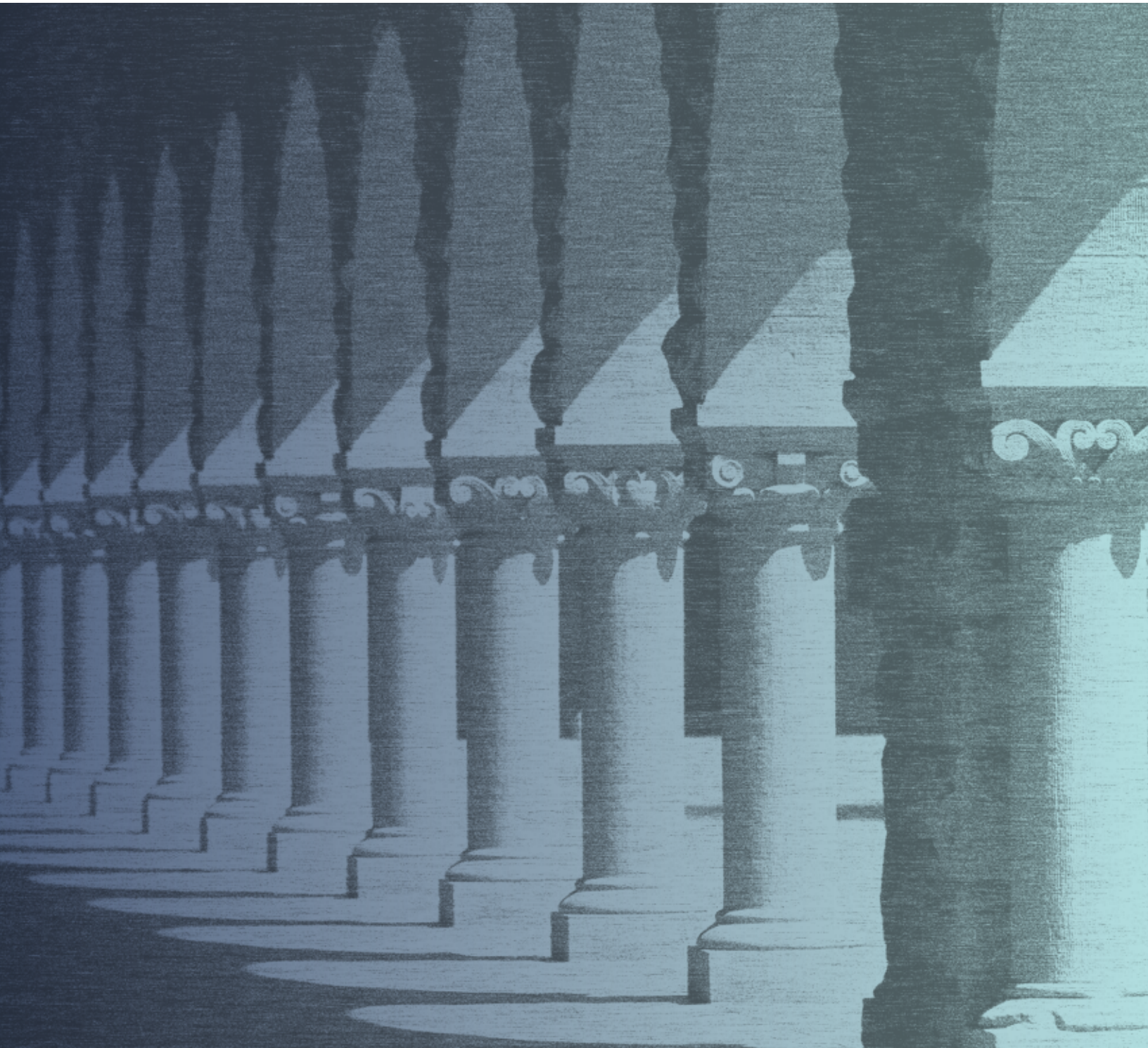

Strengthening the Transfer Pathway

From Community to
Four-Year Private Colleges

EDVANCE
FOUNDATION





A dark, blue-toned photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, a wooden bench sits on a path. The background is filled with the silhouettes of trees and foliage, creating a textured, layered effect. The overall mood is quiet and contemplative.

Acknowledgments

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION	6
LEARNINGS FROM THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER INITIATIVE	9
RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL SURVEY ON TRANSFER PRACTICES	11
FINDINGS FROM THE LISTENING TOUR	14
A STRATEGY FOR SMOOTHING THE TRANSFER PATHWAY	17
RECOMMENDATIONS	20
CALL TO ACTION AND NEXT STEPS	25
CCTI CASE STUDIES	28
<i>Amherst College: Willingness to Experiment Pays Off</i>	28
<i>Bucknell University: Collaboration from Community to Classroom</i>	30
<i>Mount Holyoke: Face-to-Face Interaction Makes the Difference</i>	32
<i>University of Michigan: Road Show Reaps Success</i>	34
<i>University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Understanding the Psychology of Transferring</i>	36

Concerned about access to higher education, inequality, and social mobility, the Edvance Foundation set out to develop a program that would increase the flow of community college graduates to four-year private colleges and universities and enhance students' prospects for success. Its efforts build on the work of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, which funded partnerships between community colleges and eight highly selective colleges and universities from 2006 to 2010. The Foundation awarded additional grants to six institutions in 2011 and 2012.

As part of its program planning, the Edvance Foundation surveyed the literature, examined prevailing and best practices, and initiated an 18-state listening tour, panel discussions, and webinar series with higher education leadership. More than 800 higher education leaders across the country participated in the listening tour.

In addition, the Edvance Foundation partnered with Human Capital Research Corporation to administer the largest survey ever undertaken on transfer practices at private, four-year undergraduate institutions. In all, 414 schools completed the survey, representing 25% of those sampled.

The results are telling, and critical to understanding how best to improve access to four-year private undergraduate institutions for community college graduates. The survey found:

- Most private colleges are responsive to transfers from two-year colleges, and most use transfer students to fill in gaps in their annual admission targets. The more selective the institution, however, the less likely it is to accept transfer students.
- Most private colleges do not require completion of a two-year degree prior to acceptance at a four-year institution.
- Colleges and universities have many transfer agreements in place, but there are wide inconsistencies among those agreements. And, in fact, only a handful of community colleges feed the pool of transfers to private colleges.
- The biggest obstacle to transfers is the credit-transfer evaluation; evaluators have a range of professional responsibilities and are inconsistent in their application of academic admission standards.
- The transfer application process can be daunting, especially for first-generation students. Moreover, academic admission standards vary widely, and early identification programs to create a more seamless pathway for promising students are limited.
- For those students who master the transfer application process, the level of support once they arrive on campus varies: less than half of the surveyed private colleges offer tailored orientation programs to transfers.

The listening tour generated a rich perspective on these issues and how best to address them. Drawing on all of this research, the Edvance Foundation recommends the following steps toward smoothing the pathway from community colleges to four-year institutions:

- **Early identification of promising students**, preferably well before they enter a two-year college;
- **Creation of virtual bridge programs**, relying heavily upon technology-based applications;
- **Rigorous, discipline-based study** at two-year colleges better linked to four-year academic expectations;
- **A network of mentors for two-year students** to support community college counselors and serve as a bridge to staff, providing a safety net at the four-year schools;
- **Heightened collaboration** with existing organizations devoted to access at the local, state, and national levels;
- **Stronger support from corporations** seeking a better prepared workforce;
- **Redeployment of institutional aid** from four-year private colleges to support transfers, who often persist and graduate at higher rates than the colleges' standard admissions cohorts;
- **Creation of a broader safety net** for academic and student services at four-year colleges using existing institutional resources;
- **Stronger faculty involvement**, both on an institutional level and in a national advisory capacity;
- **Benchmark statistics on transfer students** to create a national, updated clearinghouse of student transfer data; and
- **Development of metrics that measure transfer participants from “cradle through career,”** with targeted alumni surveys to determine the value of this pathway to an educated national workforce.

To put these recommendations into practice, the Edvance Foundation proposes to create a college transfer partnership between community colleges and private four-year undergraduate colleges and universities – eventually extending this partnership to public institutions. **Only by removing the obstacles to a seamless educational pathway can American higher education commit fully to access as a national social and economic imperative.**

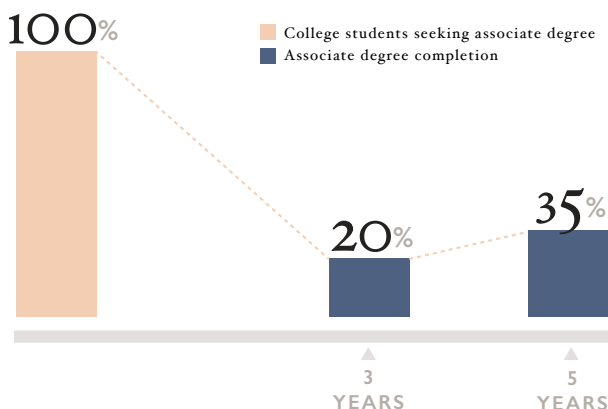
When American political and educational leaders established a national network of community colleges in the 1960s, they aimed to open the door to post-secondary education for all. This democratization of higher education was to take two forms: providing practical career training for some students, and offering others the educational building blocks needed to transfer to four-year institutions and earn bachelor's degrees. Decades later, community colleges' promise of opportunity would seem to have been fulfilled if measured by sheer enrollment. Some 13 million students attend these low-cost institutions, making up 44% of all U.S. undergraduates. In the popular imagination, community colleges continue to embody their promise of upward mobility.

