The Transfer Landscape:
a Survey of College Officials

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A study by *Inside Higher Ed* and Hanover Research
October 2020

HURON

Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020

2 p.m. Eastern
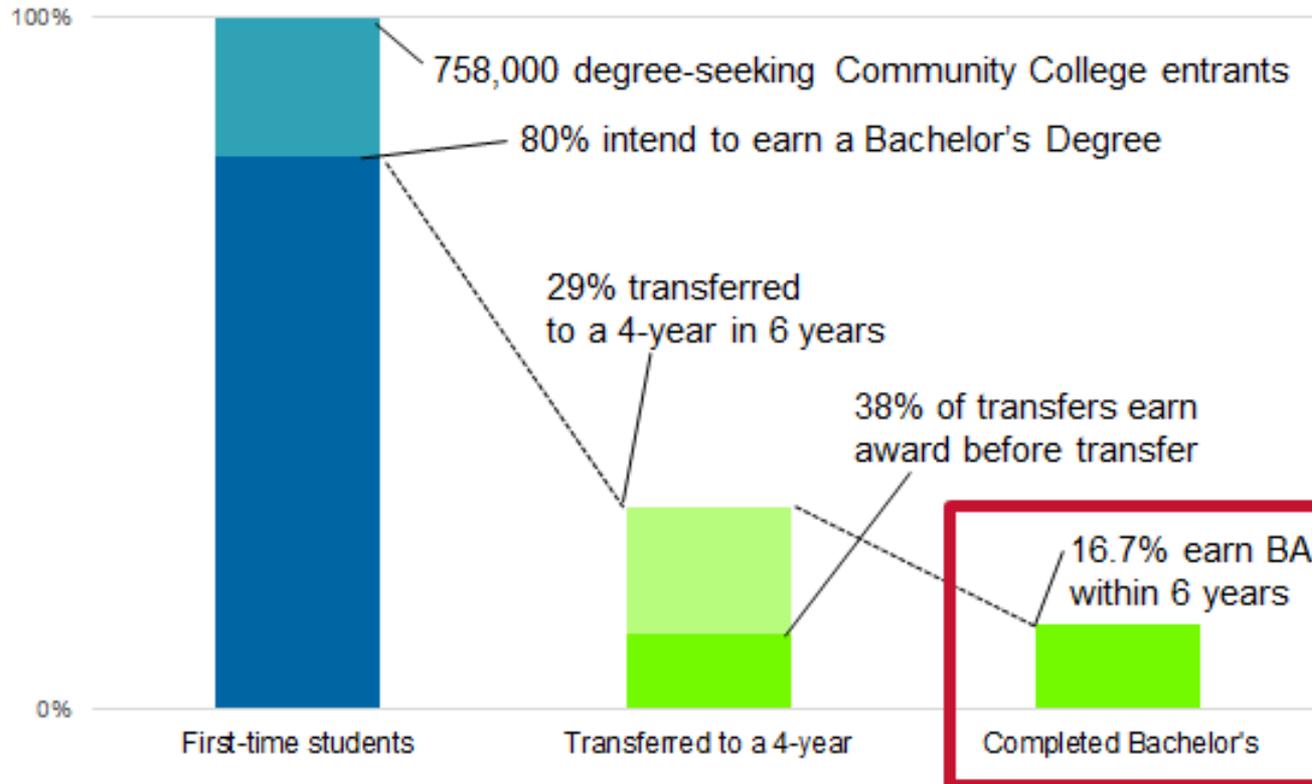
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The National Transfer Landscape – Chances of Success

— **CCRC** —

Few Transfer, Even Fewer Complete

758,000 degree-seeking Community College entrants

80% intend to earn a Bachelor's Degree

29% transferred to a 4-year in 6 years

38% of transfers earn award before transfer

16.7% earn BA within 6 years

100%

0%

First-time students | Transferred to a 4-year | Completed Bachelor's

NSC data on the fall 2013 entering community college cohort, most recent transfer outcomes from Shapiro et al. (2017); Jenkins & Fink (2016)

The National Transfer Landscape – Credit Loss

CCRC

Transfer Credit Loss

Just **58%** of students successfully transferred 90% of their credits.

