Transfer Counseling Conference Summary

On March 27, 2024, the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District (CLPCCD) hosted the [Annual Transfer Conference for Counselors](#) on behalf of the California Community Colleges Chancellors Office (CCCCO). Through a five-year grant, CLPCCD is contracted to manage the Transfer Counselor Website (TCW) and coordinate intersegmental collaboration amongst the California Community Colleges (CCCs), the California State University system (CSU), the University of California system (UC), and California private colleges and universities (AICCU). This document is a summary of the Annual Conference sessions including key points, challenges in the transfer process, opportunities and next steps borne from the sessions.

Overview of Transfer Conference Sessions:

The CCC's Vision 2030 goals to close equity gaps in transfer admissions were centered in the conference sessions. In the [opening keynote session](#) for the conference, speakers from the CCC Chancellor's Office set the stage for the conference by introducing *Vision 2030 – A Roadmap for California Community Colleges*. This vision and accompanying strategic plan are centered on meeting students' needs, advancing institutional equity, and removing systemic barriers to accessing higher education. A centerpiece of this plan is to improve the CCC-to-four-year university transfer process. The presenters highlighted how Vision 2030 goals push for academic data to disclose disparities among students who are continually underrepresented in education and encourage institutions to be explicit about the changes necessary to create equitable opportunities and outcomes for students who are most impacted by systemic racism.

Transfer Equity in Action

From highlighting equity issues in grading to strengthening CCC partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), the subsequent conference sessions shared a focus on equity-advancing approaches. This focus was guided by the theme of the 2024 conference, 'Transfer Equity in Action'.

There are various options for transferring to a four-year university from a CCC including California State Universities (CSUs), the Universities of California (UCs), private universities, or [HBCUs)](#). Three conference sessions showcased transfer options available to CCC students. Presenters informed attendees about the number of transfer students in their systems, general requirements for transferring, and resources around financial aid for specific pathways. Presenters also shared recent data on the number of transfer students enrolled by the CSU, UC, and private university transfer options. Figure 1 below demonstrates some of this data presented from Fall 2022 on transfer student enrollment. The following are two transfer options that presenters highlighted:

- ***CSU Transfer Success Pathway Program (TSP):*** [Presenters during the CSU transfer program session](#) highlighted the TSP, a CSU guaranteed admission program in which first-

time college freshmen entering community college or taking a gap year after high school are eligible. TSP participants are in a binding agreement with one CSU and must meet certain transfer course requirements before enrolling in the CSU. Presenters explained how the TSP is a critical program as it increases access to higher education for underrepresented students, increases graduation rates by reducing unit costs and time for degree completion, and improves transfer opportunities for students.

- *CCC to private Institutions:* Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (AICCUs) presenters provided an overview of their organization and the multiple AICCU pathways transfer students can participate in, including the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), transfer admission agreements, articulation agreements with community colleges, and degree completion programs. Additionally, presenters noted that private universities tend to be less affordable than public universities – therefore, AICCU has been consistently advocating to increase the Cal Grant and Pell Grant maximum award for students planning to attend AICCU institutions.

Figure 1: Fall 2022 Transfer Student Enrollment
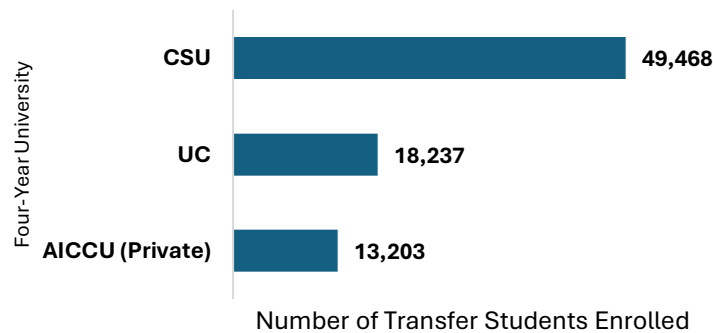
CCCs and HBCUs will continue to strengthen their partnerships so students are aware of this transfer option. During the session on CCC transfer pathways to HBCUs, the presenters highlighted actionable steps to further strengthen the partnerships between CCC and HBCUs and to ensure students are aware of the HBCU transfer pathway and the specific requirements. These action steps include: HBCU partners connecting with CCCs, transfer students and counselors virtually and in-person for webinars; developing joint transfer agreements with CCCs to streamline the process of transferring credits; strengthening connections between HBCU student success coaches and CCC students; and continually sharing best practices for strong transfer pipelines and student success – especially for students of color. An example of these next steps is the CCC to HBCU Summit 2024 where CCC counselors will have the opportunity for immersive professional development with HBCU partners.

