

Transfer as Academic Gauntlet: The Student Perspective

A Report for the Initiative on
Transfer Policy and Practice

Stephen J. Handel

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About the Author

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About the Initiative on Transfer Policy and Practice

In partnership with the College Board's National Office of Community College Initiatives and the Advocacy & Policy Center, the Initiative on Transfer Policy and Practice highlights the pivotal role of the transfer pathway for students — especially those from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds — seeking a baccalaureate degree; convenes two- and four-year institution leaders to identify policies and practices that enhance this century-old pathway; and promotes a national dialogue about the viability and potential of transfer to address the nation's need for an educated citizenry that encompasses all sectors of American society.

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Executive Summary

As part of the Initiative on Transfer Policy and Practice and as a complement to *The Promise of the Transfer Pathway*,* a recently released analysis of the current transfer process in the U.S., this report assesses the current effectiveness of the transfer pipeline as it works for students today — not from the policymakers' perspective but from the standpoint of students. How do prospective transfer students enter this pipeline? What are the tests they must pass in preparing for, and applying to, the four-year institution? What types of barriers must they overcome to become fully integrated at the receiving institution?

Transfer as Academic Gauntlet: The Student Perspective identifies three central challenges that community college students face as they prepare themselves for transfer to a four-year college or university:

- **Getting Ready:** Students who are preparing for transfer are often faced with insufficient information about the transfer process; nonexistent or indecipherable policies specifying how their community college credits will transfer; and enormous complexity in satisfying requirements for possible admission to multiple four-year institutions.
- **Getting In:** Students who are ready to apply for admission at one or more four-year institutions encounter another cluster of challenges, including late notification of admission and insufficient financial aid. In addition, transfer students are often asked to make a decision whether to attend without knowing officially how (or if) their community college credits will be accepted by the four-year institution and how these credits will apply toward various elements of the baccalaureate degree.
- **Getting Through:** Students who successfully transfer struggle to become familiar with a new campus. It is a transition that deserves but rarely receives much attention from campus administrators, who sometimes assume that transfer students are already acclimated to college and do not need assistance.

*Access this report at <http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/admission-completion/community-colleges>.

Transfer as Academic Gauntlet — The Student Perspective

A Note to the Reader

*This paper is one of three supplemental reports commissioned for the Initiative on Transfer Policy and Practice, a College Board project funded in part by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, focusing on the effectiveness of the transfer pathway for community college students seeking the baccalaureate degree. For a comprehensive description of this initiative's methodology, empirical and policy analyses, findings, and recommendations, please see the full report, *The Promise of the Transfer Pathway: Opportunity and Challenge for Community College Students Seeking the Baccalaureate Degree*, and several supplemental reports, available at <http://advocacy.collegeboard.org/admission-completion/community-colleges>.*

Assessing the current effectiveness of the transfer pipeline requires a discussion of this academic pathway as it works for students today — not from the policymakers' perspective but from the standpoint of students. How do prospective transfer students enter this pipeline? What are the tests they must pass in preparing for, and applying to, the four-year institution? What types of barriers must they overcome to become fully integrated at the receiving institution? Without an understanding of the actual mechanics of transfer — and the students who are caught in a process often viewed by them as unnecessarily complicated — generating solutions intended to improve this academic pathway will be an arid and inconsequential activity. Although there are over 1,200 community colleges and 2,300 four-year institutions in the United States, and the transfer process varies enormously among them, there are several tasks that every prospective transfer student must undertake.

The transfer process is an unusual way to earn a bachelor's degree. Prospective transfer students at a community college are required to leave their first institution for another in the middle of their undergraduate academic career, which in itself can be extremely disruptive. Pick up any college guidebook, and it will almost certainly advise students *not* to transfer from one institution to another unless they

have a very good reason. Such books, which are almost always pitched to the needs of high school applicants preparing for entry to a four-year institution, warn students that it will be difficult to adjust to a new campus layout and culture; that they will be forced to leave an old set of friends behind and make new ones; and that they will face a series of awkward academic disjunctures. The new school may not accept credits earned at the previous institution, for instance, possibly delaying graduation and increasing costs. Moreover, faculty may be wary of admitting transfer students into the major, especially if they are unfamiliar with the level of preparation the student received at the community college.