And **15%** can't transfer any credits at all.

Students who can transfer 90% of their credits were **2.5x** more likely to get their bachelor's degree, compared to those who transfer half or less.

Source: BPS data, Monaghan & Attewell, 2015.

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Methodology

- Questions prepared by *Inside Higher Ed,* in collaboration with Hanover Research.

- Polling conducted by Hanover in September/October.

- 143 administrators involved in transfer process or policy; 120 at 4-year colleges, 23 at 2-year colleges.

Students Transferring at Least 30 Credits In (Now and in 2025)

% of Students	2019-20		2025 (projected)	
	4-Year Public	4-Year Private	4-Year Public	4-Year Private
50% or more	17%	9%	32%	16%
40-49%	15%	7%	6%	10%
30-39%	9%	12%	21%	15%
20-29%	17%	15%	21%	22%
10-19%	21%	22%	9%	15%
Less than 10%	6%	21%	2%	12%
Unsure	15%	13%	9%	9%

Four-year public and private college administrators answered this question.

How Many Students Transfer?

	2018-19/ 2019-20	2025 (projected)
50% or more	13%	13%
40-49%	4%	17%
30-39%	30%	26%
20-29%	13%	22%
10-19%	26%	13%
Less than 10%	4%	0%
Unsure	9%	9%

% of Community College Respondents

How Transfer Students Fare

Approximately what proportion of transfer students [to/from] your institution perform worse, the same, or better than students who began their academic careers [there/at the transfer institution]?

MEANS

4-year private (n=45) | 4-year public (n=29) | 2-year public (n=20)