In reality, however, community colleges too often lead nowhere. Just 20% of first-time, full-time community college students seeking an associate degree receive one within three years, and even after five years the completion figure only rises to 35%. This disconnect between educational intentions and outcomes is particularly problematic for the 80% of community college students who begin their studies with plans to transfer and earn a bachelor's degree. Original plans notwithstanding, just 25% will have transferred five years later. And only 17% will earn a bachelor's degree within six years of transferring.

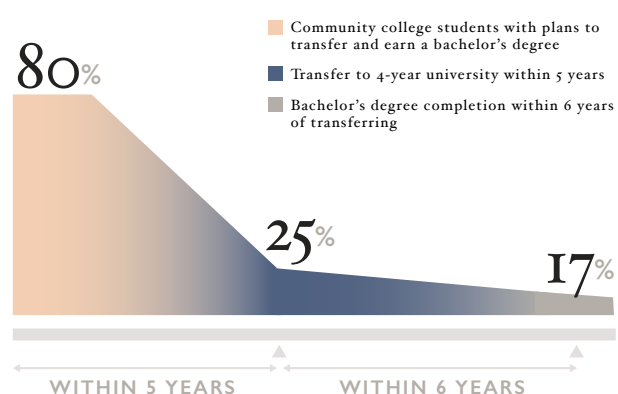
These figures are particularly disappointing at a time when the economic payoff from post-secondary education – and four-year degrees in particular – is at an all-time high. What's more, the future will likely hold more of the same. Research by organizations such as Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce shows that a rapidly growing number of knowledge-economy jobs now require post-secondary credentials. Building human capital has taken on unprecedented importance, both for individuals and for our nation.

Our goal is simple: to design a college transfer partnership...to provide greater opportunities for community college graduates.

COLLEGE STUDENTS SEEKING ASSOCIATE DEGREE



COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH PLANS TO TRANSFER



Improving transfer success from community colleges to four-year institutions “offers a critical avenue for upward mobility.”

Against this backdrop, it seems clear that we need to find new ways to help community colleges fulfill their original purpose, particularly for students who are most in need of opportunity. This will require, among other things, increasing their effectiveness as doorways to the four-year degrees that hold so much potential for raising earnings and improving lives. As noted in a recent report from the Community College Research Center at Columbia University’s Teachers College, improving transfer success from community colleges to four-year institutions “offers a critical avenue for upward mobility” for underserved students, including first-generation, low-income, and racial and ethnic minority undergraduates.

This report describes one promising approach to reaching this goal – promoting widespread, and effective, transfer programs between community colleges and private bachelor’s-degree-granting colleges and universities.

It first describes the results of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation’s pioneering Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI), which helped high-achieving, low- to moderate-income community college students transfer to, and succeed at, eight highly selective four-year colleges and universities. Under this pilot program, five private and three public institutions not only admitted community college transfer students but also provided the resources and supports needed to ensure that larger numbers reached graduation. The report contains case studies highlighting the approaches taken at five of these schools.

Encouraged by the highly positive outcomes of the Community College Transfer Initiative, in 2010

a group of senior higher education officials came together to create the Edvance Foundation, with the aim of promoting innovative solutions to the nation’s higher education challenges, including more transfer initiatives.

As a first step, Edvance undertook the largest-ever national survey of institutions participating in two- to four-year student transfer partnerships, covering 414 private colleges and universities. In parallel with the survey, it conducted an 18-state listening tour and 10 national webinar conversations, in which nearly 800 senior higher education leaders offered their insights into how best to scale up transfer programs. This research was funded by planning grants from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, with an eye toward creating a college transfer partnership program called the “Nexpectation Network.”

The leaders surveyed and interviewed described a range of challenges facing community college transfer partnerships. These included everything from the difficulties surrounding a decentralized recruiting process to the need for teaching transfer students the soft skills they will need to succeed in competitive four-year institutions.

Drawing on the results of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation’s pilot program, coupled with the Edvance Foundation’s survey and listening tour, this report suggests a framework for a new kind of college transfer partnership designed to advance this vital agenda. It lays out a set of core principles and practices that should guide efforts to refine and scale existing partnerships to an unprecedented degree. It then suggests next steps in research and practice to build on these early efforts.

To be sure, college transfer partnerships are by no means the only solution to our educational woes. But there is good reason to believe that they represent an important step toward expanding opportunity, as community colleges were intended to do. Expanding the number of these programs – in a thoughtful way that builds on lessons learned from current efforts – is a worthy goal indeed. The evidence that follows provides ample support for a new kind of partnership that builds on the groundwork laid so far.

The Edvance Foundation's initial focus is on private colleges and universities because of their strengths in providing the kind of individualized student supports that community college transfers need to make it to graduation. But the recommendations offered here apply equally to public-sector institutions (and two of the case studies based on the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation

pilot are from public universities). In its report "Bridging the Higher Education Divide," The Century Foundation Task Force on Preventing Community Colleges from Becoming Separate and Unequal cited the early work of the Edvance Foundation as an especially promising effort to scale up a program nationally that would address issues of inequality, access, and diversity.

Learnings from the Community College Transfer Initiative

From 2006 to 2010, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Community College Transfer Initiative (CCTI) funded eight highly selective colleges and universities to help high-achieving, low- to moderate-income community college students transfer to, and succeed at, their institutions. The participating institutions were Amherst College, Bucknell University, Cornell University, Mount Holyoke College, the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Michigan, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Southern California. The Cooke Foundation awarded additional grants to six institutions in 2011 and 2012.

The purpose of the Cooke grants was to establish a framework for best practices at these highly selective colleges and universities. The eight grants did not attempt to identify a "cost per student" number. Instead, the aim was to unlock the mystery of whether and how transfer students could also achieve similarly high persistence and graduation rates as non-transfer students.

The results were very promising. To be sure, the participating colleges and universities encountered challenges along the way, from concerns that community college students wouldn't be well prepared academically to worries on the part of

those transfer students that they wouldn't fit into the culture of elite campuses. Nevertheless, all eight institutions improved their ability to recruit qualified students and support their success.

Almost 1,100 students participated in the CCTI program at the eight schools originally funded. The graduation rates were impressive. In the five case studies highlighted in this report, for example, these transfer students graduated at rates comparable to the graduation rates of the general student population. In some cases, these rates exceeded 90% over four years.

CCTI AT A GLANCE



1,100 transfer students



8 highly selective 4-year colleges and universities
(5 private; 3 public)



Average grade point average for CCTI students: 3.11



The CCTI served many students who were nontraditional with respect to life experience, personal circumstances, and age. For many students, it was transformational. Participants saw their educational horizons expand. They were able, some for the first time, to engage in what one called “intellectual feasting.”

Each participating college and university tailored the initiative to its own circumstances, of course. The case studies at the end of this report illustrate the diverse paths these schools took to improve access for transfer students, who in turn proved to be valuable participants in all aspects of life at their new campuses.

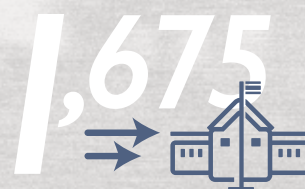
By the end of the pilot period, it became clear that the CCTI created lasting benefits. As described in the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation’s program evaluation report, *Partnerships That Promote Success: Lessons and Findings from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation’s Community College Transfer Initiative*, increasing access for low- to moderate-income community college transfer students helps not only the students who transfer but also the two- and four-year institutions that educate those undergraduates.

- According to *Partnerships that Promote Success*, “The CCTI helped community college partners enrich their institutional transfer culture, made more information available for students interested in transferring to a four-year institution, and reached out to students who were not necessarily seeking to transfer.”
- For four-year schools, the CCTI increased the diversity of the student body, and CCTI students with varied life experiences often transformed classroom discussions with stimulating questions and impressive preparation. Moreover, community college transfers performed on par academically with their non-transfer-student peers.

NATIONAL SURVEY ON TRANSFER PRACTICES AT A GLANCE



Survey conducted:
early 2012



Sent to 1,675 institutions



Response rate of 25%



414 private college
respondents from 46 states
plus Washington, D.C.,
Guam, and Puerto Rico

Results of the National Survey on Transfer Practices

In early 2012, the Edvance Foundation commissioned Human Capital Research Corporation to conduct a national study of transfer practices at private undergraduate four-year institutions. Researchers surveyed 1,675 institutions across the nation and two U.S. territories in early 2012. Responses were received from colleges in 46 states, plus Washington, D.C, Guam, and Puerto Rico. In all, 414 schools completed the survey, for a total response rate of 25%.

The survey results provide valuable information about the need for more effective collaboration between community colleges and private four-year institutions. Among the findings:

RECEPTIVITY TO TRANSFERS

- **A substantial number of private four-year schools are open to transfers from two-year colleges.** Of the responding institutions, 93% reported that they currently recruit students from two-year colleges.

- **However, the more selective a private college is, the less likely it is to serve transfer students.** This is demonstrated by an analysis of survey respondents that classifies elite private colleges as those that fall in the 95th percentile based on factors such as students' academic qualifications, graduation rates, and admit rates. On average, those institutions accept just one-third as many transfers as private colleges that fall between the 50th and 70th percentiles. Across a range of activities important to creating smooth transfer pathways, including recruitment of transfer students from community colleges and establishing clear course equivalencies for those transfer students, greater selectivity is inversely related to policies that are crucial to student success.

- **Just 2% of participating private colleges require that transfer students complete their associate degree before transferring.** This "poaching" undermines cooperation between community colleges and four-year schools, and detracts from the seamless transfer pathway needed for both sides to benefit from strategic partnerships.