Transfer Resources to Students:

It has been challenging for students who are applying to multiple college systems to organize the hefty amount of information for each system. Across multiple sessions, presenters noted that organizing layers of information and keeping track of multiple requirements and deadlines is a critical challenge for both students and counselors – especially for students applying to multiple college systems. The hefty amount of information makes it easy for students to miss steps and crucial deadlines for their applications. Thus, transfer counselor leaders are continually creating innovative resources to further support students and counselors with organizing all the necessary information.

Given the vast amount of information managed by students and counselors, resources such as the CCC Transfer Counselor Website and local college tools such as learning management systems (Canvas, etc), and CRM platforms (Ellucian, Salesforce, etc.) exist to support organizing information and making the transfer process easier for students and counselors. Across the conference sessions, facilitators highlighted multiple resources that can support transfer students and transfer counseling centers with various aspects of the transfer process. Facilitators noted how having multiple transfer options can make it difficult for counselors to efficiently support their students. Thus, it is important to support both counselors and students with resources that can effectively organize the large amount of information, especially for students who are transferring to multiple systems. Specifically, these resources can support students and counselors with organizing critical documents, tracking deadlines, synthesizing the transfer requirements for various transfer pathways, and with tailoring transfer guidance for students who are of diverse backgrounds. The following are two key resources that presenters highlighted for counselors and students during the conference sessions:

- *CCC Transfer Counselor Website (TCW) 2.0:* This updated website provides prospective transfer students and counselors access to up-to-date guidance and information on various transfer options. For example, the website developers continually update changes to CSU and UC transfer policies, add upcoming transfer workshops, and spotlight specific academic information such as academic renewal requests. During the TCW session, facilitators highlighted how a primary goal for the website is to provide even more opportunities for counselors to connect with students and help them achieve their educational goals.
- *Canvas:* During the conference, two Transfer Center staff members presented Canvas as a resource for transfer students. Students and instructional faculty have successfully used Canvas for many years as an instructional and learning management tool. Transfer counselors have more recently adopted Canvas to help transfer students navigate application requirements and other critical information. With Canvas, counselors designate and tailor specific resources for students in cohorts – this ensures that information is updated and is relevant for different groups of students. Additionally, counselors have added learning modules, guides, and application video tutorials for students that parallel the CCC application workshop series. Canvas also has features that allow students to engage with each other and counselors which supports counselors in

meeting transfer students' needs. When facilitators asked students for feedback on Canvas as a resource, students overall highlighted that Canvas modules have been very helpful for them and have improved their transfer experience.

- **Other resources mentioned throughout the sessions included:**
    - First Gen Transfer Guide
    - CSU GPA Calculator
    - UC Transfer Admission Planner (TAP)
    - UC Data Center
    - CSU Transfer Planner
    - AICCU Transfer Guide

The Completion Time Counseling Model is also an up-and-coming resource for counselors and students across CCCs. Presenters from Crafton Hills College facilitated a session on an innovative counseling model for community colleges called the Completion Time Model. This model uses the traditional structure of counseling services as the foundation and intertwines it with completion coaches. In this model, completion coaches (who are Crafton Hills College alumni) support the counseling faculty and staff by helping their students with navigating forms and processes, bridging them to campus resources, and enhancing community building between counselors, students, and their peers. For example, completion coaches support students with class registration and help set up their UC, CSU, and Common Application accounts. The session presenters emphasized the transformative power of the completion time model and encouraged other community college campuses to adopt a similar model to further support their counselors and students. See Figure 2 below for a Venn diagram of the different and overlapping roles of traditional counselors and completion coaches.

