

# Issue Brief: Transfer Policy

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## I. Reliance on Community Colleges

The nation and the states are increasingly dependent upon lower division education offered in community colleges and

effective transfer to improve baccalaureate completion rates and raise higher education attainment.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1**  
**Undergraduate Enrollment in States with High Community College Participation (2008)**

State	4-year institutions	2-year institutions	Total FTE enrollment	% enrolled at 2-year institutions
Wyoming	9,616	22,006	31,622	70%
California	772,629	1,298,067	2,070,696	63%
Arizona*	136,298	204,731	341,029	60%
New Mexico	50,800	61,400	112,200	55%
Mississippi	71,791	81,417	153,208	53%
Illinois	363,131	409,491	772,622	53%
Washington	173,074	176,080	349,154	50%
Texas	533,910	540,497	1,074,407	50%
Oregon	98,131	97,978	196,109	50%
New Jersey	171,821	157,129	328,950	48%
Kansas	95,681	78,954	174,635	45%
Maryland	143,246	105,324	248,570	42%
Nebraska	72,394	52,600	124,993	42%
North Carolina	250,551	172,662	423,213	41%
South Carolina	117,293	78,658	195,951	40%
Michigan	315,775	208,767	524,542	40%
Minnesota	185,122	115,668	300,790	38%
Kentucky	130,986	81,119	212,105	38%
Arkansas	84,874	50,855	135,729	37%
Virginia	248,154	147,687	395,841	37%
<b>Nation (50 States + DC)</b>	<b>9,612,034</b>	<b>6,288,866</b>	<b>15,900,900</b>	<b>40%</b>

\*See endnotes.

## II. States with Burgeoning Young Populations

Most states that project rapidly growing numbers of high school graduates are heavily dependent upon community

colleges as the entry point for students seeking the bachelor's degree.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 2**

**The 10 States with the Highest Projected Number of High School Graduates: Dependence on Community Colleges**

	Projected Number of High School Graduates in 2022	Annual Undergraduate FTE Enrollment For All Races/Ethnicity (2008)		Percent of Students Enrolled at 2-year Institutions
		2-year Institutions	4-year or more Institutions	
		Arizona*	110,650	
California	362,658	1,298,067	772,629	63%
Florida	191,608	230,768	589,330	28%
Georgia	101,108	145,253	266,297	35%
Illinois	118,463	409,491	363,131	53%
New York	135,742	325,272	689,702	32%
North Carolina	107,628	172,662	250,551	41%
Ohio	106,672	204,649	358,557	36%
Pennsylvania	123,462	172,417	453,884	28%
Texas	338,181	540,497	533,910	50%
<b>United States</b>	<b>3,041,417</b>	<b>6,288,866</b>	<b>9,612,034</b>	<b>40%</b>

\*See endnotes.

### III. States with Large Minority Populations

Students from racial and ethnic groups with low college completion rates are concentrated in community colleges and

dependent upon effective transfer to achieve baccalaureate degrees.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 3**  
**Percent of Undergraduate Enrollment in States with Large Minority Populations**  
**Percent of Students Enrolled at 2-year Institutions**      **Percent of Students Enrolled at 4-year Institutions**

State	Percent of Students Enrolled at 2-year Institutions				Percent of Students Enrolled at 4-year Institutions			
	Black non-Hispanic	Hispanic	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian or Pacific Islander	Black non-Hispanic	Hispanic	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian or Pacific Islander
Alabama	32%	28%	41%	26%	68%	72%	59%	74%
Arizona*	61%	69%	74%	55%	39%	31%	26%	45%
California	71%	70%	67%	55%	29%	30%	33%	45%
Colorado	24%	47%	24%	25%	76%	53%	76%	75%
Delaware	34%	35%	32%	28%	66%	65%	68%	72%
Florida	29%	24%	30%	27%	71%	76%	70%	73%
Georgia	45%	35%	34%	27%	55%	65%	66%	73%
Hawaii	23%	26%	27%	47%	77%	74%	73%	53%
Illinois	54%	65%	46%	45%	46%	35%	54%	55%
Louisiana	40%	29%	33%	24%	60%	71%	67%	76%
Maryland	46%	46%	43%	38%	54%	54%	57%	62%
Mississippi	55%	47%	61%	42%	45%	53%	39%	58%
Nevada	15%	14%	21%	10%	85%	86%	79%	90%
New Jersey	53%	53%	55%	38%	47%	47%	45%	62%
New Mexico	50%	53%	75%	45%	50%	47%	25%	55%
New York	38%	38%	44%	26%	62%	62%	56%	74%
North Carolina	41%	44%	52%	29%	59%	56%	48%	71%
South Carolina	46%	44%	49%	37%	54%	56%	51%	63%
Texas	55%	52%	43%	46%	45%	48%	57%	54%
Virginia	39%	45%	45%	38%	61%	55%	55%	62%
Nation (50 States + DC)	43%	52%	46%	41%	57%	48%	54%	59%

\*See endnotes.

