Transfer & Mobility: A National View of Postsecondary Pathways of First-Time Students

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Transfer as a Success Outcome

• College transfer is an important student outcome as it plays a significant role in students’ degree completion, an indicator of student success.
  – Baccalaureate degree attainment for community college students who transfer to four-year institutions;
  – Additional coursework at lower costs in two-year institutions for students in four-year institutions;
  – Reverse transfer of credits to enable students to combine their credits from both two-year and four-year institutions in order to be awarded an associate’s degree by the two-year institution.
  – Lateral transfer to find a better institutional fit or a program
The National Student Clearinghouse Data

- Researchers can follow students across all types of institutions; two-year and four-year, public and private;
- Data are not limited by state lines;
- Outcomes can be measured over multiple years and for different cohorts;
- Results can be reported at the national, state or regional level.
Cohort and Outcome Definitions

- 3.6 million first-time students in Fall 2008;
- Full-time, part-time, mixed enrollment;
- Transfer outcomes over 6 years through August 2014;
- Transfer defined as enrollment in an institution different from the starting institution
Students’ First Enrollment by Institution Type, Fall 2008 Cohort

- Two-Year Public: 48.2%
- Two-Year Private Non-Profit: 32.2%
- Two-Year Private For-profit: 14.3%
- Four-Year Public: .7%
- Four-Year Private Non-Profit: .3%
- Four-Year Private For-profit: 4.4%
Overall Transfer Rates

- Over a third (37.2 percent) transferred to a different institution at least once within six years.
- Of those who transferred, almost half (45 percent) changed their institution more than once.
- Counting multiple moves, students in the fall 2008 cohort made 2.4 million transitions from one institution to another within six years.
Six-Year Transfer and Mobility Rates by Sector and Control of Starting Institution

- **Public**
  - Two-Year: 35.6%
  - Four-Year: 36.5%

- **Private Non-Profit**
  - Two-Year: 53.9%
  - Four-Year: 34.3%

- **Private For-profit**
  - Two-Year: 20.8%
  - Four-Year: 22.9%

- **Private Non-Profit**
  - Two-Year: 10%
  - Four-Year: 175,704

- **Private For-profit**
  - Two-Year: 683,120
  - Four-Year: 36,284

**Post-degree**

- Public: 3.9%
- Private Non-Profit: 4,907
- Private For-profit: 5,486

**Pre-degree**

- Public: 421,654
- Private Non-Profit: 36,284
- Private For-profit: 36,284
Six-Year Transfer and Mobility Rates By Enrollment Intensity

- Exclusively Full-Time: 11.9%
- Exclusively Part-Time: 22.9%
- Mixed Enrollment: 53.7%
Transfer and Mobility Rates by Enrollment Intensity and Institution Type

- Public TWO-YEAR
  - Full-Time: 29.0%
  - Part-Time: 11.8%
  - Mixed: 54.1%

- Public FOUR-YEAR
  - Full-Time: 22.3%
  - Part-Time: 12.4%
  - Mixed: 52.3%

- Private Nonprofit FOUR-YEAR
  - Full-Time: 22.0%
  - Part-Time: 12.2%
  - Mixed: 60.1%

- Private For-Profit
  - Full-Time: 12.3%
  - Part-Time: 5.4%
  - Mixed: 42.9%
Timing of First Transfer or Mobility by Enrollment Intensity

% of Fall 2008 Transfer Cohort by Enrollment Intensity

- Full-Time
  - Year 1 (2008-09): 23.0%
  - Year 2 (2009-10): 36.3%
  - Year 3 (2010-11): 26.5%
  - Year 4 (2011-12): 8.4%
  - Year 5 (2012-13): 3.5%
  - Year 6 (2013-14): 2.4%

- Part-Time
  - Year 1 (2008-09): 12.7%
  - Year 2 (2009-10): 24.9%
  - Year 3 (2010-11): 20.3%
  - Year 4 (2011-12): 16.2%
  - Year 5 (2012-13): 13.9%
  - Year 6 (2013-14): 12.0%

- Mixed Enrollment
  - Year 1 (2008-09): 12.0%
  - Year 2 (2009-10): 37.6%
  - Year 3 (2010-11): 24.2%
  - Year 4 (2011-12): 13.4%
  - Year 5 (2012-13): 8.1%
  - Year 6 (2013-14): 4.8%
Total Transfer and Mobility Rate by Sector of Destination Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector of Transfer Students' Starting Institution</th>
<th>Two-Year</th>
<th>Four-Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-degree</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post degree</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Destination of First Transfer or Mobility by Sector and Control of Starting Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting Institution</th>
<th>Public TWO-YEAR</th>
<th>Public FOUR-YEAR</th>
<th>Private Non-Profit FOUR-YEAR</th>
<th>Private For-Profit FOUR-YEAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Year Public (Non-Summer Transfer)</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Year Public (Summer Swirlers)</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Year Private For-Profit</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Year Private Non-Profit</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Year Public</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Students Who Transferred</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In-State and Out-of-State Transfer and Mobility by Sector and Control of Starting Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector and Control of Transfer Students' Starting Institution</th>
<th>Transferred Out of State</th>
<th>Transferred Within State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public TWO-YEAR</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public FOUR-YEAR</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Nonprofit FOUR-YEAR</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private For-Profit FOUR-YEAR</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key results

• Over a third transferred at least once within six years.

• Mixed enrollment students had by far the highest transfer and mobility rate (53.7 percent). Exclusively part-time students had the lowest transfer rate (11.9 percent).

• About 1 in 4 two-year starters transferred to a four-year institution within six years (24.4 percent) but only 3.2 percent did so after receiving a credential at their starting two-year institution.

• The higher proportions of students transferring without an associate’s degree may create a growing case for reverse transfer initiatives being pursued in many states.
Key results

• Two-year public institutions are the top mobility destination for students who start in four-year institutions.

• More than half (51.3 percent) of those who transferred from four-year public institutions moved to a two-year public institution. 42 percent of those who transferred from four-year private institutions headed to community colleges.

• A quarter of all student mobility from four-year institutions to community colleges consisted of summer swirlers, who returned to the starting four-year institution in the following fall term.

• Nearly 1 in 5 transfers among students who started in two-year public institutions and 1 in 4 from four-year public institutions crossed a state line in the transition.
Implications

• While mobility can often result in loss of credits, recommending that students do not change their institution does not seem to fit the reality of today’s students, given the prevalence of transfer.

• Instead, both starting and destination institutions should work together to better inform and advise students, and to make these transitions smoother and hurdle-free.
Implications (continued)

- Student mobility is not limited by state-lines. As more states move towards performance-based funding, it is more important than ever for states and institutions to be able to measure the outcomes of their transfer-out students.

- The increased attention to student outcomes and degree attainment at the national and state levels are likely to lead to new accountability measures for postsecondary institutions that will need to go beyond the first-time full-time cohorts that institutions are used to tracking.
For more information...

Visit
nscresearchcenter.org

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