Figure 2: Differences and Similarities Between Traditional Counselors and Completion Coaches
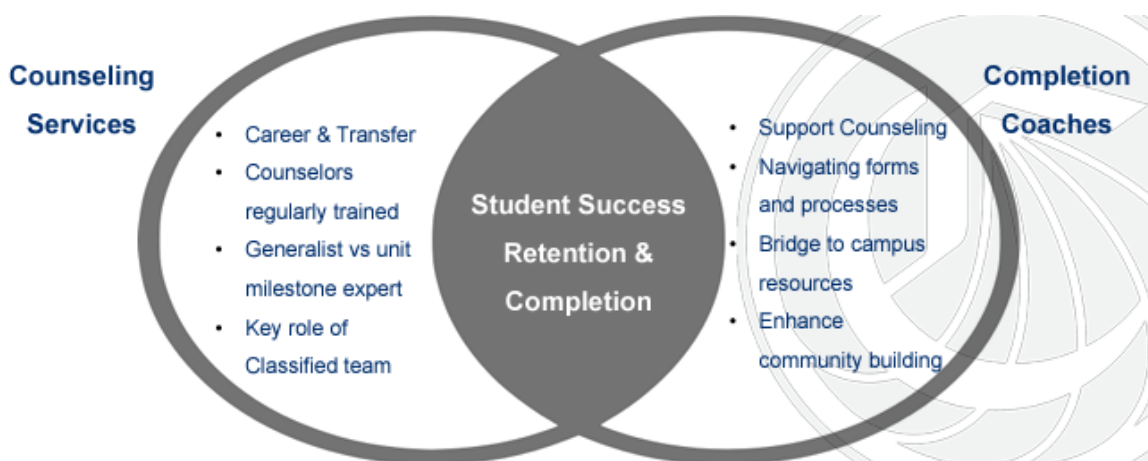
Equity issues persist with how resources are marketed to students. Related to equity issues within grading policies, equity issues continue to exist when campuses and organizations advertise

and share resources to support transfer students. During the session on the future of the TCW, presenters noted that while most transfer students are students of color and many are also first-generation college students[1], much of the information on the website is not specific to their needs (see Exhibit A for visualizations that depict continued equity gaps in transfer admissions). Similar concerns arose during the FACCC Counselor Committee's session on grading policies and the session on adopting Canvas as a resource for transferring students. Generally, policies that encourage students to challenge their grades and non-instruction specific resources are not marketed to fit the needs of students from communities that have been historically underserved. Thus, presenters called for more deliberate outreach of transfer resources and materials to Black, Latinx, and first-generation students.

Given persisting equity issues, presenters emphasized targeting outreach and resources specifically to student populations that have been historically excluded from access and success in higher education. For example, during the session on the updated Transfer Center Website (TCW), presenters supported expanding resources on career development education for students of color and gathering direct feedback on the website from these students to further support targeted outreach. Presenters encouraged outreach to Black and Latinx students through social media, student group newsletters, and other digital media.

Transferring from a CCC as a STEM Student:

CCC students majoring in STEM encounter unique challenges in the transfer process, mainly because of the multiple prerequisites. The SJCC's Transfer Counselor's session on preparing STEM majors demonstrated that there are multiple barriers for STEM students – especially for students of color and first-generation STEM students. STEM majors are considered "high unit majors" that require layers of prerequisite courses and sequences. This additional complexity can be a major barrier for students. The prerequisites require students to take on more course units than other majors which can lead to affordability issues. Additionally, maintaining a strong academic standing in STEM classes can strain student capacity, especially for students who have extra responsibilities (i.e. students who are working and/or are parents). Ensuring STEM transfer students are taking all their required courses and consistently monitoring their GPAs can complicate the work of counselors, especially for students who are aiming to apply to multiple college systems and/or who must take actions to repair their GPA. However, as further explained below, opportunities and resources exist to support students with navigating the challenges of transferring as STEM majors.

