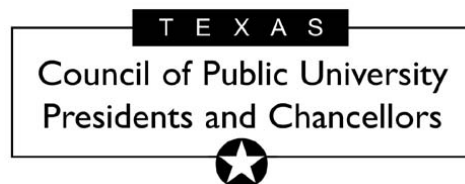


Improving Texas Community College Student Transfer Rates
to General Academic Institutions:
A Report Featuring Recommendations for the Coordinating
Board, Higher Education Institutions, and the State

September 22, 2008



For information, contact:

Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors
1103 W 24th Street
Austin, TX 78705
512-923-8517
512-795-2222 FAX
www.cpupc.org

Table of Contents

Executive Summary3

Recommendations

Tables:

1. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Action Items (with Institutions of Higher Education)6

2. Community College and General Academic Institution Action Items8

3. General Academic Institution Action Items10

4. Legislative Action Items12

Appendices:

- A. Accountability Measures Regarding Student Transfer of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and Legislative Budget Board**
- B. Select Best Practices and Resources Identified by Professionals in Student Transfer**
- C. Transfer Practices Survey Summary: Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers**
- D. Transfer Practices Survey Summary: Vice Presidents of Student Services Divisions (Council of Student Services Vice Presidents)**
- E. Committee Organization/Meetings Conducted**
- F. Committee Charge**

Executive Summary

Texas has a strong history of providing post-secondary education through university systems, independent institutions, and community colleges. With six university systems, four independent public universities, over 50 community college districts and campuses, and 40 independent colleges and universities, Texas institutions of higher education have the capacity to educate its citizens. However, the size of the State and the complexity of its organization of higher education have often served to make a single state-wide approach difficult. In spite of this complexity, all stakeholders for improving our system of education agree that it is critical that Texas higher education leadership combine their efforts with those of the legislature, system and university boards, and local community college boards to ensure that students are able to easily negotiate the opportunities to gain an education through seamless transfer from a community college to a general academic institution. To do so will require an understanding of the barriers faced by students, as well as a commitment to make the necessary policy changes to reduce those barriers. This needs to begin with a state initiative to fund programs specifically addressing student transfer efforts.

In spite of a robust system of higher education, data from the *Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) Longitudinal Study* finds that nationally only 10.3 percent of 1995 -1996 beginning postsecondary students who started at two-year institutions had attained a bachelor's degree six years later in 2001. Texas's statewide six-year baccalaureate rate was 13.1 percent for the fall 1996 cohort and 15.9 percent for the fall 1999 cohort. Although the definitions for each study differ somewhat, the conclusion that must be drawn is that in Texas, as well as nationally, we are not serving students very well when they begin their postsecondary education at a community college. Furthermore, inequities continue to exist when one examines the rates of transfer and graduation between white and other students.

Last fall, former chair of the Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors, Chancellor Mark G. Yudof appointed a committee of university presidents to undertake a study of how Texas public universities could be more responsive to their mission of "closing the transfer gaps" by developing partnerships with community colleges, in promoting legislation that would enable smoother transfer, and through reviewing existing practices and policies, both in Texas and elsewhere. This three-prong effort focuses on student transfer from two-year institutions to four-year institutions and complements other existing state efforts, including ongoing discussions among representatives of the University of Texas System, the Texas A&M University System, and members of the Texas Association of Community Colleges. Additionally, two statewide conferences held during the period of work provided resources and advice to the committee. These two conferences, one sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Transfer Students and the other, a Transfer Summit, sponsored by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, resulted in several recommendations which are supported by this committee.

The committee was also assisted by a series of surveys that provided information from senior university managers representing the key offices of admissions, registrar and student services. Surveys administered to members of the Texas Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) and the Council of Student Services Vice Presidents (COSS/VP) provided information and suggestions concerning transfer practices, policies, and

areas of challenge. Lastly, *The College Transfer Student in America*, published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (2004), also served to guide the committee process.

In terms of state policy, the committee is supportive of HB3851 (80th) (Morrison), requiring each institution to adopt a written policy on promoting the admission of undergraduate transfer students. This committee offers its support to the Coordinating Board as the agency prepares to respond to the new legislation (see <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=80R&Bill=HB3851>).