All of these are excellent reasons *not* to transfer, but all are irrelevant and largely a fact of life for community college students who *must* transfer to earn a bachelor's degree. It is ironic that while we do not recommend that Ivy Leaguers transfer, we insist that community college students do. In effect, we ask individuals likely to possess far less college knowledge than most students to navigate this process — and almost entirely on their own.

Getting Ready

Initially, the road by which community college students prepare themselves for transfer to a four-year institution looks a great deal like the one high school students must travel. Students must develop a program of study that meets college admission requirements, decide on the schools they would like to attend, apply to one or more four-year institutions, evaluate multiple offers of admission and, once enrolled at a four-year institution, persist toward the bachelor's degree. Indeed, except for the fact that transfer students have college experience and are generally older than first-time college students, the process of getting ready for, getting in, and getting through college with a bachelor's degree in hand looks like the same rite of passage most first-time college students must endure. And that's part of the problem. The similarities in process belie a series of challenges facing transfer students that are unique to the special pathway they have chosen to earn a bachelor's degree.

Community college students who decide to transfer face three major challenges in preparing to attend a four-year college or university: insufficient information in print or on the Web about the transfer process; nonexistent or indecipherable policies specifying how their

"[We need] equity for transfer students. Access to knowledge is critical. Most transfer processes that I've seen are absolutely opaque. [Freshman applicants] can at least go to the College Board and figure out, 'Okay, these are my SAT scores, what's the likelihood of me getting in?' I see none of that for transfer students."

Member, Commission on Transfer Policy & Practice, 2012

community college credits will transfer and apply toward the bachelor's degree; and the enormous complexity in satisfying requirements for possible admission to multiple four-year institutions.

Lack of Basic Transfer Information: High school students applying for freshman admission have at their disposal dozens of Web-based and print resources to help them sort through the process. Every major educational organization (including the College Board) has an array of books, brochures, and manuals describing the freshman-application process. In minute detail, prospective applicants in high school are told what classes and tests they must complete, the grade-point average (GPA) they must earn, the kind of essay they must write, and the letters of recommendation they must secure. There are books that direct freshman applicants to the colleges that will "change their lives" and how-to manuals that promise them "killer applications."

For students attending a community college, however, there are very few resources with specific and actionable details about transfer. Even information as elementary as determining which four-year institutions in the U.S. admit transfer students is hard to find. For example, no educational organization has developed a Web-based search engine that allows community college students to identify four-year institutions they may be interested in attending based on a set of criteria relevant to the transfer process. While high school students can search for appropriate institutions based on a variety of admission-related criteria (minimum GPA and SAT® scores, for example), community college students will not find a single Internet search engine that allows them to sort U.S. four-year institutions based on transfer admission criteria, such as whether an institution admits transfers at the sophomore or junior level, provides special admission consideration to community college (as opposed to four-year college) transfer applicants, or recommends specific kinds of academic preparation.

Students must piece together information gleaned from a variety of sources. Of course, community college counselors are a welcome and pivotal source

of information for students, but their numbers continue to dwindle. A recent report indicated that cuts to community college budgets have been especially hard on student services, with counselor-to-student ratios estimated at anywhere between 1:800 and 1:1,200 (Scott-Clayton, 2011, p. 7).¹

Opaque or Nonexistent Credit Transfer Policies:

Given that even basic information about the transfer process is largely nonexistent, it should not be too surprising that more detailed and complex information about how course credits transfer from one institution to another is difficult to find or understand. The underlying reason, prospective transfer applicants soon discover, is that the currency of exchange — course credits — is sometimes a disputed commodity.

The reasons that such credits are disputed are numerous: interinstitutional mistrust, faculty/administrator conflict over control of the curriculum, and bureaucratic intransigence. These concerns are of little interest to students, who are only interested in knowing how the course they completed at a community college will transfer to the four-year institution(s) they are interested in attending.

The policy instrument that links the curricula of two- and four-year institutions is the articulation agreement. These agreements specify how a course, general education plan, major requirement, or other bachelor's degree-related requirement may be satisfied by a student completing courses at a community college. The definition of an articulation agreement sounds simple enough, yet these interinstitutional agreements are rarely written with the student in mind.