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for counselors to make the transfer process smoother for STEM students. As a part of the SJCC's counselor session on students transferring

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[1] According to the CCC Chancellor's Office, during the 2019-2020 academic year, 35% of CCC students identified as first-generation in their family to attend college. Additionally, approximately 66% of CCC students identified as Hispanic, Asian, African American, or Filipino. https://www.ccccо.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Digital-Innovation-and-Infrastructure/research-data-analytics/data-snapshot/student-demographics

as STEM majors, session attendees and the presenter discussed recommendations for student supports. One key recommendation is to ensure that students know prerequisite requirements as early as high school. Having information early on will help students make decisions on which AP or dual enrollment classes they need to enroll in and subsequently expedite the lengthy prerequisite process. Overall, this session highlighted how it takes a whole campus effort at community colleges to fully support STEM students with their goals – from organizing workshops and mentorship programs to pairing students with STEM tutors.
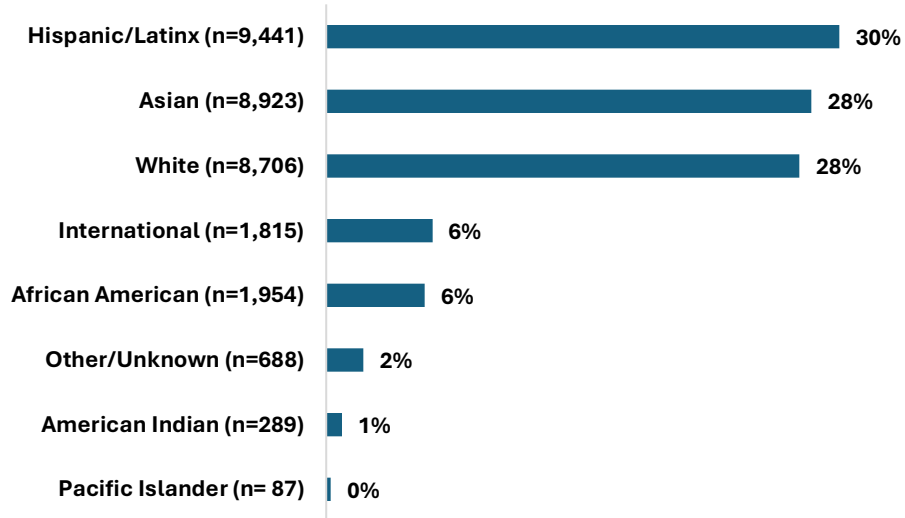
Equity in grade alleviation policies and practices:

Inequities persist within grade alleviation and reporting policies. Through the FACCC Counselor Committee's session on equity issues around grade alleviation policies, it is evident equity issues continue to persist in critical areas of the transfer process that impede student success – particularly for historically underrepresented students. Among the challenges are a lack of standardized grading policies and processes for students to challenge their grades, and access to financial aid. Marketing fair grade policies and advocating for stronger policies that inform and empower students to challenge and alleviate their grades are crucial steps to closing gaps in grading equity and disparities in academic success.

Counselors can participate in policy and campus advocacy that works towards alleviating equity issues with grading and grade reporting. As a part of the FACCC's counselors' session, presenters recommended counselors push for local and college-level grading policies to close the gap in grading equity and empower students to advocate for themselves and their academic success. The presenters from this session highlighted Academic Renewal, Pass/No Pass, and Excused Withdrawal in their call to action for policy changes. In this call to action, the presenters pushed for counselors to participate in the academic senate at their campuses, recommended changes to current grading policies to make them equitable and student-centered, and continually meet with deans at dean's council meetings.

