



**The Practical Guide to Increasing
Community College Transfer to
High Graduation Rate Institutions**

AUTHORS:

Tania LaViolet, Benjamin Fresquez, McKenzie Maxson, and Joshua Wyner
The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program

THE AMERICAN TALENT INITIATIVE:

The American Talent Initiative (ATI) is a Bloomberg Philanthropies-supported collaboration between the Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program, Ithaka S+R, and a growing alliance of colleges and universities dedicated to substantially expanding opportunity and access for low- and moderate-income students. By 2025, ATI aims to attract, enroll, and graduate an additional 50,000 lower-income students at the 290 colleges and universities that consistently graduate at least 70 percent of their students in six years. "ATI members" are a subset of these 290 and include a mix of public and private colleges and universities from all over the country.

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FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS FEATURED IN THIS REPORT:

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

(in order of appearance)

Smith College*
Lawrence University
Marist College
Bryn Mawr College
Vassar College
Amherst College
Cornell University
Southern Methodist University

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

(in order of appearance)

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill*
University of California—Los Angeles*
University of Washington
University of Maryland—College Park
University of California—Berkeley

* A Transfer-Friendly Ecosystem

A GUIDE TO USING THIS RESEARCH

THE TALENT BLIND SPOT IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS:

THE CASE FOR INCREASING COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER TO HIGH GRADUATION RATE INSTITUTIONS

- Understand the community college transfer landscape with data from the report.
- Download the companion slide deck to help make a strong case for transfer at your institution.

THE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO INCREASING COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER TO HIGH GRADUATION RATE INSTITUTIONS

- Use the "Fundamental Principles" as a strategy audit to assess how your institution compares to others.
- See what is possible by learning from the "Transfer-Friendly Ecosystems" of three exemplary institutions: Smith College, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and the University of California-Los Angeles.
- Read the "Transfer Tactics Repository" to access case studies of institutional practices that respond to specific challenges.

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REVISITING THE CASE—FIVE REASONS TO EXPAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER AT ATI INSTITUTIONS

1 A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY TO REACH HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED STUDENTS.

Black, Hispanic, Native American, and lower-income student representation is higher in community colleges than in four-year public and not-for-profit schools.



2 COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS ASPIRE TO A BACHELOR'S, BUT INSTITUTIONS STRUGGLE TO SUPPORT THEM.

Most community college students intend to complete a bachelor's degree, but few succeed in reaching their goals.



80%

INTEND TO
ATTAIN A
BACHELOR'S
DEGREE



14%

ATTAIN A BACHELOR'S
DEGREE WITHIN
6 YEARS OF COMMUNITY
COLLEGE ENTRY

3 EVEN THE HIGHEST ACHIEVERS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE ARE OVERLOOKED.

Each year, 50,000 high-achieving low- and moderate-income community college students do not transfer to a four-year institution. Approximately 15,000 of these students have achieved a GPA of 3.7 or above, which would make them competitive at the nation's most selective schools.



50,000

DO NOT TRANSFER TO A
FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION

15,000

OF THEM HAVE A GPA
OF AT LEAST 3.7

REVISITING THE CASE—FIVE REASONS TO EXPAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER AT ATI INSTITUTIONS

4

THE ATI SECTOR CAN CREATE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS.

NEW STUDENTS WHO ARE TRANSFERS

ATI INSTITUTIONS

ALL 4-YEAR INSTITUTIONS



18%



32%

Across all ATI institutions, only 18 percent of new students are transfers, compared to 32 percent at all four-year institutions. Meanwhile, half of ATI institutions' transfer admissions webpages do not contain any references to transfer from community colleges.

5

MODEST CHANGE AT INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONS CAN HAVE SUBSTANTIAL NATIONWIDE IMPACT.

If every ATI school enrolled an additional 20 low- and moderate-income community college transfer students as juniors each year, ATI would be a quarter of the way to reaching its 50,000-by-2025 goal—halfway if each enrolled an additional 40 transfer students.

50,000
BY 2025

A large red circle with the text '50,000 BY 2025' inside. It is surrounded by approximately 20 smaller red circles of varying sizes, all connected to the central circle by thin dashed lines, creating a radial network effect.

What Can ATI Institutions Do to Be Part of the National Transfer Effort?

THE PRACTICAL GUIDE

DATA FROM “THE TALENT BLIND SPOT: THE CASE” OFFERED CLEAR EVIDENCE OF A SUBSTANTIAL POPULATION OF HIGH-ACHIEVING, LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME TWO-YEAR STUDENTS.

Specifically, each year, there are more than 50,000 transfer-ready community college students with a 3.0-4.0 GPA—approximately 15,000 of whom have a GPA of 3.7 or higher—who do not transfer to any four-year public or not-for-profit college or university. “The Case” further demonstrated that the 290 colleges and universities with 70 percent or higher graduation rates—hereinafter referred to as “the ATI sector” or “ATI institutions”—have a mixed record of supporting transfer from community college. Based on a comprehensive review of the literature, interviews with practitioners and researchers, and site visits at three ATI institutions, “**THE TALENT BLIND SPOT: THE PRACTICAL GUIDE**” recommends principles of transfer practice and strategy, demonstrates how these practices and strategies are combined into exemplary “Transfer-Friendly Ecosystems” at three different institutions, and shares several other examples of practice from across the ATI sector that aim to overcome key barriers to transfer student success.

A Road Map to Advancing Community College Transfer at ATI Institutions

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE	A WAY FORWARD: THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES
While many ATI institutions admit some community college transfer students, most struggle to align policies and practices within their institutions—as well as with their community college partners—with what is needed to achieve higher levels of transfer student access and success.	Advancing Opportunity Through Strong, Leadership-Driven Partnerships Instead of viewing transfer purely as an enrollment strategy, ATI institutions must prioritize transfer throughout the organization—including at the highest levels—and organize internally to meet the unique needs of transfer students, develop mutually beneficial relationships with community colleges and their leaders, and cultivate two- and four-year faculty champions—key players in partnership development and the success of transfer students.
As a result of the historical lack of transfer opportunity across the ATI sector, community college students and their mentors tend to overlook ATI institutions when weighing transfer options. Even when ATI institutions are considered, the dearth of information and transparency on credit transfer, financial aid, and support systems can discourage students from applying or result in costly additional time-to-degree.	Engaging and Advising Community College Students Early Rather than traditional recruiting tactics, ATI institutions should lean on established community college partnerships to build strong relationships with community college faculty and advisors—the main influencers of prospective students. Students’ trusted mentors should be empowered to give comprehensive guidance early in the process, and four-year advisors should be readily available to answer specific transfer questions.
A compressed timeframe at their bachelor’s institution leaves transfer students relatively little time to establish a sense of inclusion and engagement, adapt to new academic expectations, and pace toward on-time graduation, let alone participate in the high-impact experiences typically associated with the ATI sector. Despite these challenges—and their potentially costly consequences—too few ATI institutions provide the tailored support needed to ensure that community college transfer students access the full range of experiences available.	Fostering Holistic Transfer Student Success with Dedicated Supports While community college transfer students are likely to graduate, more needs to be done to support equitable and holistic success. Specifically, ATI institutions should consider pre-transfer programming in partnership with community colleges to set students up for success as early as possible, robust orientation programming after admission, and continuous post-transition support to reinforce key messages when students need them most. ATI institutions should also consider that transfer students are likely to hail from communities historically underserved by higher education—including students with low-income backgrounds, students of color, parenting students, veterans, etc.—and connect students to tailored programming and resources as needed.

THE PRACTICAL GUIDE

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR TRANSFER SUCCESS AT ATI INSTITUTIONS

Understanding the Challenges Faced by Community College Transfer Students

Our research suggests that increasing opportunity for low- and moderate-income community college transfer students requires that two- and four-year institutions work within their own institutions and also work together to address commonly experienced barriers to transfer success. Transfer success goals, as we define them here, are **increased rate of transfer, strong engagement with and inclusion in the campus community, graduation and post-graduate outcomes similar to those of traditional students, and equitable outcomes across underrepresented groups, including students of color and those from lower-income backgrounds.**¹ The interrelated challenges faced by transfer students, summarized below, are well documented in the literature; however, according to our contacts, they may be experienced somewhat differently by the lower-income students who are best situated to transfer to an ATI institution.²

¹ The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. *Tackling Transfer: A Guide to Convening Community Colleges and Universities to Improve Transfer Student Outcomes*. Aspen Institute College Excellence Program and the Community College Research Center, December 2017.

² Dean, KC; Fink, John; Jenkins, Davis; and Wyner, Joshua. (2016). *The Transfer Playbook: Essential Practices for Two- and Four-Year Colleges*.

Burack, Cathy; Lanspery, Susan; Shields, Thomas Piñeros; and Singleton, Sharon. (2014). *Partnerships That Promote Success: Lessons and Findings from the Evaluation of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Community College Transfer Initiative*.

Student Voices on Community College Completion, (October 2012). Public Agenda.

Unclear pathways: Many two-year students may be completely unaware that transfer to an ATI institution is an option. Even when transfer is presented as a possibility, uncertainties about qualifications and a lack of peers with experience transferring to the ATI sector could deter even the highest achievers. Perhaps due to the limited number of students transferring to most ATI-eligible institutions, the pathways for students who wish to transfer are frequently not standardized, making it hard for students to understand which requirements and courses are needed for admission and which credits will transfer. Moreover, these pathways and requirements often differ from those established by regional public universities, which rely more heavily on transfers to reach enrollment goals. This introduces additional complexity into an already difficult-to-navigate transfer system, calling for supports that go above and beyond standard transfer advising.

Inefficient course credit articulation: A study by the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that, on average, students lost 43 percent of credits during the transfer process, effectively setting them back a year

of study.³ Errors in navigating transfer pathways while enrolled in community college are partly to blame for these inefficiencies. Four-year policies and patterns, such as imprecise credit evaluation until after admission and skepticism about two-year course quality, may also contribute to this problem. When transfer students are forced to take extra time to complete their degrees, the financial burden can act as a barrier to transfer student graduation and cause increased debt loads.

Financial and social anxieties: A confluence of financial hardship, family obligations, employment needs, and other demographic factors can make both affordability and belonging at ATI institutions seem out of reach for many prospective transfer students. Specifically, intersecting concerns about post-transfer academic success, not belonging, and other financial and social stressors associated with family responsibilities and/or moving far from home can prevent transfer students from fully engaging with the four-year community. These anxieties can result in qualified students taking themselves out of contention for admission even before connecting with an ATI institution.

While state two- and four-year systems can help address at least the first two matters at scale, the research strongly suggests that variations in institutional practice can make an enormous amount of difference in community-college transfer students' access and success, even among colleges in the same state that serve similar student populations.⁴ Indeed, individual ATI institutions—both public and private—have developed (or are developing) clear two-to-four-year pathways to ensure that more community college transfer students succeed. Adopting such policies—especially at four-year colleges and universities with a limited history with

community colleges—requires intentionally modifying institutional structures that are designed largely to serve traditional students who enter as first-years. In alignment with the recommendations outlined in the 2016 Aspen/CCRC Transfer Playbook, we identified strategies and tactics from ATI institutions that promote institutional receptiveness to transfer and demonstrate promise in addressing the specific challenges experienced by transfer students.⁵ These practices fell within three mutually reinforcing categories that can lay the foundations for community college transfer success.

³ U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2017). *Students Need More Information to Help Reduce Challenges in Transferring College Credits*, GAO-17-574.

⁴ Jenkins, D., and Fink, J. (2016). *Tracking Transfer: New Measures of Institutional and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students Attain Bachelor's Degrees*. Community College Research Center; The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program; National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

The 2016 CCRC/Aspen research report, *Tracking Transfer*, demonstrates large variation in transfer students' access and success after transfer, even when controlling for institutional characteristics including urbanicity and percentage of low-income students at the sending community college from which students transfer.

⁵ Dean, KC; Fink, John; Jenkins, Davis; and Wyner, Joshua. (2016). *The Transfer Playbook: Essential Practices for Two- and Four-Year Colleges*.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES IN TRANSFER PRACTICE AND STRATEGY



**Advancing Opportunity Through Strong,
Leadership-Driven Partnerships**



**Engaging and Advising Community
College Students Early**



**Fostering Holistic Transfer Student
Success with Dedicated Supports**

In the next section, we demonstrate how these fundamental principles come together at three ATI institutions with Transfer-Friendly Ecosystems.

Later, we provide specific examples of institutional practice across a broad spectrum of ATI institutions in the “Transfer Tactics Repository.”



Advancing Opportunity Through Strong, Leadership-Driven Partnerships

This section is aimed at ATI institutions that are relatively new to community college transfer, in the early stages of developing two-year partnerships, or in the process of overhauling existing transfer policies and practices. The goal of these recommendations is not to establish program pathways per se, but to deepen connections between two-year and ATI institutions.

At the core of transfer success is strong two-to-four-year partnerships. While clear articulation agreements and program maps between partner institutions can serve as backbones of partnerships that yield scaled transfer student access and success, those presuppose large numbers of transfers between two specific institutions. Even without large volumes of students and clear program maps, effective bridges between two- and four-year institutions can be achieved.

Ultimately, transfer students will benefit when community college and four-year staff, faculty, and leadership have a shared understanding of each other's missions,

challenges, goals, and student populations, and feel ownership for the success of students enrolled at partner institutions. In this section, we highlight three features associated with strong partnerships that, when undertaken simultaneously and consistently, can promote long-term transfer student success.

Prioritizing Transfer at ATI Institutions

Facilitating Alignment with Community Colleges

Cultivating Two- and Four-Year Faculty Transfer Leadership

INTERESTED
IN DEVELOPING
PROGRAM
PATHWAYS?

*Read "The Transfer
Playbook"*

The **"Transfer-Friendly Ecosystems"** section and Case Studies 1-3 in the "Transfer Tactics Repository" (page 42) provide specific examples of how a range of ATI institutions developed strong partnerships with community colleges.

Prioritizing Transfer at ATI Institutions

A coordinated, mission-based transfer enterprise requires thoughtful internal organization

Prioritizing transfer may seem like an obvious step in the process, but its importance cannot be overstated. Four-year colleges and universities were not designed with community college transfer students in mind. At institutions that enroll the fewest two-year transfer students, those original designs that begin with incoming first-year students are least likely to have changed over time to accommodate transfers. By visibly prioritizing transfer, four-year institutions can begin the process of confronting systems across a decentralized college or university that are least likely to serve transfer students well.