#### IV. Statewide Policies

Statewide policies must assure that students can transfer from community colleges to baccalaureate-granting institutions and earn bachelor's degrees with the same number of credit hours and in the same amount of time as "native" students who receive their lower division instruction from the four-year college or university.

- Articulation agreements between individual two- and four-year institutions or groups of institutions can be helpful, but they should be developed in the context of statewide transfer policy.
- In the absence of a comprehensive, integrated statewide transfer policy framework:
  - the scale of improvement needed to significantly raise baccalaureate completion rates and levels of educational attainment cannot be achieved nationally and in many states;

A state policy framework for transfer should include:

- Standardized core lower division transfer curriculum and Transfer Associates Degrees with courses accepted by all public two- and four-year institutions (and private institutions that choose or can be induced to participate) for general education and prerequisites for majors.

##### Examples:

- States with Transfer Associates Degrees include: **Florida, Rhode Island, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Washington State.**
- **Washington State** has created an Associate of Science-Transfer Degree (AS-T) pathway for students majoring in sciences and engineering. Students completing the AS-T

- the burden of negotiating variations among large, complex institutions falls primarily on students seeking to transfer;
- the costs of inefficiencies in the transfer process (e.g., credits not transferrable; excessive credits taken after transfer because community college credits are not applied to degree requirements) are borne by states and students.

##### Examples:

- Community college students who transfer to public universities in **Florida** accumulate the same number of credits as native students.
- Transfer students to **Tennessee** public colleges and universities graduate within six years at a higher rate than native students.<sup>4</sup>

#### V. State Policy Framework

complete fewer credits toward a degree and are more likely to earn a bachelor's degree.

- In **Arizona**, two institutions have created an associate's degree to bachelor's degree transfer program that outlines a prescribed sequence of classes for students to take at the community college to prepare them for a degree at the four-year university.
- **Ohio** and **Texas** have standard general education curriculum for transfer.
- **Oregon** has created general education learning outcomes for the first two years of college and based its Associate of Arts Transfer Degree on these outcomes.<sup>5</sup>

- Common course numbering system across two- and four-year institutions for the designated transfer curriculum.

Examples:

- **Florida** and **Texas** use common course numbering of lower-division courses for the entire public higher education system.<sup>6</sup>

- Guaranteed admission with junior status for students who have met the designated lower division transfer requirements at community colleges.

Examples:

- Recent legislation passed in **California** (currently waiting for the Governor's signature) will create a transfer degree and guarantee junior status to those transferring between the community college system and the state college system.<sup>7</sup>

- Guarantees that the credits for the designated lower division courses will transfer and be accepted as fulfilling lower division requirements and that students who complete the lower division sequence will be admitted as juniors.

Examples:

- **Nevada** mandates that each major program be articulated with every other similar program in the state.
- **Colorado** has program major to program major articulation agreements in which students complete 60 credits at the community college and 60 credits at the four-year institution.<sup>8</sup>

- States should require the components of this framework be put in place through statewide agreements. Faculty from four-year institutions and community colleges should develop

the transfer curriculum collaboratively to assure that the transfer courses are equivalent across all institutions.

Example:

- In **Arizona**, there are discipline specific articulation task forces to confirm common core courses and discuss curricular changes.<sup>9</sup>

- Financial incentives for community colleges for transfer and incentives for timely baccalaureate completion by transfer students could be designed to be shared by institutions that send and those that receive transfers, perhaps weighted towards rewarding success of low income students (Pell recipients).

Example

- **Oklahoma's** performance funding model rewards institutions for retaining and graduating students and making transitions, like transfer, as smooth as possible.<sup>10</sup>

- Financial aid is critical for low-income transfer students, particularly since most are transferring to higher cost institutions.

Examples:

- **Kentucky** has a Workforce Development Transfer Scholarship for students in high demand career fields.
- **Maryland** also has scholarships for students in community colleges who are majoring in high demand fields.
- **Virginia** awards \$1,000 grants to students who complete a transfer associate degree and meet academic and financial criteria.<sup>11</sup>

Appendix I: Transfer and Graduation Rate Data on Community College Students<sup>12</sup>

