

THE TRANSFER MAZE



The Campaign for
College Opportunity

The High Cost to Students and the State of California

September 2017

The value of a college degree has never been higher than today. Californians with a bachelor's degree earn more than \$1.3 million on average over their lifetime above their peers with only a high school diploma and are less likely to live in poverty or face unemployment. The State of California also yields a high return: for every dollar spent on higher education, the state receives \$4.50 from the increased earnings of college graduates and lower costs for providing state services.

But, despite high returns to individuals and the state, California is projected to be short over one million bachelor's degrees to meet workforce demands by 2030.

In California, 2.3 million students — 70% of all undergraduates in the state — are enrolled in a California Community College which means to increase bachelor degree production to meet workforce demand, students' ability to transfer from the community college to the state's four-year universities is an economic imperative.

Unfortunately, transfer in California is a maze for students and, despite significant efforts to improve transfer, rates of transfer remain unacceptably low.

THE TRANSFER MAZE EQUALS

Longer Time to Degree: 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.



Low Transfer Rates: Students transferred at an average rate of only:

4% after 2 years

25% after 4 years

38% after 6 years

High Costs to Students: Transfer students are estimated to pay an additional \$36,000-\$38,000 to attain a bachelor's degree because of longer time to degree.



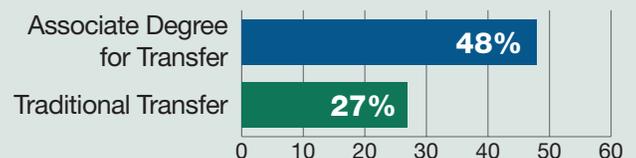
High Costs to the State: A slight reduction in the number of excess credits community college students take and moving students through to completion at the CSU could free up as much as \$41 million in state spending and provide enrollment for as many as 10,200 additional full time students.



THERE IS GOOD NEWS

The Associate Degree for Transfer Reduces Time to Degree: 48% of students with the new Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT) to the CSU graduate within two years with their BA compared to only 27% for traditional transfer students.

Earning a BA Degree 2-years after Transfer



THE TRANSFER MAZE: "...IT'S DEEP, BUREAUCRATIC, AND REALLY DIFFICULT."

Seventeen-year-old Ben Newsum was filled with anticipation when he stepped through the doors of Modesto Junior College (MJC) in the spring of 2012. Raised by a single parent, Ben was proud he had managed to graduate from high school early. And like so many California students, he saw community college as an affordable option where he could complete his lower-division coursework before transferring to a university two years later. After Ben enrolled at MJC, he immediately met with a counselor and said, "I want to transfer. What should I do?" That is when Ben's real adventure with California's Transfer Maze began.



Between 2012 and 2017, Ben:

- Attended **5** community college campuses
- Accumulated **95** units, though only 70 were required for transfer in his major
- Was enrolled for **5 1/2** years
- After **experiencing countless** stress-induced nights...
- **Just learned he was admitted to UC Davis' Genetics and Genomics Program**

Reflecting on his transfer journey and that of his friends, Ben notes, "Transferring from a community college is hard, you have to learn the system... it's deep, bureaucratic, and really difficult."

RECOMMENDATIONS: CLEARING THE MAZE



- 1.** Increase State funding to enroll more students directly in our public universities
- 2.** The University of California, California State University and the California Community Colleges should work together to fix transfer and to honor and strengthen the Associate Degree for Transfer pathway
- 3.** Community colleges should adopt Guided Pathways to improve student success

To read the full report and find infographic notes and data sources, please visit our website at www.collegecampaign.org.

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