As this committee completes its charge through the provision of this report, we recognize the momentum in addressing student transfer is only just beginning; we look forward to advancing discussions among university presidents and system representatives with presidents of the State's community colleges, the Coordinating Board, and the legislature. This second phase will likely unite the various groups presently addressing student transfer and encourage identification of essential policy action items with clear and effective strategies. This report is intended to serve as a helpful resource and springboard to advance the discussion.

Although the complexities of educational organization in Texas and the differing cultures of the many segments of higher education have the potential of creating tensions, the pressing need to provide better and more accessible education in Texas must guide our future. That future must include a vision for post-secondary education that is open to all who qualify while also providing opportunities for higher education to respond to educational and workforce needs of the State. The complexities of administering and managing an institution of higher education should not detract from a students' desire to achieve their educational goals. What follow are recommendations for improving student transfer in Texas as drawn from surveys, interviews, conferences, and meetings of the committee.

Recommendations

Based upon the charge to the committee, "...to undertake a study of how Texas public universities could be more responsive to their mission of 'closing the transfer gaps' by developing partnerships with community colleges, in promoting legislation that would enable smoother transfer, and through reviewing existing practices and policies, both in Texas and elsewhere..." this committee of university presidents unanimously embraced the following series of recommendations. The committee, in fulfilling its charge, not only studied existing policies and practices relating specifically to transfer, but also engaged in dialogue with those intimately involved in the transfer process, reviewed policies and practices across the nation, and participated in meetings with other stakeholders on issues related to transfer. In addition to the policy issues addressed below, the committee focused on substantive strategies to move the transfer process from the rhetoric of being a desired "seamless transfer process" to being a reality for students with positive impact on statewide higher education goals.

Recommendations provided in this report are not prioritized; instead they identify potential action items for further consideration by 1) the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and institutions of higher education (IHE's), 2) partnerships with community colleges and general academic institutions, 3) general academic institutions, and 4) the state legislature. Presented as a "menu" of options, the programs recommended here may be acted upon as appropriate. The committee recognizes statewide implementation may not be the best approach for many of the action items and that several institutions have one or more of the recommended programs in place. Exploring the opportunities presented here, for new or expanded program implementation, is encouraged to advance student success throughout the state.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in Collaboration with Institutions of Higher Education

The Higher Education Coordinating Board serves a statewide function and can bring together the leadership from both community colleges and general academic institutions to frame common definitions, implement statewide actions to facilitate transfer, and oversee data management/reporting.

The proposed recommendations range from the very simple—such as promoting reverse transfer and "tips to transfer" on the ApplyTexas website (a centralized means for both Texas and non-Texas students to apply to the postsecondary institutions in Texas)—to engaging in detailed conversations with stakeholders in establishing reporting measures and mechanisms to appropriately reflect progress regarding student transfer. Twenty-three potential action items are provided in Table 1 (recommendations are not presented in a prioritized or rank order).

Table 1 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Action Items (with Institutions of Higher Education)		
Action Item	Suggested Timeline	Funding Source /Responsible Party
1. Agree upon the definition of an undergraduate transfer student (by number of credits or previous experience, how dual enrollment and Early College High School courses should be counted) and create a glossary of transfer terminology to include definitions for dual enrollment, co-enrollment, swirling, etc.	Fall 2008	THECB
2. Determine appropriate accountability measures related to student transfer, including recognition for shared success (such as including transfer students in calculating graduation rates or introducing a separate metric). See Appendix A for current transfer-specific measures	Fall 2008	THECB
3. Determine a common GPA calculation (particularly relevant to developmental courses)	Summer 2009	THECB
4. Utilize the statewide student tracking system to prepare an annual report on transfer success ; this could take the form of reporting process with institutions identifying to the Coordinating Board their transfer actions, policies, plans, and targets related to <i>Closing the Gaps</i> targets/goals	Summer 2009	THECB
5. Address opportunities to enhance the common course numbering system , particularly to advance the core curriculum and/or transfer AA degrees and eliminate exceptions to the CCNS through increased enforcement of the statute	Fall 2008	THECB
6. Reactivate the statewide Transfer Issues Advisory Committee to advance the recommendations regarding student transfer and consider an annual conference on student transfer as a charge; consider statewide mechanisms to track students, common electronic transcripts, advising guides, electronic degree audits, course applicability systems, tracking including class rosters and grade information, transfer student bridge programs for student credit, transfer inefficiencies for applied technology students	Fall 2008	THECB
7. Review barriers (real and perceived) to transferring in particular majors, such as teaching education, nursing, engineering, and political science. Provide increased emphasis to existing field of study (FOS) programs and expand FOS to additional majors while continuing discussions such as that regarding SB139 (80 th) addressing the curriculum alignment of RN and LVN programs	Fall 2008	THECB
8. Evaluate and report on HB3851 (80 th) regarding policies on promoting transfer student enrollment, possibly identify "best practices" regarding enrollment, retention, and financial aid efficiencies (transfer centers, bridge programs, joint admission agreements, program articulation agreements, etc.)--see http://cadena.fullcoll.edu/University%20Transfer%20Programs.htm	Spring 2009	THECB

