

Yes, You Can Track Your Transfer Student Outcomes!

Hands-on Training with an Excel Data Tool

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How to Measure Community College Effectiveness in Serving Transfer Students

By John Fink and Davis Jenkins

While many students who start at a community college intend to transfer and complete a bachelor's degree, most of them are not successful. One of the impediments to improving outcomes for these students has been the lack of widely available measures of institutional effectiveness in serving transfer students. In the publication *Tracking Transfer* (Jenkins & Fink, 2016), CCRC, in partnership with the Aspen Institute and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Research Center, proposed a common set of metrics for assessing the performance of two- and four-year institutions in enabling degree-seeking students to transfer and complete bachelor's degrees. The NSC Research Center has since incorporated the *Tracking Transfer* metrics into its own new Tracking Transfer Signature Report series (see Shapiro et al., 2017, for the first report), which will provide state and national outcomes data annually to allow colleges to benchmark their performance on transfer.

In this guide, we provide instructions for community colleges that want to use NSC data to measure their effectiveness in serving transfer students. To do so, colleges will need to access both NSC enrollment and degree file data on their students. Based on the methods we used in *Tracking Transfer*, Part 1 of this guide explains how community colleges can assess their own overall effectiveness in helping students to transfer and complete bachelor's degrees. Part 2 shows how colleges can go on to evaluate the effectiveness of transfer partnerships with their top receiving four-year institutions.

The metrics we describe in this guide can serve as useful tools to examine what practices facilitate or impede effective transfer.¹ Therefore, calculating these metrics on a periodic basis, comparing them with state and national benchmarks, and sharing them with faculty, advisors, and others can play an important role in efforts to improve bachelor's degree outcomes for community college students.



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Sabbatical Proposal

What We Know- The Transfer Report generated by WCC's Office of Institutional Research indicates where our graduates are headed within one year of graduation from Westchester Community College.

What we Do Not Know- No comprehensive data on bachelor's degree completion once students arrive at their transfer destination.

How Can We Know More?- According to the report from the Community College Research Center (CCRC), "How to Measure Community College Effectiveness in Serving Transfer Students" (Fink and Jenkins 2017), community colleges can take an in depth look at these outcomes by analyzing data available through the National Student Clearing House (NSC). Outcome measures include:

- Transfer-out rate
- Transfer-with-award rate
- Transfer-out bachelor's completion rate

National Student Clearinghouse

”The **National Student Clearinghouse**[®] relieves the administrative burdens and costs related to student data reporting and exchange. We are a nonprofit and nongovernmental organization and the **leading provider of educational reporting, data exchange, verification, and research services**. Our work — performed in a trusted, secure, and private environment — provides numerous time- and cost-saving benefits to students, schools, administrators, and requestors.

In addition, education leaders rely on the Clearinghouse’s **unique national student data resources** to better understand student pathways and outcomes in order to help students succeed.

Our research arm, the [National Student Clearinghouse[®] Research Center[™]](#), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, works with higher education institutions, states, districts, high schools, and educational organizations to better inform practitioners and policymakers about student educational pathways and enable informed decision making.”

Definitions

Transfer-out rate- The percentage of the entering community college cohort who ever enrolled at a four-year institution for at least one term after their first term at the community college, within six years of first enrolling at the community college.

Transfer-with-award rate- The percentage of transfer students who started at the community college and completed a certificate or associate degree from the starting community college prior to their earliest enrollment at a four-year institution.

Transfer-out bachelor's completion rate- The percentage of transfer students who started at the community college and completed a bachelor's degree from any four-year institution within six years of starting at the community college.

Data Request

The Department of Institutional Research was able to request the necessary raw data from the National Student Clearing House.

Identifying the Starting Cohort

All degree-seeking, first-time-ever-in-college (FTEIC) students who started at the college in a given fall term, including part-time students but excluding current and prior high school, dual enrollment students

Degree seeking defined as meeting two of the following conditions:

- They enrolled full-time for at least one term within 12 months of starting in the fall cohort, or
- they enrolled at least half-time for any two terms within 18 months of starting in the fall cohort

Tracking period is six calendar years from entry at the starting community college-

- Fall 2012, 2013, and 2014 cohorts requested
- For the part time terms (6cr), include the additional spring semesters of consideration.

Demographic Data:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Income/Pell
- Age
- Gender
- Program

Proposed Outcomes



Gain a more comprehensive understanding of the transfer patterns for WCC students.



