The Truth about Transfer:

What Students Say They Need to Get Through the Gate to University

March 2020

Dr. Darla Cooper
Executive Director
The RP Group
www.rpgroup.org

Mission
• Strengthen CCCs’ ability to gather, analyze, and act on information in order to enhance student equity and success

Services
• Research, evaluation, planning, professional development, and technical assistance—designed and conducted by CCC practitioners

Organization
• 501(c)3 with roots as membership organization
College Futures Foundation
www.collegefutures.org

Vision
• More graduates for a thriving California

Mission
• Removing barriers so more low-income and underrepresented students attain bachelor’s degrees

Funder  Partner  Connector
Today’s Outcomes

*Participants will…*

- Know the *Through the Gate* transfer study research questions, approach, resources, and progress
- Have a framework for building students’ transfer capacity, including specific factors students who close to transfer say impact their progress
- Have resources and tools for applying the study methodology and findings locally
- Identify specific steps to begin identifying and assisting students who are close to transfer
Today’s Outline

• Overview and Phase 1 Recap
• Student Perspectives Research Findings and Areas of Opportunity
  – Transfer Capacity-Building Framework
    • Four Essential Factors
• Ways to Boost Your Students’ Transfer Capacity Now
• Resources and Next Steps
A Fresh Take on the Transfer Challenge

Research Overview and Phase I Recap
Through the Gate Aims to...

Identify individuals who have completed all or most of their transfer requirements, but who do not make it “through the gate” to university.

Determine strategies for increasing transfer, boosting baccalaureate production, and enhancing students’ social and economic mobility, especially for underrepresented populations.
### Research Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1: Mapping the Transfer Landscape</th>
<th>Phase 2: Getting Better Directions</th>
<th>Phase 3: Engaging for Action</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative research to better understand the transfer landscape focusing on students who met all or most of their requirements but have not transferred</td>
<td>Mixed-methods research to understand what factors impact these students’ journeys and how policy and practice might change to propel them through the gate</td>
<td>Convenings with postsecondary leaders, educators, researchers, and advocacy groups to identify strategic opportunities to strengthen transfer success based on findings</td>
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Phase 1: Mapping the Transfer Landscape

Research Question:
How many students get stuck close to the transfer gate?

Population:
- 875,630 CCC students
- Enrolled b/w 2010-2011 and 2014-2015
- Outcomes through spring 2016

Subgroups:
1. 67% Transfer Achievers (583,074)
2. 16% Students At the Gate (135,557)
3. 18% Students Near the Gate (156,999)
Phase 1 Key Findings

• >50% of these students exit without credentials
• Math is a barrier
• Time is the enemy
• Once African Americans reach key milestones, they are most likely to transfer…but too few get this far
• Latino students more likely to be At or Near the Gate than to have transferred
Phase 2: Student Perspectives Research Findings and Areas of Opportunity
Phase 2 Research Questions

- **Why** do so many students who are close to achieving their transfer goal stop short of making this transition?
- **What can we do** to help students who are close to transfer make it through the gate to university?
- **What is holding back different student groups**, and **how can we help** them continue their journey?
Phase 2 Methodology

- ATG-NTG at 31 California Community Colleges (CCC) (Enrolled and Exited Students) N = 39,651
- Online Student Survey N = 809
- Student Interviews N = 39
# Who Are the Students in Phase 2?

## Characteristic

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Survey N = 809</th>
<th>Interviews N = 39</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Filipino</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latina/o/x</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Ethnic Groups</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
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The Truth about Transfer: What Community College Students Say They Need to Get Through the Gate

Prepared by:
Darla M. Cooper, ESC  |  Alyssa Nguyen, MA  |  Kelley Karandeff, EdM
Katie Bichlmann, PhD  |  Reginald Purcell, PhD
February 2019
Students are motivated to transfer to have a better life, for themselves and their families.

I wanted to do something that felt more important than working at a grocery store…I didn’t want to be there the rest of my life. I wanted a position that I could call myself an expert in…[be] a professional.
Transfer Capacity-Building Framework

Students need a more holistic and integrated approach to ensure progress toward their educational goal: a bachelor’s degree.

The overall feeling most students have is that transfer is completely difficult. I think everyone agrees… that [the college] makes it hard. You feel that community colleges in general make it extremely difficult to transfer.
Transfer Capacity-Building Framework

Community colleges can’t do this work alone; intersegmental collaboration and university involvement is critical.
Transfer Capacity Building Framework

UNIVERSITY AFFORDABILITY
Ensuring students understand the true university cost and associated expenses, as well as available assistance (including and beyond financial aid)

SUPPORT NETWORK
Connecting students with caring, encouraging, and supportive individuals

PATHWAY NAVIGATION
Providing students timely and accurate information about each stage of the transfer journey, from entry all the way through the transfer gate

SCHOOL-LIFE BALANCE
Easing students’ negotiation of work, family, and school responsibilities
Finances are the *biggest* hurdle students cite regarding transfer regardless of age, gender, or racial/ethnic background.

