

From Community College to University

Expectations for California's New Transfer Degrees

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Transfer pathway is critical to creating more college graduates

- California needs more college graduates
 - Potential shortfall of one million graduates by 2025
- Research points to problems with transfer process
- Policymakers want to improve outcomes, minimize costs
- Chancellors at California Community College (CCC) and California State University (CSU) interested in reform

Important reform passed in 2010

- Legislation (SB 1440) had several goals
 - Create clearer transfer pathways that reduce excess units
 - Incentivize associate degree
 - Increase transfer
- CCCs required to create associate degrees for transfer
- Degree gives students guarantees for CSU
- Academic Senates established “Transfer Model Curricula” (TMC)

More legislation passed in 2013

- LAO and Campaign for College Opportunity expressed concerns
 - Reform not happening quickly enough
 - Too much variation across campuses
- SB 440
 - Transfer degree “becomes the preferred transfer pathway for all students across the state”
 - Specifies TMC approach and sets targets
 - Other provisions

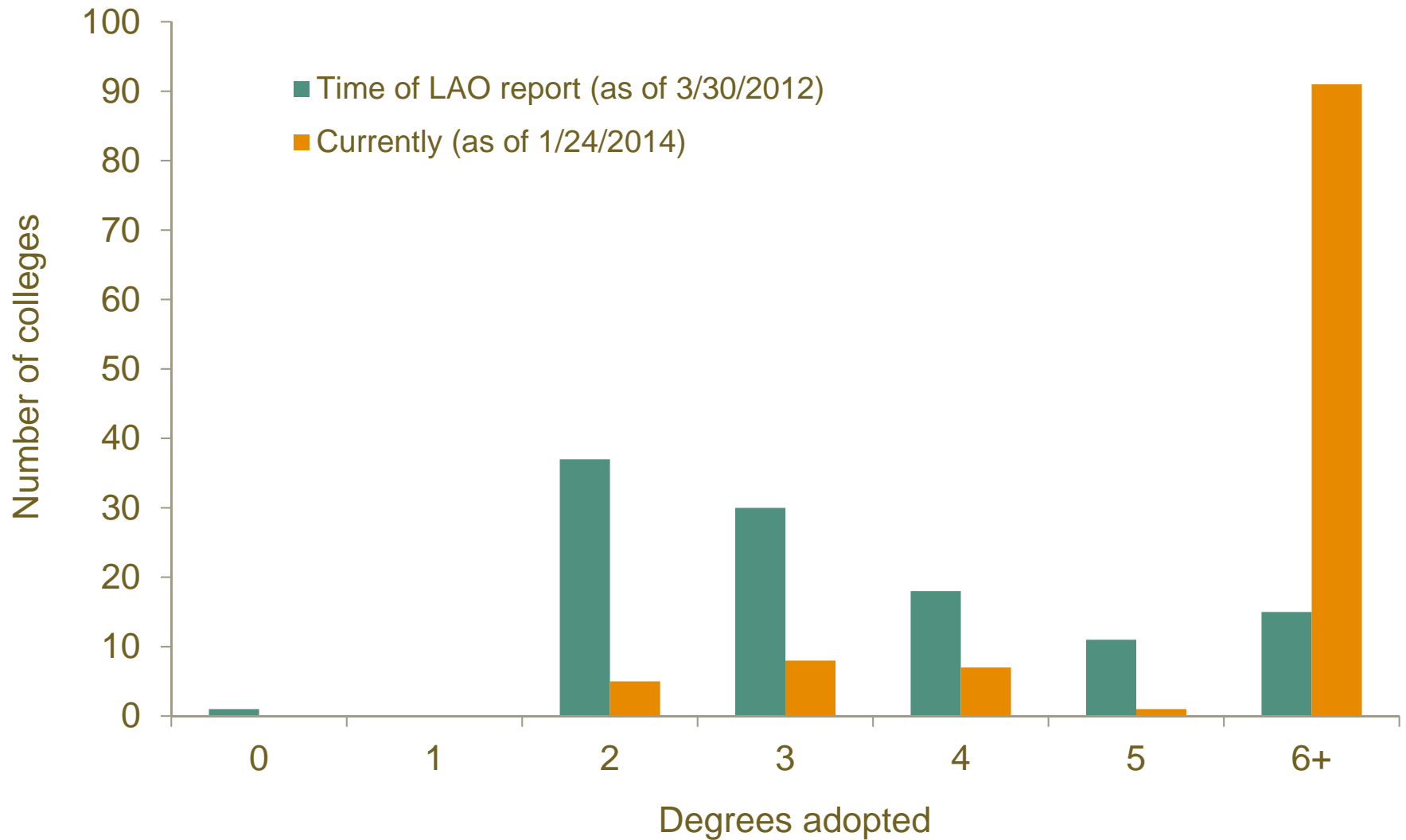
This study assesses recent progress

- Is the program on track?
- Methods include
 - Review of public data
 - Over 70 interviews with administrators, faculty, and staff at CCC and CSU
 - Survey of 84 student leaders at CCC

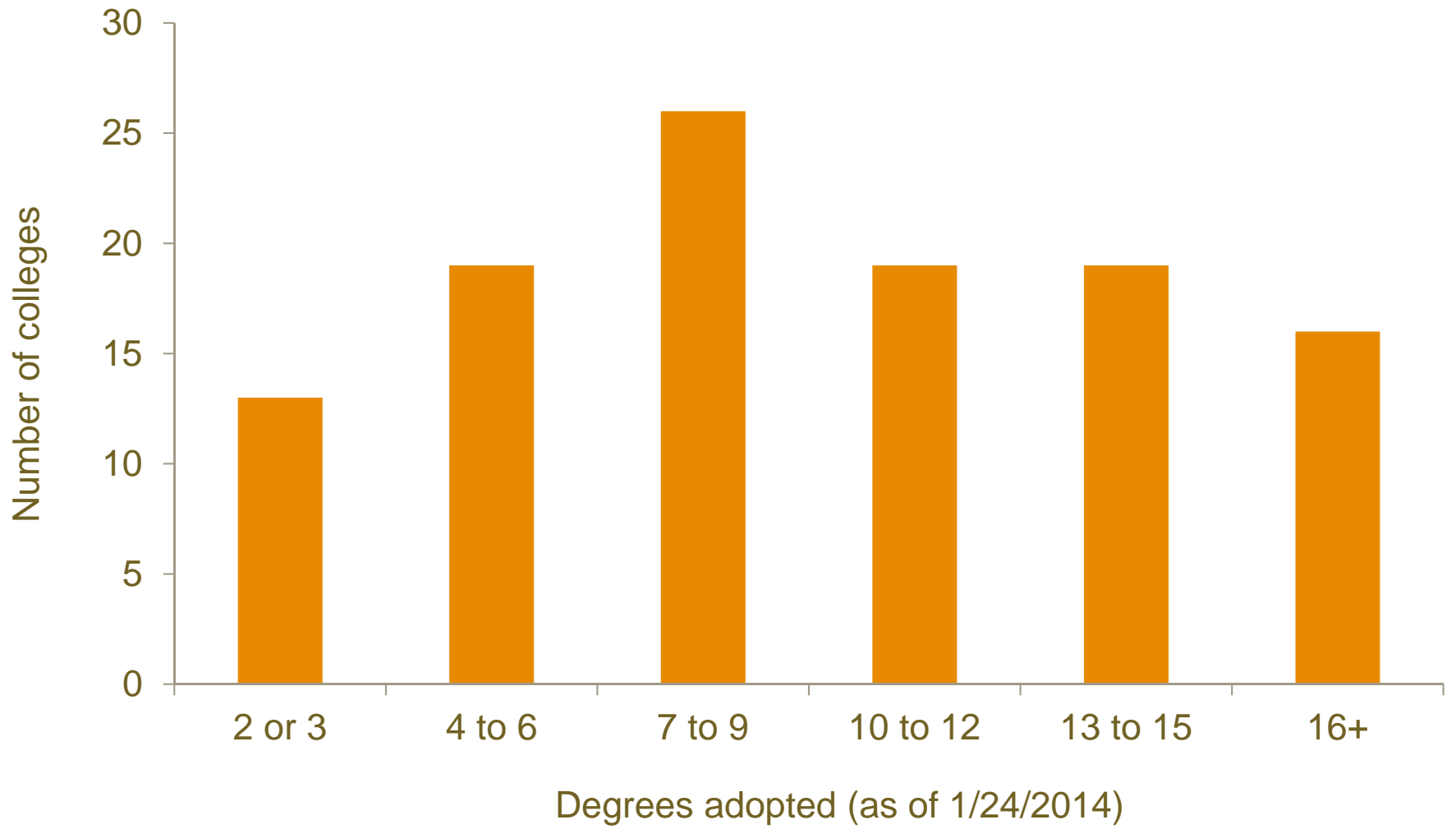
Outline

- Recent progress
- Perceptions of the degrees
- Assessment of the pathways
- Conclusions and recommendations