The nearly endless number of interinstitutional articulation arrangements necessary to link curricula at two- and four-year institutions has led to the creation of an articulation bureaucracy, stunning in its complexity and nuance, which often hampers rather than assists students' academic progress. Students' need for information about course transferability competes against interinstitutional faculty infighting over control of the undergraduate curriculum, concerns over community college course rigor, the intellectual provincialism of the four-year institution, and a host of other issues. This can lead to articulation agreements that are less clear than they could be in describing how credits transfer from one institution to another. "Deciphering the Articulation Code" describes how all this looks to students (see sidebar on page 5).

Preparing for Multiple Institutions: Assuming students have access to course transferability information and can apply it effectively to their individual needs, they are then faced with the dilemma of completing a program of study

Continued on p. 7

Deciphering the Articulation Code

How difficult is it for a student to use currently available articulation information to plan for transfer? Let's follow "Melinda" as she plans her transfer strategy.

Table 1 presents an articulation agreement — selected randomly — from California's Project ASSIST, the statewide repository of the state's articulation and transfer information for all public community colleges and four-year universities. ASSIST was the first, and remains perhaps the best, program for systematizing and presenting articulation information. Over the two and a half decades of its existence, educators administering the program have worked diligently to keep the student in mind in the presentation and delivery of articulation and transfer information within ASSIST. Yet, by highlighting one of the best systems in America, the challenges that students are up against become clear.

The articulation agreement in Table 1 provides "Melinda," a first-time student at "Rural Community College" (RCC), with information about the major in electronic arts at "California University" (CU). Courses in the left column are lower-division courses at CU that are required for this major. Courses in the right column are equivalent courses at RCC that Melinda can complete to fulfill CU's premajor requirements. Despite the fact that this agreement is applicable to the 2011-12 academic year, Melinda soon discovers that she will be unable to complete all of the lower-division requirements for this major because five of the seven required courses are not offered at RCC ("no course articulated"). It is not clear whether RCC offers one or more of these courses and they not accepted by CU, or RCC simply does not offer an equivalent course. For Melinda and any other RCC student wishing to transfer to CU and major in electronic arts, the result is the same. They will not be able to complete all of the lower-division course work needed for this major at RCC.

One alternative for Melinda is to wait until she transfers to CU to complete these courses, assuming, of course, that CU deems her eligible to transfer. For many majors, especially ones that are popular, four-year institutions require students to complete most, if not all, of the lower-division requirements before they will be allowed to enroll at the receiving institution. Premajor requirements become, in effect, admission requirements. Let's assume, however, that CU will allow Melinda to transfer and begin the major at the four-year institution. What should Melinda complete at RCC in the interim? General education (GE) courses are a popular and good choice, but that requirement will fill, at most, 36 credits. In California, community college students are required to transfer into a four-year institution at the junior level, meaning they must complete 60 credits at the community college. What other courses can Melinda productively complete at RCC that will advance her academic progress? It appears that she can only complete courses for elective credit. That's fine, but four-year institutions often limit the total amount of credits a community college student may apply toward a bachelor's degree.

When Melinda transfers to CU and majors in electronic arts, however, her challenges will not end. She will immediately be behind her junior-level peers who began at CU because those students will have already completed the lower-division courses required for the major (the ones that were not articulated at RCC). Most likely, Melinda will not be allowed to complete upper-division courses in her major without completing the lower-division courses first (after all, that's why they call them "prerequisites"). To complicate matters further, it is not clear what other courses Melinda could productively enroll in while she is completing the lower-division premajor curriculum, especially if she completed all of her GE requirements at RCC. And what will Melinda do if the required lower-division courses are not offered every term at CU? Worse, what happens if Melinda decides — after completing her premajor courses — that she's no longer really interested in electronic arts as a major? After all, she's only now experienced what the major is like after at least two years in college because RCC did not offer the introductory courses. Should she be allowed to change her mind and her major?

The point of this exercise is not to point out flaws in the ASSIST system (which is one of the best in the U.S.), castigate a community college for its limited curriculum, nor accuse a four-year institution of placing unreasonable curricular demands on students. The idea is merely to highlight how complicated the life of a transfer student becomes when preparing for this transition. And, believe it or not, although this articulation agreement was randomly selected, it is not nearly as complicated as many other agreements.

