The Age of the Transfer Student

Stephen J. Handel

College Admission 2025: Embracing the Future

- The Transfer Moment

- AVP, Undergraduate Admissions, University of California (Systemwide)

- University of Southern California
- January 21-23, 2015
A Shared History

Today…A Transfer Moment

Student Desire

If You Build it, They Will Come
A Shared History...The Transfer Partnership

- Spans Three Centuries
- Elitism and the Progressive Era
- A Nation on the Move
- The Pivotal Role of Four-Year Institutions
Drift and Disengagement...

- Four-Year Colleges:
  - The goal of an upper-division-only future...unfulfilled
  - The need for lower-division enrollments...insatiable!

- Two-Year Institutions:
  - A desire to expand the experiment
  - A need for independence and identity
Today...A Transfer Moment: Why?
The Political
The Financial
The Inevitable
Today...A Transfer Moment

Our President: Obama’s “America’s College Promise Proposal.”

Your Congress: CCs are one of the few non-partisan issues in DC.

My Governor: “Brown urged a serious consideration of displacing freshmen with increased numbers of transfer students at UC. Increasing the proportion of transfer students could be a way to maintain the quality of the University, increase diversity, and lower the University’s cost structure.”
Today...A Transfer Moment

The Financial

Commitment:
- 4-Year Private: $35,596
- 4-Year Public: $15,919
- 2-Year Public: $10,242

Cost:
- Annual CC Tuition: $3,260
- Annual Public 4-Year Tuition: $8,890

The Great Recession: Retrenchment and Reassessment
Today...A Transfer Moment

Demography is Destiny and Diversity:
CCs welcome low-income, 1st generation, and other URM students in greater numbers than most 4-year institutions

Filling Seats is Job One:
Depending on the state you live in, high school graduation rates are static.. or are exploding! Either way, CCs are the part of your solution...
A Shared History

Today…A Transfer Moment

Student (Baccalaureate) Desire

If You Build it, They Will Come
Students want to earn a four-year degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Student Characteristics</th>
<th>1989-90</th>
<th>1995-96</th>
<th>2003-04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>83.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>79.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>79.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>85.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander¹</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native²</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>55.0²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age When First Enrolled</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 or younger</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–23</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24–29</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 or older</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest 25 percent</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>84.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle 50 percent</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest 25 percent</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More student desire

- **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
Degree Intentions of CC Students 1966-1999

Year:

- 1966
- 1967
- 1968
- 1969
- 1970
- 1971
- 1972
- 1973
- 1974
- 1975
- 1976
- 1977
- 1978
- 1979
- 1980
- 1981
- 1982
- 1983
- 1984
- 1985
- 1986
- 1987
- 1988
- 1989
- 1990
- 1991
- 1992
- 1993
- 1994
- 1995
- 1996
- 1997
- 1998
- 1999

Degree Intentions:

- AA Degree
- BA Degree
- BA + Graduate Degree
Even More Desire...

- 1940-1950s: “…between two-thirds and three fourths of [new] community college students expect to transfer…” (Medsker, 1960)

- 1924: Survey of 9,000 students: 80% intended to transfer to a four-year institution

- 1920: Student survey at 29 California Community Colleges:
  - “To save money” (60%)
  - “To prepare for the university” (58%).
  - “Occupational training” (1%).

Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. 43
I can hear you thinking...

“The junior college is succeeding in the first step of its preparatory function, namely in giving its students an ambition to go on to further work in the university….there are many reasons to suppose that it is succeeding too well.”

Walter Eells, 1931
The National Debate

The Diploma's Vanishing Value
Bachelor's degrees may not be worth it, but community college can bring a strong return

Is college worth it?

Are college degrees still worth it in this economy?

College is a bad financial bet for some, study says

Bachelor's degree: Has it lost its edge and its value?
“It is important to underscore the finding that community college students — even if we restrict our focus to baccalaureate aspirants — secure significantly fewer baccalaureate degrees than four-year college entrants.

This result is so cruel given the fact that so many students (particularly among working-class and minority youth) enter the community college in the belief that it will greatly assist their pursuit of the baccalaureate degree.”

Kevin Dougherty, 1994, p. 67-68
A Shared History

Today…A Transfer Moment?

Student Desire

If You Build it, They Will Come
“Many California students begin their higher education journey at a community college, yet year for the opportunity to earn a four-year degree. We must continue to support the access and success of the California community college population.”