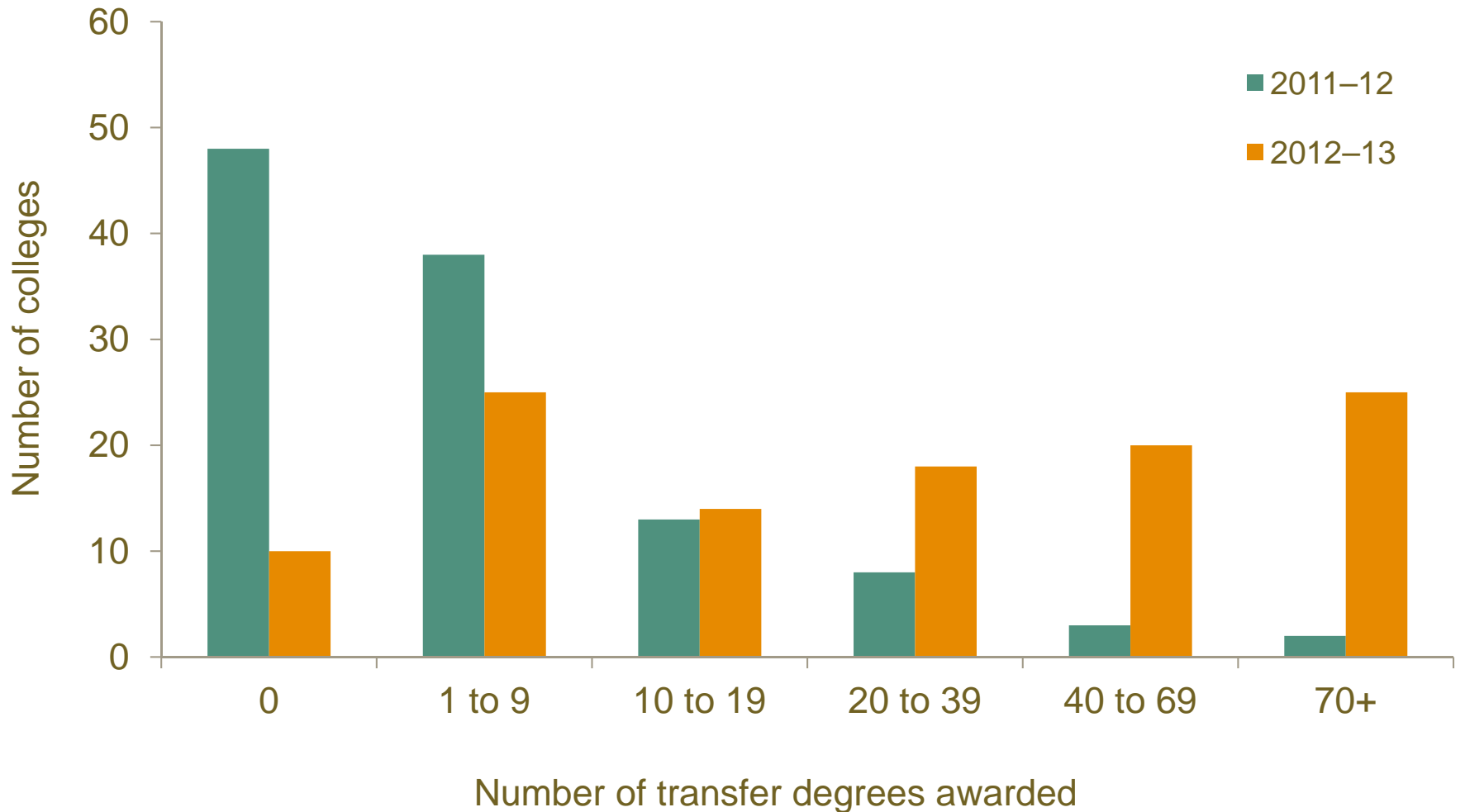
Number of transfer degrees offered at CCCs has grown tremendously



Many colleges now offer a range of transfer degrees...