Table 1

Articulation Agreement by Major
Effective During the 2011-12 Academic Year

To: CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE | From: RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
10-12 General Catalog | Quarter | Semester
Effective During the 2011-12 Academic Year

====Art B.A. - Multimedia Option (Electronic Art)====

The Art B.A. degree requires a total of 180 quarter units; the major with the Web Design Option consists of 86 quarter units including both lower- and upper-division course work. The following courses are required lower-division (freshman-sophomore) major requirements, and each course must be completed with a grade of "C-" or better:

ART 1020	The Creative Process	(4) No Course Articulated	
ART 1113	Drawing I	(4) ART 8 Basic Drawing I	(3)
ART 2025	Basics of New Media	(4) No Course Articulated	
ART 2630	Introduction to Digital Photography	(4) No Course Articulated	
ART 2810	Principles of Design	(4) No Course Articulated	
ART 2830	Web Design	(4) No Course Articulated	

ART 1114	Painting I	(4) ART 17 Beginning Painting - Oil and Acrylics	(3)
	OR		OR
ART 1115	Printmaking I	(4) No Course Articulated	
	OR		OR
ART 1116	Sculpture I	(4) ART 60 Beginning Sculpture	(3)
	OR		OR
ART 2701	Black and White Photography I	(4) PHO 2 Basic Photography	(3)
	OR		OR
	Same as: COMM 2701		

Additional studio art course (four quarter or three semester units).

Questions regarding the major requirements listed above may be directed to the Art Department at (xxx) xxx-xxxx. For upper-division (junior-senior) major and option requirements, please see the CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY catalog or visit our website at <http://www.CALIFORNIAUNIVERSITY.edu>.

Deciphering the Articulation Code *(continued from page 5)*

Keep in mind that this is an articulation agreement for a single major at a single four-year institution. If Melinda is interested in transferring to a second institution — even in the same university system — she must examine a separate articulation agreement. Moreover, Melinda must also study articulation agreements for requirements other than the major, such as general education. Finally, some articulation agreements are rarely as detailed as this one. Sometimes such agreements specify only that a particular course will transfer to a four-year institution without specifying — this is key — if the course applies toward general education requirements, premajor requirements, or any other institutional mandates. These distinctions are pivotal but often unknown to students.

at the community college that will prepare them for transfer to a four-year institution. Unless a student has an ironclad guarantee of admission to a four-year institution (a small percentage of students do), most are hedging their bets by applying to multiple four-year institutions. *Unlike* high school applicants, however, community college students quickly understand that applying to multiple four-year institutions comes with unique challenges. That's because students who apply to two or more four-year institutions need to take into account multiple admission requirements that may vary significantly. These may involve different minimum GPA thresholds, transferable course credit limits (some institutions want transfers to apply as sophomores, others as juniors), general education requirements, and perhaps most problematically, lower-division, premajor course requirements.

Community college students are also likely to experience great variation in requirements when they attempt to complete lower-division prerequisites in preparation for the major they plan to study at the four-year institution, since different universities emphasize different approaches to a discipline.² This is academically defensible, but if community college students plan to apply to more than one four-year institution, they quickly discover the complexity of completing academic programs at the community college that meet the requirements of several four-year institutions simultaneously.³

This problem was highlighted over five decades ago by Leland Medsker, author of *The Junior College: Progress and Prospect* (1960), one of the most influential books in the area of transfer:

... since students generally have many choices of four-year institutions to which to transfer, they do not always know well in advance the one which they will enter. For the student to meet the specific requirements of one institution does not necessarily mean that he meets the requirements of others. If the student's choice changes, he may have additional work to take and hence be delayed in his progress to the baccalaureate degree. (p.138)

Since Medsker's era, however, students' completion of lower-division, premajor courses has taken on greater importance as a baseline for admission. At highly selective four-year institutions, or at other institutions that offer popular and highly subscribed majors, the number of required premajor courses a student has completed at the community college (and the grades that he or she has earned) will determine admission to the institution. This is especially problematic for students attending small or moderately sized community colleges, where the curricular offerings may be less comprehensive.

Getting In

Transfer students who have successfully prepared themselves for one or more four-year institutions and are ready to apply for admission encounter another cluster of challenges.

Late Notification: At most four-year colleges and universities, admission staff review freshman student applications first, then transfer applications. The impact on transfer applicants is almost always negative. First (and not surprisingly), transfer applicants receive their notification of admission later. In the U.S., almost all four-year colleges and universities adhere to a NACAC guideline to notify freshman applicants of their application status no later than April 1. For transfer students, however, there is no such agreement. (NACAC recently studied a plan to select a nationwide notification date but chose not to move forward with the proposal.) In a recent survey of four-year institutions, most institutions did not adhere to a specific date to notify transfer applicants of their admission status. Institutions that did adhere to a notification date sent letters of admission status to transfer applicants no earlier than May 1 and as late as Aug. 1.