2%

of participating private colleges require that transfer students complete their associate degree before transferring.

93%



of responding institutions reported that they currently recruit students from two-year colleges.



Accept fall transfers



Accept spring transfers

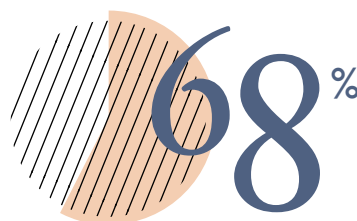


Accept summer transfers

- Colleges and universities often use community college transfers to plug revenue gaps caused by enrollment miscalculations involving withdrawals, dropouts, and study abroad. This is reflected in their flexibility about the timing of incoming community college transfers. One hundred percent of survey respondents accept fall transfers, 95% accept spring transfers, and 42% accept transfers for summer session. Institutions too rarely use community college transfers as building blocks for shaping a strong and diverse class.

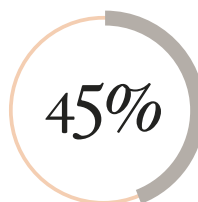
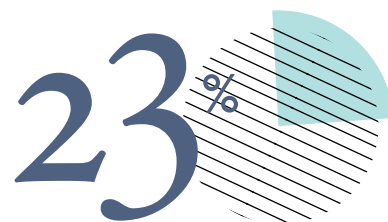
SHORTCOMINGS OF ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

- Articulation agreements that govern student transfers between two-year institutions and private four-year colleges tend to cover a relatively small number of feeder community colleges.** On the one hand, 68% of survey respondents had active articulation agreements. But close to half of those schools had five or fewer agreements in place. An additional 23% had between six and 10 agreements. The survey demonstrates that most private institutions are not partnering with the full array of prospective feeder community colleges.
- In addition, the transfer landscape is made unnecessarily complex by inconsistencies in existing articulation agreements.** Ninety-three percent of responding colleges recruit students from community colleges through articulation agreements. But many of these agreements are decentralized, subjective, and uncoordinated, and they vary in scope and terms. And they warrant more frequent evaluation to ensure that best practices are being followed.



68% of respondents had active articulation agreements

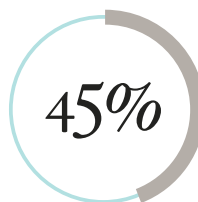
23% had between 6 and 10 agreements



45% offer tailored orientation programs for transfers



37% of campuses have faculty handle evaluations



45% have department heads handle evaluations



56% have academic administrators handle evaluations

● **The most complicated and potentially problematic aspect of the transfer process is credit-transfer evaluations.** While 81% of institutions surveyed have an established set of transfer course equivalencies, evaluation is highly inconsistent, both within and across campuses. Respondents said that credit evaluations are handled by a wide range of campus officials, from faculty (37% across all colleges surveyed) to department heads (45%) to academic administrators (56%), and often by a combination of these groups. With so many gatekeepers, standards often vary. Until we have something closer to common standards, transfer credits will never be regarded as a common currency.

● **Transfer application requirements to selective private colleges can be daunting for first-generation students from community colleges.** Most four-year colleges require high school and college transcripts for transfer students, together with supporting materials such as recommendations and SAT/ACT scores. There is a weak transfer support network, with overworked community college counselors unable to provide the individualized support that many students require in order to meet four-year college admission requirements.

● **Residency requirements are often minimal for community college transfers, and are inconsistent across institutions.** Two-thirds of the private colleges surveyed permit transfer students from community colleges to spend less than two years on their campuses. These modest residency requirements, together with inadequate support services, make it less likely that these transfer students will graduate, because failure to integrate into a campus significantly raises the chances of withdrawal. Additionally, the most selective institutions typically accept the fewest credits, further confusing the application process.

● **Academic standards are compromised for transfers from two-year colleges.** Only 10% of the colleges and universities surveyed require a grade point average of 3.0 or better for transfer students. One-third require a GPA between

2.1 and 3.0. This low academic bar makes it more likely that community college students will arrive on four-year campuses unprepared, without targeted early identification and ongoing mentoring to prepare them while in community college. Poor preparation, in turn, correlates highly with lack of academic success and non-completion.

● **Early identification merit-aid programs for promising community college transfers are limited.** Only 9% of the institutions surveyed have an “early assurance” program that guarantees scholarship support to high-achieving community college students identified in the early stages of the admissions process. Those colleges have implemented a range of initiatives to foster a successful transfer process for talented community college students, including rolling admissions, early action admissions, and “2-plus-2” partner programs with specific feeder community colleges.

● **Just 45% of respondents offer orientation programs that are specifically tailored to the needs of students transferring from community colleges.** Nearly half offer some form of ongoing student support program that specifically address those transfer students’ needs, both social and academic.

2/3 **2 YEARS**
OR LESS

Two-thirds of the private colleges surveyed permit transfer students from community colleges to reside less than two years on their campuses.

10% **3.0**
OR BETTER

Only 10% of the colleges and universities surveyed require a grade point average of 3.0 or better for transfer students.

Findings from the Listening Tour

The Edvance Foundation's listening tour, which began in 2010 and concluded in 2012, focused on the nature of existing articulation arrangements, their strengths and weaknesses, and how the transfer process might be improved in order to create broad guidelines for a new national effort to expand educational opportunities.

The wide-ranging series of conversations took place in two main formats: personal visits with college and university presidents and practitioners in 18 states, and 10 national webinars for post-secondary practitioners. Edvance also made presentations to several higher education organizations, including the National Association of Independent College and University State Executives, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities Secretariat, and the Council of Independent Colleges.

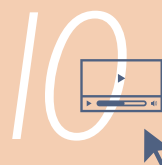
LISTENING TOUR AT A GLANCE



Timeframe:
2010-12



Face-to-face meetings
with college and university
presidents in 18 states



10 national
webinars



Roughly 800
participants in total

The results of this ambitious effort were instructive. Presidents of community colleges, presidents of four-year private colleges, and practitioners – mainly provosts, enrollment vice presidents, admissions staff, and transfer coordinators – offered distinct but often complementary views of how existing transfer protocols might be improved, and of how the entire process could be re-envisioned and taken to scale.

Among four-year private college leaders, there was agreement that increasing the number of community college transfer students could form a logical building block upon which to build four-year enrollments. Leaders of these colleges

– many of which were concentrated in Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin, where the bulk of interviews were conducted – noted that their strategic plans all have common planks that include increasing diversity and serving disadvantaged and first-generation students. An improved transfer program could do a lot to meet those goals, they agreed.

Further, they had a lively debate in several states during the listening tour on the return on investment (ROI) for transfer students, especially when compared to the weakest admitted group in their freshmen admissions class. Since the Cooke Foundation numbers indicate that admitted

transfer students in the pilot projects graduate at rates comparable to the overall admitted classes, transfer students are an attractive group because they do not “wash out” like the weakest students admitted as part of a freshman class. Further, they populate upper-division classes that generally have the smallest number of students enrolled, creating efficiencies by driving down the cost per student to run these classes. Those interviewed warned, however, that for the transfer program to be successful, the cost to admit should not exceed the current cost to move a traditional student from applicant to matriculant.

In addition, private higher education leaders voiced concerns about how a campus culture often focused on educating 18- to 22-year-olds would adapt to growing numbers of students from nontraditional populations, what the reaction of faculty and staff would be to this change, and whether the admission of more transfer students would threaten the academic quality of each class. They also raised concerns about the need for remedial work to ensure that transfer students are prepared for the academic rigors of selective private campuses. As the president of one highly competitive liberal arts college put it: “We like having transfer students but are concerned about how well prepared they will be to undertake the demanding reading and writing needed to succeed at a place like this.”

Notwithstanding these worries, they were accompanied by a recognition that potential problems with expanding transfers could be addressed by creating a safety net for community college students at four-year institutions. This safety net would include everything from increased financial aid and tailored orientation programs to improved counseling and academic assessment for transfer students. In addition, college and university leaders stressed the ways in which strong student mentorship, one of the greatest strengths of their institutions, could play a key role in fostering the success of transfer students.

However, mentorship alone will not suffice, they cautioned. To be successful, community college transfers must be prepared to undertake a major in a specific discipline, while also possessing core academic skills such as reading comprehension,

strong writing, and an ability to use quantitative information. Soft skills such as the ability to work well with others and to assess complex situations are also vital.

For their part, community college presidents saw a substantial benefit to improving the transfer pipeline. They noted that if the transfer pipeline kicked in as the two-year applicant graduated from a community college, the number of community college graduates would increase, perhaps substantially depending upon the scale of the transfer program. Further, they suggested that better coordination of academic programs, counselors, and facilities would refine and improve the relationship with four-year schools, offering a comprehensive education along an expanded and defined pathway. Finally, they suggested that these new transfer relationships might open important strategic partnerships that would enhance existing workforce and economic development initiatives while strengthening corporate and philanthropic support.

Community college presidents and practitioners shared a firm belief in the need for improved mentorship for transfer students. They noted that the limited numbers of counseling staff in two-year institutions are overwhelmed, and they suggested that any future initiatives should emphasize placing additional mentoring staff directly on community college campuses. The community college leaders said these mentors should have as their clear, principal responsibility walking students through the transition to a four-year experience.

Mentoring is all the more important given the cultural, social, familial, psychological, and financial barriers many community college students face when navigating the transfer process to four-year institutions. That’s one reason why community college leaders stressed the need to make use of technology to give students individualized mentoring, including broadening their horizons to consider transferring to four-year institutions outside the local market with which they are most familiar.