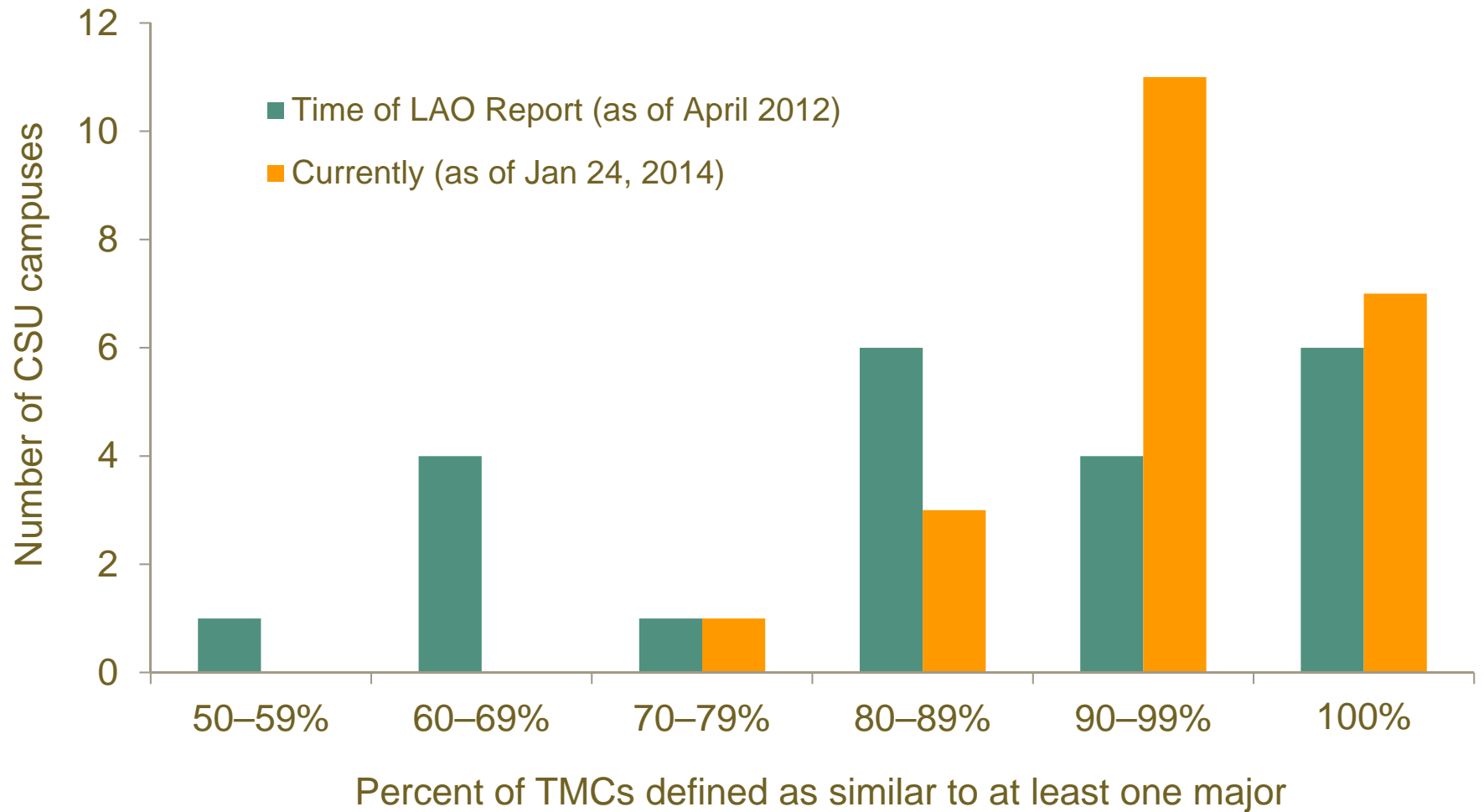
...But most are not yet *awarding* many degrees to students