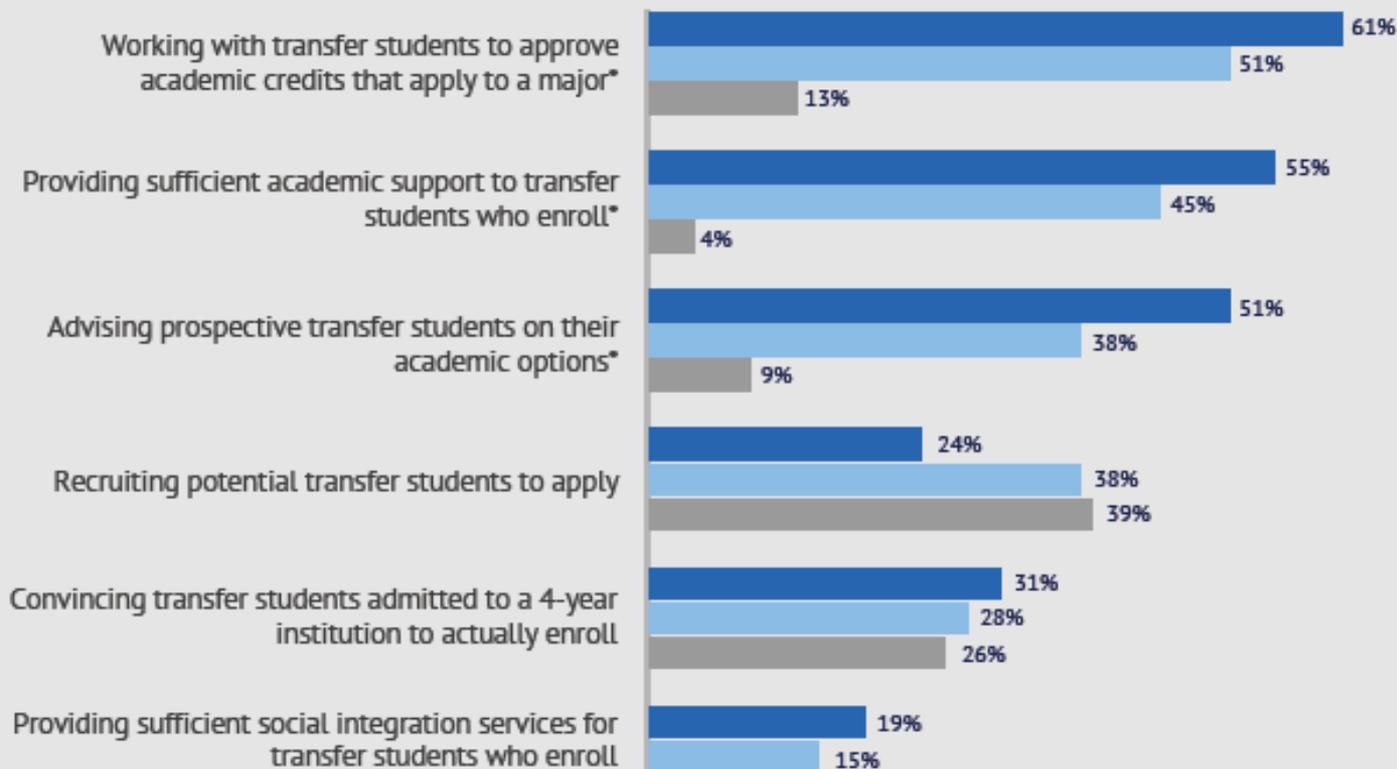|	4-year private	4-year public	2-year public
Better	20%	26%	33%
About the same	56%	48%	41%
Worse	13%	8%	12%
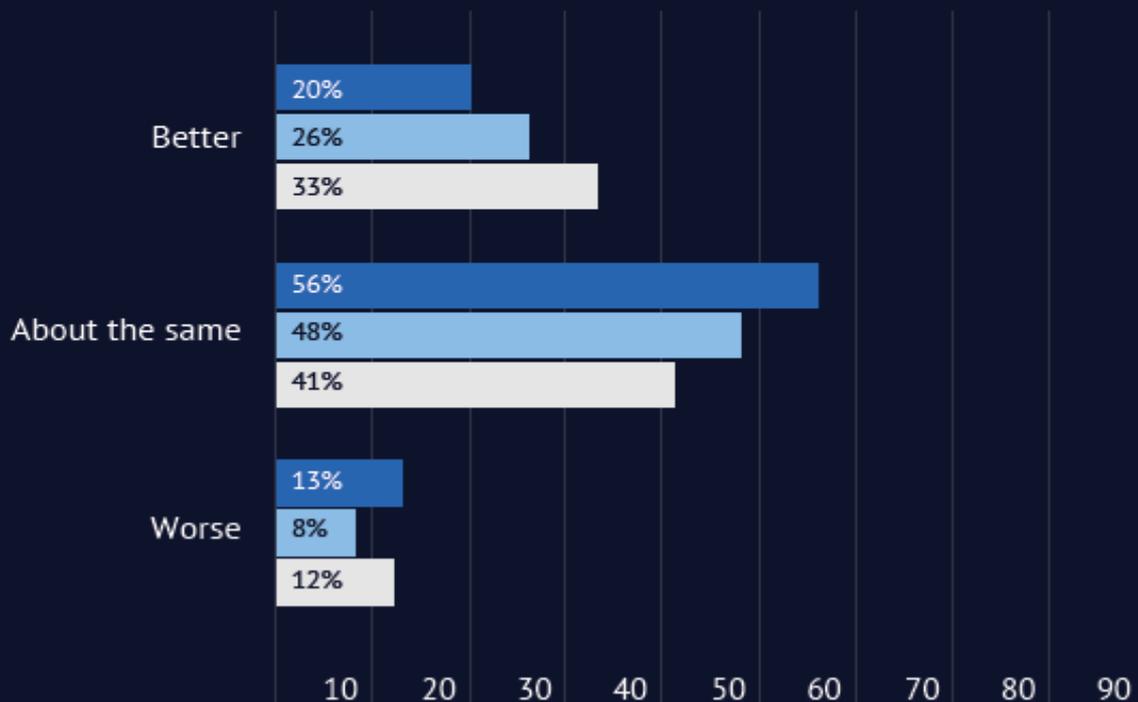
Effectiveness in Managing the Transfer Process