On the matter of academic preparedness, community college presidents and administrators expressed two main concerns. They contended

Without better metrics, it will be difficult or impossible to measure the success of students who participate in a college transfer partnership.

that the community college curriculum has sufficient rigor, but said there may be significant differences in pedagogy, academic programs, and outcome measures. That, in turn, suggests that better academic coordination is needed in order to promote the success of transfer students.

At the same time, the community college leaders who participated in the listening tour expressed concern that new transfer partnerships could lead to poaching of their best and brightest students if four-year institutions accept transfers who have not yet completed their two-year credentials. They conceded, however, that a new college transfer partnership could avoid such problems by establishing what might be called an “early assurance” program. This would guarantee admission to talented community college students early on during their studies, on the condition that they complete an associate degree before transferring to a baccalaureate-granting institution.

Representatives of both sectors agreed on two final points. First, there is a troubling scarcity of ongoing, longitudinal data about the academic progress, persistence, and graduation rates of students who transfer from community colleges to four-year colleges. Without better metrics, it will be difficult or impossible to measure the success of students who participate in a college transfer partnership.

Second, campuses participating in such a partnership will need to have “skin in the game” as the pilot project scales into a national program. This will require annual membership fees for both community colleges and four-year colleges. In addition, for the partnership to become self-sustaining as quickly as possible, it will need not only implementation grants from major foundations but also local and regional corporate support.

A Strategy for Smoothing the Transfer Pathway

The Edvance Foundation and its institutional partners have learned enormously from the initiatives outlined in this report. The results of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's pilot Community College Transfer Initiative provide valuable lessons about what works – and what needs to be improved – in these transfer ventures. The Edvance Foundation's national research survey provides quantitative evidence illustrating what the key elements of a successful transfer initiative should be. And the lessons gleaned from the listening tour offer invaluable ground-level insights into what opportunities and challenges presidents and other senior leaders from two-year and four-year institutions see in the implementation of a college transfer partnership.

Looking forward, the Edvance Foundation plans to build on the influential work already accomplished by nonprofits such as the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and through various statewide articulation agreements. Our work will reflect the best practices identified in a range of studies focused on creating stronger pathways to higher education success for promising students from low- to moderate-income families and from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. For these students, making the leap from a community college to a selective four-year private institution requires overcoming a host of social, cultural, political, familial, and economic barriers.

Our goal is simple: to design a college transfer partnership – a comprehensive national program that takes systematic advantage of the untapped capacity at many private colleges to provide greater opportunities for community college graduates.

As noted earlier, four out of five first-time community college students say they eventually want to earn a bachelor's degree. But only 12% do so within six years of entering community college. That number doesn't improve much over a longer timeframe: only 17% earn their bachelor's degree within six years of transferring.

The imperative to improve the transfer process is clear. Private colleges, with their well-developed

mentoring and academic support networks, have great potential to raise success rates. However, too many four-year institutions rely on transfer students in an ad hoc fashion simply to fill seats and meet revenue targets. This approach leads to poaching of community college students before they complete an associate degree. That, in turn, can leave students without a well-designed support system, lowering their chances of successful bachelor's completion.

We must find a way to break this vicious cycle and replace it with a coherent program that will lead to greater success and benefits for all those concerned – most importantly for the transfer students themselves, but also for the participating community colleges and four-year institutions. A revamped recruitment process would help private baccalaureate-granting institutions recruit the talented, well-prepared, low-income, and racially diverse students they seek in a coordinated fashion. It would help fulfill the promise of community colleges as a launching pad to higher education for promising students. And, most importantly, it would increase opportunities for students most in need of academic upward mobility.

Smoothing the Transfer Pathway:

Edvance Foundation's Five Core Components



EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Early identification of promising students, together with concentrated academic support as they prepare to transfer to private colleges, and regular evaluation of their readiness for these demanding institutions. While early identification practices varied in the Cooke Foundation projects, the twin pillars of engagement (preferably before enrollment in a community college) and identification of college-going opportunities (through social media and mobile applications that reach targeted populations) are critical.

There are promising mobile applications in development – like ULink – that will provide information to prospective transfers in a clear and simple format. In addition, Gates Foundation-supported programs like The Get Schooled Foundation, MyCollege, and UNow, as well as the 20 applications funded through its College Knowledge Challenge, all offer students easy-to-understand transfer information and support.

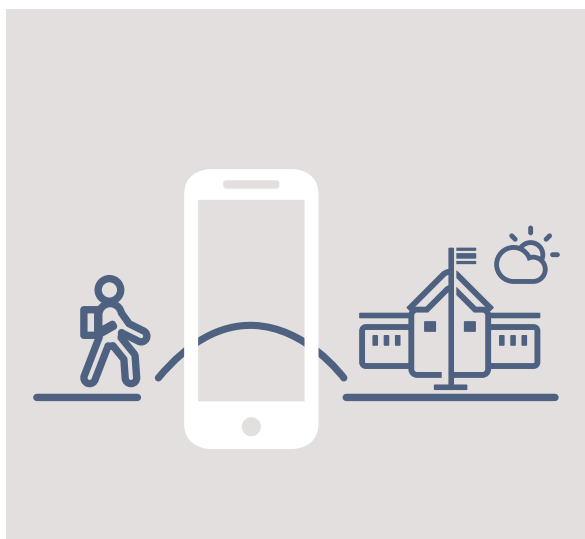


VIRTUAL BRIDGE PROGRAMS

Establishment of virtual bridge programs, delivered through mobile technology, to strengthen academic and soft skills and promote college and career readiness.

Most listening tour participants agreed that blended learning – a mixture of online and classroom instruction – would be the most effective way to prepare transfer students for the demands of four-year institutions. They expressed confidence in the pedagogical effectiveness of new technologies, and in the cost-effectiveness of spending on those technologies to create economies of scale.

CASE STUDY: Bucknell University:
Collaboration from Community to Classroom *p.30*

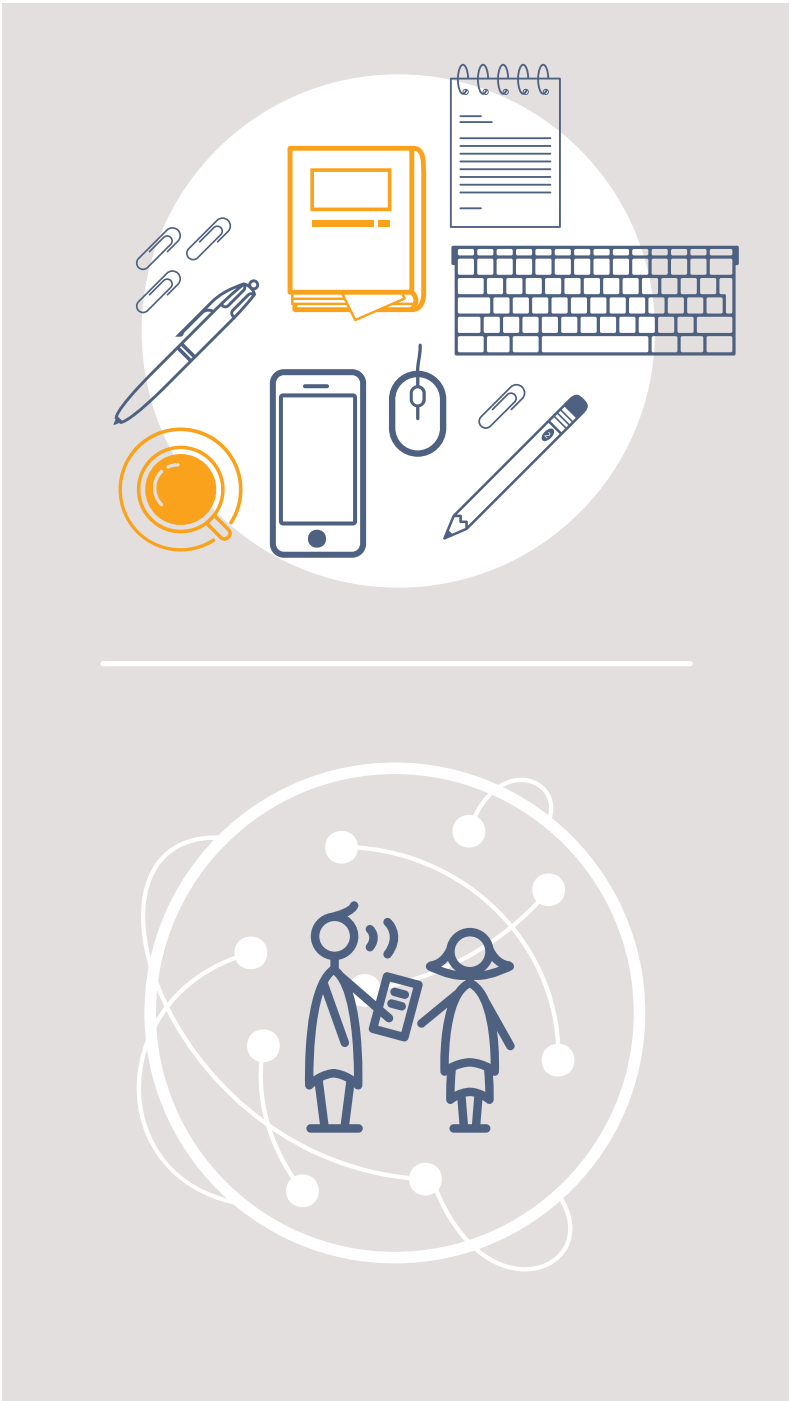


3.

