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# Crafting a Student-Centered Transfer Process in California: Lessons from Other States



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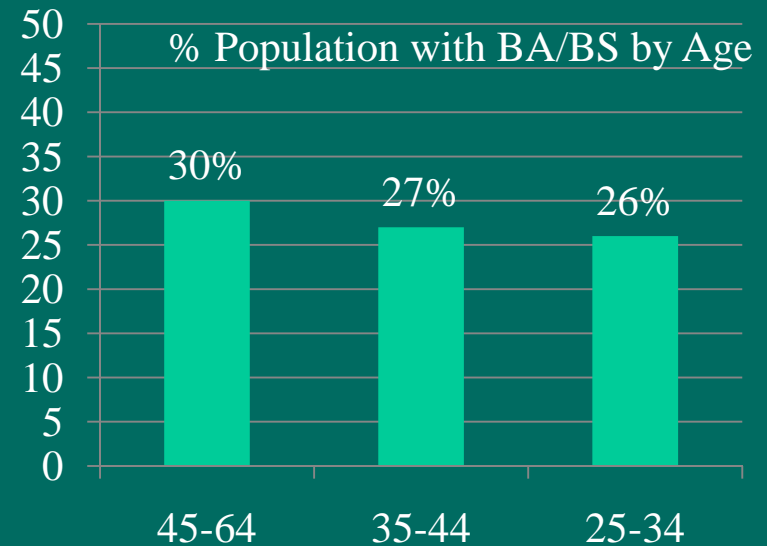


Presentation to:

Campaign for College Opportunity  
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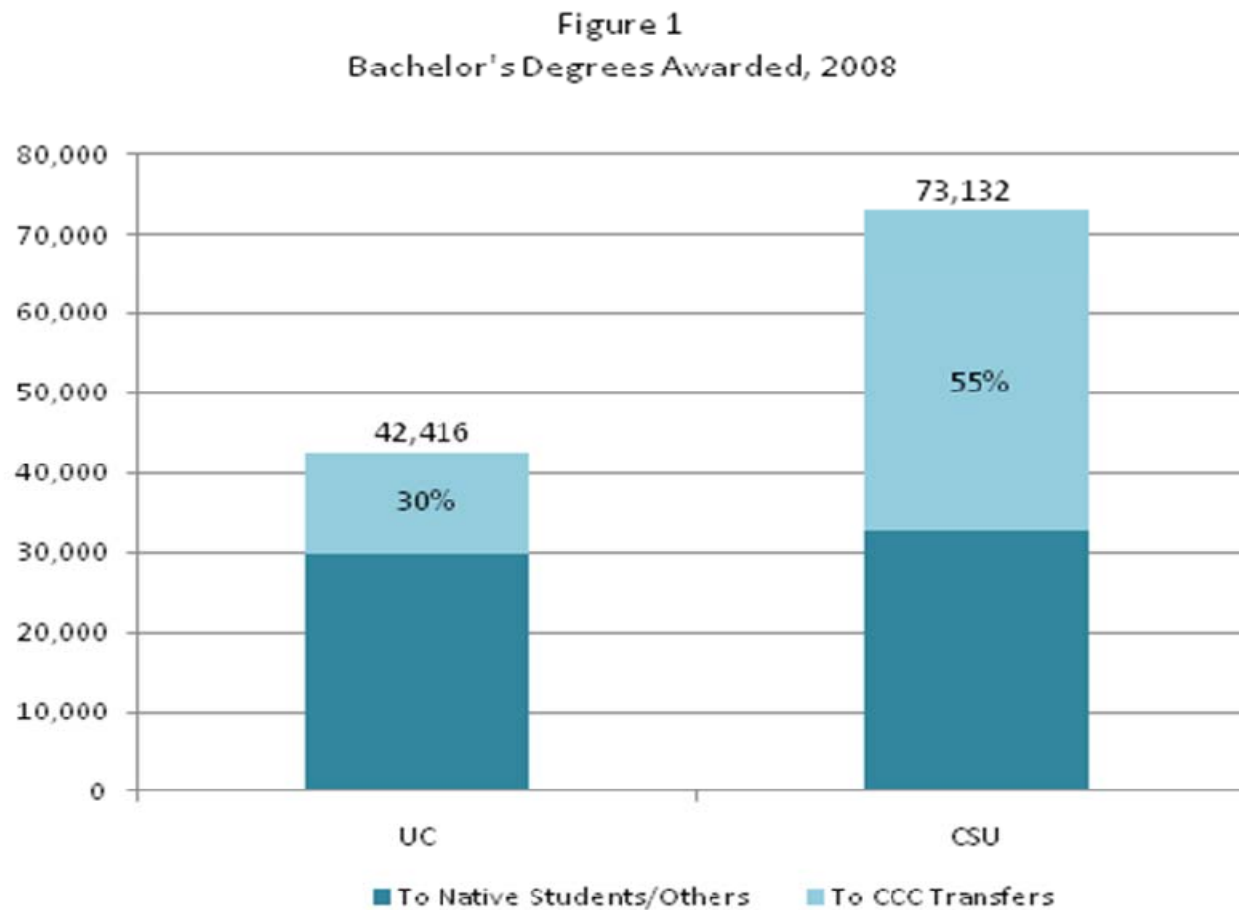
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## Fix Transfer: If Not Now, When?