Second, students who receive an admission offer after April 1 face a cascading set of challenges. For example, unless a four-year institution has specifically reserved residence hall accommodations for transfer students, these applicants will be either late in applying for on-campus housing or be at a disadvantage in securing

housing near campus. In addition, late notice may harm a student's ability to receive institutional financial aid, since it is likely that a good deal of the aid would have been promised to freshmen already admitted to the institution. Often, transfer students are presented with financial aid packages that include more loans and less grant aid.

"There is a presumption that course and program selection by community college students is an educated decision, but that is a questionable assumption. We don't pay a lot of attention up front, and then students are left with the consequences of a decision that was uninformed. So, just from the very start we have a very fragile system."

Member, Commission on Transfer Policy & Practice, 2012

Lack of Timely Credit Evaluations: In addition to receiving a notice of admission after freshman applicants, transfer students are often asked to make a decision whether to attend without knowing officially how (or if) their community college credits will be accepted by the four-year institution and how these credits will apply toward various elements of the baccalaureate degree (e.g., GE requirements, major requirements, and electives). Although four-year institutions provide students with what is generally called a "credit evaluation," which lists how the institution will officially apply course work from other institutions toward the fulfillment of a four-year degree, it is not generally created until late in the summer or, in some instances, the transfer student's first term at the four-year institution. Thus, most transfer students are asked to decide whether to accept admission to the receiving institution without the benefit of knowing how they stand in relation to the bachelor's degree. Knowing in advance how their community college credits specifically apply toward the undergraduate degree allows students to gauge how long it will take them to finish college. Given variations in credit acceptance policies among four-year institutions, it is not uncommon for students' time-to-degree to vary from one and a half to three years. That translates into thousands of dollars in college costs for students.

In their defense, four-year institutions often do not have the staff to complete credit evaluations during the short time between when a transfer applicant is notified of admission and the deadline for acceptance. Even if an institution has an articulation agreement with the student's community college, evaluators at the receiving institution must still review each transcript individually. If the student has attended more than

one community college — which is often the case — evaluations can take much longer. Still, this short time window is partly of the four-year institutions' own making since, as described earlier, transfer applicants are often notified of admission well after freshman applicants.

Getting Through

For community college students who successfully transfer to a four-year institution, becoming familiar with a new campus is a transition that deserves, but rarely receives, much attention from campus administrators. The minimal attention given to the transition is sometimes based on the assumption that transfer students are already acclimated to college and do not need assistance. Other times it is simply because the number of transfer students enrolling in an institution is so small that this constituency is invisible.

As if to justify this neglect, both two- and four-year institution leaders often note that transfer students demonstrate remarkable academic success following their transition to the receiving institution. Indeed, prominent researchers have documented that the very act of transfer represents a remarkable achievement that four-year institutions should look upon as a positive indicator of student perseverance and commitment (Adelman, 2005, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Although this may be true, it misses the point. Freshmen at highly and moderately selective four-year institutions are largely successful too, but there is an entire infrastructure built around their admission to the four-year institution, with such things as multiday orientation programs, freshman seminars, first-year advisers, and the like. So, why not transfers? The need is as much about social integration as it is about academics.⁴

Ensuring that transfer students "get through" to the bachelor's degree, then, requires an intentional process, one that anticipates and accommodates the sometimes unique needs of this student constituency. A recent College Board report presented interviews with education leaders at a dozen four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. with a record of serving community college transfer students (Handel, 2011). These leaders recommended that institutions interested in better serving the needs of these students develop an authentic institution-wide vision that integrates these students into the academic culture of the four-year institution. Fortunately, many four-year institutions are already engaged in this important work. However, at other institutions, transfers are largely invisible.⁵

Connecting Transfers to the Academic Culture of the Four-Year Institution: *The Promise of the Transfer Pathway* describes in detail the differences in culture

between two- and four-year institutions and how these differences undermine transfer student progress. For now, it is simply important to appreciate that transfers must not only navigate a significant transition in the middle of their academic career but also adapt themselves to a new environment — one that is often significantly different from the one they left behind in size, location, cost, and academic demands, among other factors.

