Tracking Transfer: Key Metrics to Support Institutional Improvement

John Fink
Senior Research Associate
Community College Research Center

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Few Transfer, Even Fewer Complete

- 850,000 degree-seeking Community College entrants
- 80% intend to earn a Bachelor’s Degree
- 32% transferred to a 4-year in 6 years
- 34% of transfers earn award before transfer
- 14% earn BA within 6 years

Source: Shapiro et al. (2017); Jenkins & Fink (2016)
Equity gaps, by Race & Income

Fall 2007 CC Entrants

- All Students: 14%
- Lower-income: 10%
- Higher-income: 16%

Jenkins & Fink, 2016

Fall 2010 CC Entrants

- All Students: 16%
- Asian: 23%
- Black: 9%
- Hispanic: 11%
- White: 19%

Shapiro et al., 2017

14% earn BA within 6 years
Completed bachelor's
A Longitudinal College Path to Bachelor's Degrees

Using Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Pulbic High School Seniors

Clive Belfield
Queens College, City University of New York

John Fink
Community College Research Center
Teachers College, Columbia University

Davis Jenkins
Community College Research Center
Teachers College, Columbia University

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Address correspondence to:
Clive Belfield
Professor of Economics
Queens College, City University of New York
65-30 Kissena Boulevard
Flushing, NY 11367
Email: c.belfield@qc.cuny.edu

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Transfer Outcomes for Community College Students

- Transfer outcomes low and inequitable, but there is variation in college performance
- CC students aren’t gaining momentum
- Many bachelor’s intending students don’t transfer
- Rampant, inequitable transfer credit loss leads to extra time-to-degree, extra cost, decreased likelihood of completion
- Despite credit loss, CC route to bachelor’s still cheaper (if students complete)
Students make progress, don’t transfer

Bachelor’s Degree-Seeking 2-year Entrants in VA,
Rate of Transfer to Four-year Colleges

- All two-year entrants: 23%
- Associate earners: 68%
- < 20 college-level credits: 5%
- 20-39 college-level credits: 18%
- 40-59 college-level credits: 36%
- ≥ 60 college-level credits: 57%

Source: Xu, Jaggars, & Fletcher, 2016, Table 9.
Barriers to **Transfer Momentum** for Community College Students

- Students not helped to explore career/college options, and develop a plan—and their progress isn’t monitored
- Transfer paths unclear, gen ed core misleads students
- Too many entering students weeded out through abstract, rote instruction in uninspiring subjects; too few experience high-quality active learning in fields of interest
- “Transfer shock” upon arrival at the four-year
- Dual enrollment offerings not designed to help students actively explore interests and develop goals for college and careers
Transfer paths unclear

Enrollment Patterns among ~100K Bachelor’s Degree Completers who Started at a Community College

- 2 + 3, 17.7%
- 3 + 3, 13.6%
- 2 + 4, 10.9%
- 1 + 4, 8.0%
- 1 + 3, 3.7%
- 1 + 5, 4.9%
- 4 + 2, 3.5%
- 4 + 1, 0.2%
- 5 + 1, 0.1%
- 1 + 2, 0.7%
- 3 + 1, 0.2%
- 2 + 1, 0.2%
- 1 + 1, 0.1%
- 2 + 2, 8.1%
- 3 + 2, 8.1%
- 3 + 1, 0.2%
- 1 + 2, 0.7%
- 4 + 1, 0.2%
- 5 + 1, 0.1%
- 1 + 1, 0.1%

Few graduates follow 2+2 pattern

Jenkins & Fink, 2016; Further disaggregation by authors
How Can Community College and Four-Year Partners Achieve Strong Transfer Outcomes?
1) Prioritize transfer student success
2) Create clear program pathways with aligned high quality instruction
3) Provide tailored transfer student advising
Transfer Playbook **Institutional Self-Assessment**