Table 1 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Action Items (with Institutions of Higher Education)		
Action Item	Suggested Timeline	Funding Source /Responsible Party
9. Create statewide articulation agreements that incorporate guaranteed transfer with certain provisions for success (26 states have statewide articulation agreements); a standard 42 hour Texas core curriculum has been suggested	Summer 2009	THECB
10. Sponsor statewide articulation conferences with institutions of higher education to align the curriculum, particularly the core curriculum	Summer 2009	THECB/IHE
11. Adopt policies to address developmental education courses involving transfer students	Fall 2008	THECB
12. Continue to seek/secure grant funding to support model transfer programs such as academic advising centers	Fall 2008	THECB
13. Simplify the reverse transfer process by including a release authorization component on the statewide ApplyTexas application and the common transfer application; add a co-enrollment option to the ApplyTexas applications	Fall 2008	THECB
14. Add a “tips to transfer” pop-up window (or link) to the community college ApplyTexas application	Fall 2008	THECB
15. Create a handbook for transfer students , working with the institutions in identifying common statewide elements with access to the document on the ApplyTexas website	Fall 2008	THECB/IHE
16. Consider a special category in the annual THECB Star Awards to recognize outstanding student transfer programs	Fall 2009	THECB
17. To provide the ability to track student enrollment beyond Texas, all institutions should participate in and utilize data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse	Spring 2010	THECB
18. Identify teams to share best practices from existing community college/general academic partnerships and assist as statewide consultants/experts	Fall 2008	THECB
19. Establish and host a library of resources , including individual community college/general academic articulation agreements	Summer 2009	THECB
20. Continue to work with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission in addressing the student pipeline and college readiness issues, particularly in encouraging students to plan their transitions (including participation in College Connections programs, Early College High Schools, IB, AP, CLEP, dual enrollment, and the vertical integration of P12-colleges-universities, etc.)	Fall 2008	THECB
21. Form a study group to address the ideal time for a student to transfer and corresponding implications on academic advising and accountability measures	Spring 2009	THECB

Table 1 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Action Items (with Institutions of Higher Education)		
Action Item	Suggested Timeline	Funding Source /Responsible Party
22. Conduct a study comparing the performance of dual credit students to the overall student population with considerations of academic rigor and leading to specification of outcomes for lower division courses (particularly those most frequently taught as dual credit courses)	Spring 2009	THECB
23. Re-evaluate the Texas Core Curriculum	Summer 2009	THECB

Partnerships With Community Colleges and General Academic Institutions

Community colleges and general academic institutions must collaborate to ensure that students can move seamlessly from one segment to the next without loss of credit and with an understanding of the requirements for graduating with a baccalaureate degree.

Advising community college students and promoting the various policies related to transfer is a shared responsibility, perhaps best undertaken at a regional level throughout the state. While some programs can be developed as statewide initiatives (promoting the consequences of not choosing a major early, studying the impact of the 30/45* hour rule and promoting federal financial aid opportunities), other transfer-focused programs are more appropriately coordinated locally to take advantage of available staff and resources. Table 2 provides 17 potential action items (unranked) for consideration by the two segments of higher education.