Compare our data with state and national benchmarks



Assess our effectiveness in helping students to transfer and complete bachelor's degrees.



Examine what practices facilitate or impede effective transfer.



Evaluate effectiveness of transfer partnerships with our top receiving four-year institutions and work with those partners to identify strategies to improve outcomes for students.



Help decide which transfer partnerships to prioritize for improvement.

National Benchmarks

Tracking Transfer Report

Measures of Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students to Complete Bachelor's Degrees

This series was first developed in 2016 as a collaborative effort among the Clearinghouse Research Center, the Community College Research Center (CCRC), Columbia University, and Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program.

The first Tracking Transfer report was released in 2017 and each following year the Clearinghouse Research Center updates the key metrics, with which to benchmark and measure progress and completion for transfer students from two- to four-year institutions. The annual updates are available only as spreadsheet downloads; please see the original 2017 report for an additional explanation of the metrics and methodology.

[NSC Transfer Tracking](#)

Transfer Analysis Tool

Collaboration

- How can we use this project to create a more efficient way of analyzing the data moving forward?
- How we can make it easier for other community college transfer professionals to analyze their own data?

Dashboards

- **Transfer Outcomes by Entering Cohort and Student Characteristics**
- **Transfer Outcomes by Four-Year Destination**
- **Transfer Outcomes by Four-Year Destination and Bachelor's Degree Field**
- **Transfer Outcomes for Program Review**

Transfer Outcomes by Entering Cohort				
Values	2012	2013	2014	Grand Total
Count of Entering Cohort	2017	1892	1869	5778
Average of Transfer	44%	40%	40%	41%
Average of Transfer w/ Award	46%	51%	50%	49%
Average of Transfer and 4yr Completion in 6yrs	32%	39%	39%	36%
Average of Time from entry to first transfer (years)	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.2
Average of Time from first transfer to 4yr completion (years)	2.7	2.4	2.5	2.6
Average of Time from CC entry to 4yr completion (years)	5.7	5.0	5.0	5.3

Although the average of transfer did decrease after the 2012 cohort, 44% to 40%, it is encouraging to note that the transfer with award rate increased, 46% to 50%, as well as the average of transfer and 4-year completion in 6 years, 32% to 39%. The average time from community college entry to 4-year completion decreased overall as well, 5.7 years to 5 years.

Transfer Outcomes by Entering Cohort

How WCC Compared Nationally

According to the **National Student Clearinghouse 2021 Tracking Transfer Update** for the fall 2014 cohort, the U.S Community College Average for the same categories are as follows:

- **Transfer-Out Rate- 30.8%**
- **Transfer-With-Award Rate- 41.9%**
- **Transfer-Out Bachelor's Degree Completion Rate- 47.4%**

Although we are above the national average for Transfer-Out at 40%, and Transfer-With-Award at 50% for the Fall 2014 cohort, we are below for Transfer and 4-yr Completion in 6yrs at 39%.

Transfer Outcomes by Student Characteristics

Transfer Outcomes by Race/Ethnicity

Transfer Outcomes by Race/Ethnicity										
Values	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latino	White	Asian	Unknown	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Non-resident alien	American Indian/Alaska Native	Two or more races	Grand Total
Count of Entering Cohort	1372	2139	1579	191	219	13	79	55	131	5778
Average of Transfer	39%	39%	45%	55%	37%	69%	41%	31%	40%	41%
Average of Transfer w/ Award	43%	54%	48%	43%	49%	33%	38%	53%	40%	49%
Average of Transfer and 4yr Completion in 6yrs	27%	33%	47%	40%	36%	11%	52%	24%	35%	36%
Average of Time from entry to first transfer (years)	3.4	3.4	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.9	3.1	3.6	3.3	3.2
Average of Time from first transfer to 4yr completion (years)	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.9	2.7	1.7	2.3	1.8	2.8	2.6
Average of Time from CC entry to 4yr completion (years)	5.5	5.5	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.7	4.6	5.3	5.1	5.3

Black or African American students and Hispanic/Latino students have a much lower bachelor's degree completion rate than White students (27% and 33% vs 47%).

Transfer Outcomes by Income/Pell

Transfer Outcomes by Income/Pell				
Values	Pell: No	Pell: Yes	Blank	Grand Total
Count of Entering Cohort	1832	2033	1913	5778
Average of Transfer	42%	37%	45%	41%
Average of Transfer w/ Award	49%	51%	46%	49%
Average of Transfer and 4yr Completion in 6yrs	42%	36%	32%	36%
Average of Time from entry to first transfer (years)	2.9	3.3	3.4	3.2
Average of Time from first transfer to 4yr completion (years)	2.5	2.4	2.8	2.6
Average of Time from CC entry to 4yr completion (years)	4.9	5.1	5.7	5.3

Although lower income students had a slightly higher rate of transfer with an award (51% and 49%), higher income students were more likely to earn a bachelor's degree after they transferred (42% and 36%).