Please rate the degree to which [your institution is/four-year institutions are] effective at managing the following aspects of the student transfer process:

% Extremely Effective + % Very Effective

4-year private (n=67)   4-year public (n=53)   2-year public (n=23)

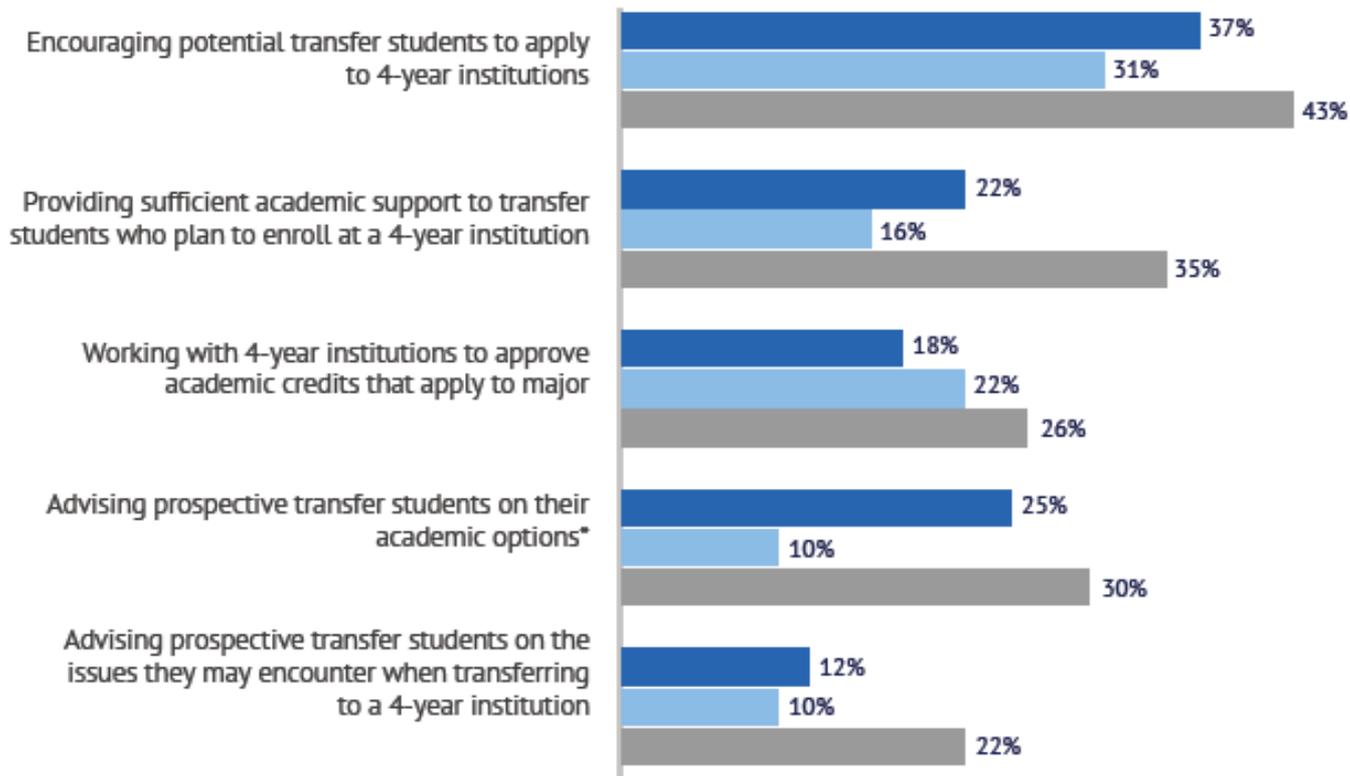|	4-year private	4-year public	2-year public
Working with transfer students to approve academic credits that apply to a major*	61%	51%	13%
Providing sufficient academic support to transfer students who enroll*	55%	45%	4%
Advising prospective transfer students on their academic options*	51%	38%	9%
Recruiting potential transfer students to apply	24%	38%	39%
Convincing transfer students admitted to a 4-year institution to actually enroll	31%	28%	26%
Providing sufficient social integration services for transfer students who enroll	19%	15%	

Effectiveness in Managing the Transfer Process (cont.)