DISCIPLINE-BASED STUDY

Support for rigorous, discipline-based study at community colleges. This will make it easier to establish common transfer equivalences that smooth the transfer process by ensuring that four-year institutions accept credits from two-year schools for similar courses.

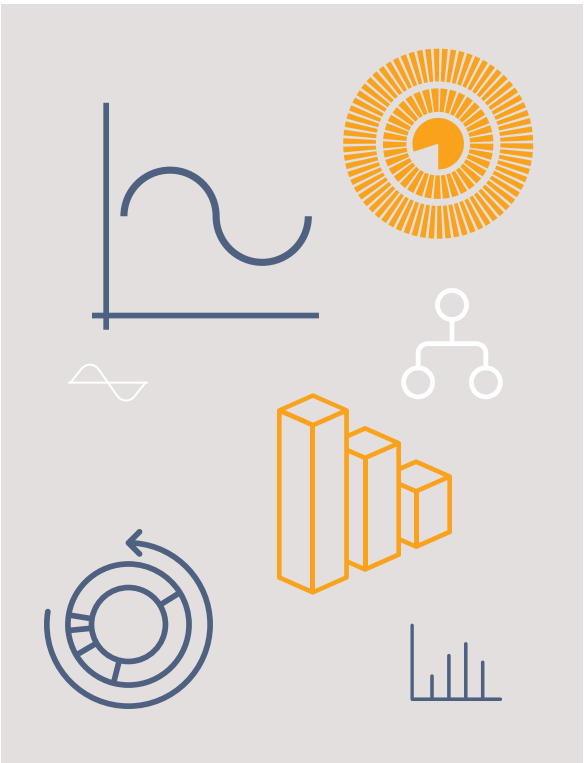
CASE STUDY: University of Michigan: Road Show Reaps Success *p.34*



4.

MENTORING NETWORK

Creation of a network of mentors for two-year students, staffed through regional offices. The goal of this network is to guide students through a successful transfer pathway leading to timely completion of a bachelor’s degree.



5.

DATA COLLECTION

Emphasis on data collection and analysis to inform college transfer programs. Development of a national clearinghouse for transfer student data and assessment metrics will make it possible to measure the success of these programs and benefits to transfer students and the institutions they attend.

Recommendations

The pilot, listening tour, and national research study provided invaluable information to lay a foundation for evidence-based analysis. It was critical to complete these exercises to demonstrate that the right conditions applied to the transfer process could – and did – result in high persistence and graduation rates among transfer students moving to highly selective colleges and universities.

The recommendations below indicate our next steps that will lead to an evidence-based transfer process. They build upon a solid foundation provided by these first grants to test, tour, and study – and soon to further study, execute, and assess – the best practices designed to guarantee high transfer persistence and graduation rates. We conclude that well-meaning efforts to smooth the transfer pathway between states and colleges and universities are by definition bureaucratic and therefore limited in design and application. They will not address the cultural, familial, and social issues that will otherwise continue to serve as impediments to a smooth transfer process.

Work collaboratively with existing organizations at the local, state, and national level to create seamless transfer pathways for community college students.

Although many states have transfer portals – institutional partnerships and completion programs – at the time of our survey in 2012 we were able to identify only 14 state-based portals open to private colleges and universities. More generally, new approaches and completion-oriented accountability are emerging in a handful of states (California, Florida, Illinois, Texas, and Wisconsin); these include development of community college curricula that guarantee transfer to a four-year college or university.

In addition, we propose to extend our reach by collaborating with initiatives that identify promising students and facilitate the transition to college. These initiatives, such as the Phi Kappa Theta Honor Society's CollegeFish.org, the Ontario-Montclair Promise Scholars Program in California, and Success Boston, are all working to create a seamless educational pathway for students.

We see opportunities to collaborate with other programs as well. Two Gates-funded programs also support community college students: the College Success Program (in Washington, D.C. and Seattle) and the partner organizations of the Gates Millennial Scholars Program – UNCF (United Negro College Fund), the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, the American Indian Graduate Center Scholars, and the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholars Fund. They add further value by pre-screening and selecting promising candidates. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation also offers significant counseling and support

through its Young Scholars Program, College Scholarship Program, and Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship Program.

Create faculty-run academic advisory boards to assure consistency, comparability, and rigor of academic standards for community college transfers.

During our listening tour, many campus leaders expressed concern about differing expectations at two- and four-year schools. Teaching methods and mastery expectations for a calculus class, for instance, may vary considerably. Dilution of academic standards at private colleges could severely undermine a transfer partnership.

Inconsistent credit evaluation, which many campus leaders cited as a problematic aspect of two- to four-year transfers, poses additional risks. As noted earlier, our survey showed that faculty, department heads, and/or academic administrators may handle transfer applications. The often subjective nature of credit evaluation on a single campus can add to concerns that some transfer students may have much stronger academic qualifications than others. Also, inconsistent review patterns across campuses can be a problem for community college students applying to transfer to multiple four-year institutions.

Academic advisory boards run by faculty in both sectors could play an important role in addressing these concerns. These boards could standardize readiness and academic competencies, in part through testing, and could recommend adjustments to community college curricula in order to bring them into line with the content and rigor expected at four-year institutions.

CASE STUDY

Mount Holyoke:
Face-to-Face
Interaction Makes
the Difference

p. 32

We propose to extend our reach by collaborating with initiatives that identify promising students and facilitate the transition to college.

Create a new pool of transfer counselors, funded by participating two- and four-year institutions, to add value to the work of existing on-campus counselors.

A new cohort of transfer counselors would provide a bridge between two-year institutions, where limited counseling is available, and four-year private institutions, where counseling tends to be strong but is not targeted at the distinct needs of community college transfer students.

In the listening tour described in this report, many two- and four-year college leaders agreed in principle to the idea of helping fund these new positions by having four-year colleges pay a per capita fee for each admitted transfer student. They also approved of the idea of community colleges contributing a modest participation fee as a concrete commitment to the program, which we believe will yield higher completion rates and greater alumni satisfaction among transfer students.

Identify promising transfer candidates early and provide the support needed to prepare them to succeed at four-year private institutions.

Community colleges should identify potential transfer candidates by the end of their first semester, whenever possible. Then, once students express interest in continuing their education at a four-year institution, transfer counselors at their home institution will help them consider a handful of likely transfer destinations. When a four-year college has been identified, the community college counselors will work with their counterparts at the target school to begin a sustained academic and social mentoring process.

Create a much broader safety net of programs for community college transfer students and their families, to address the cultural, economic, social, and psychological barriers to success.

Private colleges' generally high retention and graduation rates stem in part from their academic and social student support networks. However, these services will likely need re-examination in light of the very different backgrounds and skill sets of transfers from community colleges. In our survey, many four-year institutions said they recognize the distinct interests and concerns of these students and address those issues in their programming. Nearly half of the responding schools offer orientation programs tailored to the needs of community college transfers, and nearly half offer ongoing support services, in a variety of forms. However, given that more than 50% don't offer either orientation programs or ongoing support for transfer students, much work remains to be done.

Provide targeted counseling to community college students who arrive on private campuses from a range of backgrounds and with a range of needs. And make it easy for them to access a range of resources through a single point of contact.

Targeted counseling will be more effective than trying to create a one-size-fits-all statewide or national program. The new corps of transfer counselors described above should serve as a "one-stop shop" offering a range of resources for transfer students, in contrast to the multiple advisors currently deployed by many four-year colleges. Receiving institutions now rely on everyone from faculty and admissions officers to professional academic advisers to provide academic support for transfer students. The quality, consistency, and timeliness of this support vary considerably; there are few resources dedicated solely to transfer students and their special needs.

CASE STUDY

Amherst College:
Willingness to
Experiment Pays
Off

p. 28

...more than 50% don't offer either orientation programs or ongoing support for transfer students

CASE STUDY

University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill: Understanding the
Psychology of Transferring p.36

Seek support from corporations that aim to promote college access, diversity, and workforce preparation, particularly in STEM fields.

Many major corporations with large regional footprints have told Edvance that their higher education philanthropy focuses on community investment, including a commitment to educational access and workforce preparation. Their favored projects include the development of regional mentoring centers linked to community colleges, and the creation of metrics designed to show community impact, including persistence, high graduation rates, and productive employment after graduation. All these goals are closely tied to those outlined here.

Redeploy some institutional aid at four-year colleges to create a more generous scholarship program for transfer students.

Private colleges provided \$29.8 billion in

institutional aid in fiscal year 2013. Some of this could be redirected to financial aid for transfer students. During our listening tour, four-year private college presidents proposed additional transfer scholarships, beyond traditional institutional aid, in recognition of the fact that community college transfer students are disproportionately likely to be economically disadvantaged. These scholarships would cover need, books, supplies, general living expenses, and participation in orientation and support programs for transfers throughout their stay at the four-year institution. Many possible mechanisms exist for such transfer scholarships. One practical approach would be to provide an income-sensitive grant for up to two years to offset the price difference between two- and four-year degrees.

COLLECT DATA, MEASURE OUTCOMES, AND SHARE BEST PRACTICES

Develop benchmark statistics on transfer students to create a national clearinghouse for transfer student data.

Although more than 40% of first-time college students begin their education at community colleges, remarkably little high-quality information exists on their patterns of access and participation. Detailed research is needed to create benchmark statistics that can become the basis for a national clearinghouse for transfer student data. This clearinghouse would create a common lexicon for course-to-course equivalencies, facilitate learning assessment, and streamline curriculum alignment and credit recognition across systems. It would also facilitate longitudinal tracking of two-year community college graduates through four-year private colleges and universities.