### Essential Transfer Practices #2: Create Clear, Rigorous Program Pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential Transfer Practice</th>
<th>Stage of Adoption at Our College</th>
<th>Questions to Consider</th>
<th>Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **a.** Programs of study for transfer students are clearly mapped. | Not Present | - Do the transfer maps clearly indicate:  
  - Recommended lower-division courses, course sequences, and progress milestones by academic term for specific four-year majors?  
  - Clear information on differences in requirements among programs in the same major field at different institutions?  
  - Information on career opportunities in each field?  
  - Are the maps easily accessible on the college’s website?  
  - Is there a mechanism for keeping transfer program requirements and maps up-to-date? | - How does the college ensure that your programs adequately prepare students to succeed in upper division coursework? What data are gathered to assess this?  
- Are four-year faculty actively involved in reviewing the content and quality of your offerings?  
- Is there a process for university partners to communicate to your faculty needed improvements in lower-division instruction?  
- When the college identifies areas for improvement, how quickly are these challenges addressed? |
| **b.** Coursework and extracurricular activities provide students with rigorous preparation aligned to expectations for their junior and senior years. | Not Present | | |
| **c.** Alternatives to 2+2 transfer pathways have been developed for circumstances where those are not the best routes to a bachelor’s degree. | Not Present | | |

We recommend the college president and other senior leaders emphasize that improving transfer student outcomes is core to achieving the college’s mission.
Transfer Networks are Complex: Use Data to Identify Major and Aspirational Partners

Tools for Gathering Transfer Data

Measuring Your College’s Effectiveness Serving Transfer Students

(Originally compiled by the Aspen Institute, Community College Research Center, and Paul D. Camp, 2016)

The tables and definitions below detail a basic set of metrics your college should use to measure the outcomes of your students who seek to transfer to a four-year institution. These measures of your college’s transfer outcomes in comparison to national averages can provide an opportunity to measure how your transfer students fare at your college’s top five transfer destinations.

Table 1: Tracking Transfer Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Performance Measure 1</th>
<th>Performance Measure 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Urban CC Nationally</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Rural CC Nationally</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


How to Measure College Effectiveness Serving Transfers

By John Fink and Davis Jenkins

While many students who start at a community college and complete a bachelor’s degree, most of them are not strategic in improving outcomes for these students. The tables and definitions below detail a basic set of metrics your college should use to measure the outcomes of your students who seek to transfer to a four-year institution.

Table 1: Major Transfer Partner Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Performance Measure 1</th>
<th>Performance Measure 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top 10 largest four-year transfer destinations</td>
<td>Number of transfers to this university</td>
<td>Percent of university award offered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guidelines for Before, During, and After a Focus Group

Before a focus group:

• Be clear about your goals for the focus group, and develop questions for your protocol accordingly. Like other questions, target these questions to the topic of discussion.

• Recruit a diverse group of participants, make sure to include as many students who have struggled or succeeded as those who have not.

• Provide context that helps students feel comfortable sharing their experiences candidly. Be clear about anonymity but also keep opening questions fairly short and neutral, to avoid creating bias in students.

• Choose a facilitator who is neutral, credible, and familiar with the students.

• Use a digital recorder rather than a written or audio device to ensure that there is no bias in the information captured.

• Let the conversation flow, and allow students to ask questions.

Resource: Planning and Conducting Transfer Student Focus Groups

When the goal at hand is to improve outcomes for transfer students, it is important to start by talking with students themselves. As your team plans for your transfer workshop, student focus groups can help provide your planning team with valuable qualitative data, which contains rich detail and contexts that are not captured by quantitative data.

Findings from the focus groups can help institutional leaders identify the ways in which students’ experiences do not match the intended design of a particular program or intervention. When conducted in advance of a state-wide workshop or conference, these focus groups can serve as a valuable opportunity to identify areas where there is the greatest need for improvement and then incorporate these lessons into the workshop goals and content.

What follows is a resource to help you plan for your transfer student focus groups. We highlight important guidelines to keep in mind before, during, and after a focus group. In addition, we include a sample protocol geared to a conversation about transfer, as well as guiding questions for a facilitator debrief. We encourage you to adapt these protocols to fit your needs. For more on how to develop good focus group questions, please see Krueger’s 2005 “Developing questions for focus groups.”