**Table 4**  
**Transfer and Completion Rates at 2-Year Colleges**  
**Students Starting at 2-Year Colleges**

State	Graduated from a 2-Year Institution	Enrolled in a 4-Year Institution in Year 3	Enrolled in a 4-Year Institution in Year 4	Graduated from a 4-year Institution	Graduated from a 2-Year or 4-Year Institution*
Alabama	19%	18%	19%	14%	33%
Arizona	22%	11%	14%	11%	33%
Arkansas	24%	12%	14%	10%	33%
California	14%	8%	13%	11%	25%
Colorado	28%	17%	18%	10%	38%
Connecticut	21%	8%	10%	7%	28%
Florida	32%	11%	14%	13%	45%
Georgia	24%	20%	25%	22%	46%
Hawaii	22%	13%	13%	11%	33%
Idaho	16%	14%	16%	15%	31%
Illinois	26%	13%	15%	15%	41%
Indiana	8%	5%	5%	5%	13%
Iowa	29%	19%	19%	17%	46%
Kansas	25%	28%	28%	21%	46%
Kentucky	29%	11%	12%	9%	38%
Louisiana	16%	10%	11%	7%	23%
Maine	36%	9%	10%	5%	41%
Maryland	21%	14%	17%	15%	35%
Massachusetts	21%	10%	14%	8%	29%
Michigan	20%	10%	14%	12%	32%
Minnesota	39%	15%	17%	12%	51%
Mississippi	32%	17%	18%	15%	46%
Missouri	21%	15%	18%	15%	35%
Montana	24%	18%	19%	12%	36%
Nebraska	34%	14%	15%	12%	46%
Nevada	13%	8%	10%	7%	20%
New Jersey	22%	10%	15%	13%	34%
New Mexico	18%	8%	9%	5%	24%
New York	27%	16%	20%	16%	43%
North Carolina	27%	11%	12%	9%	36%
North Dakota	55%	24%	22%	19%	74%
Ohio	15%	11%	12%	9%	25%
Oklahoma	19%	10%	12%	9%	27%
Oregon	19%	10%	13%	10%	30%
Pennsylvania	26%	12%	15%	13%	38%
Rhode Island	18%	12%	14%	8%	26%
South Carolina	27%	10%	11%	9%	36%
South Dakota	56%	10%	9%	3%	59%
Tennessee	14%	14%	17%	14%	28%
Texas	12%	12%	15%	12%	23%
Utah	25%	15%	18%	13%	38%
Vermont	45%	21%	30%	20%	65%
Virginia	21%	15%	17%	15%	36%
Washington	32%	14%	17%	15%	47%
West Virginia	14%	14%	14%	9%	23%
Wisconsin	29%	16%	18%	12%	41%
Wyoming	20%	17%	19%	15%	36%
<b>United States</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>33%</b>

\*Students with both 2-year and 4-year degrees are double counted.

## Endnotes and Sources

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<sup>1</sup> Notes for tables 1, 2 and 3: University of Phoenix Online and Western International University are excluded from Arizona's results, but included in the National total. Their undergraduate enrollments and completions are not representative of Arizona's performance as most first-time undergraduates are out-of-state residents (University of Phoenix Online = 97.4% out-of-state, Western International = 87.1% out-of-state - IPEDS fall 2008 Residence & Migration File). Full-time and part-time enrollments by race are only available for the fall reporting period. Annual full-time and part-time enrollments by race are estimated by applying the fall full-time/part-time ratio to the annual unduplicated headcount for each respective race. Annual FTE enrollment is calculated as estimated annual full-time enrollment + 1/3 of estimated annual part-time enrollment for each race. Awards by race may not add to total due to changes in race/ethnic reporting. Sources for tables 1, 2 and 3: NCES, IPEDS, 2007-08 Enrollment File, all public, private non-profit, and private for-profit 2-year and 4-year institutions.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> *Increasing College Completion: State and System Policy Recommendations* (unpublished), presented at the Southern Regional Education Board annual board meeting June 27-29, 2010, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Breneman, Meghan W., Callan, Patrick M., Ewell, Peter T., Finney, Joni E., Jones, Dennis P., Zis, Stacey, *Good Policy, Good Practice II* (forthcoming). Institute for Higher Educational Leadership and Policy, *Crafting a Student-Centered Transfer Process in California: Lessons From Other States*, Colleen Moore, Nancy Shulock and Cristy Jensen, August 2009, [http://www.csus.edu/ihelp/PDFs/R\\_Transfer\\_Report\\_08-09.pdf](http://www.csus.edu/ihelp/PDFs/R_Transfer_Report_08-09.pdf). Hezel Associates, Lumina Foundation for Education, WICHE, *Promising Practices in Statewide Articulation and Transfer Systems*, June 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Hezel Associates, Lumina Foundation for Education, WICHE, op.cit.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/sen/sb\\_1401-1450/sb\\_1440\\_cfa\\_20100420\\_111951\\_sen\\_comm.html](http://info.sen.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/sen/sb_1401-1450/sb_1440_cfa_20100420_111951_sen_comm.html)

<sup>8</sup> Hezel Associates, Lumina Foundation for Education, WICHE, op.cit

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> National Center for Higher Education Management Systems analysis of National Student Clearinghouse data, September 2009.