One really big thing that’s scaring me is the money…. I mean, it's almost unimaginable that I have to spend the amount that one would pay for a very big house in California simply on education.
Implications

Help students understand all costs associated with attending a university and the full complement of financial assistance options.
Areas of Opportunity

- Convene financial aid reps from your college and partner universities re: building students’ understanding about the total cost of a baccalaureate
- Help students complete financial aid forms and scholarship applications, start to finish
- Walk students through their financial aid award letters, help them understand what they mean, and what other funding might be available
Students are juggling numerous and often competing school, work, and family responsibilities in an effort to address financial hurdles.

I have to take calculus for business…. The problem is [my college] doesn’t offer [it] at night or on the weekends. It’s a morning class at [the main campus]…. That may work for a millennial, but not for someone with a full-time job.
Implications

Actively recognize the complexity of students’ lives in how educational services and supports are delivered (e.g., course scheduling, childcare availability, access to local/regional universities)
Areas of Opportunity

• Explore student-centered scheduling to ensure students are able to get the courses they need
• Connect students with childcare, housing, food, transportation, and other basic needs resources
• Coordinate with university partners to identify options for students to complete a baccalaureate (in impacted programs / for place-bound students)
Students are often missing accurate and timely information about pursuing a bachelor’s degree throughout their transfer journey—from both their community colleges and prospective universities.

A lot of people are left confused in what they’re doing…there’s all kinds of figuring out on their own…kind of teetering on the edge of, “Am I doing this right? Am I taking the right classes?” I think the ones who have it real lucky are the ones that consistently go and ask a bunch of questions and don’t stop until [they] get answers. And that kind of isn’t really good.
Implications

Proactively provide clear and accurate information about transfer processes and requirements, strategically conveyed across students’ entire community college journey.
Areas of Opportunity

• Maximize the visibility of your transfer center and/or other transfer supports and services on campus
• Increase university presence on campus, promote aggressively, and incentive student participation
• Develop technology solutions that help students access updated info and real-time pathway advice
• Facilitate meetings between college and university faculty by academic department to align expectations for transfer students
• Ensure faculty teaching advanced courses know the CSU and UC application processes and financial aid deadlines and incorporate info into courses
Students say the absence of social support negatively impacts their transfer decision-making and compromises their capacity for pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

A lot of times, it feels like people are fighting their own battles [at my college].... It just doesn’t really feel like everyone’s connected...like they’re fighting together. A lot of times, it feels like a lot of people are on their personal journeys by themselves.
Implications

Intentionally connect students to a network of supporters who demonstrate an active investment in their transfer success (e.g., offer customized guidance, help them manage obstacles, provide sustained encouragement throughout their journey)
Areas of Opportunity

- Outreach to high-leverage students who have not seen a counselor in the most recent term to connect them to relevant resources and services
- Structure person-to-person support that helps students develop a relationship with at least 1 individual who can provide personalized guidance and encouragement
- Develop peer groups for transfer students who have similar ed/career goals and/or are close to the transfer gate
- Work with university partners to connect prospective transfer students and the university
Q&A

• What resonates?
• What questions do you have?
• What more do you want to know?
Ways to Start Boosting Your Students’ Transfer Capacity Now
Consider:

1. Identifying and proactively reaching out to students who are close to transfer right now

2. Quantifying the transfer population on your campus using the transfer continuum as your guide; disaggregate these data by different student characteristics

3. Talking directly to high-leverage students to map their transfer journey in order to better understand their experience with the four essential factors
Through the Gate
Resources and Next Steps
Through the Gate Transfer Study

Overview
Resources for Students
Resources for Educators
Participating Colleges
Project Team and Advisors

THROUGH THE GATE

Timeline: 2016-2019

Research aimed at identifying strategies for increasing transfer among “high-leverage learners” in California Community Colleges — individuals who have completed all or most of their transfer requirements, but who do not make it “through the gate” to a university.

View this short video to hear more about the project’s purpose and goals.

Read the Through the Gate Transfer Study Project Description to learn more about the research purpose and approach.

Details
Focus Populations:
Transfer-bound students
Status: Current
Contact: Alyssa Nguyen,
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Areas of Impact
Completion And
Transfer, Equity

Tags
Current projects, Transfer
students, High-leverage
learners, Transfer-ready
students, Transfer-prepared students, At the
gate, Near the
gate, Transfer
achievers, Transfer
continuum, Inland
Empire, Central
Valley, Associate Degree
for Transfer, ADT
Tell us your story!

Is your campus using Through the Gate to improve transfer outcomes? Send an email to Darla M. Cooper, EdD or Alyssa Nguyen, MA.

Resources for Educators

- Reports and Briefs
  - Identifying High-Leverage Transfer Students on Your Campus, Through the Gate Transfer Study Methodology, March 2019
    Tool 1: Guide for adapting the study’s methodology on your campus; includes data sources and elements, instructions on file preparation, and steps for generating the study population
  - Determining Students’ Transfer Odds on Your Campus, Through the Gate Transfer Study Methodology, March 2019
    Tool 2: Guide for adapting study’s statistical model for identifying students’ transfer odds on your campus, including data sources and instructions for implementing and interpreting the model

- Tools

- Infographics and Posters

- Articles
Looking ahead….

• Technical report and dissaggregated findings brief in spring 2020
• Strategic engagement with the field in 2020 around how to act on these data
For more information on the Through the Gate Study

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www.rpgroup.org/through-the-gate
#StudentsThroughtheGate

Student Perspectives on Transfer Paper
Thank you!