

TRACKING TRANSFER

An update on the progress of statewide associate degree transfer pathways in Michigan.

June 2016

This month's edition of Tracking Transfer shares recent research that focuses on transfer students. Several publications have highlighted important evidence about the outcomes of transfer students including the frequency and intensity of transfer behavior, the academic and labor market outcomes of transfer students, reverse transfer, and best practices in building transfer pathways. These publications shed light on the experience of transfer students across the nation and in Michigan.

[Do Students Benefit From Going Backward? The Academic and Labor Market Consequences of Four- to Two-Year College Transfer](#) (June 2016)

by Vivian Yuen Ting Liu

This study used an administrative dataset from one state to examine academic and labor market outcomes among students who began at a four-year institution and transferred to a two-year institution (4-2 transfer). The study specifically focused on students who earned less than a 3.0 GPA in their first term of enrollment at the four-year institution. The study found that 4-2 transfer students were *more likely* than non-transfer students to complete a two-year college credential and bachelor's degrees compared with similar peers who did not transfer. In addition, short-term labor market outcomes indicated that 4-2 transfer students are not penalized compared with other struggling students who did not transfer from the four-year institution.

[The Transfer Playbook: Essential Practices by Two- and Four-Year Colleges](#) (May 2016)

by Joshua Wyner, KC Deane, Davis Jenkins & John Fink

This publication is based on observed practices of six sets of community colleges and universities that have higher than expected rates of bachelor's degree attainment for transfer students. Researchers examined community colleges with strong transfer student outcomes, identified their strong four-year transfer partners, and conducted site visits at six partner dyads. Based on this analysis, this practical guide identifies three essential strategies including (1) making transfer student success a priority, (2) engaging faculty from two- and four-year institutions to create clear programmatic pathways aligned with high-quality instruction, and (3) providing tailored transfer student advising and support.

[Improving Credit Mobility for Community College Transfer Students](#) (May 2016)

by Education Northwest

This study examined transcripts and course equivalency databases, interviewed higher education staff, and conducted student focus groups to examine course credit mobility in 10 states. The authors found that degree program credit loss, not outright credit loss, is a more likely outcome for transfer students. The study found that students often lost credit because there was significant uncertainty in transfer planning among students and a pervasive lack of adequate advising to support transfer students as they navigate this complex system. The report concludes with recommendations to improve the transfer process.

[Tracking Transfer: New Measures of Institutional and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students Attain Bachelor's Degrees](#) (January 2016)

by Davis Jenkins & John Fink

This study examined transfer patterns of students who enrolled in a community college in Fall 2007 and followed students for the next six years. Researchers found that 37% of Michigan community college students transferred to a four-year institution in the six years after starting college. This is compared to the national average of 33% and ranks Michigan among the top seven states in community college transfer. While Michigan students are transferring at a higher rate than their peers in other states, they are completing associate and bachelor's degrees at lower rates. Approximately 24% of community college transfer students completed an award prior to transferring (compared to the national average of 29%) and 34% completed a bachelor's degree within six years of beginning college (compared to the national average of 42%). In addition, completion rates in Michigan differed by sector with 40% of students transferring to public institutions completing a degree within six years compared with 14% of students transferring to private, non-profit institutions.

[Contributions of Two-Year Institutions to Four-Year Completions](#) (Spring 2015)

by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

This brief report examines the role of two-year institutions in four-year student completion. In the 2013-14 academic year, 46% of students who completed a degree at a four-year institution were previously enrolled at a two-year institution at least once in the prior ten years. In Michigan, 43% of students who completed a degree at a four-year institution previously enrolled at a two-year institution.

For more information, contact the [Michigan Center for Student Success](#).

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