

PRESS RELEASE

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New Report Finds Transfer Process for Community College Students to Four Year Universities a Complex and Costly Maze

Study by The Campaign for College Opportunity calls on the state to fund CSU and UC to serve more freshman and transfer students and urges community colleges, CSU and UC to clear the transfer maze.

Los Angeles (September 12, 2017) – The Campaign for College Opportunity today released a new report, **“The Transfer Maze: The High Cost to Students and the State of California,”** which found that transfer between California Community Colleges and the California State University (CSU), and University of California (UC), is a bureaucratic maze which few students manage to navigate.

The report finds that only 4% of students intending to transfer do so within two years. By six years, only 38% of students transfer. This bodes poorly for California’s economy that is predicted to be 1.1 million bachelor degrees short by 2030. “When 70% of all college students in California attend a community college, a successful transfer path is key to producing the bachelor degrees the state needs and that the majority of students in community college hope to gain,” said Michele Siqueiros, president of the Campaign for College Opportunity.

The report’s analysis finds that because transfer is so complex, community college students take longer to complete their bachelor degrees and spend \$36,000 - \$38,000 more than a student who started their education at a four-year university. When students are stuck in the transfer maze, state spending rises, tax revenue is lost, and spots for new students are unavailable.

While major transfer reforms have been introduced in the last several years, including the successful Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT), the process remains complicated and inconsistent across systems, schools, and departments. The report outlines six key factors that construct the transfer maze:

1. A broken remedial education system that traps students in non-credit bearing courses;
2. Campus level faculty autonomy leading to a lack of curricular alignment with other campuses, often within the same system;
3. A decentralized higher education system consisting of the community colleges, CSU and UC, that operate as distinctive entities with no mandate for cooperation;
4. Too many choices in General Education with inaccessible information for students to make informed decisions;
5. State budget cuts and high demand at community colleges means that many campuses do not offer the full range of courses students need or courses are oversubscribed causing delay in the time it takes a student to transfer; and,
6. The ratio of community college counselors to students is 615:1. The inability to meet with a counselor or meet with the same counselor over time leads to students guiding themselves or receiving inconsistent guidance.

“Students are caught in the middle of battles between the systems, colleges, and faculty and the costs are high. Every day spent fighting over educational turfs, we fail to clear up the transfer maze and we lose the talented students we urgently need for our workforce and economic stability,” said Siqueiros.

Other key findings of the report include:

- Only 4% of community college students transfer in two years; 25% in four years; and, 38% in six years;
- Community college students transferring to the UC will take 6.4 years to obtain a bachelor’s degree while transfers to the CSU will take 7 years;
- Transfer students are estimated to pay an additional \$36,000 - \$38,000 to earn a bachelor’s degree than a student who started at a four-year university;
- A slight reduction in the number of excess credits and moving students through to completion at the community colleges and the CSU could free up as much as \$41 million and provide space for 10,200 additional full-time students; and,
- The ADT is growing exponentially (68,000 students have earned ADTs since 2010) but it is not the preferred transfer pathway to the CSU system and the UC does not acknowledge the ADT with guaranteed admission.

The study provides three key recommendations for clearing the transfer maze:

- Increase state funding to enroll more students directly into the state’s public four-year universities and to serve the increasing number of transfer students;
- Honor and strengthen the ADT pathway to become the preferred method of transfer for both the CSU and UC; and,
- Develop and scale guided pathways models at California community colleges.

“We can fix transfer when we decide to put students first. The tremendous growth in the Associate Degrees for Transfer is a glimpse of what can be when our systems and faculty come together in the spirit of student success. Let’s get to work!” concluded Siqueiros.

To access the complete “**The Transfer Maze: The High Cost to Students and the State of California**” visit www.collegecampaign.org/resource-library/our-publications/

About Campaign for College Opportunity:

The Campaign for College Opportunity is a California non-profit research and advocacy organization focused on a single mission: to ensure all Californians have an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in college in order to build a vibrant workforce, economy and democracy. For more information, visit www.CollegeCampaign.org/ [Facebook.com/CollegeCampaign](https://www.facebook.com/CollegeCampaign) or follow [@CollegeOpp](https://twitter.com/CollegeOpp).