The Institutional Challenge:

Institutional decentralization is one of the most common underlying barriers to achieving transfer student success. Despite requiring campus-wide coordination, too often, community college transfer is viewed as primarily the responsibility of admissions and/or the registrar. While these units can design processes to allow access, alone they rarely have the capacity or means to coalesce the multitude of stakeholders and/or allocate the resources necessary to achieve systems-level change. This assignment of responsibility fails to engage many people responsible for functions critical to transfer access and success—including financial aid, admissions, student life, and housing—leaving policies and practices aligned to traditional students rather than accommodating to the needs of the transfer population.

A Way Forward:

The most successful transfer models systematically align individual offices around a shared transfer student success mission by centralizing and empowering transfer leadership.

The goal of this approach is for independent units to reach a common understanding of the community college student population, view transfer student access and success as a priority and as part of their roles, and promote collaborations that create a deliberate and seamless transfer experience from recruitment to graduation. There are concrete steps that any institution—especially those newer to serving transfer students—can take to hardwire transfer student success.

DECENTRALIZED TRANSFER INITIATIVES ARE SLOWER TO GAIN CAMPUS-WIDE TRACTION AND HINDER FOUR-YEAR ABILITY TO EASE TRANSFER BARRIER

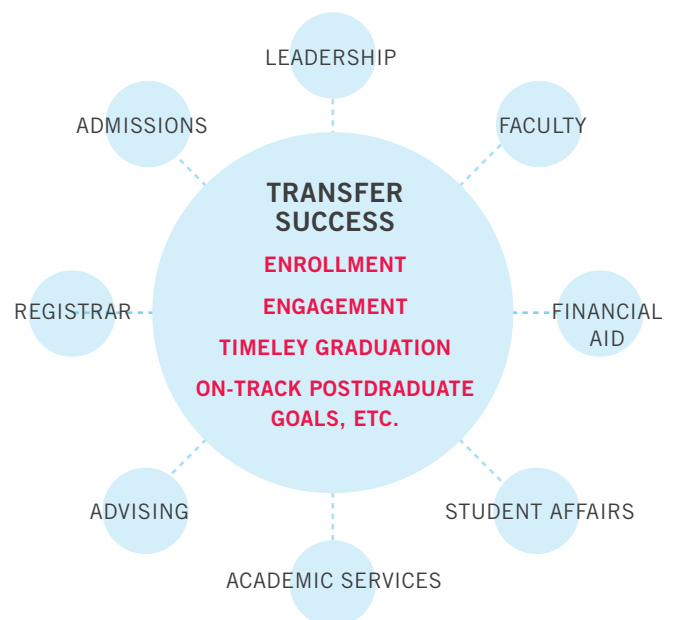
WHERE DOES YOUR INSTITUTION FALL ON THE SPECTRUM?

STATUS QUO: SILOED,
ROLE-BASED TRANSFER MANAGEMENT

IDEAL STATE: COORDINATED,
MISSION-BASED TRANSFER ENTERPRISE

LEADERSHIP > RESOURCE ALLOCATION
FACULTY > ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS
ADMISSIONS > RECRUITMENT/APPLICANT EVALUATION
FINANCIAL AID > AWARDING & COUNSELING
REGISTRAR > ARTICULATION AND CREDIT EVALUATION
ADVISING > POST-ENROLLMENT GUIDANCE
ACADEMIC SERVICES > TUTORING
STUDENT AFFAIRS > ORIENTATION, SUPPORT, & HOUSING

- REACTIVE • DISCONTINUOUS PROGRESS
- IMPAIRED COMMUNICATION • STUDENT CONFUSION



- STRATEGIC • MOBILIZED & ACCOUNTABLE
- OPEN COMMUNICATION • STUDENT-CENTERED

Build Urgency and Sustained Progress Through Leadership: The Role of Presidents

First, presidents can provide a clear and unifying direction through visible internal and external messaging that elevates transfer as an integral part of fulfilling the institution's longstanding mission. Beyond any initial announcements, leaders can help integrate transfer into the institutional culture by consistently mentioning transfer students. For instance, presidents might consider incorporating transfer students in verbal and written communications, recognizing transfer initiative successes, noting transfer students who receive honors, and incorporating community college transfer into strategic planning and board materials and conversations.

Second, presidents should pair visible messaging with committed resources to reinforce the importance of transfer and promote steady progress. An effective set of resources could include:

- Hiring or appointing someone within senior academic or administrative ranks to serve as the “lead transfer champion.”
- Issuing a directive to form a campus-wide planning and advisory committee—a “transfer champions team”—that includes faculty members from different disciplines and senior administrators from key transfer-supporting services, including but not limited to enrollment management, student affairs, finance, and academic advising. Where possible, the transfer student perspective should also be incorporated.
- Committing significant need-based financial aid and/or scholarship support for low- and moderate-income community college transfer students, especially where program pathways are unlikely to exist and students will need additional time to complete their degrees.



While relatively straightforward, visible and material support from the president's office can build the momentum needed to ensure transfer initiatives can gain campus-wide traction.

Hardwire Transfer Through Consensus Building: The Work of Transfer Champions

To shift the conversation from presidential mandate to campus-wide buy-in, all units—from leaders to frontline staff—must understand how their day-to-day responsibilities intersect with the success of transfer students and broader transfer initiatives. Without this crucial but often-overlooked step, competing priorities and siloed activities can stall progress and leave negative transfer student experiences unresolved.

Presidents should deploy the transfer champion on a cross-campus tour to gather perspectives across stakeholders, answer questions, and create an understanding of two-year students. Furthermore, all senior leaders who serve on the planning and advisory committee should reinforce the lead transfer champion's work within their own reporting line to ensure that tasks set by the committee can be realized in a timely manner. Supported by presidential leadership, this balance of ownership by the transfer champions and shared accountability across the campus can result in the systems change required to improve transfer student access and success.



READ MORE ABOUT HOW LEADERSHIP AT LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY AND THEIR TWO-YEAR PARTNERS TRANSFORMED THEIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER INITIATIVES IN JUST ONE YEAR (CASE STUDY 1, PAGE 43).

Use Qualitative and Quantitative Data to Persuade, Evaluate, and Improve

Underpinning the above two recommendations is effective case-making. Presidents and transfer champions should be equipped with national, regional, and institutional data to help make a compelling big-picture case for why transfer is critical to the fulfillment of the institution's student-facing mission and respond to those with reservations about transfer student ability. Highly effective in making the case are data that demonstrate differences in the racial and socioeconomic composition of students who attend community college and those who start at an ATI institution.

Beyond establishing buy-in, data are crucial to the evaluation and enhancement of transfer initiatives. Institutions should identify, communicate, and track transfer student-specific key performance indicators (KPIs) to understand program strengths, potential inequities, and actionable areas for improvement. Example KPIs include:

- Transfer student enrollment, retention, graduation, time-to-degree, and credits lost when transferring, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and Pell status
- Levels of unmet financial need and/or total debt accumulation
- Transfer student engagement with high-impact experiences

In addition, qualitative data from transfer student focus groups or surveys can provide insights into transfer students' senses of engagement and belonging and can complement the quantitative data in identifying interventions that would make the most difference.

In many cases, especially where transfer partnerships are in the early stages of development, four-year institutions may still enroll even small numbers of community college transfer students. Preliminary analyses on this student population, however limited, can inform how institutions can best design and/or scale up their support systems.

Facilitating Alignment with Community Colleges

An emphasis on leadership-driven partnerships can foster long-term sustainability of transfer initiatives.

The Institutional Challenge:

Engaging with and learning from community colleges is a fundamental step to four-year colleges increasing their “transfer readiness.” For instance, strong relationships between community college staff and faculty and their four-year counterparts can inform how ATI institutions might support the unique needs and challenges faced by lower-income transfer students inside and outside the classroom after transferring. However, forming partnerships with community colleges is not always a straightforward endeavor. Transfer student enrollment at ATI institutions is often relatively low, or unpredictable year-to-year, in comparison to enrollment at other transfer destinations. Accordingly, the development of partnerships with community colleges can face two common obstacles:

- **Misaligned Objectives:** Community colleges may view partnerships as marginal to their mission because so few students are served. As a result, four-year institutions have difficulty identifying key point people in community colleges who will invest the time needed to co-develop talent pipelines to supply transfer admissions opportunities.
- **Partnership Instability:** Effectiveness of partnerships often relies on one or just a few individuals at two-year schools, such as a dean or several key transfer advisors. Connections with individuals rather than whole institutions can lead to disruptions when there is staff turnover.



READ MORE ABOUT HOW ALIGNED LEADERSHIP HELPED MARIST COLLEGE AND ITS TWO-YEAR PARTNER SUSTAIN AND STRENGTHEN A TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP (CASE STUDY 2, PAGE 44).

A Way Forward:

These challenges underscore the importance of aligning leadership between community college and ATI institutions. ATI leaders—presidents, senior administrators, and transfer champions—can lay the groundwork for deeper partnerships with community colleges’ senior administrators, faculty, advisors, and transfer centers by first establishing alliances with community college presidents and senior administrators through in-person meetings.

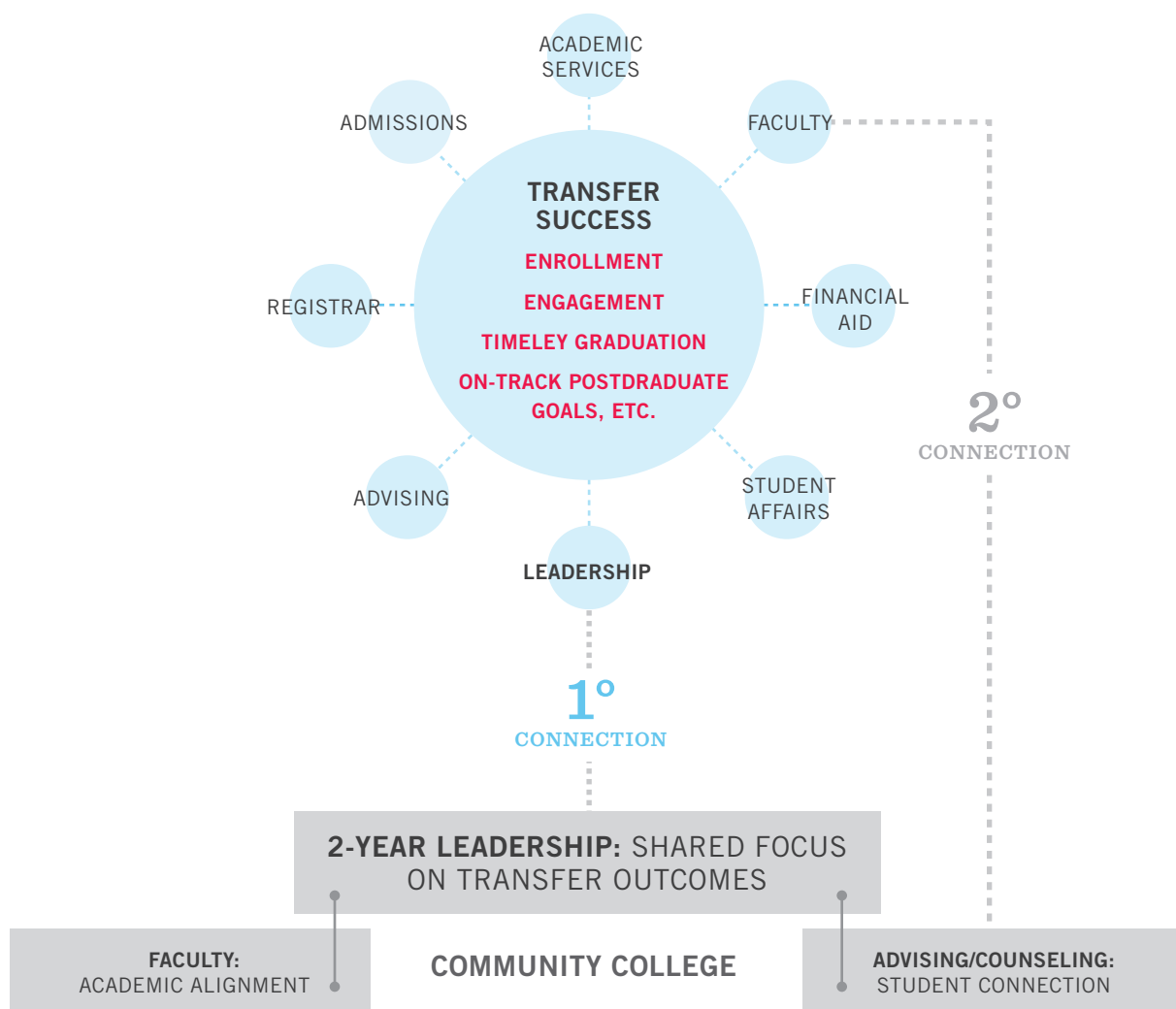
Beyond lending legitimacy and visibility to partnerships, we observed three additional positive attributes of leadership-driven partnerships over the long-term:

- **Shared Goals Emerge:** Four-year institutions can learn how the scope and goals of their transfer initiatives could serve the strategic priorities of prospective community college partners, which may include increasing overall degree attainment, closing student success gaps for specific racial or socioeconomic groups, or increasing visibility of transfer students to top colleges or universities. Regular in-person meetings of leaders can keep up-to-date mutual understandings of each institution’s changing context and priorities, surfacing new opportunities for collaboration or growth.
- **Structured Sustainability:** Rather than relying on individual interest or goodwill, which is vulnerable to staff turnover, community college presidential directives can mobilize senior leaders and whole units to spearhead transfer partnerships for which they are accountable.
- **Embedded Maintenance Timelines:** Once partnerships are established, program maps and support systems risk becoming out-of-date. Regular leadership meetings force everyone to reflect on whether current efforts are effective or require modification.

LEADERSHIP-DRIVEN PARTNERSHIP

HOW DO YOUR COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES COMPARE?

FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION



Cultivating Two- and Four-Year Faculty Transfer Leadership

Investments in faculty champions can facilitate transfer partnership and pathway development.

The Institutional Challenge:

In addition to presidents and senior administrators, faculty are essential stakeholders in supporting transfer success; they ensure efficient credit transfer and promote teaching excellence and innovation that is inclusive of the transfer population. However, efforts to expand access and integrate transfer students into the four-year community can be especially difficult when faculty harbor reservations about course equivalency and student academic preparedness or resist accommodating transfer student needs during critical transition periods.

A Way Forward:

Beyond presenting faculty with data on transfer student success rates, one of the most powerful mechanisms to cultivate four-year faculty support for transfer initiatives is to provide opportunities for them to engage with their two-year counterparts to build trust and understanding. These relationships can lay the groundwork for developing clear course articulation agreements or program maps. Here are three additional advantages to creating and maintaining mechanisms through which two- and four-year faculty can regularly communicate:

- **Overcoming Skepticism:** Initial resistance to transfer subsidies when four-year faculty connect with community college faculty—who often have similar academic backgrounds and interests—and gain assurance that two-year classrooms are sufficiently rigorous to enable talented transfer students to excel in a four-year context.
- **Supporting Advancements in Pedagogy and Curricula:** Four-year faculty can learn how to best teach and support transfer students from their two-year peers, who have often developed nuanced teaching strategies over many years working with a diverse student body. Likewise, with exposure to curricula and expectations at ATI institutions, two-year faculty can better align their course content to enhance the transfer readiness of their students.
- **Advancing and Maintaining Agreements:** When faculty feel accountable to each other, they are more likely to engage in the kind of ad hoc contact needed to solve problems that arise, thereby avoiding lapses in articulation agreements that result from curricular or programmatic changes at either institution.



READ MORE ABOUT HOW BRYN MAWR COLLEGE AND ITS TWO-YEAR PARTNERS (CASE STUDY 3, PAGE 45) FOSTERED INTER-INSTITUTIONAL FACULTY RELATIONSHIPS TO BUILD BUY-IN AND CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITY FOR TALENTED LOWER-INCOME COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS.





Engaging and Advising Community College Students Early

This section explores effective approaches to engaging with prospective community college students. While specific tactics differ depending on the scope of recruitment (e.g., regional vs. national, large- vs. small-scale), all outreach strategies should seek to cultivate awareness and preparedness early—especially for underrepresented student groups—by building and drawing on strong relationships with community college partners.

The Institutional Challenge:

The historical lack of practices and policies that support transfer students across the ATI sector remains a significant challenge. Overwhelmingly, the literature and our research contacts describe a common barrier to increasing transfer rates across the sector: Community college students perceive ATI institutions as out of reach—that is, if they think of them at all.

What We Know About Prospective Transfer Student Decision Making

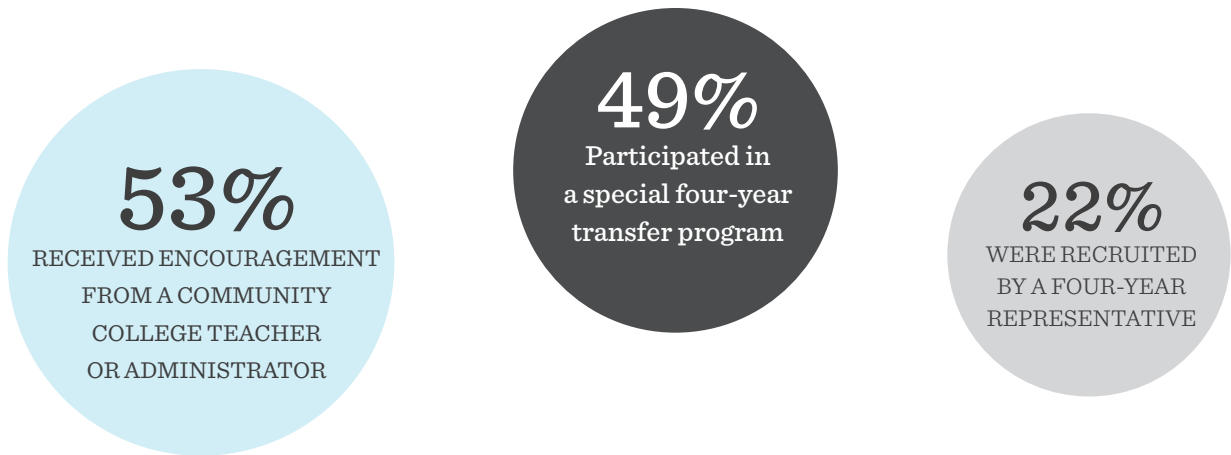
As part of their 2014 evaluation of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's (JKCF's) Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI), an institutional grant program aimed at jumpstarting community college transfer opportunity at top colleges, Burack et al. published results from surveys of two-year students who successfully transferred to five private and three public selective institutions—all of which are ATI-eligible. Their responses provide valuable insight into factors influencing high-achieving community college students who decided to transfer to a top college. Notably, 53 percent of respondents indicated that a main reason for applying to their eventual transfer destination was encouragement from a community college teacher or administrator. In contrast, only 22 percent of students indicated that the main reason for applying was recruitment by a

four-year representative. This is consistent with findings from our ATI research contacts, who describe widespread skepticism about opportunities at their institutions among community college students.

According to the surveys, the most effective form of four-year outreach was special four-year transfer programs, with 49 percent of respondents indicating that participation was a major driver in their decision to apply. However, our conversations with institutional representatives revealed an important nuance: Student participation in these programs was in many cases the result of community college faculty and staff recommendations.

The CCTI surveys also point to heightened financial anxieties among transfer students. For instance, 88 percent of respondents indicated that financial aid was important in their decision to apply to a four-year institution, and 76 percent of respondents indicated that they anticipated financial difficulty. Interestingly, 58 percent of respondents experienced financial difficulty after transfer, revealing the need for high-graduation-rate colleges and universities to pay attention to students' ongoing financial situations even when the institutions offer generous financial aid.

How Transfer Students Decide to Apply to a High Graduation Rate Institution...



A Way Forward:

While more aggressive recruitment efforts by ATI admissions counselors and four-year transfer advisors can help, these survey results provide evidence of the importance of building the kind of community college partnerships discussed earlier in this report, as well as leaning on those partnerships to reach high-achieving students through their trusted mentors.

We provide three broad guidelines for structuring outreach to high-achieving community college students.

Changing Perceptions: Making Opportunity Believable

Following Up with Direct-to-Student Recruitment

Allowing Flexibility with Specialized Self-Service Materials

The “Transfer-Friendly Ecosystems” section and Case Studies 4-6 (pages 46-49) in the “Transfer Tactics Repository” provide specific examples of how a range of ATI institutions engage community college students with transfer opportunities.

Changing Perceptions: Making Opportunity Believable

While senior leaders lay the groundwork for partnerships, community college faculty and advisors are critical to shifting student perceptions about access to ATI institutions.

Enabling Community College Mentors to Become Opportunity Advocates:

As observed in the CCTI evaluation, two-year faculty and advisors have considerable influence over their students' future plans. Rather than leaving recommendations to chance, ATI institutions should systematically inform and support student mentors at two-year schools. To help them guide students to understanding the full range of options available, institutions should ensure these influencers are aware of transfer opportunities and supports, can communicate the institution's value proposition, and can identify and effectively guide prospective students to transfer resources and contacts.

ATI institutions might consider the following questions, depending on the scale of their transfer recruitment efforts:

- Do you scale talent identification by offering training to two-year advisors?
- Do you leverage leadership to raise awareness among two-year faculty and advisors?
- Have you considered contacting your alumni network employed in two-year schools?



READ MORE ABOUT THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON OFFERS ADVISORS AT ITS PARTNER COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO STRENGTHEN TALENT IDENTIFICATION AND SUPPORT (CASE STUDY 4, PAGE 46).

Removing Actual and Perceived Financial Barriers:

Once faculty and advisors point prospective students to ATI institutions, debt aversion and perceptions of financial hardship can still deter students from applying—even when attending would be affordable. ATI institutions should, first and foremost, ensure that transfer students are provided the same financial aid as other rising juniors with similar financial circumstances. Additionally, colleges and universities should recognize that the financial needs of transfer students can differ substantially from those of traditional students due, for example, to the cost of off-campus housing, childcare, and/or commuting. When awarding aid, ATI institutions should take into consideration the full picture of transfer students' financial need (see Smith College, page 28). Finally, transfer-specific scholarships can validate students' academic achievements, fostering a sense of belonging while meeting financial need. To ease students' financial anxieties, community colleges and four-year institutions should work together to equip transfer recruiters, advisors, and financial aid officers with consistent information and resources needed to answer prospective transfer student questions about costs and aid.



READ MORE ABOUT TRANSFER-FRIENDLY ADMISSIONS MATERIALS CREATED BY AMHERST COLLEGE, CORNELL UNIVERSITY, AND SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY (CASE STUDY 6, PAGE 49).

⁶ Burack, Cathy; Lanspery, Susan; Shields, Thomas Piñeros; and Singleton, Sharon. (2014). *Partnerships That Promote Success: Lessons and Findings from the Evaluation of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Community College Transfer Initiative.*

Following Up with Direct-to-Student Recruitment

Rather than as an initial contact to students, utilize direct recruitment activities to reinforce efforts by community college advisors and faculty.

Sending Dedicated Recruiters and/or Advisors to

Captive Audiences: Recruitment visits made without first cultivating a presence among community college students and, more importantly, their influencers yield uneven results. Greater success can be achieved when four-year institutions embed transfer advisors in community colleges to build relationships with students. However, this may not always be feasible. In such cases, institutions may want to consider regular, periodic visits by recruiters and/or advisors who specialize in transfer to build on student interest established by community college faculty and staff recommendations.

Traveling in Groups to Reinforce the Message:

Community college students may not believe opportunity exists when a single top college takes interest in them, but several institutions may together make a more convincing case. To combat skepticism and reiterate the message that transfer students are welcome at ATI institutions, specialized transfer recruiters/advisors might consider traveling in small groups. This may be especially helpful when recruiting students to apply to institutions far from home (see Smith College, page 28).

Running Targeted Cohort Programs: Cohort programs have proven effective at building deep relationships with community college students and are most common when two- and four-year schools are geographically proximate. In addition to serving as an outreach opportunity, cohort programs support long-term transfer student success. Exemplary cohort programs work with students as early as possible during their associate's degree programs to influence course choices, address gaps in academic preparation, and/or raise comfort levels with residential four-year campus culture.

Allowing Flexibility with Specialized Self-Service Materials

Even before transfer, institutions should be mindful of the work and family responsibilities of non-traditional students and provide flexible options for them to access follow-up information.

Designing Transfer-Friendly Websites: At many points during the recruiting process, faculty and advisors may refer prospective students to transfer pages on institutional websites. As our analysis in “The Case” indicates, too often, transfer webpages may not be well designed to encourage further engagement. In addition to clearly conveying the basics of transfer, exemplary websites included key four- and two-year points of contact, information about specialized transfer programming and supports, and transfer student profiles to foster a sense of belonging.

Considering Recorded Informational Webinars:

Recognizing that many low-income students cannot afford to visit a four-year campus, some colleges are experimenting with web-based recorded informational sessions that can be accessed at the student's convenience. These can serve as a scalable means to connect with students who live farther away or who work during regular office hours.



READ MORE ABOUT TARGETED COHORT PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL (UNC-CHAPEL HILL, PAGE 32), THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-LOS ANGELES (UCLA, PAGE 36), AND VASSAR (CASE STUDY 5, PAGE 48), ALONG WITH THEIR PARTNER COMMUNITY COLLEGES.



Fostering Holistic Transfer Student Success with Dedicated Supports

This section highlights key areas where institutions may need to develop dedicated and tailored programming to support equitable outcomes for community college transfer students across a comprehensive set of measures, including social belonging; academic success as measured by performance, graduation, and time-to-degree; and engagement with high-impact experiences associated with post-graduate success.

The Institutional Challenge:

Even when community college transfer students are admitted and enroll, their experiences can differ markedly from those of their traditional student peers. For instance, while traditional students have significant time to settle in and explore when first entering an ATI institution, community college transfers must adjust in a compressed timeframe; they must immediately choose a major, find friends among already-formed peer groups, and contemplate life after graduation in less than two years. This leaves little margin for error in establishing a sense of inclusion and engagement, adapting to new academic expectations, and pacing toward on-time graduation. Improving the transfer student experience often requires adapting typical support systems to transfer students' unique needs. That work begins with gaining a greater understanding of the transfer student population.

What the data tell us about the transfer student experience:

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Community College Transfer Initiative evaluation provided valuable insights into the major social life challenges transfer students faced at ATI-eligible institutions.⁷ For instance, 54 percent of respondents indicated that engaging with clubs, activities, and friends was a challenge, while 52 percent indicated that "fitting in" was a challenge. Academically, while institutional and national data demonstrate that transfer students are likely to perform well in the classroom and graduate, there is concern among faculty and staff that students' shorter time on campus and affordability-driven focus on timely completion could inadvertently sideline their engagement with high-impact experiences. This assertion is corroborated by findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement that demonstrate that transfer students are much less likely to participate in activities such as research with faculty, internships, and study abroad.⁸ According to research from the Gallup-Purdue Index, students with lower participation rates in experiential learning are less likely to report indicators of post-graduate well-being and success.⁹

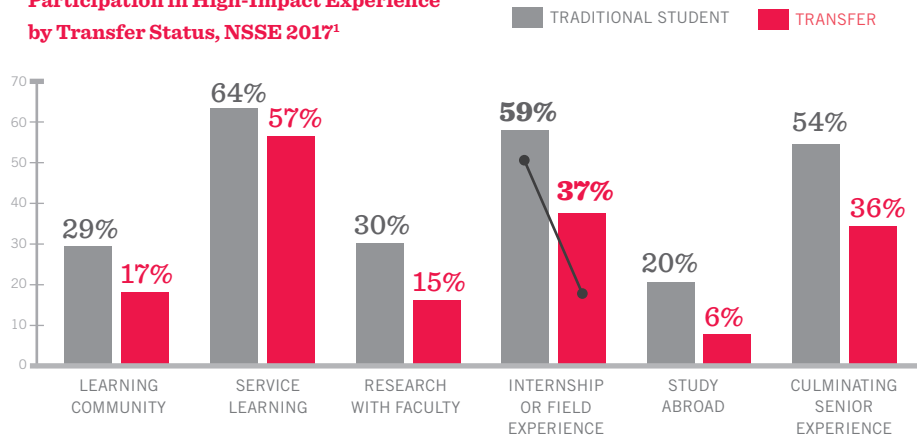
⁷ Burack, Cathy; Lanspery, Susan; Shields, Thomas Piñeros; and Singleton, Sharon. (2014). *Partnerships That Promote Success: Lessons and Findings from the Evaluation of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Community College Transfer Initiative.*

⁸ National Survey of Student Engagement. (2017). *NSSE 2017 High-Impact Practices.*

⁹ Gallup. (2015). *The Gallup-Purdue Index 2015 Report.*

MISSED OPPORTUNITY: TRANSFER STUDENTS LESS LIKELY TO ENGAGE WITH EXPERIENCES LINKED TO POSTGRADUATE SUCCESS

Percentage of Seniors Indicating Participation in High-Impact Experience by Transfer Status, NSSE 2017¹



Graduates Who Reported Applied Learning Through an Internship or Job Were²...