Table 2 Community College and General Academic Institution Action Items		
Action Item	Suggested Timeline	Funding Source /Responsible Party
1. Create transfer offices on community college campuses	Spring 2009	State, IHE**
2. Sponsor events on community college campuses to promote transfer , including accelerated degree programs for adult students	Fall 2008	IHE
3. Create dual admission programs between general academic and community college institutions	Fall 2008	IHE
4. Provide early identification of and assistance for transfer students (including adult students) while enrolled at community colleges and throughout their transition to a university	Fall 2008	IHE
5. Provide study-skills training on community college campuses Seek opportunities to include study-skills training on community college campuses	Fall 2009	Community Colleges

Table 2 Community College and General Academic Institution Action Items		
Action Item	Suggested Timeline	Funding Source /Responsible Party
6. Seek 2+2 financial aid program development, including funding, matching grants, advising and promotional campaigns	Spring 2009	State, IHE
7. Consider establishing Honors Transfer Programs to provide a "fast track" for community college students who meet certain standards for priority admission to participating universities (See El Camino College in Calif.)	Fall 2008	IHE
8. Communicate to students the consequences of not choosing a major early in their postsecondary career (loss of the \$1,000 graduate-on-time tuition rebate, 120 hour degree-plan limits, 30* hour rules limiting courses within a major, the "3-peat" course repeat limit, and the six course drop limit)	Fall 2008	IHE, THECB
9. Study the impact of the 30* hour rule as community college students arrive at universities, where students exceeding the number of courses needed for a bachelor's degree may be charged up to out-of-state tuition levels (Texas Educ. Code 54.068)	Fall 2008	IHE, THECB
10. Develop and promote strategies to increase student utilization of federal financial aid programs (including tax credits, etc.)	Fall 2008	IHE, THECB
11. Incorporate transfer services into existing GO Centers	Fall 2008	IHE
12. Forward contact information for first-time in college and transfer-declared students to four-year universities to facilitate early contact, recruitment and advising	Spring 2009	IHE, THECB
13. Explore opportunities to co-teach freshman seminar courses on community college campuses	Spring 2009	IHE
14. Address reverse transfer by adding on all college applications a statement offering release authorization of transcripts for the purpose of granting an AA degree (and add to ApplyTexas online application)	Fall 2008	IHE, THECB
15. Encourage universities to work with college alumni staff in promoting transfer among community college alumni populations	Summer 2009	IHE
16. Encourage university outreach to enroll AA and AAS/technology students and accept courses for transfer credit	Spring 2009	IHE
17. Encourage local/regional employers to support their employees in continuing/completing their postsecondary education	Fall 2008	IHE

* Undergraduate students who enrolled initially in the fall 2006 semester or subsequent semesters cannot exceed more than 30 hours. Undergraduate students who enrolled initially in the fall 1999 semester or subsequent semesters cannot exceed more than 45 hours of the number of hours required for completion of the degree plan in which they are enrolled. Any hours beyond 30/45 are considered excessive and will result in additional tuition charges (up to out-of-state tuition charges).

**IHE, or Institutions of Higher Education, a reference for both community colleges and general academic institutions.

General Academic Institution Action Items

Because the ultimate goal of transfer is for students to complete their education at a general academic institution, those campuses have a special responsibility to create an environment that encourages and supports transfer students.

A natural tendency is to assume student transfer is the responsibility of the undergraduate admissions division. This is true, up to a certain point. For students to succeed following enrollment, every division of an institution must be aware of their role in contributing to the success of all students, including transfer students. Action items for the state's general academic institutions are provided in Table 3 (not as a prioritized list).

Table 3 General Academic Institution Action Items		
Action Item	Suggested Timeline	Funding Source /Responsible Party
1. Provide a transfer student orientation program ; provide a prominent and dedicated Internet link to transfer student services with a focus on quality and easy-to-find information	Spring 2009	General Academics
2. Provide all students who are not accepted with " redirection letters " informing them of regional community college and regional general academic institution opportunities, with an emphasis on transfer	Spring 2009	General Academics
3. Encourage recipients of student financial aid to attend a money management seminar including identification of opportunities to minimize debt (a recommendation appropriate for all students)	Spring 2009	General Academics
4. Increase the number of academic advisors to encourage student success by developing clear expectations and rewarding strong advising programs and inform these advisors of financial aid issues related to transfer (the \$1,000 graduate-on-time tuition rebate, 120 hour degree-plan limits, 30 hour rules limiting courses within a major, the "3-peat" course repeat limit, and the six course drop limit)	Fall 2008	General Academics
5. Increase scholarship programs for transfer students	Fall 2008	General Academics/ State
6. Host professional development programs for higher education advisors (with outreach to high school, community college and university advisors), utilizing resources such as the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)	Spring 2009	General Academics/ THECB
7. Host regional articulation conferences for advisors	Fall 2008	General Academics/ THECB
8. Enhance assessment efforts related to student transfer and success, encouraging inter-departmental conversations and inter-institutional sharing of best practices	Fall 2008	General Academics