Guidelines for Before, During, and After a Focus Group

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Tracking Transfer: Key Metrics to Support Institutional Improvement
Tracking Transfer: Five New Measures

1. Transfer-Out Rate
2. Transfer-with-Award Rate
3. Transfer-Out Bachelor’s Completion Rate
4. Transfer-In Bachelor’s Completion Rate
5. Community College Cohort Bachelor’s Completion Rate
Tracking Transfer: New Measures

First-time-ever-in-college (FTEIC) Cohort Definition

- NSC data, first time in college during the fall 2010 term
- Dual-enrolled students excluded
- Degree-seeking only (identified using enrollment intensity in 1st year)
- Six-year tracking period

Transfer Student Definition

- In fall 2010 cohort and subsequently enrolled at any number of other institutions, so long as at least one was a four-year institution
- One-third of transfer students matriculated at two or more institutions after their initial community college enrollment
## Tracking Transfer: New Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Outcome</th>
<th>Rate Definition – Numerators &amp; Denominators</th>
<th>Unit of Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer-out Rate</td>
<td># of students in cohort who transfer / # of students in cohort</td>
<td>Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer with Award Rate</td>
<td># of transfers who first earn a certificate or associate degree at the starting community college / # of transfer students</td>
<td>Community College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer-Out Bachelor’s Completion Rate</td>
<td># of transfers who eventually earn a bachelor’s degree at any four-year institution / # of transfer students</td>
<td>Community College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NSC’s *Tracking Transfer* update: Fall 2010 Cohort

**Transfer-Out Rates**
- OK: 36%
- LA: 32%
- U.S. average: 32%

**Transfer-with-Award Rates**
- FL: 46%
- CT: 34%
- U.S. average: 34%

**Transfer-Out Bachelor’s Completion Rates**
- IL: 45%
- TX: 42%
- U.S. average: 42%

Source: NSC Signature Report 13
Community College Cohort Bachelor's Completion Rates by State

Source: NSC Signature Report 13

NSC's Tracking Transfer update: Fall 2010 Cohort
CCRC, Aspen, & NSC’s *Tracking Transfer*: Fall 2007 Cohort

**CC Cohort Bachelor's Completion Rates for Lower and Higher Income Students**

- **Lower income students**
- **Higher income students**

**States**
- WY, MT, OK, MS, FL, IA, TN, KS, ND, AL, ID, NY, IL, OR, TX, MO, VA, WA, NE, MI, NH, MN, PA, LA, AZ, MA, CA, KY, NJ, NV, MD, NC, HI, SC, AR, WV, GA, CO, WI, NM, CT, OH, ME, SD

- **U.S. average**

- **CCRC**

- **Tracking Transfer**

- **Fall 2007 Cohort**
Replicating Tracking Transfer Metrics using NSC Data

- How does my college perform on the “Tracking Transfer” outcomes?
- Which institutions are our major partners, and what are the degree outcomes for students who transfer to those partners?
Tracking Transfer: Key Metrics to Support Improvement

Merging Tracking Transfer Metrics to College Data for further Disaggregation

### Table 2.
Community College Transfer Outcome Measures (Example Results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Transfer-Out Rate</th>
<th>Transfer-With-Award Rate</th>
<th>Transfer-Out Bachelor's Completion Rate</th>
<th>Cohort Bachelor's Completion Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community college results</td>
<td>(568/1,460) = 38.9%</td>
<td>(21/568) = 37.1%</td>
<td>(336/568) = 59.2%</td>
<td>(336/1,460) = 23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National average*</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*National averages using these definitions on the entering fall 2010 community college cohort are from Shapiro et al. (2017).