1.8x

More likely to be engaged in the workplace

1.3x

More likely to report holistic well being

FIGURE REFERENCES

¹ NSSE 2017 High-Impact Practices.

² Gallup (2015). *The Gallup-Purdue Index 2015 Report*.

A Way Forward:

Ensuring transfer student success requires that two- and four-year institutions take individual and collaborative action to attend to students while they are in community college, as they go through the critical transfer transition period, and until they attain their bachelor's degree.¹⁰ In designing programming, ATI institutions should pay special attention to three areas, which together cultivate an environment that promotes the holistic success of transfer students—or what experts call a “transfer-receptive culture.”¹¹

Promoting Belonging and Inclusion

Supporting Academic Success

Cultivating Mentorships and Experiential Learning

The “Transfer-Friendly Ecosystems” section and Case Studies 7-10 (pages 50-55) in the “Transfer Tactics Repository” provide specific examples of how a range of ATI institutions foster holistic transfer student success.

¹⁰ The College Excellence Program. (2017, December 13). *Tackling Transfer: A Guide to Convening Community Colleges and Universities to Improve Transfer Student Outcomes*.

¹¹ Herrera, Alfred, and Jain, Dimpal. (2013). *Building a Transfer-Receptive Culture at Four-Year Institutions*. *New Directions for Higher Education*, no 162.

Promoting Belonging and Inclusion

To facilitate inclusion, ATI institutions should provide opportunities for transfers to become familiar with campus resources, connect with other transfer students, and become self-advocates.

Knowing the Place: At minimum, transfer students should be given a basic orientation to become acquainted with their new environment. These sessions may overlap with those provided to new first-year students, but additional customized sessions should direct transfers to resources and offices relevant to circumstances more prevalent in the transfer student population, such as services for first-generation and low-income students, veterans, parenting students, and students who need social assistance.

Identifying with Other Students: Usually in relatively small numbers on ATI campuses, transfer students are at risk of feeling estranged from their traditional student peers. This can be compounded when transfers identify with other underrepresented groups, whether they be lower-income students, students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, or older students. Integration into the broader community may be made less daunting if transfer students are first given the chance to form

a support network with other transfers. Events dedicated to building community among transfer students should be standard during transfer orientation and offered throughout the year. Space dedicated to transfer students, such as a center or a lounge, can substantially enhance transfer students' sense of community and belonging, especially for those who live off campus.

Giving Voice to the Population: Transfer students can benefit from having the same self-advocacy opportunities as traditional students: representation in student government, on institutional transfer committees, and/or in student surveys and focus groups. Given the racial and socioeconomic diversity and non-traditional nature of the transfer population, these opportunities not only help engage these students, but also ensure that the institution has regular ways of gaining valuable insights about the transfer student experience, including emerging challenges.



READ MORE ABOUT HOW THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON HELPS ITS TRANSFER STUDENTS NAVIGATE ITS LARGE CAMPUS BEYOND ORIENTATION (CASE STUDY 7, PAGE 50).



READ MORE ABOUT CREATING SPACES FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS AT SMITH (PAGE 28) AND UCLA (PAGE 36).

Supporting Academic Success

Transfers are likely to graduate, but their success can be enhanced through tailored academic supports, efforts to reduce time-to-degree, and space for learning outside of the classroom.

Navigating Academic Adjustment: “Transfer shock”—the tendency of transfer student GPAs to dip in the first semester after transferring but recover in subsequent semesters—is a well-documented phenomenon, including at selective institutions. This persistent trend signals that transfer students’ academic struggles are not due to a lack of ability.

For instance, some transfer students might lack knowledge of a specific coding language or statistical program, while others might struggle with the volume of assigned reading or new writing expectations. Transfer initiatives should build awareness of where their students experience difficulties, so that faculty, advisors, and those offering other academic support services, such as tutors and experts in writing centers, can respond with specific resources at the first signs of academic distress. As importantly, faculty can be assigned or receive incentives to develop and deliver proactive support programming to get ahead of potential struggles. Early academic transition supports may include:

- Credit-bearing courses for intensive summer transfer programs (see UCLA, page 36)
- Specialized courses for new transfers equivalent to “first-year experience” seminars (see Smith College, page 28)
- Supplemental modules to address specific gaps in knowledge (see UCLA, page 36)

Completing in a Timely Fashion: Supporting timely bachelor’s completion post-transfer requires identifying prospective transfer students as early as possible and then ensuring adequate planning time with advisors. This is especially true at institutions where transfer students must seek admission to a specific major, as aligned



READ ABOUT HOW UCLA HELPS TALENTED TRANSFER STUDENTS GAIN ACCESS AND GRADUATE ON TIME BY EXPLORING MAJORS THAT ALIGN WITH THEIR CAREER GOALS (CASE STUDY 8, PAGE 52).

course selection while in community college is critical to admission into a program with junior-year standing.

Even when community college students make course choices well aligned to intended transfer destinations and majors, other institutional barriers can stand in the way of timely graduation, disproportionately disadvantaging lower-income transfers. For instance, delays can be caused by capacity-constrained courses and four-year major requirements that do not have readily available equivalents at the community colleges students attended. This becomes even more acute when strict course sequences are required—in fields such as engineering and architecture.

In addition to the academic transition supports described above, ATI institutions can promote timely degree completion for transfer students by considering:

- Transfer-friendly registration practices, such as reserving seats for transfers in high-demand programs, or enabling transfers to register at the same time as other students in high-demand prerequisites (see Smith College, page 28).
- Summer offerings for community college students on four-year campuses of capacity-constrained courses and those that are required for majors that are not offered in community colleges.

Delays can put lower-income transfer students at financial risk of not completing their degrees, especially if their eligibility for Pell Grants expires. Just as financial support eases access, ATI institutions should budget to ensure that transfer students remain financially whole for the duration of their degrees so that they may graduate even when, within reason, additional time is required.

Cultivating Mentorships and Experiential Learning

Social networks, which can be difficult to establish quickly and may be harder to navigate for first-generation transfer students, can provide strong opportunities

Providing Access to Mentors: According to the Gallup-Purdue Index, one of the most effective means to supporting post-graduate wellness and career engagement is to provide students with access to mentors.¹² While most campuses already host a variety of mentorship opportunities that can be accessed by all students, exemplary institutions have seen success with additional transfer student peer mentor program options. In that role, senior transfer students can share classroom and campus experiences, connect new transfers to faculty or staff transfer champions, help them navigate participation in clubs and other student group experiences, and provide guidance in addressing challenges that are more likely to impact transfer students.

Elevating Experiential Learning as a Centerpiece of Education: Access to high-impact experiences at four-year colleges and universities (e.g., research, internships) often results from relationships that students establish over the course of their studies. Because transfer students spend fewer years on campus, institutions must work harder to ensure that transfer students understand the importance of high-impact experiences, and facilitate direct access to networking with faculty, alumni, and career services. After students transfer, tactics may include specialized transfer orientation, regularly scheduled events, and targeted mentorship programs. Where possible, four-year institutions can collaborate with their two-year partners to introduce prospective transfer students to high-impact experiences while they are still enrolled in community college (see UCLA, page 36).



READ ABOUT HOW THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND-COLLEGE PARK SUPPORTS ON-TIME GRADUATION IN COMPETITIVE STEM MAJORS (CASE STUDY 9, PAGE 54).



READ MORE ABOUT HOW THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKELEY CONNECTS TRANSFER STUDENTS TO HIGH-IMPACT EXPERIENCES AS SOON AS THEY ARRIVE ON CAMPUS (CASE STUDY 10, PAGE 55).

¹² Seymour, Sean, and Lopez, Shane. (2015, April 8). [*"Big Six" College Experiences Linked to Life Preparedness.*](#)



TRANSFER-FRIENDLY ECOSYSTEMS IN THE ATI SECTOR

This section highlights three examples of ATI institutions' holistic transfer initiatives that incorporate several of the recommendations outlined in the previous pages.

Across the ATI sector, there are examples of institutions—both small and large, public and private, rural and urban—making concerted efforts to increase the access and success of talented community college transfer students. To understand what can be accomplished at scale when institutions fully embrace talent from community colleges, we present three profiles of ATI member institutions that have developed transfer-friendly ecosystems that incorporate recommendations outlined earlier in this report. **These three examples demonstrate that such scaled efforts can exist at very different institutions:**



<100

STUDENTS PER TRANSFER COHORT

The Ada Comstock Scholars Program:

How Smith College cultivates an inclusive environment for non-traditional-aged transfer students on its small, residential liberal arts campus.



100–1,000

STUDENTS PER TRANSFER COHORT

Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program

(C-STEP): How UNC-Chapel Hill increases access and eases transitions for lower-income transfer students by identifying and supporting talent early in community college.

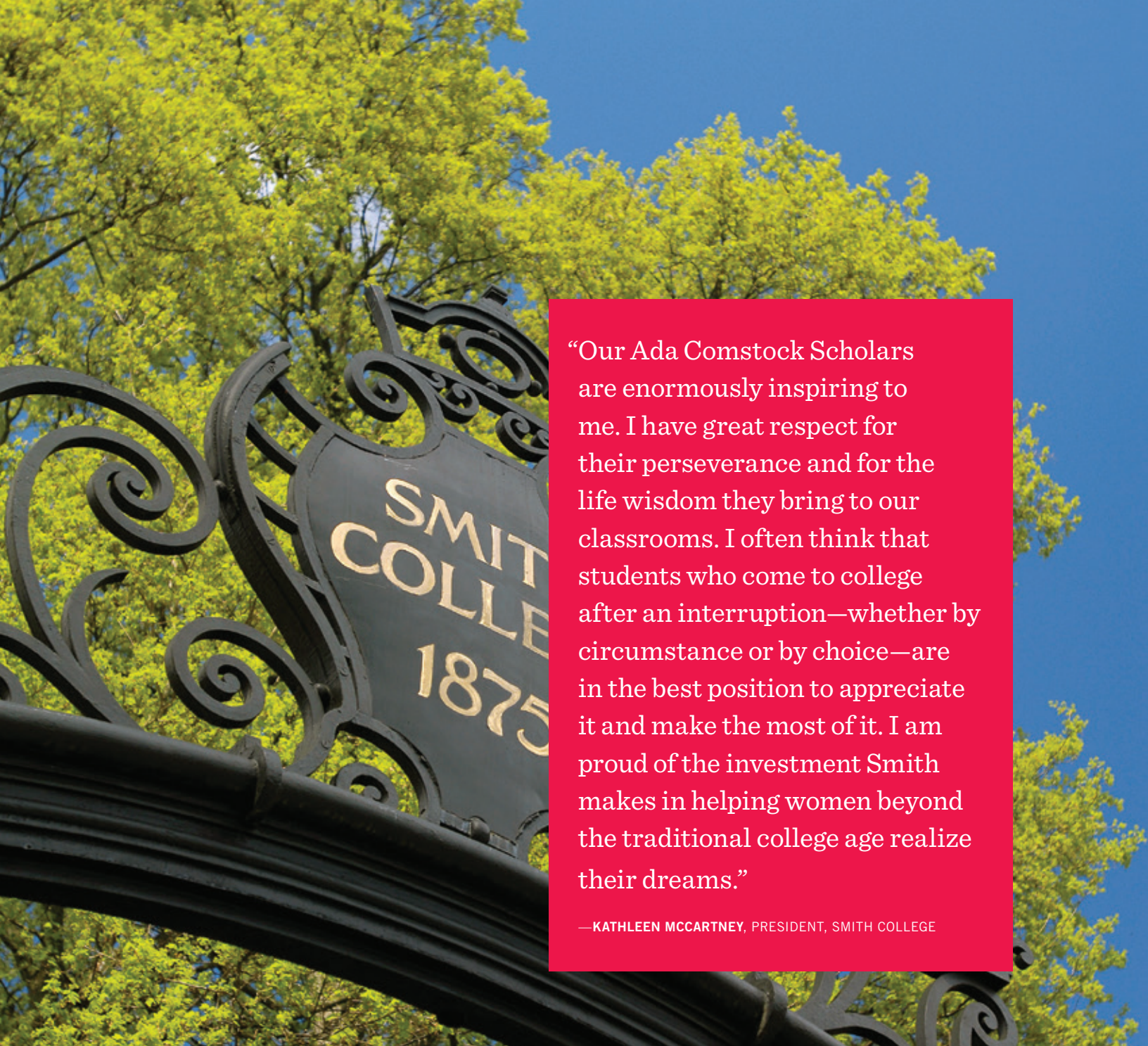


>1,000

STUDENTS PER TRANSFER COHORT

Breadth and Depth:

How UCLA scales support for over 3,150 new transfer students each year, while promoting equity for underrepresented groups through targeted programming and deep community college partnerships.



“Our Ada Comstock Scholars are enormously inspiring to me. I have great respect for their perseverance and for the life wisdom they bring to our classrooms. I often think that students who come to college after an interruption—whether by circumstance or by choice—are in the best position to appreciate it and make the most of it. I am proud of the investment Smith makes in helping women beyond the traditional college age realize their dreams.”