Transfer Outcomes- Top 20 Receiving Institutions

Four-Year Receiving Institution Name	Transfers Here	Pct. Transferred w/Award	Pct. Completed Bachelors Here	Avg. Time to Transfer Here (years)	Avg. Time Post Transfer to Completion Here (years)	Avg. Total Time to Transfer and Completion Here (years)
1. CUNY Lehman College	357	70%	45%	3.9	2.5	5.6
2. Mercy College	333	56%	45%	3.8	2.2	5.5
3. SUNY Purchase College	170	65%	60%	3.3	2.2	5.1
4. Pace University	118	64%	60%	3.5	2.3	5.2
5. SUNY Empire State College	86	30%	12%	3.9	1.7	7.4
6. CUNY Bernard M. Baruch College	76	70%	51%	3.0	2.5	5.2
7. Monroe College	76	18%	28%	3.7	1.6	4.8
8. CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice	75	57%	45%	3.4	2.4	4.9
9. CUNY Hunter College	63	49%	56%	3.2	2.8	5.4
10. The College of Westchester	55	7%	7%	3.3	1.6	5.4
11. SUNY University at Albany	50	38%	48%	2.5	2.9	5.0
12. SUNY Binghamton	49	47%	61%	2.3	2.4	4.6
13. Iona College	48	52%	48%	3.5	2.3	5.3
14. CUNY City College	44	52%	32%	3.4	3.2	6.1
15. Berkeley College	42	38%	33%	3.4	2.1	4.8
16. Manhattanville College	42	62%	60%	3.3	2.3	5.2
17. SUNY Stony Brook University	41	37%	54%	2.7	2.8	4.8
18. SUNY College Oneonta	40	35%	60%	2.3	2.2	4.7
19. State University of New York New Paltz	39	54%	46%	3.2	2.3	5.0
20. Manhattan College	37	41%	54%	3.1	2.6	5.3

Transfer Outcomes by Four-year Destination

A.S. Accounting Transfer Outcomes by Four-Year Destination

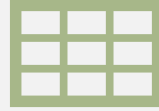
Four-Year Receiving Institution	Transfers Here	Pct. Transferred w/ Award	Pct. Completed Bachelors Here	Avg. Time to Transfer Here (years)	Avg. Time Post-Transfer to Completion Here (years)	Avg. Total Time to Transfer and Completion Here (years)
CUNY Lehman College	18	89%	67%	3.6	2.3	5.3
CUNY Bernard m. Baruch College	13	77%	38%	2.5	2.7	4.8
Pace University	10	70%	80%	2.8	2.3	4.7
Mercy College	9	67%	56%	3.7	2.2	5.7
Iona College	4	50%	25%	3.4	1.8	5.8

Degree Program Transfer Outcomes by Four-Year Destination

Transfer Destinations by Four-Year Destination and Bachelor's Degree Field

Transfer Outcomes by Four-Year Destination and Bachelor's Degree Field- Business, Management, Marketing, And Related Support Services					
Four-Year Receiving Institution Name	Bachelors Completed Here	Pct. Transfer w/ Award	Avg. Time to Transfer Here (years)	Avg. Time Post-Transfer to Completion Here (years)	Avg. Total Time to Transfer and Completion Here (years)
Mercy College	45	78%	3.2	2.1	5.4
CUNY Lehman College	43	60%	3.1	2.4	5.5
CUNY Bernard M. Baruch College	31	68%	2.9	2.4	5.2
Pace University	25	88%	3.0	2.2	5.2
Iona College	9	67%	2.9	2.4	5.3
Manhattanville College	6	50%	3.2	1.9	5.2
SUNY College Oneonta	6	50%	2.6	2.5	5.1
Berkeley College	6	67%	2.5	2.3	4.8
Monroe College	5	60%	2.9	1.6	4.6
LIM College	5	100%	2.7	2.3	5.1

Moving Forward



Request updated cohort data.



Collaborate with partner institutions to further analyze the data and guide our work to improve bachelor's degree completion rates.



Provide Curriculum chairs with program specific data upon request to assist with their review process.

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