### Table 3.
Subgroup Analysis of Community College Transfer Outcomes (Example Categories)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Transfer-Out Rate</th>
<th>Transfer-With-Award Rate</th>
<th>Transfer-Out Bachelor's Completion Rate</th>
<th>Cohort Bachelor's Completion Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By race/ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By income/Pell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By program area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Merge NSC records with college data to further disaggregate various subgroups.*
Tracking Transfer: Key Metrics to Support Improvement

**Partnership analysis: How do transfers to your college’s top partnerships fare on the following outcomes:**

- Transfer-with-Award rate
- Bachelor’s Completion rate
- Average number of years before transfer to the FY
- Pct. of CC’s transfers who transferred to this FY
- Pct. of CC’s bachelor’s degree graduates who completed at this FY
Tracking Transfer: Key Metrics to Support Improvement

Partnership analysis: How do transfers to your college’s top partnerships fare on the following outcomes:

Table 5.
Transfer Partnership Performance Measures (Example Results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four-Year Receiving Institution Name</th>
<th>Transfer-With-Award Rate Among Transfer Students to This Four-Year Institution</th>
<th>Bachelor’s Degree Completion Rate Among Transfer Students to This Four-Year Institution</th>
<th>Percentage of Community College’s Transfer Students Who Transferred to This Four-Year Institution</th>
<th>Percentage of Community College’s Bachelor’s Completers Who Completed at This Four-Year Institution</th>
<th>Average Number of Years Until Transfer to This Four-Year Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other four-year receiving institutions (n = 29)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Tracking Transfer: Key Metrics to Support Improvement

**Further Detail for Top Transfer Partners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Merge records with college data to further disaggregate by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of transfer students to this FY</td>
<td>148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pct. of transfers who earned a pre-transfer CC award</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of years before transfer to this four-year institution</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree completion rate for students who transferred to this four-year institution</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average time to bachelor’s degree completion (within 6 years)</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Further Detail on Broad Degree Fields among Transfer Students who Completed Bachelor’s Degrees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Professions</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Humanities, &amp; English</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science &amp; Mathematics</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture &amp; Natural Resources</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer &amp; Information Sciences</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Technology</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services &amp; Administration</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All bachelor’s degree completers in this partnership (N = 98) 100%
Bachelor’s Degree Completer Program Areas Among Community College Entrants (Fall 2010 FTEIC Cohort)

Source: CCRC analysis of NSC data on the fall 2010 FTEIC, degree-seeking community college cohort.
Bachelor’s Degree Completer Program Areas Among Community College Entrants (Fall 2010 FTEIC Cohort)

New York Completers (N=8K)
- Uncategorized/Missing: 2%
- Social & Behavioral Sciences: 21%
- Other Science & Mathematics: 2%
- Biological Sciences: 10%
- Public Services & Administration: 13%
- Health Professions: 5%
- Engineering: 3%
- Education: 5%
- Computer Science: 2%
- Business: 20%
- Arts, Humanities, & English: 16%
- Applied Technology: 2%
- Agriculture & Natural Resources: 1%

NY Lower income Completers (N= 1244)
- Uncategorized/Missing: 2%
- Social & Behavioral Sciences: 20%
- Other Science & Mathematics: 2%
- Biological Sciences: 15%
- Public Services & Administration: 12%
- Health Professions: 3%
- Engineering: 5%
- Education: 2%
- Computer Science: 18%
- Business: 14%
- Arts, Humanities, & English: 14%
- Applied Technology: 2%
- Agriculture & Natural Resources: 1%

NY Higher income Completers (N= 3509)
- Uncategorized/Missing: 1%
- Social & Behavioral Sciences: 20%
- Other Science & Mathematics: 3%
- Biological Sciences: 8%
- Public Services & Administration: 14%
- Health Professions: 3%
- Engineering: 5%
- Education: 2%
- Computer Science: 22%
- Business: 19%
- Arts, Humanities, & English: 19%
- Applied Technology: 1%
- Agriculture & Natural Resources: 1%

Source: CCRC analysis of NSC data on the fall 2010 FTEIC, degree-seeking community college cohort.
Tracking Transfer: Ideas for Further Framing Analyses

- By meta-major area students enter in their first year: Tracking Transfer outcomes and top transfer destinations
- Bachelor’s completion rates among transfers by CC award type (including no pre-transfer award)
- Partner with major university destination: Credit loss studies: Transcript audits, transfer credit loss/applicability
- Course-taking behaviors among transfer students who did and did not complete a bachelor’s degree
  - Top courses passed and failed (DFW rates)
  - Average number of credits earned pre-transfer
Thank you!