Alignment of transfer degrees to majors at CSU is critical

- TMC:18 units of major preparation coursework included in the transfer degree
- Each CSU decides if a particular TMC is “similar” to its major in that discipline
- Can students complete within 60 credits?
 - Requirements in a major vary across CSUs
 - Requirements vary across options or concentrations within a major at each campus
 - Some have extra graduation requirements

Significant progress at CSU, but choices are limited at some campuses



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Views of faculty and staff critical to implementation

- Opinions are currently mixed
 - Many see improvement overall, but benefits apply only to a subset of students
- Wide agreement across CCC and CSU on positive aspects
 - Consistent pathway, alignment of transfer with degree, student guarantees, faculty conversations
- Some difference in views on negative aspects
 - CCC: pathway not really “statewide”
 - CSU: doesn’t address inadequate advising
- Acknowledge initial resistance, but believe momentum is building

Implementation is complicated

- Complex campus processes
 - Curriculum review and approval for the degrees
 - Revise curriculum to stay within 60 units
- Fiscal challenges
 - Severe budget cuts, difficult to allocate faculty and staff time to the effort
- Lack of infrastructure across the two systems

Student awareness is limited, as are information efforts

- More than 1/3 of student leaders had not heard of transfer degrees
 - Most don't understand them
 - Believe awareness lower among general students
 - Think college efforts to inform ineffective
- Survey confirms what we heard in interviews
- Interest among students is higher than awareness

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Are transfer degrees offered in the right majors?

- To be useful, degrees should be established in subjects students want
- To assess the transfer pathways, we look at
 - Patterns of transfer activity by discipline
 - Share of BAs awarded to transfer students by discipline

Transfer degrees are in popular fields, but coverage varies by college

Historical transfer activity from selected CCCs in disciplines with transfer degrees

College	Number of transfer degrees offered	% transfers to CSU in disciplines with transfer degrees	% BAs awarded to transfers in those disciplines
Fullerton	18	69%	73%
Butte	17	46%	48%
Orange Coast	16	62%	70%
Long Beach City	11	40%	50%
Riverside City	9	16%	24%
Evergreen Valley	4	9%	13%
LA Mission	3	8%	7%

25 TMCs cover majority of BAs, but there are gaps

Transfer activity at selected CSUs in disciplines related to the TMCs

CSU Campus	% BAs awarded in disciplines related to TMCs	Number of TMCs with related major offered	Number of TMCs accepted as "similar"	% BAs awarded in disciplines with "similar" TMC
Stanislaus	84%	23	23	84%
East Bay	77%	24	24	77%
San Diego	74%	23	21	71%
San Francisco	70%	25	24	68%
Monterey Bay	74%	20	18	66%
Pomona	61%	22	18	58%
San Luis Obispo	40%	19	14	27%

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What is the progress on transfer degree goals?

- Clearer pathways will be created
 - But less clear on reducing units, increasing capacity
- Associate degree completion will increase
 - But incentives may not be sufficient
- Number of transfers may increase
 - But impeded by capacity at CSU, infrastructure
- Establishment as preferred path to transfer has limits
 - Limited by profile of CCC students, no path to UC

Many circumstances can reduce benefits of “ideal” pathway

Ideal transfer pathway via AA-T/AS-T

Begin GE coursework

Begin lower division major coursework

Apply to transfer

Complete coursework within 60 credits and earn AA-T/AS-T

Enroll in CSU

Complete upper division coursework within 60 credits

Many CCC students have a transfer goal

But only some will graduate CSU with 120 credits

Circumstances leading students off of the ideal transfer pathway

- **Major not decided early**
student accumulates units in courses that won't count toward TMC
- **CSU as transfer destination not decided early**
student accumulates units taking courses for UC or other university outside the CSU
- **Preferred CSU campus or major/concentration not “similar” or impacted**
student accumulates units taking courses to meet local requirements of preferred/impacted program
- **Change made by student that eliminates 60-unit guarantee**
student accumulates units due to change in major or concentration, adding minor, or other special program like study abroad

Recommendations

- CSU coordinate review of “similar” designations at each campus, and of priority admission mechanism
- CCC coordinate efforts to help colleges share curricula and resources to offer more degrees
- CCC and CSU consider course registration priority
- Legislature can
 - Consider “clean up” legislation to allow more flexibility for some majors
 - Provide funding to expand and coordinate efforts to increase student awareness
- Intensify efforts to extend transfer pathway to UC

Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.