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California's Higher Education Transfer Function

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST'S OFFICE

Presented To:

Senate Select Committee on College and
University Admissions and Outreach





State Places High Importance on Transfer Function



1960 Master Plan Envisioned Transfer Pathway to Enhance Access, Affordability

- ***Seeks to Balance Competing Goals.*** Attempts to address “the problem of numbers” (enrollment demand) and “the problem of quality” (selectivity).
- ***Tiered Eligibility.*** UC and CSU eligibility tightened, but community colleges to provide universal access.
- ***Cost Containment.*** Community colleges a more affordable option for lower-division coursework.



Donahoe Act Directs Segments to Facilitate and Improve Transfer

- ***Community Colleges.*** Board of Governors has responsibility to ensure students have access to courses meeting universities’ lower division baccalaureate degree requirements.
- ***Universities.*** UC and CSU should expand transfer admissions to achieve 60/40 ratio between upper division and lower division students.
- ***Transfer Is a Systemwide Priority.*** The transfer function is to be “a central institutional priority of all segments..., and the segments shall have as a fundamental policy and practice the maintenance of an effective transfer system.”
- ***Specific Transfer Mechanisms.*** The segments should pursue common course numbering, a core transfer curriculum, transfer agreements, and other strategies for facilitating transfer.



State Places High Importance on Transfer Function

(Continued)



Transfer Function Highlighted as a Priority in Recent Legislation and Annual Budget Acts

- **Chapter 73, Statutes of 2005** (SB 63, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), specifies performance measures to be reported annually by CCC, including student transfers to four-year institutions.
- **Chapter 804, Statutes of 2006** (SB 652, Scott), directs CCC and UC to expand articulation of major preparation courses by January 1, 2008.
- **Earmarked Funding.** Current budget includes \$1.4 million for CCC to support articulation and common course numbering projects. The budget includes an additional \$2 million in UC's budget to increase transfer among educationally disadvantaged students.
- **Transfer Among Budget Priorities.** Current budget specifies that CCC enrollment growth funding should be allocated to give highest priority to transfer, basic skills, and career technical education courses.



“Multiple Missions” Complicates Assessment Of Transfer Function Performance



What Percentage of CCC Students Should We Expect to Transfer?

- ***Partly Depends on Student Preferences.*** Only about one-third of students initially express intent to transfer. Yet about one-half of actual transfer students did *not* initially express transfer goal.
- ***Partly Depends on Student Preparation.*** Most CCC students are not prepared for transfer-level work in English or mathematics.
- ***Partly Depends on UC and CSU Institutional Capacity and Eligibility Requirements.*** Enrollment funding at UC and CSU is limited. Eligibility requirements can vary by campus and over time.



Recent Reports Offer Broad Range of Transfer Rates

- The CSU Sacramento’s Institute for Higher Education and Leadership calculated a rate of 18 percent.
- The CPEC calculated a 22 percent rate.
- The CCC’s accountability report offers a rate of 41 percent.
- The MPR Associates calculated six different rates, from 24 percent to 67 percent.
- Overall, very few CCC students transfer. Rates are especially low among Latino and African American students.



Data Related to 1999 Cohort



Six-Year Transfer Rates

- About 11 percent of first-time CCC students transfer to a four-year institution within six years.
- Another 8 percent become “transfer ready”(but do not transfer) within that time period.
- Transfer rates vary by racial/ethnic group: 12 percent for whites, 17 percent for Asians, 8 percent for Latinos, and 7 percent for African Americans.



Characteristics of Transfer Students

- About two-thirds have not completed minimum academic requirements for transfer to UC or CSU. (These students primarily transfer to private or out-of-state institutions.)
- About one-half did not express transfer as a goal when first entering community college.



Key Policy Questions



How Does Transfer Fit Within CCC's Multiple Missions?

- Should Legislature expect CCC to focus on transfer only for students who are prepared and inclined to transfer?
- Alternatively, should Legislature expect CCC to encourage students to consider transfer as a goal?
- What percentage of CCC resources or capacity does Legislature expect to be focused on transfer function?



How Much Space at UC and CSU Should Be Allocated to Transfer Students?

- Growth in traditional college-age population will soon slow and even reverse. This may create "room" for more transfers.



Success of Transfer Function Depends on Various Institutions



Factors Within Community Colleges

- Availability of transferable courses.
- Adequacy of advising and counseling.
- Effectiveness of assessment and placement mechanisms.



Factors Within UC and CSU

- Institutional capacity to enroll transfer students.
- Clarity and consistency of transfer admissions requirements.



Intersegmental Factors

- Articulation of courses among the higher education segments.



State Government's Role

- Clarity of transfer goals and priorities within higher education system.
- Coordination and oversight of higher education system.
- Allocation of enrollment funding among segments.