Please rate the degree to which [your institution is/two-year institutions are] effective at managing the following aspects of the student transfer process:
% Extremely Effective + % Very Effective
4-year private (n=65) 4-year public (n=49) 2-year public (n=23)

Encouraging potential transfer students to apply to 4-year institutions
- 4-year private: 37%
- 4-year public: 31%
- 2-year public: 43%

Providing sufficient academic support to transfer students who plan to enroll at a 4-year institution
- 4-year private: 22%
- 4-year public: 16%
- 2-year public: 35%

Working with 4-year institutions to approve academic credits that apply to major
- 4-year private: 18%
- 4-year public: 22%
- 2-year public: 26%

Advising prospective transfer students on their academic options*
- 4-year private: 25%
- 4-year public: 10%
- 2-year public: 30%

Advising prospective transfer students on the issues they may encounter when transferring to a 4-year institution
- 4-year private: 12%
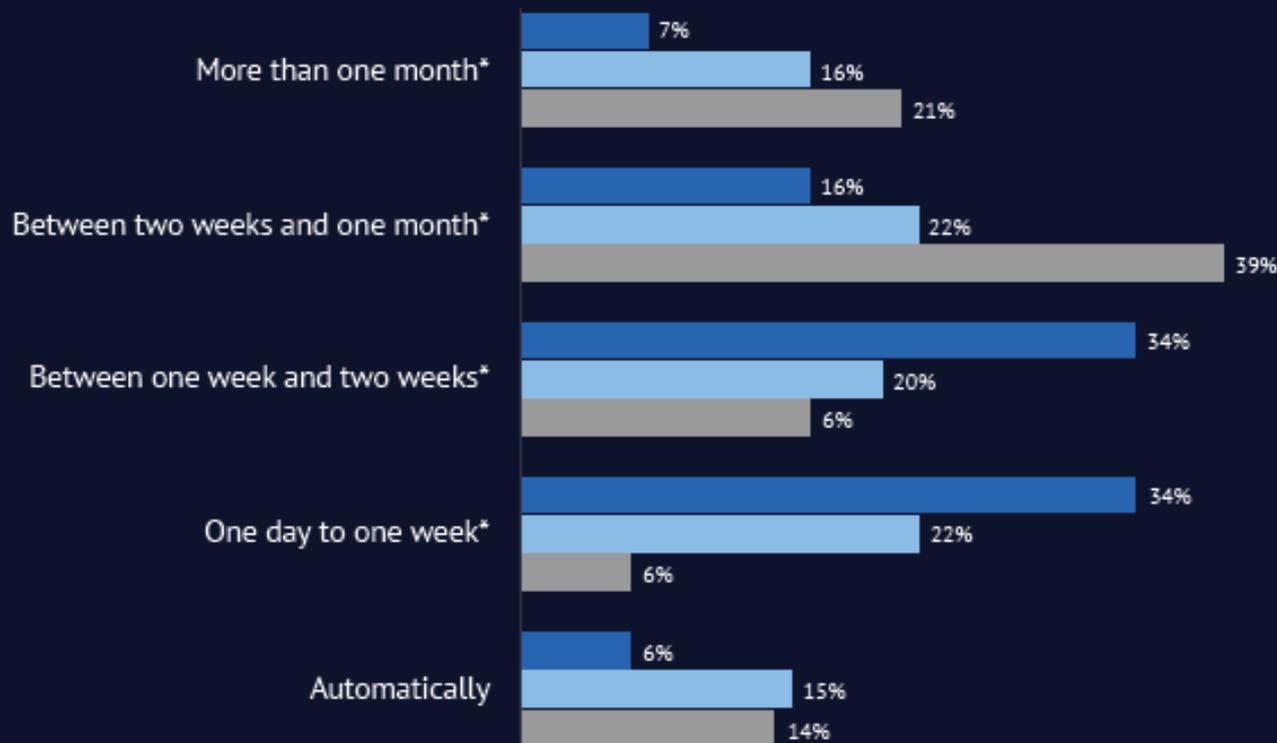- 4-year public: 10%
- 2-year public: 22%

Perceptual Gap
on Credit Approval Process

Approximately what proportion of transfer students [to/from] your institution receive credit approval within the following time frames?