Helping students connect to the culture of a four-year institution is as important for transfer students as it is for freshman students. Researchers such as Alexander Astin (1993) and Vincent Tinto (1994) have shown that students who adapt well to their new environment are more likely to succeed academically. Yet the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) revealed that transfer students, compared to native students, are less likely to participate in high-impact activities, such as study abroad, internships, research, and senior seminar or capstone activities (NSSE, 2009). Thus, it is especially important for faculty and staff at four-year institutions to engage transfer students early, although this is sometimes left to chance.⁶

But what does it mean to connect with the four-year campus community? The higher education leaders discussed earlier recommend the development of some basic transfer services, such as orientation programs designed specifically for community college students, transfer centers that create a “home base” for these students as they acclimate to the new institution, and transfer student housing or housing resources that address the sometimes specialized needs of this student constituency.

The Student Dimension

Seeing transfer from the student’s perspective reveals a system designed primarily for institutions, not individuals. Although policymakers, legislators, and educators have earnestly attempted to simplify the process, it remains, in many places, a quagmire. Yes, many students navigate the process well. Others succeed because of the talents of hardworking counselors and advisers who, like all experienced guides, do not allow their charges to roam dark alleys or explore dead ends. But for students without access to the resources and people who make transfer possible — the students for whom community colleges were designed to attract and accommodate — navigating the transfer process is more difficult than it needs to be.

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Notes

1. Understanding the pivotal role of counselors, some community colleges are directing resources to provide students with the guidance they need. The City College of Chicago, for example, is working toward a goal of 450 students per counselor by the end of 2012 (down from 920 students per counselor in 2011). However, other states are struggling, not only because they lack funding but also because of state regulations that make it difficult to add counselors when resources are tight. See P. Fain's article "Back of the Line," *Inside Higher Education*, May 29, 2012.
2. Even within the same university systems, premajor requirements are not standardized. Moore, Shulock, and Jensen (2009) documented how the lower-division requirements for the same discipline differed among campuses within two university systems. Displaying the varying requirements for the same major at three campuses of the University of California and the California State University, these researchers highlight the unique challenges facing transfer students as they plan for transfer. In such instances, these students are asked to have a nuanced understanding of the premajor requirements of different campuses and majors and then implement this knowledge by fashioning a series of term-by-term academic programs that address these carefully constructed curricula.
3. With expert assistance, however, applying to multiple institutions need not be onerous. A community college counselor who reviewed an earlier version of this manuscript had this to say: "If a student walks in the door and tells me, 'I want to be a psychology major,' I can map out a course plan that will make her eligible for transfer to five or more institutions, [a] minimum [of] two private institutions, and any combination of University of California or California State University campuses in less than 60 credits." But this counselor goes on to emphasize that in order for the student to act on these options, she must "make community college her primary responsibility, obtain her classes, and minimize remediation." It is worth noting that if all transfer students were the direct beneficiaries of this level of advice and counsel, the transfer pathway would be a far more efficient avenue to the baccalaureate.
4. From Dougherty (1994): "...the travails transfer students face are not just financial and academic but also social. For various reasons, transfer students have a hard time integrating themselves into the social life of four-year colleges....Because many have difficulty getting sufficient financial aid, transfer students more often have to work to support themselves and thus have less time for mixing with peers on campus. Orientation programs directed specifically to transfer students are rare, and clubs and other extracurricular activities at four-year colleges usually focus their recruitment efforts on freshmen" (p. 101).
5. A student affairs leader at a transfer-friendly four-year institution described the situation this way: "What happens, especially in large institutions but throughout the country, is that transfer students are treated as second-class citizens. Intentionally or not, people design programs around freshmen. [Our institution] values freshmen, but we value transfers too, understanding that sometimes our efforts might have to be the same, but sometimes might have to be different" (Mark Allen Posiel, quoted in Handel, 2011, p. 16).
6. Again, Medsker reveals that this is not a new issue: "Even more serious is the fact that most four-year colleges, and particularly the large universities, do little to orient and assimilate transfer students. Nothing comparable to the program for entering freshmen exists" (Medsker, 1960, p. 137).



About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

This report is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of over 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT[®] and the Advanced Placement Program[®]. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

About the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center was established to help transform education in America. Guided by the College Board's principles of excellence and equity in education, we work to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. We make critical connections between policy, research and real-world practice to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today.

advocacy.collegeboard.org