Exhibit A: Visualizations of gaps in transfer admissions

Figure 3: Percentage of UC CCC Transfer Applicants by Race and Ethnicity in Fall 2023

Hispanic/Latinx (n=9,441)   30%
Asian (n=8,923)   28%
White (n=8,706)   28%
International (n=1,815)   6%
African American (n=1,954)   6%
Other/Unknown (n=688)   2%
American Indian (n=289)   1%
Pacific Islander (n= 87)   0%

Source: UC Transfer Fall Admissions Summary Dashboard

Figure 4: CCC to UC Transfer Admission Rates by Race and Ethnicity in Fall 2023

International   83%
Other/Unknown   83%
Asian   81%
White   78%
Hispanic/Latinx   73%
Pacific Islander   72%
American Indian   69%
African American   66%

Source: UC Transfer Fall Admissions Summary Dashboard

Figure 2 demonstrates how over half of UC transfer applicants from a CCC in Fall 2023 were students of color. Figure 3 shows gaps exist with admission rates for groups of these students – though more Hispanic/Latinx transfer students applied to UCs, white and international transfer students had a higher average admission rates.

Figure 4: Diversity of Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT)[2] Students vs. Overall Undergraduate Enrollment at AICCU Institutions (23-24 Academic Year)
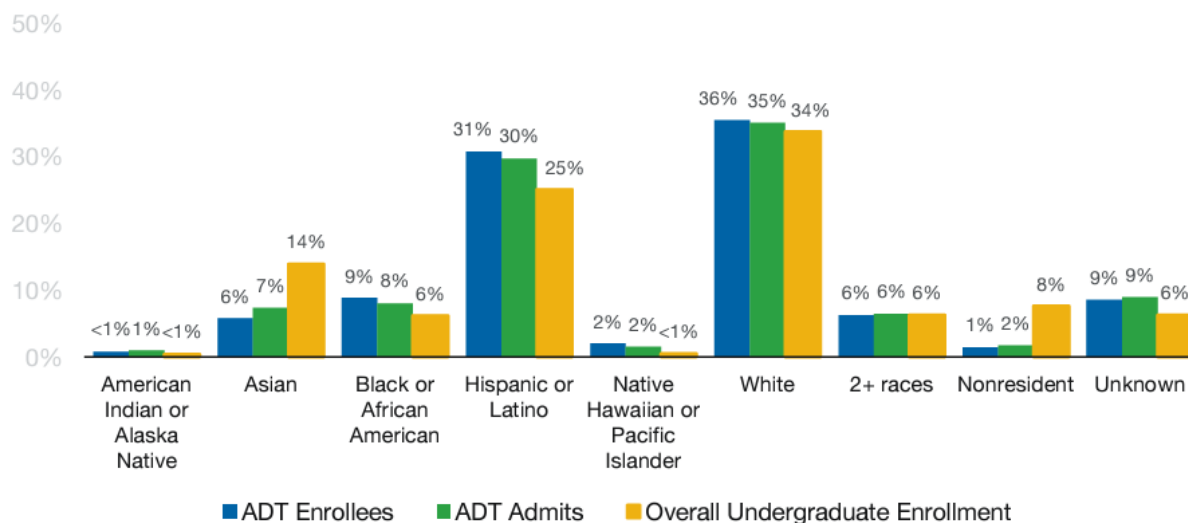
Source: AICCU ADT Status Report 2024

In the 2023-24 academic year, ADT applicants and enrollees were more likely to be Hispanic or Latinx than the overall undergraduate population at AICCU institutions.

Overall, the Transfer Counselor Conference illuminated promising practices such as promoting transfer from CCCs to HBCUs and utilizing the Completion Time Course Model, identified transfer challenges, and sparked discussions of proposed solutions. With the conference's focus on equity, session attendees were provided with a breadth of resources they can leverage in their work with transfer students. CLPCCD looks forward to seeing this work continue to develop and supporting future efforts.

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[2] In 2023-24, 42% of students who enrolled at AICCU institutions through the ADT pathway were from underrepresented backgrounds.
https://cdn.ymaws.com/aiccu.edu/resource/resmgr/publications/2024/aiccu_adtreport_fall_2023_sp.pdf