Table 3 General Academic Institution Action Items		
Action Item	Suggested Timeline	Funding Source /Responsible Party
9. Create online transfer equivalency charts for all general academic campuses, perhaps developing a standardized statewide template and process for sharing course inventories	Fall 2009	General Academics
10. Include provisions for up to four semesters of tuition/fee coverage in campus guaranteed tuition programs for transferring community college students with limited family incomes	Fall 2009	General Academics
11. Establish transfer centers at all general academic institutions	Summer 2009	General Academics
12. Consider offering junior residential communities and program services to address the needs of transfer students (and juniors who did not participate in residential programs as freshmen)	Spring 2009	General Academics
13. Consider a standard reporting template for universities to report to community colleges on the students the colleges send to the university as transfer students	Fall 2008	General Academics/Community Colleges
14. Encourage university faculty to travel to college campuses and/or advance distance education opportunities for location-bound students	Fall 2008	General Academics/Community Colleges

Legislative Action Items in Cooperation with the Coordinating Board and Institutions of Higher Education

In order for the recommendations provided below to result in positive action, the Coordinating Board, with community college and general academic institution input, needs to define a budget that will provide funds necessary to carry out the recommendations. Table 4 provides nine state-level recommendations, in random order, which focus upon establishing scholarships for transfer students, introduce incentives for community college students to transfer, and provide for serious analysis of impediments to student success.

Table 4 Legislative Action Items		
Action Item	Suggested Timeline	Funding Source /Responsible Party
1. After assuring basic student and institutional needs are met through established funding mechanisms, create State incentives for the number of transfer students who graduate from general academic institutions (18 other states have such incentives); consider all segments of the pipeline involved in preparing students, including the public education sector	Spring 2009	State
2. Establish a fund to match scholarship funds raised by IHE's specifically dedicated to benefit transfer students	Spring 2009	State
3. Explore options regarding rules related to the 120 hour limit, 30 hour limit, and six course drop policy so as not to unduly penalize transfer students while encouraging degree completion	Spring 2009	State
4. Fund bridge programs dedicated to facilitating transfer between community colleges and four-year institutions.	Spring 2009	State
5. Support simplification of federal aid/FAFSA applications	Spring 2009	State
6. Review state policy addressing appropriations, tuition, and student financial aid to maximize successful enrollment and completion in higher education, modifying criteria which may inhibit transfer student eligibility/progress (particularly the 30 hour limit)	Spring 2009	State/THECB
7. Provide a clear public policy commitment to improving college success rates for all students, including assurances for transfer students that their academic and financial needs will be addressed	Spring 2009	State
8. Create a coordinated statewide marketing campaign promoting the benefits of a postsecondary education, to include transfer information and to encourage degree completion among adults with "some college credit" (inclusive of certificate and technical program completion)	Summer 2009	State/THECB
9. Address transfer student financial aid policies for full-time and part-time students to financial aid follows the successful transfer student (including automatic renewal status for TEOG recipients to receive TEXAS Grants, review of GPA requirements for various forms of state aid, and the need for additional scholarship/grant appropriations when eligibility is expanded)	Spring 2009	State/THECB
10. Address college readiness and developmental education , consider opportunities for the high school curriculum to include career/technology education and career advising (also curricular advising or career exploration courses), align testing in high school and college entry (ACCUPLACER, PSAT, etc.) for efficient student progression to a degree	Summer 2009	State/THECB
11. Align state priorities and policies involving higher education, public education, and workforce goals to address the need for technology graduates, AA graduates, and bachelor's-level graduates as the state examines college readiness, workforce readiness, adult learners, implications of dual credit and introducing incentive programs	Summer 2009	State/THECB

Appendix A
**Accountability Measures Regarding Student Transfer of the Texas Higher Education
Coordinating Board and Legislative Budget Board**

University Accountability Measures (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Accountability System http://www.txhighereddata.org/Interactive/Accountability/UNIVS_MeaDef.pdf
Participation: (Measure #6) Percent of enrollment that are transfers from Texas public two-year colleges with at least 30 semester credit hours attempted. Definition: Number and percentage of undergraduate enrollment who have transferred from Texas public two-year colleges with a minimum of 30 SCH attempted over the past six years.
(Measure #20) Graduation Rate for two-year college students who completed at least 30 SCH before transferring to a university. Definition: Number and percentage of undergraduate enrollment who are transfer students from Texas two-year colleges with a minimum of 30 SCH in the six years prior to transferring and graduated from the same Texas public university within four years.
(Measure #21) Percent of baccalaureate graduates completing at least 30 SCH at a Texas two-year College. Definition: Percentage of baccalaureate graduates who completed at least 30 semester credit hours at a Texas two-year college before transferring to a public university.