Means

4-year private (n=64)   4-year public (n=44)   2-year public (n=20)

Time frame	4-year private	4-year public	2-year public
More than one month*	7%	16%	21%
Between two weeks and one month*	16%	22%	39%
Between one week and two weeks*	34%	20%	6%
One day to one week*	34%	22%	6%
Automatically	6%	15%	14%

How Credit Approval Works

Please rate how much you agree or disagree regarding the following statements about [your institution's process/four-year institutions' processes] for deciding which transfer credits to recognize:
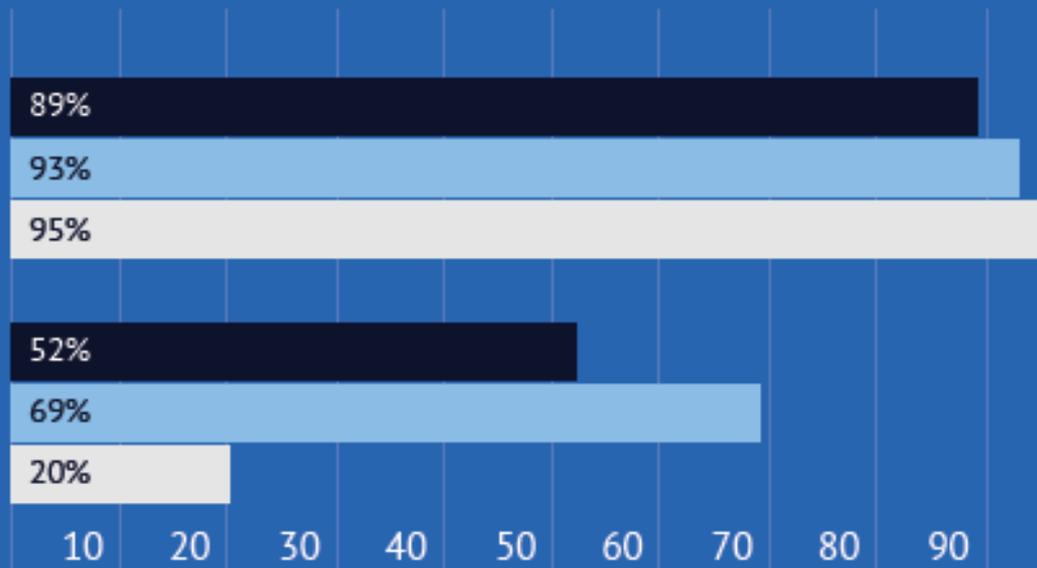
% Strongly Agree + % Agree

4-year private (n=46) | 4-year public (n=29) | 2-year public (n=20)

A more centralized approach to credit evaluation works better for transfer student enrollment.
- 89%
- 93%
- 95%

Faculty experts in individual academic departments are effective at deciding which and how many credits students may transfer to a major program.*
- 52%
- 69%
- 20%