—KATHLEEN MCCARTNEY, PRESIDENT, SMITH COLLEGE

TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE
ENROLLMENT (2015-16)

2,453

NEW TRANSFERS
(2016-17)

81

NEW ADAS
(2016-17)

31

PELL ENROLLMENT
SHARE (2015-16)

21%

SHARE OF ADAS ON NEED-
BASED FINANCIAL AID

94%

6-YEAR GRADUATION
RATE, TRADITIONAL
STUDENTS (2015-16)

89%

4-YEAR GRADUATION
RATE, ADAS (2015-16)

87%



In many ways, Smith College is a typical highly selective small residential liberal arts college.

But a closer look reveals that its student body is anything but traditional—and it isn't just because it is a women's college. Each year, through its Ada Comstock Scholars Program, Smith admits about 30 non-traditional transfer students to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree. The "Adas," as they are known, often

include students who are working, students who are parenting, veterans, and students who are returning to college after gaps in their undergraduate studies, which typically began at a community college. The program is designed with considerable flexibility to meet the unique needs of its students. For instance, Adas can opt to complete their studies on a part- or full-time basis—a rare option at one of the nation's top colleges.

THE ADA COMSTOCK SCHOLARS PROGRAM

How Smith College cultivates an inclusive environment for non-traditional aged transfer students on its small, residential liberal arts campus

Among smaller-scale transfer programs, Smith's initiative offers a unique mix of dedicated resources and a deep culture of understanding and inclusion that has been intentionally developed across the broader campus. From recruitment to graduation, Adas have access to specialized supports, including a dedicated admissions counselor (who also serves as the Ada Comstock post-admission advisor), an Ada Class Dean, dedicated housing options, and an Ada study lounge. In addition, multiple on-campus academic and personal supports—such as tutoring, faculty advising, life skills/enrichment workshops, and career counseling—reflect and adapt to the unique needs of Adas. These services and ongoing student challenges are regularly discussed with the wider Smith community during meetings of the Ada stakeholder committee. Smith's approach of embracing transfer has ensured that even this relatively modest-sized group of Adas can have a big impact on campus.

DEEP DIVE: PROMOTING INCLUSION OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS ON A "TRADITIONAL" LIBERAL ARTS CAMPUS

Dedicated staff roles support the success of Ada Scholars by promoting campus-wide systems and cultures inclusive of non-traditional students.

Based on the dedicated Ada staff's deep understanding of students' needs, Smith College strives to ensure that Adas are fully integrated into student life and are supported across the whole campus. Specifically, a group of individuals—including Ada staff, representatives from various campus offices (the Registrar; Inclusion,



Diversity, and Equity; Student Affairs; and Residential Life), and two Adas known as “class presidents”—work to raise awareness across campus and address gaps in services that impact the inclusion and success of Ada scholars. Examples of how Smith policy and practice have been adapted to support Adas include:

- **Special considerations in financial aid:** Almost every Ada Comstock Scholar receives need-based financial aid from a combination of state, federal, and institutional resources. The Smith financial aid office understands that, because of Adas’ personal responsibilities, expenses for Adas can be much higher than for traditional students. Financial aid officers work closely with Adas and, when necessary, exercise their “professional judgment” authority to adjust FAFSA data and analyses to reflect the special circumstances of the student. These adjustments can help make travel, childcare, and other expenses more affordable for Adas. Further, Adas can apply for emergency funding for themselves or dependents through a special fund exclusively for Ada Comstock Scholars.
- **Early registration:** In the past, Adas would register alongside incoming first-year students during orientation, shortly before classes started. However, Smith now opens course registration for Adas during the summer and before the incoming first-year class to allow them more planning time, understanding that class schedules are incredibly important for Adas, who often have family care, commuting, and their own and/or their partners’ work schedules to consider. This practice allows Adas greater access to the courses they need to graduate in a timely manner.
- **Physical space on campus:** Within the past few years, campus advocates have successfully established the Ada Comstock Lounge, a center exclusively for Adas that features 24-hour access to lockers, study space, computers, lounge areas, and a kitchenette. The space also includes a children’s play area to accommodate parenting students. Students

indicate that the space has been instrumental to building a sense of community; it has both increased Adas’ access to information through peer-to-peer interactions and served as a physical representation of their belonging on campus. Further, the college provides two distinct housing options for Adas, an on-campus house that is open during breaks and during the summer months (for an additional fee) and apartment-style living for Adas with families.

Rather than asking Adas to conform to traditional student norms, Smith acknowledges the unique perspectives and circumstances these transfer students bring to the table and builds systems and supports that accommodate those differences. As a result, 80 percent of Adas graduate—a rate only slightly lower than that of their traditional student peers (who typically have not had to face the same challenges)—and Adas are well integrated into the college culture and feel empowered to contribute to and enrich the Smith community.

THE NEXT FRONTIER:

Smith College’s Ada Comstock Scholars often experience acute economic disadvantage. Despite the generous financial resources and services already available, Smith is seeking ways to reduce the housing and food insecurity still experienced by Adas. Further, Smith is looking to increase Ada scholars’ engagement with career and post-graduate planning to help them succeed beyond their time at Smith.



Key Features of The Ada Comstock Scholars Program



Pre-Transfer Foundations	Transfer Transition Support	Post-Transfer Engagement
Identifying and Supporting Community College Talent • Collaborative admission agreements with three feeder community colleges • An associate director of admissions serves as the specialized nontraditional transfer student admissions counselor, building close relationships with community college “transfer champions” and prospective students • Two-year transfer champions at partner community colleges—who are instrumental to the recruitment pipeline—are regularly visited and invited to visit Smith • Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)-sponsored advising for honors students and PTK scholarship opportunities for two Ada Scholars • Transfer recruitment in partnership with other liberal arts colleges to overcome student skepticism and self-doubt	Facilitating Integration into the Four-Year Campus Community • Financial aid packaging that reflects nontraditional student experiences and expenses • Spring admissions meeting for newly admitted Adas highlights available campus services and amenities • Peer mentoring program run by current Adas jumpstarts community building before classes start • Specialized orientation programming • Course registration for Adas occurs before incoming first-years’ registration, allowing planning time for childcare, work, etc. • Seminar classes akin to “first-year experience” to accustom Adas to Smith/liberal arts expectations	Supporting Engagement and Growth In & Beyond Classrooms • Ada stakeholder committee of staff, faculty, and Ada representatives, that works to build awareness of Adas across campus and meet their unique needs • Ada “class presidents” represent and advocate for needs of current Ada classes • The Ada Comstock Scholar handbook is a tailored, comprehensive guide to succeeding at Smith • The specialized transfer admissions counselor also provides post-admission support, connecting students to wrap-around services as needed • A dedicated dean is responsible for the academic welfare of Adas, guiding them to resources and support services needed to achieve success within and outside the classroom • Around-the-clock access to study space, computers, lockers, kitchenette, and child play space in the Ada Comstock Lounge • Additional stipends to allow access to unpaid internships and emergency funding • Apartment style housing available for Adas with families



“UNC’s C-STEP program is particularly meaningful to me because it reflects my own personal history as a community college student who transferred into the University of California system. As Chancellor at Carolina, I have witnessed how C-STEP, working hand-in-hand with community colleges, provides a door of entry to the opportunities of higher education and unlocks the full potential of these students.”

—UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL
CHANCELLOR **CAROL FOLT**

TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE
ENROLLMENT (2015-16)

18,415

TOTAL ENROLLMENT OF
C-STEP STUDENTS (2015-16)

186

NEW TRANSFERS
(2015-16)

771

INCOMING
TRANSFER GPA

3.7

PELL ENROLLMENT SHARE
(2015-16)

22%

INCOMING
TRANSFER GPA

3.0



CAROLINA STUDENT TRANSFER EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

How UNC-Chapel Hill increases access and eases transitions for lower-income students by identifying and supporting talent early in community college

C-STEP PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC/Carolina) didn't always have the reputation of being a transfer-friendly institution. However, knowing the richness that the relatively few students from the state's community college system added to its own community, UNC developed the Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program (C-STEP) with the help of a Jack Kent Cooke Foundation grant. Launched in 2006, C-STEP is a partnership between Carolina and 10 North Carolina community colleges with the aim of identifying cohorts of high-achieving low- and moderate-income students and supporting them in completing their associate's degrees and transferring to Carolina with the skills to excel. Indeed, 30 percent of C-STEP students qualified for UNC's signature need-based financial aid program, the Carolina Covenant.

Timing is key to C-STEP's success. Very early in their community college careers, students are identified as potential C-STEP applicants. At that time, candidates are selected through a holistic review process, and commit to advising, peer mentoring, and attending a host of social, cultural, and academic events to familiarize themselves with Carolina before transferring.

One central goal is for C-STEP students to establish a sense of belonging in the Carolina community before they complete their associate's degrees. Since its start, the C-STEP approach has resulted in 84 percent of students graduating, enabling them to continue their studies at competitive graduate and professional schools, pursue fulfilling careers, and use their Carolina education to ultimately serve their communities.

DEEP DIVE: Laying the Foundations for Success Through Advising, Early Community Building, and Continuity Between Transitions

UNC-Chapel Hill proactively addresses transfer student academic readiness, social inclusion, and transition challenges through three distinguishing features of C-STEP.

1. ESTABLISHING DEDICATED AND ROBUST EARLY ADVISING SYSTEMS TO ENCOURAGE ACADEMIC SUCCESS

One of the distinguishing features of UNC's program is a network of dedicated C-STEP community college advisors, located at partner two-year schools. These advisors—typically community college faculty or academic advisors—are tasked with identifying talent for the C-STEP program, assisting prospective students with the C-STEP application process, and supporting a cohort of students accepted to the program so that they meet admission requirements and are poised to excel academically at Carolina.

Given this pivotal role, UNC spends considerable time and resources to ensure that C-STEP community college advisors are equipped with the support and information they need to ensure students succeed. To ensure quality across partner community colleges, UNC supplies new advisors with a standard handbook and, twice annually, all C-STEP advisors convene to share best practices. They discuss how to address challenges in terms of promoting the program, identifying talent, supporting students in meeting requirements, and building community.



Beyond standardized training, C-STEP community college advisors are given encouragement and the autonomy to determine how to best serve the unique needs and cultures of their students. For instance, some C-STEP community college partners include community service in C-STEP programming to foster well-rounded student development beyond the classroom. Because of the time, commitment, and resources it takes for their community college advisors to support a C-STEP cohort, UNC provides each partner community college with a modest grant to cover the costs of faculty course releases and/or other operational support needed to manage C-STEP.

2. CREATING AN EARLY SENSE OF BELONGING THROUGH REGULAR PRE-TRANSFER SOCIAL EVENTS AT UNC-CHAPEL HILL

UNC hosts a series of social events on its campus aimed at giving C-STEP students early exposure to the Carolina community and designed to forge connections between C-STEP students from all community colleges, staff, faculty, and other students. Events include shadowing programs with current UNC C-STEP students, peer networking opportunities, and leadership and team-building activities (e.g., scavenger hunts). Participation is required for the C-STEP Kick-off Event, Shadow Program, and at least one other activity in each year of the program. When students enroll as juniors, they are already familiar with the campus and its resources, are connected to a community, and have a sense of Carolina's academic expectations. With most of the traditional transition period already behind them, C-STEP students are poised to hit the ground running as soon as they arrive.

3. PROVIDING A STABLE POINT OF CONTACT TO EASE TRANSITIONS

The job descriptions of C-STEP program specialists located at UNC—a director and coordinator—are wide-ranging. Together they are responsible for maintaining community college relationships, delivering advisor professional development, running events for prospective transfers, and developing monthly programming for enrolled C-STEP students. Perhaps most importantly—understanding that other institutions often struggle to support transfer students during the “hand-off” between community college

and the four-year destination—C-STEP program specialists serve as a constant presence before, during, and after transfer, establishing a sense of continuity for C-STEP students during transition periods.

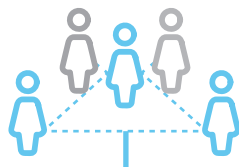
For instance, early on, the specialists make regular visits to community college partner institutions and participate in pre-transfer programming, providing a first connection to and direct contact at UNC. Post-transfer—at the start of their first semester at UNC and each semester thereafter—all C-STEP students are encouraged to meet with one of the specialists to chart their Individualized Carolina C-STEP Plan (ICCP), a tool designed to identify student strengths, predict potential barriers to their success, and identify solutions to overcome their challenges. The ICCP is used to deepen student relationships and provides a framework for early intervention when students struggle. Insights from ICCPs allow program specialists to provide student referrals to specific resources, including academic and financial aid advising, and on- and off-campus wrap-around services.

In addition to these scheduled meetings, specialists are present during orientation and monthly workshops for C-STEP students and are available for ad hoc one-on-one meetings. Their continuous presence across the C-STEP student experience positions program specialists as trusted, go-to support systems that all C-STEP students can turn to when they aren't sure where to seek help, and a crucial link to the various resources that promote students' success.

The Next Frontier:

Each year, UNC admits approximately 850 transfer students, of which about 100 are C-STEP students. Given the success of the program, UNC hopes to double the number of C-STEP students admitted annually to 200 through more partnerships across the state's community colleges. Among the primary goals for this expansion is increasing access to underrepresented lower-income student groups. For instance, UNC aims to create greater opportunity for more American Indian students through its collaboration with Robeson Community College, UNC's latest C-STEP partner.