University Performance Measures (Texas Legislative Budget Board)
Legislative Budget Board (General Academic Institutions) http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Performance%20Measures/PerformMeasureDefs_GenAcademic_0308.pdf
Outcome 20: Percent of Incoming Full-time Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Transfer Students Who Graduate Within Four Years (Four year institutions only)
Outcome 21: Percent of Incoming Full-time, Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Transfer Students Who Graduate Within Two Years (Four year institutions only)
Outcome 31: Percent of Full-time, Degree-seeking Transfer Students Who Earn a Baccalaureate Degree Within Four Years (Upper-level Institutions Only)
Outcome 32: Percent of Full-time, Degree-seeking White Transfer Students Who Earn a Baccalaureate Degree Within Four Academic Years (OC 33 - Hispanic Transfer Students; OC 34 - Black Transfer Students; OC 35 - Other transfer Students) (Upper level institutions only)
Outcome 36: Percent of Full-time, Degree-seeking Transfer Students Who Earn a Baccalaureate Degree Within Two Years (Upper-level Institutions Only)
Outcome 37: Percent of Full-time, Degree-seeking White Transfer Students Who Earn a Baccalaureate Degree Within Two Academic Years (OC 38 - Hispanic, Black, and Other students)
Outcome 41: Persistence Rate of Full-time, Degree-seeking Transfer Students After One Academic Year (Upper level institutions only)
Outcome 42: Persistence Rate of Full-time, Degree-seeking White Transfer Students After One Academic Year (OC 43 - Hispanic Transfer Students; OC 44 - Black Transfer Students; OC 45 - Other Transfer Students) (Upper level institutions only)
Output 4: Number of Community College Transfer Graduates Short Definition: The number of baccalaureate level graduates who attempted 30 or more semester credit hours in a Texas public community college during the past six years.
Explanatory/Input 3: Number of Community College Transfer Students Enrolled Short Definition: The number of students enrolled in the fall semester who attempted 30 or more semester credit hours in a Texas public community college during the past six years.

Appendix B
Select Best Practices and Resources Identified by
Professionals in Student Transfer

National Resources

- Achieving the Dream, Lumina Foundation
- ACT Survey of Student Opinions
- Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
- Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE)
- Federal TRIO Program
- Institute for the Study of Transfer Students
- Jack Kent Cooke Foundation
- National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- National Transfer Network
- Tau Sigma (national student organization for transfer students)

Programs Targeting Enrollment and Retention

- 2+2 Agreements
- Academic support services--writing, tutoring and testing centers
- An “advising council” comprised of university and two-year college representatives
- Bridge Programs
- Cross-trained staff to counsel transfer students
- Faculty/academic advising
- Joint admission programs
- Meetings with two-year college representatives
- Mentoring (faculty or peers)
- One-stop locations for services
- Orientation (some are mandatory)
- Outreach office at the local two-year college
- Seek grant funding for transfer enrollment/retention resources
- Targeted financial aid and scholarships
- Transfer and commuter lunch events
- Websites targeting transfer students, Transfer Guidebooks/Viewbooks

Programs in Texas

- “Achieving the Dream” grant program with the Lumina Foundation and Houston Endowment (University of Houston, Prairie View A&M University, Texas Southern University)
- “Blinn Team Program” where students take one class at the university and three classes at the college, students receive the benefits of being a full-time university student (access to residence halls, recreational center, etc.) (Texas A&M University/Blinn Community College)