Conduct regular alumni surveys of participants in the new transfer program, in addition to measuring longitudinal persistence and graduation rates as mentioned above.

Success should be measured along multiple dimensions. While tracking academic outcomes,

completion rates, and post-graduation employment are vital, surveys of alumni can also yield important information. In the 1990s, private colleges in Pennsylvania undertook an alumni study that looked at common variables, from income and employment to home ownership, as well as measures of good citizenship, such as hours devoted to community volunteering. Many colleges already conduct alumni surveys, of course, but surveys explicitly focused on outcomes of transfers from community college would yield vital, more targeted information.

Share best practices among participating institutions and with the field at large.

The Edvance Foundation plans to develop a rigorous marketing and outreach program dedicated to sharing best practices with community and private college leadership. As the program evolves, it will extend this effort to interested public college and university officials to create a national pathway across all sectors of American higher education.

CASE STUDY

University of
Michigan: Road
Show Reaps
Success

p. 34

***It is no
overstatement to
say that improving
post-secondary
opportunities in
the United States
is one of the great
policy challenges
of our time.***

Call to Action and Next Steps



It is no overstatement to say that improving post-secondary opportunities in the United States is one of the great policy challenges of our time. For the past half century, we have tried to meet that challenge in many ways, including by creating a national network of community colleges designed to help Americans of all ages improve their life prospects. But too many of those institutions are not adequately fulfilling their mission, particularly for low-income and first-generation students, who urgently require better opportunities after high school.

One potential pathway to success – transfer to baccalaureate-granting colleges – is not working as intended for many students, as research by the Edvance Foundation and others demonstrates. Both community colleges and four-year institutions share blame for these missed opportunities – but both can play a vital role in helping many more undergraduates transfer successfully and earn degrees in a timely way. It is time to create an organization that can help both sectors better serve those students.

The Edvance Foundation seeks community college and baccalaureate-institution collaborators as well as regional corporate sponsors to join forces in creating a college transfer partnership. We expect

to derive most of the funding for this partnership through member service and user fees paid by participating two- and four-year institutions.

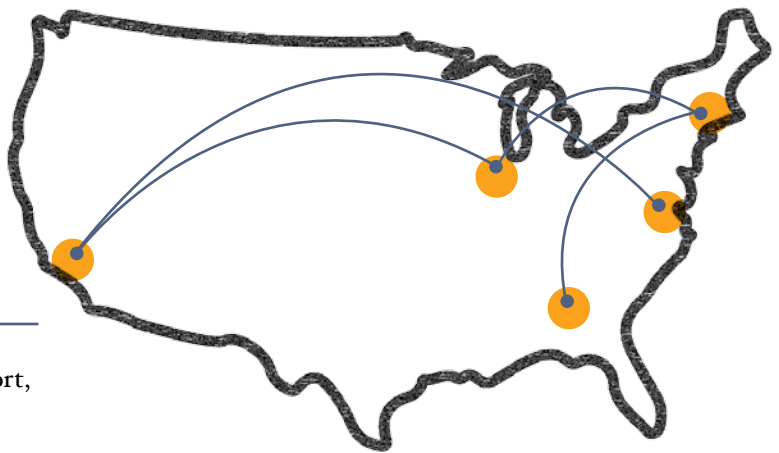
The partnership will focus initially on private colleges and universities, building on the success of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's Community College Transfer Initiative, because those institutions have a solid infrastructure of individualized student guidance already in place. Over time, however, as the initiative takes shape and demonstrates a track record of success, Edvance hopes to expand transfer partnerships to the public institutions that enroll the vast majority of community college transfers.

To make the college transfer partnership a reality, the Edvance Foundation will do the following:

1.

SEEK ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Seek additional foundation and corporate support, nationally and locally, to organize up to four regional offices as the first stage of a national scale-up. Each regional office will house transfer counselors and a small local administrative staff linked to the Boston-based central office.



2.

RECRUIT PARTICIPATION

Recruit private four-year institutions and two-year community colleges to participate in the program.

3.

APPROVE MODEL AND PLAN

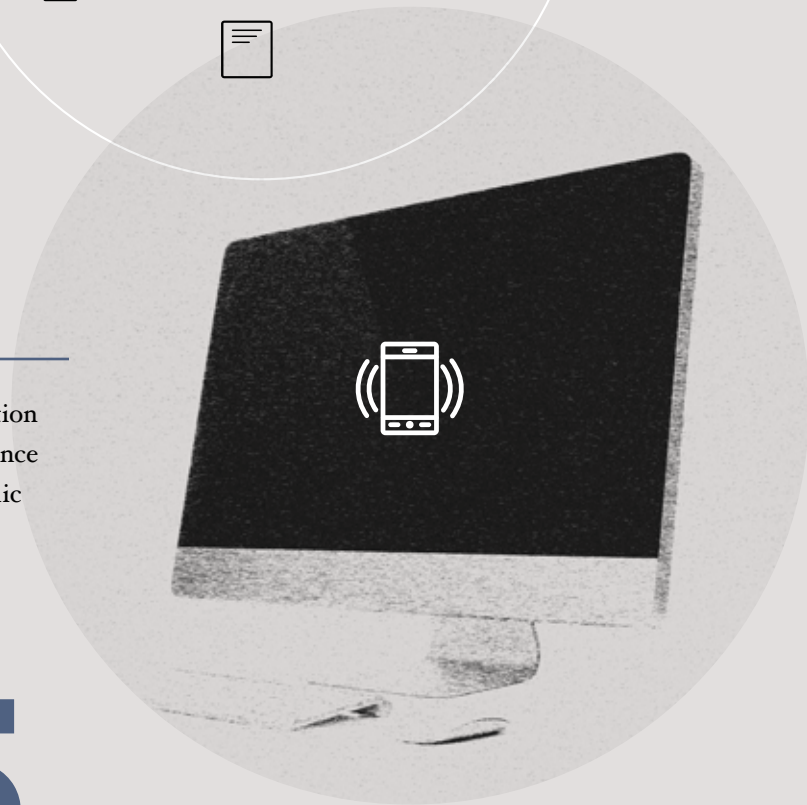
Approve a final financial model and five-year operating capital, operating, and fiscal plan.



4.

TECH COLLABORATION

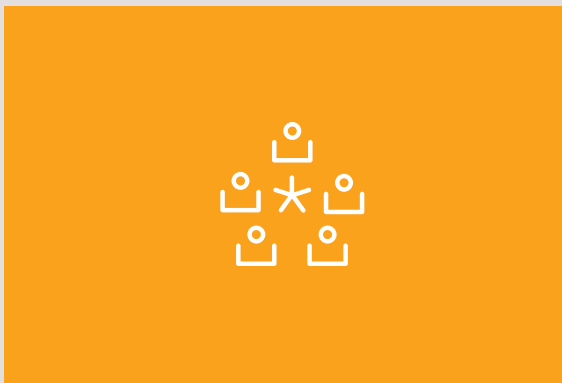
Partner with a software provider to develop an early-identification program, including a mobile app; a web-based program to enhance reading, study, technology, and collaborative skills; and academic competency programs in key disciplines.



5.

CREATE ADVISORY COUNCILS

Create faculty advisory councils that will develop web-based testing across the curriculum to bring two-year college teaching into line with expectations at four-year institutions.



At a time when the benefits of a four-year degree are greater than ever, expanding those benefits to more disadvantaged Americans represents a social and economic imperative. By identifying promising community college students early, by providing them with guidance from experienced mentors, and by creating a seamless transfer pathway to private colleges and universities, the new college transfer partnership should improve the lifelong prospects of growing numbers of ambitious low- and moderate-income students.



Amherst College: Willingness to Experiment Pays Off

The Community College Transfer Initiative at Amherst is a clear success: In the past five years, the College has accepted more than 100 community college students, and more than 60% of its transfer students previously attended a community college. This success was grounded in the college's openness to experimentation and readiness to adapt based on what it learned.

The CCTI had one strong advantage going into Amherst: It reinforced the college's commitment to become what one administrator described as "much more representative of the broader spectrum of the population."

The college had pledged to enroll more low-income students, and – characteristically for its faculty-dominated institutional culture – had ongoing faculty workshops on ways to engage low-income students.

However, the CCTI faced a disadvantage, too. Despite its interest in transfer students, Amherst actually received few of them in any category, and had only limited experience with transfers from community colleges. So with the help of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's \$585,000 grant, the college experimented. As its experiments progressed, Amherst's CCTI evolved from a program that emphasized the qualities its own campus had in common with community colleges to a cohort model that provided support for transfer students at every stage.

Amherst hired one of its own recent low-income graduates to coordinate the CCTI. It linked the program to its already-established faculty workshops, scheduling annual teaching and advising luncheons about problems characteristically faced by community college transfers. Often, CCTI students spoke at these luncheons. Amherst hosted other workshops that provided advisors and students from community colleges opportunities to learn more about CCTI. Amherst admissions staff and already-enrolled CCTI students met with prospective students at transfer fairs on community college campuses to discuss admissions and financial aid. As one result of these workshops, Amherst and nearby Holyoke Community College developed a pilot project for faculty to co-teach a course for students from both institutions.

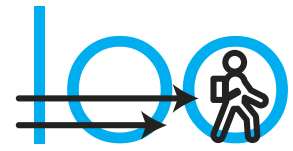
Consistent with its experimental approach, Amherst remained open to suggestions and changes. For instance, prospective transfers reported that the timing of Amherst's admissions decisions made it hard for rejected transfers to meet deadlines for accepting offers from other colleges. Accordingly, Amherst advanced its admissions notifications by a month. The college provided post-admission programming, including access to a paid point-person

on campus, and to already-enrolled CCTI students who served as peer mentors. It provided academic support, including writing fellows. It promoted academic support services for students with strong academic skills who might want help with projects such as honors theses. It also moved academic support services from student affairs to an organization reporting to the Dean of Faculty. Finally, Amherst offered career development services and other post-graduate assistance.