Key Features of The C-STEP Program



Pre-Transfer Foundations	Transfer Transition Support	Post-Transfer Engagement
Identifying and Supporting Community College Talent • Two full-time program staff based at UNC who specialize in C-STEP and administer pre-transfer student and advisor events • Strong partnerships with 10 community colleges in North Carolina, each with at least one trained C-STEP two-year advisor • Professional development offered at UNC each semester for C-STEP community college advisors and a standard C-STEP training guide for new advisors • Regular meetings between community college students and trained two-year C-STEP advisors • Clear criteria for transfer admission to UNC-CH • Meetings each semester between C-STEP students and UNC academic advisors to promote major-readiness • Additional visits to community colleges by UNC undergraduate admissions transfer specialists and representatives from the office of financial aid • Immersive pre-transfer community-building opportunities for students at UNC, such as a C-STEP student shadow program and kick-off events • Engagement of C-STEP alumni and current C-STEP students in recruitment at their former community colleges to demonstrate peer success to prospective students	Facilitating Integration into the Four-Year Campus Community • Continuous access to and direct support from dedicated UNC C-STEP program specialists • Eligibility for the Carolina Covenant*, which provides robust financial aid to the lowest-income students • Mandatory specialized orientation programming for new C-STEP transfers • Mandatory individual student meetings with a C-STEP program specialist to develop an “Individualized Carolina C-STEP Plan” (ICCP) at least once per term • Assignment of C-STEP peer mentor based on program of study • Established connections between town and university partners for C-STEP off-campus housing options	Supporting Engagement and Growth In & Beyond Classrooms • Ongoing support from C-STEP program specialists • Monthly C-STEP events to reinforce community building and connect students to valuable resources and supports like career services • C-STEP Summer Internship Stipend subsidizes unpaid internship opportunities • C-STEP Committee of UNC administrators, staff, and faculty develop strategies that strengthen the transfer-student experience • More senior C-STEP students encouraged to become peer mentors and allow community college students to shadow them • Continued mandatory engagement with academic advising • C-STEP Graduation Ceremony invites community college partners to witness students’ accomplishments
THE ROAD TO CAROLINA STUDENTS SELECTED FOR C-STEP ARE EXPECTED TO: • Make timely progress toward their associate’s degree (12-15 credit hours per semester) • Meet with their C-STEP community college advisor at least once per term • Participate in C-STEP events on UNC’s campus and meet other C-STEP students • Complete their associate’s with a GPA of 3.2 or higher • Submit an application for admissions and financial aid the winter before the fall they intend to start classes at Carolina		
* The Carolina Covenant is UNC’s signature need-based scholarship program that enables lower-income students to graduate debt-free through the strategic packaging of grants, scholarships, and work-study awards. The program is open to UNC students (traditional and transfer) with family incomes less than or equal to 200 percent of the federal poverty level (e.g., \$48,500 for a family of four). Historically, approximately 30 percent of C-STEP students receive the Carolina Covenant. Remaining C-STEP scholars are eligible for other forms of need-based aid.		



“Our transfer students go on to the same graduate schools and professional schools and are highly successful. I think in terms of being inspired as an institution, these students provide a lot with their remarkable backgrounds and experiences... They work incredibly hard to get here.¹³”

—GENE BLOCK, CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-LOS ANGELES

TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE
ENROLLMENT (2015-16)

30,873

NEW TRANSFERS
(2016-17)

3,346

TOTAL BEGINNING
AS TRANSFERS

35%

PELL ENROLLMENT
SHARE

35%

INCOMING
TRANSFER GPA

3.31

FOUR-YEAR TRANSFER GRADUATION
RATE (2015-17)

92%

TRANSFER STUDENT
GPA AT GRADUATION

3.27



BREADTH AND DEPTH:

SCALING COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER

At the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA), transfer students make up more than 33 percent of incoming students each year, with more than 3,150 transfers enrolling at UCLA annually, over 90 percent of them from California community colleges.¹⁴ So, transfer isn't a single program or initiative—it is an integral part of the institutional fabric. While California boasts one of the largest community college systems in the country, nothing about UCLA's approach to transfer student outreach and support is coincidental. Community college transfer is prioritized at the highest levels, reinforced through significant resource allocation, and visibly celebrated as a major contributor to campus excellence.

How UCLA scales support for over 3,150 new transfer students each year, while promoting equity for underrepresented groups through targeted programming and deep community college partnerships

In addition to scale, UCLA has developed notable partnerships to ensure that students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education, including those from lower-income backgrounds and students of color, have additional access to UCLA through community college transfer. For instance, UCLA's transfer student population is disproportionately low-income, with nearly 50 percent of admitted transfer students eligible for Pell Grants, and over half of new transfer students identifying as students of color.

¹³ Kendall, Rebecca. (2018, January 29). UCLA recognized as 'exemplar' institution for transfer students. [UCLA Newsroom](#).

¹⁴ Data are from UCLA 2016-2017 Undergraduate Profile.



DEEP DIVE PART I: Making Transfer Equity a Priority Through Targeted Programming and Partnerships—UCLA’s Center for Community College Partnerships Scholars Program and Transfer Summer Program

Over many years, UCLA has developed strategies aimed at closing equity gaps in transfer student success. For instance, UCLA’s Center for Community College Partnerships (CCCP), a unit in the university’s Academic Advancement Program, was established to strengthen ties to California community colleges, with the goal of holistically preparing more students to transfer to top-tier research institutions like UCLA. Its programs are specifically designed to serve historically underrepresented community college students, including those who are first in their families to attend college, from lower-income backgrounds, and/or from underrepresented racial and ethnic populations.

CCCP’s hallmark initiative is its Scholars Program, which provides underrepresented students sustained support through the transfer process, including a spot in one of CCCP’s Summer Intensive Transfer Experience (SITE) programs, which are free for students. The “classic” SITE is a six-day residential program, through which community college students can acclimate to life on campus while learning about the application processes, getting to know university research and writing expectations, attending faculty lectures, and becoming familiar with support programs that can help them excel pre- and post-transfer. CCCP currently hosts 11 SITE program options, including:

- One for students interested in STEM
- Two for commuter or working students with tailored advice about how to navigate a prolonged residential experience
- Six for different identity groups (e.g., men of color, parenting students, foster youth), which are structured to allow students with similar experiences

to connect and explore historical, educational, and resources particular to those groups

UCLA’s Transfer Summer Program (TSP) provides newly admitted first-generation and lower-income transfer students an opportunity during the summer before their first full year at UCLA to establish a sense of belonging and gain confidence that they will succeed academically. Over a six-week period, students are required to enroll in an advanced composition course, a research course, and an elective, exposing them to the expectations of university courses while allowing them to earn credits. Most TSP students live on campus to begin building their social networks by engaging in social, cultural, and recreational events. Students also receive information on available campus resources and are encouraged to access the opportunities available to support them during their time at UCLA. In addition, students receive one-on-one and small group support from:

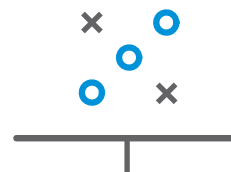
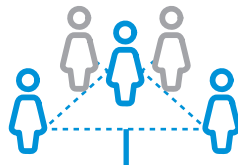
- A designated Peer Learning Facilitator in each course, who connects course content to dialogue and learning outside of the classroom
- College counselors, who discuss academic opportunities and provide personal guidance
- Peer counselors, who are also undergraduate students, who establish close bonds with transfer students and encourage their individual success

The cost of attendance and residential expenses for TSP is approximately \$6,600, but students who fill out the FAFSA can qualify for UCLA financial aid grants and scholarships.¹⁵

While TSP and CCCP programming are open to all California community colleges and their students, UCLA has developed deep, strategic partnerships with four

¹⁵ UCLA Division of Undergraduate Education. [UCLA New Student Programs: Freshman and Transfer Summer Programs](#).

Key Features of UCLA Transfer Strategy



Pre-Transfer Foundations	Transfer Transition Support	Post-Transfer Engagement
Identifying and Supporting Community College Talent • UCLA Chancellor visits community colleges statewide to demonstrate commitment to partnership • Staff of 20+ admissions counselors directly serve transfer advising staff across 114 California community colleges • UCLA sponsors professional development trainings for community college advisors, hosted on community college campuses and at UCLA, and accessible online • Comprehensive transfer admission guide details UCLA program-specific transfer requirements • Transfer Alliance Program (TAP): Competitive major priority consideration for honors program students across 51 California community colleges • Center for Community College Partnerships (CCCCP): Offers mentorship opportunities to underserved community college students • CCCC immersive summer programs target various underrepresented identity groups and are structured to increase access and success • Student Transfer Outreach and Mentor Program (STOMP): Reaches prospective transfers within 1-1.5 years of completing community college	Facilitating Integration into the Four-Year Campus Community • For-credit Transfer Summer Program provided to admitted students, targeting first-generation and lower-income students • Transfer Bruin Day in the spring connects transfers to each other and familiarizes them with transfer-specific information through workshops • One-day transfer orientation held 9 times over the summer with weekend options to accommodate working/parenting students • Transfer Transitions sessions offered directly before fall term, designed to supplement orientation and help transfer students build community and map out their two-year BA/BS timeline. Some sessions are tailored to different segments of the transfer community, including racial/ethnic groups, veterans, parents, and non-traditional students (e.g., age 24+) • UCLA and partner community college faculty collaborate to explore and develop pedagogical solutions to academic transition challenges commonly experienced by transfer students • Social media initiatives: Active social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) are used to connect students and update them on vital resources and opportunities	Supporting Engagement and Growth In & Beyond Classrooms • Transfer Student Center is a dedicated hub for transfer-specific programming and access to counseling and supportive resources • Transfer Mentorship Program enables a trained peer mentor to be matched with a transfer student for guidance and support • Guaranteed housing option for new first-year transfers; family housing also available • Transfer Experience: Living learning housing community with programs organized by peer transfer residential advisors • Transfer Pride Week is a campus-wide initiative highlighting the transfer student community • Extensive campus-wide mentorship opportunities available year-round from peers, faculty, graduate students, and residential living assistants • Organized efforts to advocate for the transfer community and build on-campus awareness and support for transfers • Online Transfer Student Resources site hosts a compendium of transfer-specific information • A Transfer Leadership Coalition brings together UCLA student organizations, leaders, and transfer allies (other students, faculty, staff) to support transfer students through information sharing, campus collaborations, and advocacy



neighboring community colleges, with an eye toward bridging equity gaps. One of those partners is East Los Angeles College (ELAC), which enrolls a large population of students from Hispanic, lower-income, and/or undocumented backgrounds and has committed to increasing its “transfer-sending” culture as part of its strategic plan. Some of the components of their collaborative relationship—which are layered on top of existing UCLA admissions and ELAC advising support—include:

- An extended CCCP 18-day SITE program specifically for ELAC students, which includes a three-unit course that counts toward their ELAC degree
- UCLA Chancellor visits to ELAC to signal to ELAC students, faculty, staff, and senior administrators the extent of UCLA’s commitment to transfer-student success goals
- Transfer task force and Advisory Board meetings with both UCLA administrators and ELAC administrators and faculty to develop additional programs
- Partnerships between ELAC and UCLA faculty to address common academic challenges experienced by ELAC transfer students, such as gaps in information or experiences that can make transitions difficult

Nearly 150 ELAC students, approximately 75 percent of whom are first-generation students, participated in the CCCP Scholars Program. The vast majority identify as Latino, and 85 percent come from families with incomes less than \$38,000. The impact on access to UCLA and other top-tier institutions for ELAC students is clear: Over the last five years, ELAC has increased the number of students transferring to UCLA by over 25 percent and, over the last 10 years, increased the number of students it transfers to the UC system by nearly 150 percent—jumping from number 28 to number 13 of community college feeder institutions. Additionally, nearly a third of their UC transfer students are transferring to UC-Berkeley and UCLA, two of the system’s most competitive campuses.

DEEP DIVE PART II: UCLA’s Approach to Scaling Transfer Student Support

In addition to its commitment to equity, one of the most notable features of UCLA’s transfer program is the scale at which it supports all transfer students from recruitment through graduation, as exemplified by the range of its efforts, outlined in the “Key Features” table. Of special note is the vibrant transfer community that UCLA has cultivated—reflected in the following three examples:

- **Transfer Pride Week:** While UCLA seeks to promote inclusion of transfer students in the broader campus community, it also views transfer students as distinctive and deserving of recognition. Each quarter, UCLA highlights its transfer community with the campus-wide Bruin Transfer Pride Week, which consists of social events, community service opportunities, and workshops that celebrate the transfer student community.
- **Transfer Student Living Learning Community:** 53 percent of entering transfer students live in UCLA apartments and family housing units. To complement community building efforts and meet the unique needs of transfer students, UCLA includes a Transfer Experience living learning community (LLC) among its housing options. The transfer LLC dedicates housing space to transfer students, where they have convenient access to programming and ready opportunities to connect with faculty and staff networks as well as academic and social resources. For example, workshops and networking events have focused on study abroad or research with faculty.
- **Transfer Student Center:** Despite the multitude of individual transfer student resources and university-wide support systems available, transfer students sometimes find it difficult to locate the support they need. Recognizing that this might be due to UCLA’s large size and decentralized nature, UCLA created its Transfer Student Center, a centralized hub to raise visibility and streamline transfer services. The center



occupies a central location on campus and offers services like drop-in advising and peer mentoring, study space, and a series of events and activities aimed at connecting transfers to the support and community they need to realize their goals.

THE NEXT FRONTIER

While a clear asset, the many resources and programs UCLA makes available to transfer students also pose a consistent challenge: a

lack of transfer student awareness of what is available. While progress has been made with the launch of the Transfer Student Center, UCLA sees room to continue building awareness of available resources through student-facing communication campaigns. The university also aims to facilitate even deeper connections among the different units serving transfer students behind the scenes, with the ultimate goal of creating a seamless experience for transfer students.

The Transfer Tactics Repository



Refer to these practices to access specific examples of how ATI institutions navigated challenges associated with developing community college transfer opportunity.

The practices are organized across the three fundamental principles in transfer practice and strategy identified in this report.

