees – Opportunities

- **Twenty one states now allow community colleges to offer bachelor's degrees – up from 11 states just eight years ago. This model may help to eliminate transfer shock, create degree programs in high-demand applied science and technical fields, and provide access to higher education in remote rural areas (Fain, 2013).**

The Growing Trend of Community Colleges Offering 4-year degrees – Barriers

- **Too little is known about student success under this model. The baccalaureate push could lead to accreditation snags, concerns about the quality of degree programs and increased costs at two-year colleges, as they hire faculty and seek facilities upgrades (Fain, 2013).**

Conclusion

- **“It is imperative, that the community colleges “maintain high standards and that transfer students move with ease from the two-year programs to the senior colleges.”**
- **.....Quote from a 1960 report detailing the structure of the new CUNY system, created 50 years ago.**

References

- Adelman, C. (2005). *Moving into town and moving on: the community college in the lives of traditional-age students*. Washington, DC, US Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/comcollege/index.html> (accessed Sept 2013)
- Anderson, G.M., Sun, J.C., & Alfonso, M. (2006). Effectiveness of statewide articulation agreements on the probability of transfer: A preliminary policy analysis. *Review of Higher Education*. 29, 261-291
- http://www.changecenter.org/research-publications/articles-from-the-diversity-conference/Effectiveness%20of%20Statewide%20Articulation%20Agreements%20on%20the%20Probability%20of%20Transfer.pdf/at_download/file (accessed Sept 2013)
- Best Practices in Statewide Articulation and Transfer Systems (2009), Lumina Foundation. <http://www.wiche.edu/info/publications/ATlitOverview.pdf> (accessed Sept 2013)
- Doyle, W. (2006). Community college transfers and college graduation: Whose choices matter most? *Change*, May/June issue. <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/change/subasp?key=98&subkey=1711> (accessed Sept 2013)
- Fain, P. Evolution or Mission Creep? "Inside Higher Education", January 22, 2013. <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/01/22/michigan-lets-community-colleges-issue-four-year-degrees-amid-controversy#ixzz2eR9cVBdt> (accessed Sept 2013)
- Gao, H., Hughes, W., O'Rear, M., & Fendley, W. (2002). Developing structural equation models to determine factors contributing to student graduation and retention: Are there differences for native students and transfers? Paper presented at Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Toronto, Canada. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services, ED478834). Retrieved January 23, 2009 from ERIC database.

References

-
- Hezel Associates (2007). *Evaluation of Arizona's Transfer Articulation System*. <http://www.aztransfer.com/Hezel> (accessed Sept 2013)
-
- McIntosh, E. J.; Nelson, D. D. Transfer Students: Thriving in a New Institution, book chapter in Schreiner, L.A., Louis, M.C., & Nelson, D. D. (Eds.). *Thriving in Transitions: A Research Based Approach to College Student Success*. (2012). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
-
- Melguizo, T. & Dowd, A.C. (2006). The study of economic, informational and cultural barriers to community college transfer access at selective institutions. Section I in *Transfer access to elite colleges and universities in the United States: Threading the needle of the American dream* (Report for the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, Lumina Foundation for Education, and Nellie Mae Education Foundation). Lansdowne, VA: Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. <http://www.jkcf.org/grants/community-college-transfer/research/transfer-access-to-elite-colleges-and-universities-in-the-united-states-threading-the-needle-of-the-/> (accessed Sept 2013)
-
- Roksa, J. & Calcagno, J.C. (2010). Catching up in community colleges: academic preparation and transfer to four-year Institutions. *Teachers College Record*, 112(1), 260-388.
-
-