- Alamo Community College Transfer Network (Texas State University-San Marcos)
- Analyze the data from five types of evaluations related to transfer students (New Student Conference Evaluation, 6-Month Evaluation, Transfer Student Pre-Assessment, Transfer Camp and Howdy Camp Evaluations) (Texas A&M University)
- Annual Community College Advisors Conference (University of Texas at Austin)
- Childcare grants and an external childcare location (Texas A&M University-Kingsville)
- Computer labs (Texas A&M International University)
- Contact students who do not re-enroll (Texas A&M International and University of Houston-Victoria)
- Course Applicability System (CAS) (University of North Texas)
- “Discover UH” a program where admissions and financial aid staff, with academic advisors, visit community colleges (University of Houston)
- Financial Aid Consortium (Tarleton State University)
- Full-time university staff on-site at the local community college (University of Texas at Arlington)
- Hire a transfer coordinator in the Advising Center (West Texas A&M University)
- Host a commuter/non-traditional student group (West Texas A&M University)
- Host a single parent support group (West Texas A&M University)
- Instant messaging and online chat services (University of Texas at Arlington)
- Inter-institutional committee comprised of key leaders with local and regional community colleges to discuss articulation and transfer issues (Texas A&M University Corpus Christi)
- Joint Admission Program, an initiative to introduce transfer students to the college campus and the available academic and support services before they begin the transfer process (University of Houston-Downtown with Houston Community College and Lone Star College)
- North Texas Community College Consortium (University of North Texas)
- Online support technicians (University of Houston-Victoria)
- Online Transfer Matrix (University of Texas at San Antonio)
- Partnerships with community colleges (Sam Houston State University)
- Pathway Partnership Program, featuring Memorandums of Understanding with 46 Texas community colleges, districts or systems (Texas Tech University)
- Pathways Project (University of Texas at San Antonio)
- Pre-advising for core and degree plans (University of Houston)
- Provide additional support to transfer students who end up on academic probation (Texas State University-San Marcos)
- Real-time admissions decisions (Texas A&M University-Commerce and Texas Woman’s University)
- Straight Through to “U” (Amarillo College)
- Strategies for Learning Class for students on probation/suspension (University of Houston-Clear Lake)
- Student Success Team/subcommittee specifically to work with transfer students (Texas State University-San Marcos)
- Targeted GRE/GMAT preparation programs or workshops offered by the School of Graduate Studies (Texas A&M University-Kingsville)
- Targeted scholarships and special group housing (Texas A&M University-Commerce)

- Transfer Admission Guarantee for students from Texas public community colleges (West Texas A&M University)
- Transfer Advisory Council and “Day of Dialogue” program targeting community college and university advisors on common issues (Texas A&M University-Texarkana)
- Transfer Advisory Council meets semi-annually with representatives from their feeder colleges to review data on the performance of their students, as well as efforts to retain the students (Texas State University-San Marcos)
- Transfer Center (University of Houston, University of North Texas, University of Texas at El Paso)
- Transfer Student Advisory Council-Student Government (University of Houston-Clear Lake)
- Transfer Student Peer Mentor Program (University of Houston-Clear Lake)
- Transfer-student focused activities within the Division of Student Affairs (four variations of an orientation program) as well as university-wide initiatives (with specific academic departments or service divisions such as financial aid) (Texas A&M University)
- Transfer Counselor Update sessions (Texas Tech University, University of Houston)
- Tuition guarantee programs that ensure students from Texas public community colleges with family incomes of \$40,000 or less will have costs of tuition and fees covered for up to four semesters (“Buff Promise,” West Texas A&M University)
- University Centers on community college campuses (ex: Lone Star College, McLennan College, Wharton College)
- Utilize a Student Development assessment team in addition to Transfer Talk-Backs focus groups (University of North Texas)

Programs in Other States

- California (specifically the UC-Berkeley Transfer Student Handbook and UC-Merced Transfer Student Association and Student Transfer Outreach Mentor Program)
- Colorado (Colorado State University’s Vital Connections Transfer Program)
- Florida (four-year campuses teaching on 2-year campuses so students do not have to leave their local campus for a 4-year degree) (programs include certain criteria and GPA requirements)
- Florida (University of Central Florida’s programs)
- Maryland (the University of Maryland’s Interim Advising Program)
- Missouri (University of Missouri-Columbia’s Transfer Interest Groups (TRIGS))
- New Mexico (University of New Mexico’s “transfer team” program)
- North Dakota (the University of North Dakota’s Transfer Student Online Orientation)
- Oklahoma State University’s Transfer Student Resource Center
- Virginia (University of Virginia’s Transfer Student Peer Advisor Program)
- Washington (statewide Direct Transfer Agreement or DTA)
- Also: Statewide initiatives in Illinois, Maryland and Minnesota

Appendix C
Transfer Practices Survey Summary:
Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars
and Admissions Officers

Summary

The Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) and the Transfer Student Issues Committee of the Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors (CPUPC) distributed a survey regarding transfer practice to TACRAO public and independent/private university members in January 2008. The survey was designed to obtain information on successful programs and policies, as well as any challenges and barriers related to undergraduate students who transfer to a Texas university.