ADVANCING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH STRONG, LEADERSHIP-DRIVEN PARTNERSHIPS	ENGAGING AND ADVISING COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS EARLY	FOSTERING HOLISTIC TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS WITH DEDICATED SUPPORTS
CASE STUDY 1: Transforming Transfer with Leadership at Lawrence University (page 43) CASE STUDY 2: Annual Vision Alignment at Marist College and Dutchess Community College (page 44) CASE STUDY 3: Facilitating Partnerships Through Faculty Exchanges at Bryn Mawr College (page 45)	CASE STUDY 4: How the University of Washington Builds Strong Relationships with Community College Advisors to Get Prospective Students On-Track Early and At Scale (page 46) CASE STUDY 5: How a Small, Highly Selective College Can Maintain a Strong Commitment to Community Colleges (page 48) CASE STUDY 6: How Three Private Colleges Use Real Transfer Student Stories to Resonate with Prospective Students (page 49)	CASE STUDY 7: How the University of Washington Uses Technology to Scale Support for Transfer Students During the Critical Transition Period (page 50) CASE STUDY 8: Encouraging Access to Alternative Majors That Align with Students' Career Goals (page 52) CASE STUDY 9: Supporting On-Time Graduation in Competitive STEM Majors at the University of Maryland (page 54) CASE STUDY 10: How the University of California-Berkeley instills early engagement with internships (page 55)



Transfer Tactics:

Advancing Opportunity Through Strong, Leadership-Driven Partnerships

Case Study 1: TRANSFORMING TRANSFER WITH LEADERSHIP AT LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

In the past, students from University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley (community college) could transfer to neighboring Lawrence University—a small private liberal arts college in Appleton, Wisconsin—but not without challenges. While an admissions relationship with UW-Fox existed, prospective transfer students were largely left to forge their own path to the private college. There was no formal transfer infrastructure nor credit-articulation agreements.

Sharing an interest in fostering the success of students from the local area, President Mark Burstein and UW-Fox CEO and Campus Dean Martin Rudd set out to establish a formal partnership. To start, Burstein appointed a “Special Assistant to the President,” a senior faculty member granted a teaching release, responsible for internal planning with campus stakeholders about the partnership as well as external discussions with the UW-Fox leadership team. The president also called for a cross-campus leadership team that included the Provost, Registrar, Dean of Enrollment Management, and the Vice Presidents of both Student Life and Finance. Together, the Special Assistant and the leadership team worked with UW-Fox to map out the barriers that transfer students might encounter both in before and after transfer. Systematically building an understanding of these challenges—such as, uncertainties about course articulation and affordability—the team was able to identify key stakeholders that needed to be involved in order to resolve those barriers.

Within a year, a formal partnership agreement was executed by leaders of both institutions that included specialized advising, registration, and financial aid information—as well as customized orientation—for UW College transfers. Additionally, Lawrence developed a navigable online credit evaluation tool for UW college advisors and prospective transfer students that shows how UW credits would transfer to Lawrence. For UW-Fox transfers, additional supports are available, including summer social events and peer mentors. To ease financial burdens, President Burstein also announced specific, significant scholarships for transfer students.

Before the launch of the partnership, Lawrence enrolled a total of approximately 10 UW college students across their student body of approximately 1,500. Now, Lawrence aims to enroll 10 to 15 new UW College students each year.

“We are very excited to formalize our relationship with the UW Colleges and specifically UW-Fox. This agreement is another step in our effort to increase access to a rigorous Lawrence education and help make it affordable to more residents of Wisconsin.”

—President Mark Burstein



Case Study 2: ANNUAL VISION ALIGNMENT AT MARIST COLLEGE AND DUTCHESS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

With clear, visible support from each institution's president, Marist College and Dutchess Community College (DCC) shaped a comprehensive transfer partnership—Bridges to Excellence (B2E). B2E was designed to serve the missions of both institutions, by increasing opportunity for first-generation and low-income students at Marist, while increasing associate's degree completion at DCC. Through shared institutional commitment, Marist and DCC continue to develop the B2E program to further meet the needs of the students it supports.

UNDERSTANDING THE MARIST AND DUTCHESS COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP

1. Building Strong Foundations Through Aligned Leadership

- Conversation centered on commitment to local community.
- Dutchess Community College (DCC) wanted to graduate more students and Marist sought to increase commuter population, with a focus on first-generation and low-income students.
- Partnership focused on underserved students from the local area with the aim of reducing human-capital flight from the Hudson Valley while simultaneously elevating the socioeconomic potential of students.

2. Reaffirming Relationship on an Annual Basis

- Presidents meet at least once per year to discuss changes and challenges in the area and identify opportunities to partner.
- A joint planning and review process is completed annually by Office of Undergraduate Admission and DCC's B2E Coordinator.
- Key constituents (e.g., admissions, student financial services, student employment, registrar, transfer services, academic services and testing, and academic learning center) from each institution meet throughout the year to plan and set expectations.

3. Setting the Tone at Home

- Marist includes a commitment to the local community in its strategic plan (Advancing the Social Good).
- Marist's American Talent Initiative commitments focus on low-income student enrollment from the local community.
- Development of the new role of Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement strengthened collaborative efforts with Dutchess Community College.

LONGSTANDING ALIGNMENT LED TO DEVELOPMENT OF CUTTING-EDGE, HIGHLY INTEGRATED FOUR-YEAR TRANSFER AND GRADUATION INITIATIVE

THE BRIDGES TO EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Student-Friendly:

- Timeline of specific activities and milestones before and after transfer
- Wrap-around academic, financial, personal, and career support through advising/counseling
- Automatic acceptance upon program requirement completion
- Committing to housing development designated for the expansion of the transfer population

Two Institutions Serving One Mission:

- Encourages associate's and bachelor's completion

Looking Ahead:

- Reviewing current transfer student awards to help incentivize local low-income students to participate in the program.
- Reinforcing assistance to identify on-campus employment opportunities to help with personal and educational expenses.

"Marist is proud to partner with Dutchess Community College on the Bridges to Excellence (B2E) program because it's a great way to develop the significant talent that exists in Poughkeepsie. By expanding young people's access to higher education and helping them reach their full potential, we're really investing in the future of our local community. And when the community succeeds, we all benefit."

—President David N. Yellen



Case Study 3: FACILITATING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH FACULTY EXCHANGES AT BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

In 2011, when Bryn Mawr College (BMC) received a three-year, \$400,000 Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI) grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, it set out to increase opportunity for high-achieving lower-income students by developing formal relationships with two neighboring community colleges. Recognizing faculty as a key part of this work, BMC began by organizing “faculty exchanges” to develop collaborative relationships between two- and four-year counterparts.

The exchanges consisted of two trips. First, faculty from the two partner community colleges visited BMC and sat in on classes, talked with students, and had lunch with four-year faculty, grouped by discipline. Then, BMC faculty travelled to a community college campus for a similar experience, observing teaching in an honors class. While community college faculty

are typically familiar with four-year campuses and expectations, the trip to the community college was a novel experience for many of the BMC faculty. For some BMC faculty members who harbored skepticism about transfer students’ ability to meet four-year expectations, witnessing the academic rigor and talent in community college faculty and students firsthand provided a compelling counter narrative. The exchange was a pivotal moment in building a critical mass of faculty buy-in and cultivating the development of “faculty transfer champions,” which paved the way for the development of BMC’s Community College Connection (C3) program with the two community colleges. C3 offers prospective students comprehensive pre- and post-transfer support from BMC and community college staff, and substantially increased the number of courses eligible for credit transfer.

“When our faculty had the chance to talk to their peers and students from the community college, they lit up as they began to understand the opportunities and great promise that our transfer partnerships could bring.”

—CRISTINA ROSE, Transfer Coordinator, Bryn Mawr College



Transfer Tactics:

Engaging and Advising Community College Students Early

Case Study 4: HOW THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON BUILDS STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADVISORS TO GET PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS ON-TRACK EARLY AND AT SCALE

At the University of Washington (UW), roughly 25 percent of undergraduate students enter as transfers. In comparison to traditional first-year students, UW's community college transfer student population is more likely to come from historically underrepresented groups, such as first-generation college-goers, students of color, and students from lower-income households.

UW offers a multitude of services customized for prospective and new community college transfers, including an online self-service academic transfer planning tool, prospective transfer student webinars, weekly in-person admissions and advising sessions, separate orientation (with tailored sessions on post-graduate planning and information for commuter students), and academic advisors assigned to each incoming transfer student.

UW works to build strong relationships with community college advisors across the state to ensure that they have the right information to identify and guide prospective students early and know where to access help. This is

especially important given UW's large size, extensive program offerings, and competitively admitted/capacity-constrained majors. For example, UW hosts in-depth community college advisor professional development opportunities, where advisors can engage in small-group, scenario-based training on how to help students navigate real-life issues such as applying to capacity-constrained majors (see page 47). In addition to supporting students with existing interest in UW, this program has resulted in UW developing the kind of trusting relationships with community college advisors that, in turn, have enabled UW to connect with the hardest-to-reach students, who trust the recommendations of their advisors.

The results: Community college advisors are equipped with the right information, so students access the guidance needed to make timely choices that not only ease transfer but set them up for success after transferring. Indeed, the four-year graduation rate of the UW transfer student population is 84 percent—on par with the six-year graduation rate of students admitted as first-year students.



THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON'S APPROACH TO COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ADVISOR SUPPORT

BROAD-BASED ADVISOR OUTREACH: EQUIPPING ADVISORS WITH TRANSFER-SPECIFIC INFORMATION AT SCALE

ANNUAL STATEWIDE CONFERENCE	LISTSERV	NEWSLETTER
• Free conference and lunch • 100+ CC advisors, ~100 four-year advisors • Transfer Admissions 101, Transfer Articulation	• Four-year and CC advisors/administrators can post • Announce events and departmental curricular changes • Forum for CC advisors to share resources	• Bi-annual announcements of events and news • Platform to regularly profile transfer student stories • Normalizes UW transfer experience

IN-DEPTH ADVISOR DEVELOPMENT: CULTIVATING CC-BASED EXPERTS

- Free event, lunch provided
- 25 CC advisors per session, 2 sessions per summer
- Deep dive into admissions evaluations, mock transfer application review
- Small group scenario-based training using advising case studies
- CC advisor-guided agenda: post-meeting evaluations inform next year's content

ADVISOR-TO-ADVISOR LIAISONS: PUTTING A FACE TO THE INSTITUTION

- Four-year advisors and admissions counselors assigned case-load of five community colleges
- Introductions to CC advisors made via email and mailed flyers
- In-person meetings facilitated by statewide conference
- Provides direct contact info to CC advisors
- Allows CC advisors to resolve questions quickly



Case Study 5: HOW A SMALL, HIGHLY SELECTIVE COLLEGE CAN MAINTAIN A STRONG COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Transfer admission to Vassar College is competitive: Between 10 and 15 percent of transfer applicants successfully gain admission. Despite the relatively small scale of its incoming transfer class, Vassar has maintained a robust commitment to the broader community college space by hosting an annual Exploring Transfer (ET) program for the past 30 years.

ET is a five-week-long summer intensive program designed to give community college students from historically underrepresented backgrounds immersive classroom and residential experiences at a four-year liberal arts college. Students live on campus for the duration of the program, gain exposure to campus resources, and complete two interdisciplinary courses designed to advance reading, writing, communication, and critical thinking skills. Crafted to promote student engagement with current political discourse, courses are co-taught by Vassar and community college faculty. Within and outside the classroom, students are supported by ET residential teaching fellows, many of whom are graduates of the program. While a five-week residential

commitment can be challenging for some to manage, the design allows students—many of whom typically have had to work, care for family, and/or commute during their studies—intensive, dedicated space and time to understand the context of a small liberal arts college.

Though students from any community college are eligible to apply to the program, ET partners with advisors at over 15 community colleges across the country, who help guide students from their institutions through the selection process. Since its inception, over 1,000 students have participated in ET, and more than 80 percent have gone on to attend a four-year college or university.¹⁶ While Vassar does not guarantee admission to ET participants, alumni of the program have transferred to and graduated from Vassar as well as other ATI institutions (e.g., Columbia, Cornell, Smith, Swarthmore, and Yale). Through ET, Vassar demonstrates how top colleges can utilize resources beyond traditional financial aid to benefit talented community college students beyond their own campuses.

¹⁶ Kosmacher, Jeff. Exploring Transfer: Encouraging Four-Year Degrees for 30 Years. *Vassar: The Alumnae Quarterly*.



Case Study 6: HOW THREE PRIVATE COLLEGES USE REAL TRANSFER STUDENT STORIES TO RESONATE WITH PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Because limited numbers of community college students make their way to top four-year colleges and universities, most community college students don't know many (if any) peers who followed that pathway and, when they do, those peers tend to be traditional or wealthier students with whom community college students may not identify. Acknowledging these realities, Amherst College, Cornell University, and Southern Methodist University (SMU) ensure that talented two-year students see that they will be welcomed and supported on their campuses.

Amherst College's transfer admissions website has a dedicated page for community college students that includes student profiles, blogs, and videos. Work is underway to update the current transfer student profiles, and recently, Amherst College added student stories and videos to

a separate webpage that addresses U.S. veterans. Similarly, Cornell University's transfer admissions page links to a comprehensive Transfer Guide that incorporates community college transfer students' perspectives. Signaling transfer-friendliness, these transfer student profiles and perspectives aim to counteract reservations held by many transfer students.

In addition to cultivating a sense of belonging, SMU, an ATI-eligible institution, noted how prospective transfer students were especially concerned about the affordability of transferring to a private institution. To allay these concerns, SMU uses sample financial aid packages based on real transfer student cases to demonstrate affordability in real terms.

HOW SHARING TRANSFER STUDENT STORIES CAN MAKE YOUR INSTITUTION MORE RELATABLE

SEEING THEMSELVES THROUGH OTHERS

Help Prospective Transfer Students Resonate With Your Campus by Sharing Real Transfer Success Stories

TRANSFER STUDENT PROFILES

- Stories, blog posts, videos, or in-person visits of recent/current transfer students representing different majors and CCs
- Transfer student alumni stories can demonstrate where they are now
- Answer questions—What were they doing before? What struck them about your institution pre- and post-transfer? Post-graduate plans?

A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

Student profile content can be repurposed to build support for transfer initiatives among faculty, four- and two-year advisors, alumni donors, etc.