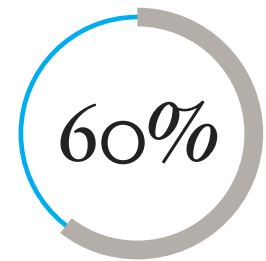
Amherst decided to continue to support the program and funded the position of Associate Director of Student Life for Diversity and Community. The College expanded its recruiting efforts to two-year institutions throughout California and large community colleges like Miami-Dade. It is investigating a "transfer scholars" program similar to the Frances Perkins initiative, which was used successfully in the region. Amherst is examining a full credit seminar to assist students in reading, writing and acculturation. It is especially interested in extending the transfer program to more "rank-and-file" returning veterans.

Of the 64 transfer students admitted to the College this year, 55% originated through the continuation of the Cooke program. Transfers through the redefined Cooke program now represent 3% of Amherst's student population.

QUICK FACTS



In the past five years, the College has accepted more than 100 community college students



More than 60% of its transfer students previously attended a community college

Amherst hired one of its own recent low-income graduates to coordinate the CCTI.



Bucknell University: Collaboration from Community to Classroom

Bucknell began the Community College Transfer Initiative with a history that gave it cause for concern: It had previously worked with another community college transfer program, with only mixed success. Some of the students involved in that program had struggled to fit in on campus and to succeed academically.

Under the CCTI, Bucknell set clear standards for transfer students. Students wishing to transfer to Bucknell had to demonstrate leadership skills. They must also have completed their associate degree, with

a grade point average of about 3.5. The average age of the students who come through the program is 28 years, compared to a typical Bucknell student whose average age is 20 years.

“Faculty here appreciates the seriousness of the approach. Employers are eager to interact and hire these folks because of the diversity that they represent.”

Like most campuses, Bucknell formed a university-wide committee early on to support the program. Bucknell's committee, though, was unusually strong. Its CCTI leader – a senior admissions administrator – met often with the university's community college partners, both individually and as a group, as well as with interested community college students. Community college students who were considering transfers were encouraged to visit Bucknell, either individually or on organized trips, for which costs were covered. In addition, Bucknell's provost worked with the university's academic departments and with the community colleges to determine credit for community college courses.

However, the most important factor in the success of Bucknell's CCTI program was the Bucknell Community College Scholars Program, funded through \$906,000 in grant money from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation and the university's own funds. This program features a six-week residential summer academic program, which introduces potential transfers to the campus and provides them with information and support – before admitting them. Community college students considering a transfer to Bucknell apply to the summer program first. Full tuition for the summer program is paid for all enrollees, along with room and board.

Summer students take two academic courses for credit, in political science, psychology, or engineering. One-day courses offered weekly help students improve academic skills such as writing, research, and the use of technology. Classes are co-taught by Bucknell and community college faculty (including some without PhDs). Students who have already made the switch from community college to Bucknell work as teaching assistants in the program. Representatives

of the university and five partner community colleges oversee the program and meet regularly to address concerns that may arise.

Overall, the summer program helps ease students into sometimes-unfamiliar cultural and social experiences they may encounter at an elite four-year institution, and establishes a cohort group. Students who end up transferring find that the mentoring they received over the summer continues through the transfer process, and through their two remaining years of undergraduate education.

To date, Bucknell has had 246 students participate in its program. From that cohort, the University has had 151 students transfer to Bucknell after completion of their two-year degree, with 147 of these students graduating from Bucknell. Including graduating engineers who remain at Bucknell for six semesters, the Bucknell transfer cohort had a graduation rate of 97.3 %. Seven of these transfer students are veterans. Of the four who did not complete their degree, three left for family/personal and one for medical reasons.

Mark Davies, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management and Director of Partnerships, concludes: "Faculty here appreciates the seriousness of the approach. Employers are eager to interact and hire these folks because of the diversity that they represent. For the first time as adults, they have the time to be just students and discover so much about themselves, their interests, and how they relate to others in an academic setting."

QUICK FACTS

Transfer Requirements



LEADERSHIP
SKILLS



ASSOCIATE
DEGREE

3.5
GPA

This program features a six-week residential summer academic program, which introduces potential transfers to the campus and provides them with information and support – before admitting them.



Mount Holyoke College: Face-to-Face Interaction Makes the Difference

Aided by a grant funding of \$828,000 over five years under the Community College Transfer Initiative, Mount Holyoke embarked in the fall of 2006 on a commitment to increase its enrollment of low- and moderate-income community college transfer students by 10% per year over the next four years.

Mount Holyoke had an advantage from the start: Its mission was already aligned with that of the CCTI. It could therefore build on two existing strengths: Its Frances Perkins program for nontraditional students and its affiliations with area community colleges. However, Mount Holyoke knew it needed to make some changes. Though the Frances Perkins program was attracting students from community colleges, not all of them were first-generation or low- to moderate-income candidates.

Mount Holyoke formed a campus-wide committee of administrators and faculty members whose support for the goals of Francis Perkins was already established. It also used some of its grant to cover the salary of a transfer coordinator for its Pathways Program on the campus of its primary community college partner, Holyoke Community College, located just a few miles away. This individual – an alumna of both Holyoke Community College and Mount Holyoke – identified, encouraged, and advised eligible transfer students and provided advice to students seeking transfer to other selective liberal arts colleges.

Although Mount Holyoke visited community colleges nationwide, it concentrated its efforts on Holyoke, transferring a significant portion of its CCTI grant to the Pathways Program at this institution. Pathways encourages transfers to local four-year institutions for “strong, committed, under-represented students,” and supports those students with academic and financial counseling and seminars with Mount Holyoke faculty. In addition to the full-time CCTI coordinator, the community college created peer mentors, current Mount Holyoke students who had previously transferred from a community college, who provided advice and assistance to transfer candidates.

In the first three years of its CCTI grant, Mount Holyoke doubled the number of recruitment visits to community colleges, from 20 to 40. It also reached out to veterans through its community college partners, and paid travel expenses to interested students who wished to attend an overnight open house. Transfer applications rose immediately, increasing by almost one-third in the first year.

Mount Holyoke offered transferring students opportunities to interact with faculty and students. These opportunities included a five-week, non-credit Math Transition Seminar, to give students a taste of what a class at their new college might be like. The seminar eases students in, meeting for its first week at the community college, and shifting after that to the four-year institution. Other transitional courses were offered as well, including “Learning Community” courses at the community college and for-credit courses offered across both campuses.

Lynn Pasquerella, president of Mount Holyoke, reports: “We have appointed faculty transfer liaisons in every science and math department. These faculty offer discipline-specific advice on courses

to incoming transfers before they ever set foot on campus, and then serve as their academic advisor when they start their first semester at Mount Holyoke.”

Support continued once transfers arrived at Mount Holyoke, in the form of orientation, academic and financial aid advising, and both formal and informal peer support.

One faculty member notes: “We feel strongly that supporting the success of community college transfer students supports our College mission to ‘draw students from all backgrounds into an exceptionally diverse and inclusive learning environment.’ Our community college transfers are intelligent, resourceful, mature, and committed to their education. They bring insights and experiences to the classroom that enrich the entire college community.”

The Pathways Program resides at Holyoke Community College. After Mount Holyoke’s CCTI grant ended, Holyoke Community College continued to fund this program. Last year, the program coordinator worked with 450 students during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Mount Holyoke continues to fund and promote a variation of the Cooke initiative. It recruits nationwide and has maintained strong partnerships with honors directors and transfer counselors at at least 30 community colleges, including Holyoke Community College. Frances Perkins applicants who were offered admission to the College have, for the last two years, received full-tuition scholarship. This year 34 new students matriculated as Frances Perkins Scholars. Ninety-five percent of these students were enrolled at a community college. These students graduate at rates comparable to the graduation rate at Mount Holyoke overall.

QUICK FACTS

20 → 40

Doubled the number of recruitment visits to community colleges



Reached out to veterans



Paid travel expenses

Mount Holyoke
offered transferring
students opportuni-
ties to interact
with faculty and
students.



The University of Michigan: Road Show Reaps Success

The University of Michigan has historically promoted opportunity and equity. However, when the Community College Transfer Initiative began – U-M calls its program Transfer to Michigan, or TR2M – the university's relationships with Michigan's community colleges were weak. The community colleges knew little about the university's admissions and financial aid policies, and seldom referred students there.

As a sign that it was serious, U-M began by housing the TR2M program in the Provost's Office. Then it began institutionalizing close and regular contact with Michigan community colleges.

To get things started, U-M hosted a "Call to Action" conference attended by its own leadership and that of the state's community colleges. U-M also kicked off the U-M "Road Show," taking a team representing numerous departments to all 31 community colleges in Michigan. Emissaries

from admissions, financial aid, the nursing and engineering schools, and the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts met with community college students and staff, spreading the word about what U-M had to offer to transfer students. Visits to a rotating list of community college campuses continue today.

In its travels, the Road Show team answered questions and listened to feedback – including widespread concerns about the affordability of U-M. Accordingly, TR2M developed a marketing

"My transfer to Michigan, my dream school, went more smoothly than I ever expected. I don't think that would have been possible without the TR2M initiative."

campaign that emphasized the likelihood of getting into Michigan, the actual cost of attending the college, and the advantages of a Michigan degree. TR2M initiated an annual Community College Transfer Day at U-M so prospective transfers and counselors could visit the campus. It also hosted monthly on-campus info sessions for transfer candidates and provided individual counseling for financial aid.