Janet Napolitano, 2014
Highly competitive institution...with a significant commitment to transfer students...

Popularity

- Over 158,000 applications received for Fall 2015 freshman admission...I could fill every campus with first-year students.

- These freshmen are truly accomplished academically.

Transfer Student Commitment

- UC Regents: At least one CCC transfer for every two freshman admitted.

- Nearly 9 of 10 from a California community college.
## Transfer Student Academic Performance at UC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Year Persistence</th>
<th>2/4 Year Graduation Rates</th>
<th>4/6 Year Graduation Rates</th>
<th>GPA at Graduation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UC’s Transfer Student Profile: Contributing to a Diverse Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Generation College</th>
<th>Low Income (Pell Eligible)</th>
<th>Under-Represented Minority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Will we embrace or divert?

“Students — many of them of modest origins — came to the junior college in search of upward mobility.

The best route for this mobility seemed obvious to them: a college-parallel transfer program that would gain them access to a senior college and to the occupations which such colleges had traditionally prepared their students.

But their aspirations clashed directly with the preferences of both the university and community college administrators, who wished to divert students away from four-year colleges and universities”

Brint & Karabel, 1989, p. 66
Final Thought…

“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 (2011)
Stephen J. Handel

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- Stephen.handel@ucop.edu
Transfer Student Persistence and Completion

 When compared by classification, transfer students perform as well, or better than native students

 Enrollment patterns and transfer student graduation rates:
  • Full-time enrollment – 83%
  • Part-time enrollment – 24.8%
  • Mixed enrollment – 62.1%

 Baccalaureate attainment rates were higher for students who transferred with a two-year degree or certificate (72%) than for those who transferred without a credential (56%).
Transformational Models

- **Financial aid – packaging and scholarships**
  - According to the Texas Student Loan Corporation (TG), Transfer students are not afforded as much financial aid as native students upon entry at 4-year institutions.

- **Financial literacy education**
  - According to Noel-Levitz, transfer students have greater concerns about financing than native students
    - 55-57% have financial problems that will interfere with their studies
    - 45-48% have the financial resources to finish college
Transformational Models

- **Transition services (transfer centers, transfer-specific orientations, mentor programs)**
  - Students who successfully transfer struggle to become familiar with a new campus. (Handel, 2013)
  - Fewer transfer students than native students feel at home at their new campuses and that is was easy to make friends. (Noel-Levitz, 2013)

- **Intentional and Intrusive academic advising**
  - Advising is a priority for transfer students and they are highly receptive to academic support services (Noel-Levitz, 2013)
  - Transfer students are less likely than native students to have received academic advising in the semester prior to transferring.
Transformational Models & Financial Implication

- Reverse awarding of the associate’s degree
- Intentional recruiting for under-populated or niche majors
- Bridge programs
- 2+2 programs
**A Glimpse Into the Future: Consolidation**

**Gainesville State College**

Access Mission

Above Average AS Degree Completion

2nd in Sector for Retention

**North Georgia College & State University**

Selective Mission

2nd Highest in Retention

2nd in Sector for Degree Completion

Senior Military College
1 University
4 Campuses
30 Counties
Multipath Powerhouse

Doctoral
Master’s
Bachelor’s
Associate
Certificate
**Questions for Consideration**

### Common Vision & Unity of Purpose
- Where is transfer reflected in our EM (and institution) mission and strategic plan?
- What transfer-related expectations do we want to establish or enhance?
- How are we communicating these expectations to faculty/students/staff/legislators?

### Collaboration & Commitment
- Who “owns” transfer and who are our transfer champions?
- Who is missing from the transfer conversation?
- What natural partnerships exist that could facilitate transfer?

### Intentional Action
- What is our institution/department doing to reduce barriers to transfer access?
- What well-intentioned programs and policies may have unintentional consequence for transfer students?
Parting Words

- Transfer students can play an integral role in contributing to an institution’s viability. As such, institutions of all types are wise to engage in intentional planning for recruiting, retaining, and graduating transfer students with the same zeal as is demonstrated for new from high school students.

- Institution-specific data collection, analysis, and dissemination activities are critical to fully understanding the potential value of current and prospective transfer students and the programs and services designed to serve them. Do not be discouraged by what you don’t know or cannot immediately ascertain. Truly understanding the local transfer phenomenon is usually a work in progress - just commit to getting to work!
Please don’t hesitate to contact me for additional information.

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