- National context
  - Obama Administration goal to increase educational attainment; emphasis on bolstering the role of community colleges
  - Recession: efforts must improve efficiency of system
- State context
  - PPIC research: CA must increase Bachelor's degrees
  - CA relies on transfer more than other states
  - Wide recognition of problems with transfer in CA
  - Particularly severe budget problems place premium on increasing efficiency

## Caution: Large Role for Transfers Does not Signal Effective Transfer Process



Source: California Postsecondary Education Commission, Custom Data Reports, Degrees/Completions--Source Institution, 2008



## What's the Problem?

- Transfers rates low/vary by method: 20-40%
  - Many “transfers” well below 60 units
- Excess units, at CCC and/or university
  - Costly and inefficient
  - Reduces access
- Many transfers never earn a college degree
  - No associate degree for most, so nothing to show for their (and the state's) considerable investment



## Hugely Complex Transfer System

- No statewide general education pattern
  - IGETC, CSU breadth, and alternative patterns
- No consistency in lower division major prerequisites
  - Campus-to-campus, program-to-program articulation agreements
  - Almost guarantees students will have to take > 60 units
  - Enrollment pressures mean requirements can change – makes transfer admission a moving target for students
- *Institution-centered, not student-centered*

## Lower Division Major Preparation – e.g., BA in Psychology

San Jose State	Sacramento State	Sonoma State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•General Psychology</li> <li>•Intro Psychobiology</li> <li>•Elementary Statistics</li> <li>•Human Biology or Human Anatomy</li> <li>•Any psychology elective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Intro. Psych.: Basic Processes</li> <li>•Intro. Psych.: Individual and Social Processes</li> <li>•Methods of Psychology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Statistics</li> <li>•Two psychology electives</li> </ul>
UC Davis	UC Santa Cruz	UC Merced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•General Psychology</li> <li>•Research Methods in Psychology</li> <li>•Elementary Statistics</li> <li>•Sociology or Cultural Anthropology</li> <li>•One of several options: (1) Intro. Biology or (2) Essentials of Life on Earth or (3) General Biology <i>and</i> either Human Evolutionary Biology or Human Heredity or Exercise and Fitness: Principles and Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Intro. to Psychology</li> <li>•Research Methods in Psychology</li> <li>•Intro. to Psychological Statistics</li> <li>•Precalculus</li> <li>•Intro. to Developmental Psychology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Intro. to Psychology</li> <li>•Two natural science or engineering courses, at least one with a lab, field or studio component</li> <li>•Cultural Anthropology or Intro. to Cognitive Science or Intro. to Economics or Intro. to Political Science or Intro. to Public Policy or Intro. to Sociology</li> <li>•Analysis of Psychological Data and Research Methods could be done after transfer</li> </ul>



## Many Reform Efforts, But Little Improvement

- Numerous examples
- Arguably have added more complexity to the process
- Conceived within traditional paradigm :
  1. Build more and more local agreements
  2. Seek ways to better communicate a highly complex set of rules to students and counselors



## Time to Change the Discussion

- From: *how to get students and counselors to understand a complex transfer system*
- To : *how to design a simpler system that works for students and honors and protects curricular diversity of the major*







## Examples of More Student-Centered Policies in Other States

- Reviewed transfer policies for Arizona, Florida, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and Washington
- Two general approaches to statewide structures:
  1. Transfer associate degrees
  2. Common statewide GE curriculum and defined major pathways



## Example: Florida

- Completing any AA guarantees admission to public university (not specific campus) and junior status for registration
- No common GE, but completing GE at one institution guarantees transfer of those courses as a block and no further GE
- Lists of common prerequisites across universities by major; unique prereqs can only be required after admission
- Degree audit system

## Example: Arizona

- Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) – 3 versions depending on intended major
  - Arts (AGEC – A)
  - Business (AGEC – B)
  - Science ( AGEC – S)
- Several major pathways corresponding to the AGEC patterns, depending on certainty of major and campus
- Completing AGEC + pathway = associate degree (AA, AS, Abus)
- AGEC guarantees admission to university (not specific campus/major) and completion of GE
- Associate degree adds guarantee of junior status and competitiveness for major admission



## Do Statewide Policies Improve Transfer?

- Can't conclude that states with statewide transfer structures and policies have higher transfer rates
  - No good data for comparing transfer rates
  - Different higher education structures, including varying emphasis on 2-yr sector and role of transfer
- But some evidence within the states
  - AZ: concluded that transfer policies had led to transfer students completing bachelor's degree with nearly one semester less credit than 5 years earlier
  - WA: found the 3-yr graduation rate for students transferring with associate degree improved from 63% in late 1990s to 71% in 2007; attributed to major pathways helping students arrive prepared to complete BA more efficiently



## What Can CA Learn from these States?

Issues to address include how to:

- Navigate governance issues
- Find the right trade-off – standardization vs local autonomy – in GE and major preparation
- Target high-demand majors to meet workforce needs
- Design and develop advising tools and services



## What Would A Student-Centered Process Look Like?

- A common general education pattern
- Associate degrees for transfer
- Degree guarantees
  - Admission to a public university (not to specific campus or major)
  - Transfer of all degree credits
- Degree in discipline / area guarantees junior status
- Allowance for minimal variation in major preparation *after* transfer



## Difficult, Yes, But Worth the Effort

- Increased efficiency – reduced units to degree and lower cost for state and students
- Access for more students by freeing up space in classes at both CCC and CSU/UC
- Better signals to employers about the meaning and value of associate degree
- More college degrees

