Keeping the Promise
Going the Distance on Transfer Reform
March 2016

California’s community colleges enroll 2.3 million students with the majority stating they intend to transfer to a four-year university. But despite student intentions and one of the community colleges’ core missions being to provide a transfer pathway to the state’s four-year university, only 4% transfer annually.

A low transfer rate is bad news for California. The state is projected to be 1.1 million bachelor degrees short of economic demand by 2030 and when 70% of all college students in California attend a community college, transfer becomes key to producing the bachelor’s degrees we need. Failing to improve transfer means too many of our college students being unprepared for our 21st century economy—in that equation, we all lose. That’s why in 2010 the Campaign for College Opportunity led the legislative effort (SB 1440) to significantly increase the number of students who transfer with a degree in hand. The spirit of the legislation was to streamline, simplify, and create a preferred transfer pathway for the majority of students hoping to transfer to the California State University (CSU).

In six years, a framework for improving transfer has been built through the new Associate Degrees for Transfer, but we have yet to go the distance.

State of Progress Six Years Later

More students earn an Associate Degree for Transfer each year
Over 20,000 students earned an Associate Degree for Transfer in 2015, nearly doubling from 2014

Better collaboration between the California Community Colleges and the California State University
Almost 2,000 transfer degree pathways are now available from the California Community Colleges to the CSU

More students benefit from the Admissions Guarantee
Almost 6,500 Associate Degree for Transfer students have enrolled in the CSU system

Associate Degree for Transfer is not yet the preferred transfer pathway to the CSU system
Only 8% of CSU transfer students have an Associate Degree for Transfer

Associate Degree for Transfer Provides a Path to Success

Guaranteed admission to California State University
Seamless 120-unit pathway
Associate degree earned before transferring
32 academic degree options
### Signs of Excellence

**What's Going Well**

Degrees awarded doubled every year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Number of ADTs Awarded</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>5,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>11,448</td>
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<td>2014-15</td>
<td>20,646</td>
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- 90% of admitted Associate Degree for Transfer students enrolled in CSU
- 92% of Associate Degree for Transfer earners retained in or graduate from CSU in two years

### Going the Distance

**Areas to Improve**

- 10 community colleges award 33% of all ADTs in the state
- The majority of community colleges need to perform better
- Only 37% of Associate Degree for Transfer earners enroll in the CSU
- We don’t know if or where the other 63% enrolled
- Four CSU campuses enroll 66% of all Associate Degree for Transfer earners
- 19 CSUs need to enroll more Associate Degree for Transfer students

### Recommendations

- State policymakers should continue legislative oversight on implementation efforts and require better data collection and transparency to ensure a seamless and preferred transfer pathway is realized.
- State funding and policy priorities for our community colleges and universities should continue to support efforts that promote success in the Associate Degree for Transfer pathway.
- Community colleges and CSU campuses should strengthen the Associate Degree for Transfer pathway on their own campuses while also expanding regional collaboration to produce and enroll more Associate Degree for Transfer students.
- Communications and counseling of this transfer pathway needs to be improved so students can take advantage of the opportunity, realize their dreams of earning a degree, and transferring to a four-year university.