To help students plan, TR2M published credit transfer guides for every community college, and launched a transfer equivalency database website that regularly updated course transfers for all community colleges. Some schools, such as nursing, also welcomed prospective transfer students to submit their community college syllabi before they applied, for more detailed information.

Fifteen new summer research fellowships enabled some prospective transfer students to gain experience and acquire a feel for the campus, now expanded to 45 fellowships due to donor support. A new web portal offered prospective transfers and their advisors information about U-M and a virtual campus experience. Individual campus organizations also stepped up, offering peer mentoring and even forming support groups, such as First-Generation College Students, established through the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Once transfer students arrived on campus, the support continued, including a carefully planned, two-day orientation and special orientations for nursing and engineering students. Peer mentoring remained available, as were academic advisors trained in the challenges faced by TR2M students.

The University of Michigan's commitment to community college prospective and current transfer students is sustained via a variety of initiatives

and ongoing programs. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions continues to maintain a focus on transfer students with their monthly Transfer Tuesday information sessions and their annual Open House for prospective transfer students. Admissions counselors continue to visit community college transfer fairs and a special Transfer Team reviews all applications.

The Office of Financial Aid continues to offer all students – both freshman and transfer – one of the most generous packages of need-based aid in the country. Support for community college transfer recruitment has increased since the end of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation grant in 2011. Academic units across campus have increased capacity within their recruitment efforts to specifically focus on community college recruitment and mentoring for first-year transfer students.

Finally, a new branch of the Undergraduate Central Student Government was launched in 2013 called the Transfer Student Resources Commission. The Commission hosted a Provost Office-supported cross-campus symposium for the last two years.

The Cooke Foundation's CCTI grant at the University of Michigan broadened awareness about access to U-M for community college students. Critically, the program deepened awareness and appreciation on campus for increased attention to community college students and low-income students in general.

The Cooke cohort tracks with all community college transfer students, averaging 85% graduation within three years, compared to a 90% rate for all students on campus. When broken out demographically, the 85% rate tracks consistently with variables including race/ethnicity, income status, and first-generation college student status.

QUICK FACTS



"Call to Action"
Conference

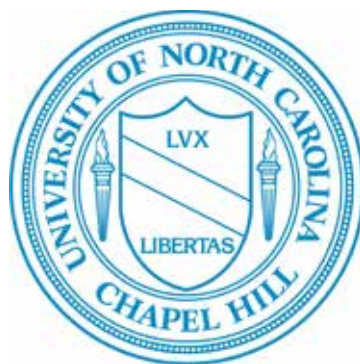


U-M "Road Show"



Visited 31 community
colleges in Michigan

To help students plan, TR2M published credit transfer guides for every community college.



The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Understanding the Psychology of Transferring

Before it received its CCTI grant, which totaled \$998,000 over five years, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had already adopted the “Carolina Covenant,” a program to enroll students from low-income families. UNC had begun a drive to support transfer students, in part by creating joint faculty and advising positions, and by helping transfer students select courses.

The CCTI grant enabled UNC to establish the Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program (C-STEP), enhancing these existing efforts significantly. However, the university knew C-STEP would confront important

challenges. In particular, it had learned that work and family obligations often made it hard for community college transfer students to take advantage of services they needed to succeed.

“I found it inspiring to see other students, who were coming from such different backgrounds, reach their goals with determination and dedication.”

UNC began by trying to understand how low- to moderate-income community college students make decisions and what contributes to their success. It convened a planning team that included deans; transfer advisors from the university's community college partners; representatives from the College of Arts & Sciences, student affairs, and financial aid; and the new C-STEP director and coordinator. It then established processes for recruitment and application that eased barriers and opened doors.

Two dedicated grant-funded advisors were installed at each of UNC's three community college partners. In addition, UNC admissions, advising, and financial aid staff conducted workshops and information sessions for college students. Students were invited to apply to C-STEP early in their community college careers, and were given more time to complete their applications. Accepted students were encouraged to keep in touch. They were given UNC cards so they could use the libraries and enroll in summer school before their transfers began.

UNC staffers and community college partners stayed in touch and shared responsibility for recruitment. A dedicated advisor at UNC kept partner campuses up to date on curriculum changes that might affect transfer students, and counseled students on course selection, both at the community college and at the university.

Support continued with the actual transfer to the university. An overnight orientation answered many social and organizational questions, and helped the incoming transfer students form a cohort. Each C-STEP student was paired with another who had already made the transfer. These trained, paid peer mentors were available to answer questions ranging from where to park, to how to schedule classes, to how to deal with family issues.

Social events and financial aid sessions helped acclimatize the new students and prepare them to succeed, and flexible housing options and financial assistance with special needs, such as child care, were made available. Overall, the C-STEP orientation was linked to the general transfer orientation, so that while C-STEP students bonded with each other, they also became part of the greater transfer community.

Once classes started, academic advisors kept in touch with C-STEP students through supportive emails and tracked their progress so they were able to intervene if needed. Monthly dinners featuring guest presentations on study habits, career planning, and other important topics helped the C-STEP cohort formed at orientation to remain strong.

Over the years, additional support mechanisms were added such as the requirement of meeting with each individual student upon arrival at UNC so that plans could be established early on.

To date, 534 students have become part of the program. The overall graduation rate for C-STEP students is 79%, and the average GPA for those that graduated is 2.9. At present, there are 151 C-STEP students enrolled at UNC and 122 students enrolled additionally at one of nine partner colleges. UNC has added six new partner institutions since 2010, hired a development officer, and made additional adjustments to the academic and social offerings at both the partner colleges and UNC.

QUICK FACTS

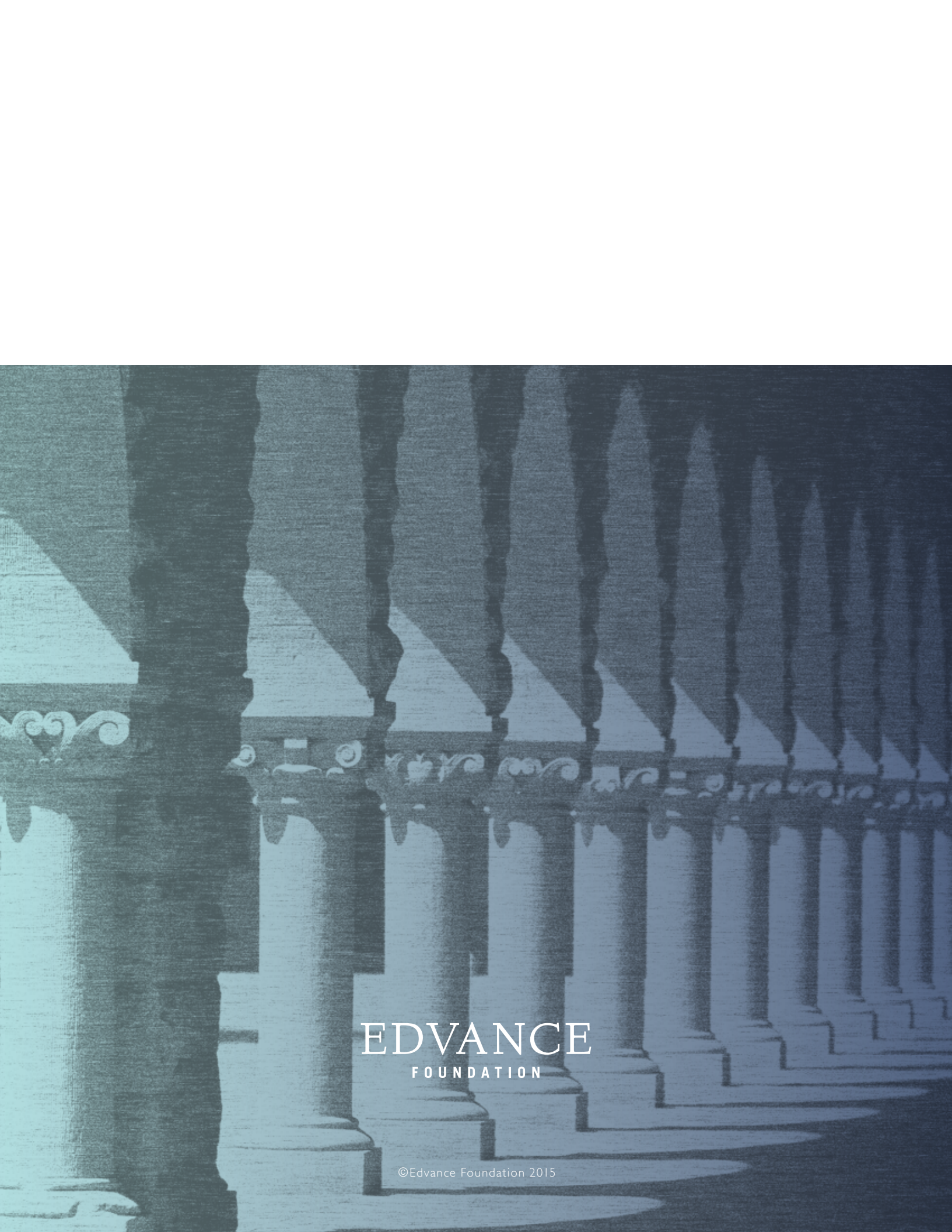


Cross-functional
planning team



Overnight orientation &
on-campus support

UNC began
by trying to
understand how
community college
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contributes to
their success.



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