MAKING AFFORDABILITY REAL TO CONVEY FINANCIAL FIT

Overcome Skepticism With Sample Financial Aid Packages Based on Real Transfer Student Aid Cases*

JASON'S 2017 FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE

- Biology major transfer student from XYZ Community College
- Family of four with an income of \$50,000 and no additional assets

Total Cost of Attendance	\$50,000
Total Grants	\$45,000

NET COST (Amount paid by student/family) ... \$ **5,000**

OPTIONS TO COVER THE REMAINING NET COST

Parent Contribution (Savings, Loans, etc.).....	\$ 2,500
Student Employment (Summer, Work Study) ..	\$ 2,500

*Illustrative examples and guidelines for transfer admissions materials



Transfer Tactics: Fostering Holistic Transfer Student Success with Dedicated Supports

Case Study 7: HOW THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
USES TECHNOLOGY TO SCALE SUPPORT FOR
TRANSFER STUDENTS DURING THE CRITICAL
TRANSITION PERIOD

With limited time to impart information to transfers, the University of Washington (UW) is working to ensure that transfer students have easy access to the right information at the right time. During the first term, UW uses its mobile-friendly student portal—which students frequently use to access their class schedules and other administrative information—to push out short, easy-to-digest reminder messages that highlight specific tips or services when students need them most. Importantly, the campaign acknowledges differences between the traditional and transfer student experience and tailors messages accordingly. For instance, “Week 0” messages focus on community building, with transfer students seeing links to transfer student orientation events. Currently in the first year of this pilot, UW plans to evaluate usage and modify message content to increase readership.

This broad-based layer of support is meant not to replace, but rather to complement, robust personalized advising, mentorship, and access to other support services. In conjunction, these nudge principles can help transfer students navigate a vast array of resources during a critical time of transition, especially on large, decentralized campuses where face-to-face interactions are not always possible for students who commute or have family or work responsibilities.



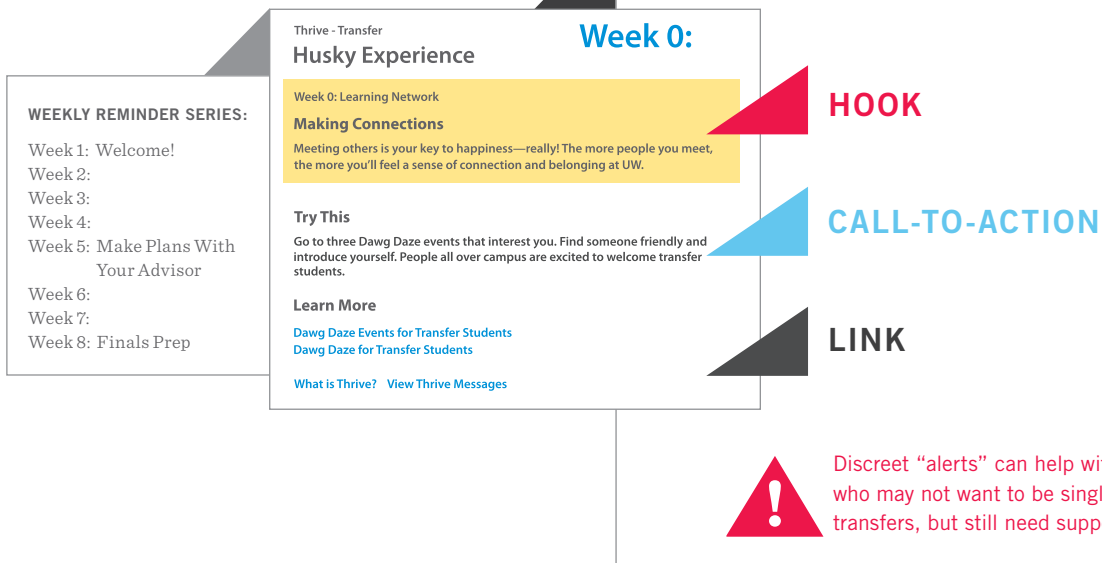
SETTING TRANSFER STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESS— CUSTOMIZED ORIENTATION AND CONTINUED SUPPORTS

CONNECTING TRANSFERS TO COMMUNITY AND PURPOSE,
WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES AND
PREVIOUS COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

MAINTAINING SUPPORT AT SCALE

HOW THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON SUPPORTS
TRANSFERS BEYOND DAY ONE FROM BEHIND THE SCENES

REMINDER CAMPAIGN IN STUDENT PORTAL HIGHLIGHTS
SUPPORTS WHEN TRANSFER STUDENTS NEED THEM MOST



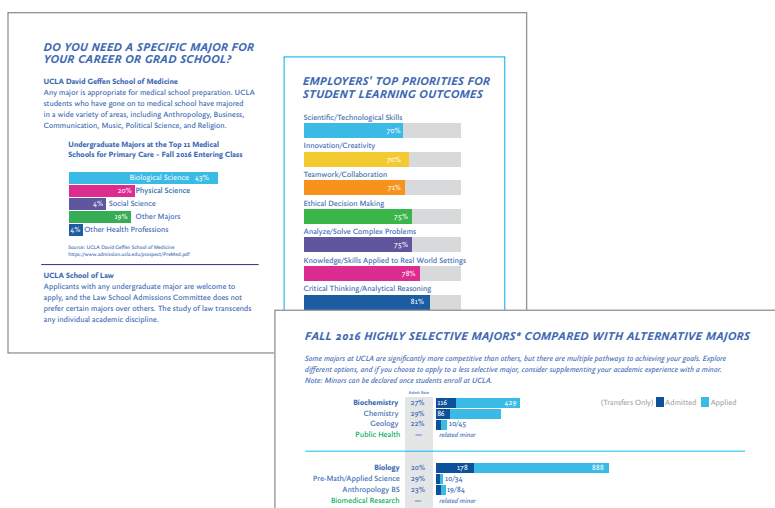


Case Study 8: ENCOURAGING ACCESS TO ALTERNATIVE MAJORS THAT ALIGN WITH STUDENTS' CAREER GOALS

The difference between a major in biological versus physical sciences can be minor when it comes to many career outcomes. For instance, medical, law, and business schools accept students from a variety of undergraduate major backgrounds. While major exploration may be the norm for traditional students—with approximately a third of them switching majors at least once—first-generation transfer students, who have to apply directly to majors, are more likely to be unaware of these nuances even though they could affect their access to competitive institutions.¹⁷

UCLA employs a variety of strategies to ensure that their transfer students have access to its most competitive majors as well as knowledge of the full breadth of its academic programming. For instance, UCLA participates in the California-wide Transfer Alliance

Program (TAP), a partnership with 51 California community college honors programs. Students who meet UCLA's TAP admissions criteria gain priority consideration to the College of Arts and Sciences, which is home to some of the school's most competitive majors, such as biochemistry, biology, communications, and economics. In engineering, faculty from UCLA and partnering community colleges work together to prepare prospective students not just for transfer, but also for academic success and participation in high-impact experiences. However, given how competitive these majors are for both transfer and traditional students, UCLA wants prospective transfer students to understand all of the program options available—many they might have never heard of, but for which they are competitive for transfer admission and that would ultimately help them meet their career goals.



¹⁷ Data Point: Beginning College Students Who Change Their Majors Within 3 Years of Enrollment. U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2018-434.



To inform these conversations, UCLA annually publishes a *Transfer Admission Guide*.¹⁸ The guide provides general information for prospective students to apply to UCLA (e.g., an admissions overview, timelines, and tips and advice from UCLA transfer advisors) as well as comprehensive details on the lower-division courses that must be completed for admission to a UCLA major concentration. The *Transfer Admission Guide* also equips advisors and prospective students with admission rates for several UCLA majors designated as highly selective, “where the demand for majors significantly exceeds space available.” In fall 2016, the average acceptance rate was 25 percent across nine of UCLA’s highly selective majors. So students fully understand the implications of their major choices, UCLA contextualizes this information with statistics about graduate school major requirements and employer priorities.

By employing this dual strategy—offering transfer students’ on-ramps to selective majors and being transparent about program-specific admission rates in the context of long-term plans—UCLA aspires to encourage students to explore all majors that align with their educational and career goals. For instance, rather than applying as a psychology major, which has a 21 percent admission rate across approximately 1,800 applicants, prospective transfer students might consider the linguistics and psychology major, which has a 41 percent admission rate across approximately 45 applicants and can lead to the same career outcomes, especially if supplemented with a related minor—details that are included in the guide.

UCLA leverages its robust outreach strategy (see page 36) to ensure that community college students and advisors can access this information. While the long-term goal is to set transfer students up for post-graduate success by broadening their access options, there are also tangible short-term benefits. With access to these tools, students can engage in major exploration in community college and identify a path to transfer early. Informed decisions can reduce the likelihood that students accumulate costly excess credits, the effects of which disproportionately and negatively impact lower-income students and students of color.

¹⁸ UCLA Undergraduate Admission. *UCLA Transfer Admission Guide: 2018-2019*.



Case Study 9: SUPPORTING ON-TIME GRADUATION IN COMPETITIVE STEM MAJORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

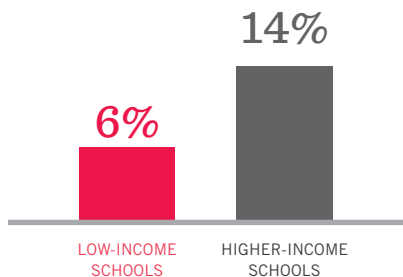
In STEM fields, enabling community college students to transfer and earn a bachelor's degree is an essential strategy to strong career opportunities. Why? According to the National Student Clearinghouse, students from high schools that serve lower-income communities are less likely to complete a STEM bachelor's degree within six years of high school graduation than are their higher-income peers. As noted in "The Case," students from lower-income high schools are also much more likely to enroll in community college. Further, job market data from Burning Glass indicate that there is an undersupply of STEM bachelor's graduates compared to demands in the workforce. By contrast, there is a slight oversupply of workers prepared for entry-level STEM jobs, which often require sub-baccalaureate credentials.

At the University of Maryland-College Park (UMD), approximately one third of undergraduate students

enter as transfers. One of UMD's largest colleges, the A. James Clark School of Engineering, is also one of its most popular transfer destinations. To promote the success of transfer students interested in engineering, all eight of UMD's engineering departments reach out to prospective students in Maryland's community colleges to hold face-to-face advising appointments aimed at helping students navigate engineering transfer pathways and meet the requirements of what are generally prescriptive course sequences. To keep students on pace for timely graduation, scholarships are offered to transfer students so that, during the summer prior to enrollment, they can complete mandatory courses not offered at their community colleges. With this robust support, UMD engineering transfer students have a 92 percent four-year graduation rate (three-year rolling average), rivaling the 95 percent four-year graduation rate of other rising juniors who study engineering.

LOWER-INCOME STUDENTS LESS LIKELY TO EARN STEM DEGREES

STEM BACHELOR'S COMPLETION SIX YEARS
AFTER HS GRADUATION, CLASS OF 2008



OVERSUPPLY IN STEM SUB-BA ATTAINMENT AND UNDERSUPPLY IN STEM BACHELOR'S ATTAINMENT EMPHASIZES IMPORTANCE OF ROBUST COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER PIPELINES TO NATIONAL ECONOMY

FOR "BACHELOR'S+"
EARNERS...

48%

OF ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS
REQUIRING AT LEAST A
BA ARE IN STEM FIELDS

29%

OF BACHELOR'S GRADUATES
EARN A STEM DEGREE

FOR "SUB-BA"
EARNERS...

24%

OF SUB-BA DEGREES
ARE IN STEM FIELDS

32%

OF SUB-BA ENTRY-LEVEL
JOBS ARE IN STEM FIELDS

FIGURE REFERENCES

Real-Time Insight Into The Market For Entry-Level STEM Jobs.
Burning Glass Technologies, 2014.

High School Benchmarks 2015: National College Progression Rates.
National Student Clearinghouse.



Case Study 10: HOW THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKELEY INSTILLS EARLY ENGAGEMENT WITH INTERNSHIPS

At the University of California-Berkeley (UC-Berkeley), 21 percent of undergraduates enter as transfer students. The university boasts high graduation rates, with 91 percent of transfer students graduating in four years or less, with an average time-to-degree of 2.17 years after transfer. UC-Berkeley is now looking to the next frontier of success: ensuring that their transfer students are not only graduating on time but more frequently accessing the high-impact experiences associated with long-term post-graduate success and wellness.

UC-Berkeley leverages its robust transfer orientation programming to jumpstart transfer student engagement with career exploration, alumni networking, and internships. For instance, the university offers two specialized orientation programs for transfer students that incorporate an excursion to nearby companies and organizations and a social mixer with alumni organized into industry-based networking groups. These kinds of experiences—typically a first for many—allow transfer students to hit the ground running by connecting them to purpose and career pathways before classes start.

CREATING ONRAMPS TO HIGH-IMPACT EXPERIENCES AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE, TRANSFER-TAILORED ORIENTATION PROGRAM



RESOURCES OVERVIEW

- Connect transfers to career services resources
- Link majors to potential career paths
- Sets stage for importance of networking, internships, etc.



CAREERS IN CONTEXT

- Excursion to visit nearby companies and organizations
- Exploration of different career and internship opportunities
- Jumpstarts experiential learning



ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

- Mixer with alumni organized into industry-based networking groups
- Exposure to various career paths, hands-on networking learning experience
- Fosters early connection to purpose & demonstrates value of 4-year degree

Appendix: “The Practical Guide” Study Design

To understand the underlying institutional challenges ATI colleges and universities face in increasing community college transfer opportunities, as well as to identify promising practice and candidates for case studies, we selected ATI institutions for telephone interviews based on a comprehensive literature review, transfer admissions webpage content evaluation (as described in “The Case”), and an analysis of publicly reported ATI-eligible and member institution transfer enrollment data from the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). ATI institutions that demonstrated promising practice in the literature and website review and/or were ranked among the institutions with strong transfer enrollment (relative to the size of the incoming first-year class) were contacted for interviews. Additionally, as part of their commitment to ATI, all member institutions submit

an outline of their individual institution’s goals, strategies, and areas of inquiry for increasing opportunity for low- and moderate-income students. An analysis of content related to community college transfer access and success submitted before June 30, 2017, was also used to select institutions for further investigation.

The preliminary quantitative and qualitative scan, in combination with follow-up telephone interviews, surfaced three “transfer-friendly ecosystems” among ATI-member institutions for further study. Two-day site visits were conducted at each exemplar institution, which included meetings with senior administrators, transfer leadership, faculty, and students. The purpose of these site visits was to observe firsthand how the support systems for prospective and enrolled community college transfer students were managed, integrated, and perceived across the campuses.



If every ATI school enrolled an additional 20 low- and moderate-income community college transfer students as juniors each year, ATI would be a quarter of the way to reaching its **50,000-by-2025 goal**—halfway if each enrolled an additional 40 transfer students.