Biggest Concerns
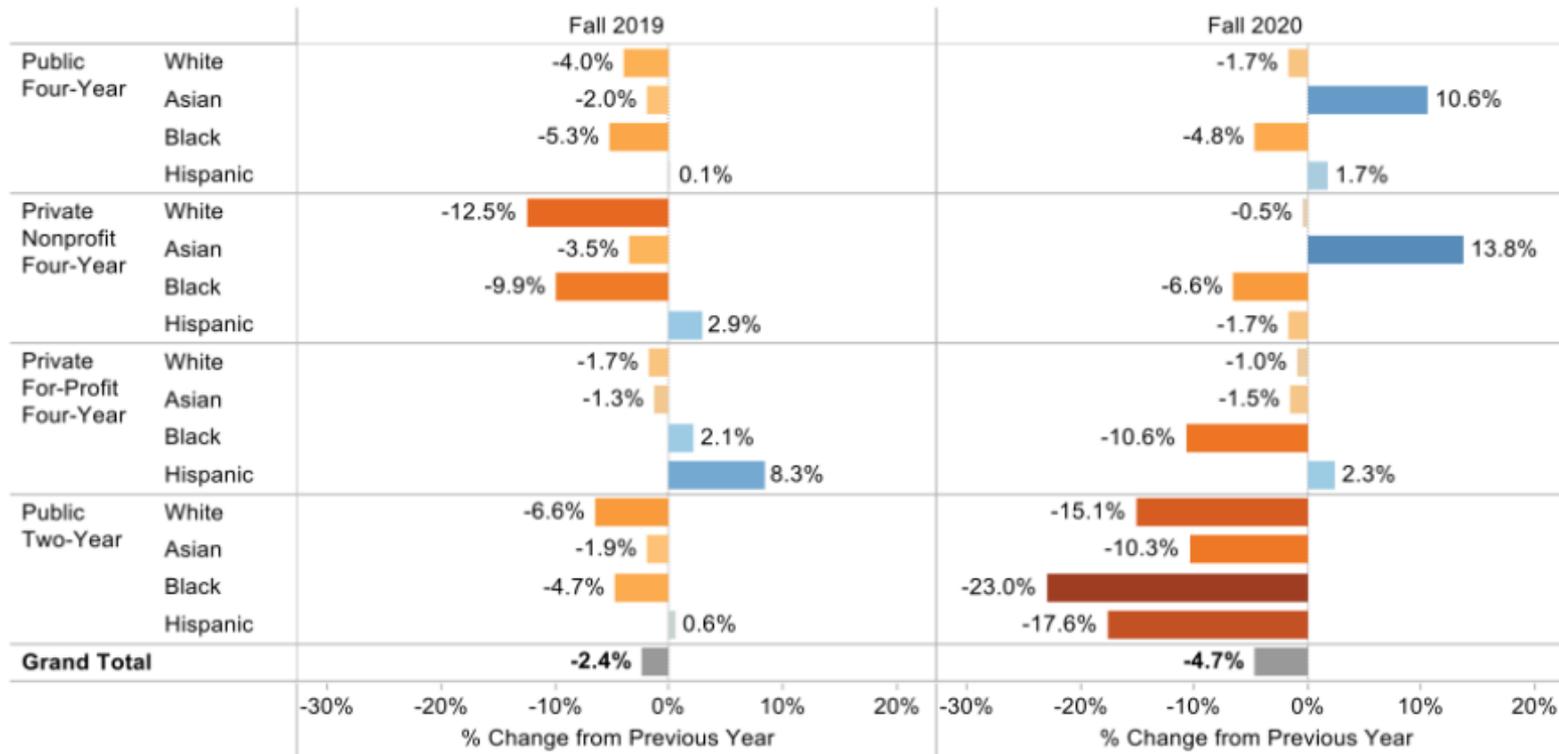# About Transfer Students

- **Success in an online environment** is a worry for half or more of 2-year and 4-year college administrators.

- **Inability to afford tuition** is a concern for ¾ of officials at community colleges and more than half of those at 4-year private colleges, but just 39% of those at four-year publics.

- **Difficulty of credit transfer process** troubles 60% of community college officials but only a third of four-year college administrators. **Failure to apply credits to a major** of more concern to two-year than four-year officials.

- Community college administrators more likely than four-year peers to be concerned about **lack of social integration,** and twice as likely to worry about transfer students' **difficulty finding support services.**

Policies in Place for Transfer Students, Pre-COVID

- 93% of public 4-year college respondents said they had **aligned academic curriculums** with local 2-year colleges; about 2/3 of private 4-year institutions said the same.

- 57% of 4-year colleges and 44% of private colleges said they had **direct admissions programs** for 2-year college students.

Early Look
at the Pandemic's Impact

Figure 5. Change in Total Transfer Enrollment by Institution Sector and Race/Ethnicity

National Student Clearinghouse

Thanks