The survey, with approximately half (15 of 32) of the Texas public university representatives responding with a small sampling of independent universities (seven), reveals a wide range of responses by the institutions in dealing with policies related to transfer students. Comments received also demonstrate a commitment to expanding services related to the recruitment and retention of transfer students and in addressing barriers to their success.

One of the more frustrating questions is also the most basic: How do you define a transfer student? Here, five of the 15 public universities selected "30 or more transferable hours." Of the independent universities, four of the seven selected "15 or more transferable hours." Two public and the two remaining independent universities commented that a transfer student is any student with college credit after high school graduation. Additional definitions of transfer from the public universities included 12 transferable hours (three universities), 18 hours, 21 hours, or 54 transferable hours (from Sul Ross Rio Grande College, an upper-level junior/senior institution).

Throughout Texas, policies on each campus also vary in terms of permitting students to repeat a course, enroll with a maximum number of transferable credits, or participate in credit-by-exam programs. Yet, the universities are very clear in that remedial coursework is not accepted for transfer, and the transfer of technical and vocational courses is also not accepted or limited to courses which may apply to certain degree programs.

Interestingly, earning an associate's degree prior to transfer is not considered an advantage by nine public universities and five independent universities. Of the five universities (four public, one independent) indicating there is an advantage to students with an associate's degree, references were to the value of the completion of the core curriculum. The University of Texas at Arlington noted an associate's degree assists with scholarship eligibility. Of those responding that an associate's degree is not advantageous, respondents noted core completion is more important than an earned degree and commented on the need to evaluate each course individually (hours and GPA) in the admissions process. One respondent referred to the risk to transfer students in taking too many courses:

The risk of taking non-applicable courses increases with increasing numbers of courses taken from other institutions. Associate degree programs have inherent tendency to result in students taking credit that will not apply to their bachelor degree. Students intending to complete associate degrees should be carefully advised. They have a high need to be sure courses articulate. Also, because state laws for excess hours have increasingly tightened, students can ill afford to take courses that do not directly count toward degree completion. Disappointingly, competing an associate's degree may lead to just that.

As noted in the statement above, legislated policies designed to impact the success of students may introduce an additional level of challenges to transfer students, particularly in the area of academic advising received by both their community college and university campuses.

Given the array of traditional and unique approaches designed to improve student transfer success, challenges remain. The most frequently cited barriers to transfer students and their success were (1) the lack of financial aid and scholarships (with one respondent adding that scholarships are limited to full-time students and many transfer students enroll part-time), and (2) advisement from community colleges that differs from the university.

In response to the barriers and challenges faced by transfer students in their efforts to pursue their education, Texas universities and two-year colleges are working closely on many initiatives targeting student transfer, retention and graduation. Such initiatives include articulation agreements, joint admission agreements, reverse transfer programs, regular meetings with community college personnel, dedication of full-time university staff on-site at the local community college, advisor newsletters, and transfer planning guidebooks. Additional specific initiatives were noted as:

- Alamo Community College Transfer Network (Texas State University-San Marcos, St. Mary's University, Texas Lutheran University)
- Annual Community College Advisors Conference (University of Texas at Austin)
- Financial Aid Consortium (Tarleton State University)
- North Texas Community College Consortium (Texas Woman's University)
- Transfer Advisory Council and "Day of Dialogue" program targeting community college and university advisors on common issues (Texas A&M University-Texarkana).

Related to these initiatives, best practices commonly focus upon articulation agreements, reverse transfer programs, concurrent admissions programs, and on-site programs at the local community colleges (participation in the community colleges' orientation, hosting a transfer fair or targeted advising days, and on-site advising). Also, efforts to improve the efficiency of transfer credit evaluations and degree audits. Texas A&M University-Commerce and Texas Woman's University offer real-time admissions decisions; the University of North Texas implemented the Course Applicability System (CAS) for students to track their courses and their applicability at participating institutions.

New and planned efforts targeting transfer improvement noted by the universities include targeted scholarships (and modification to scholarship plans to increase transfer student eligibility), expanded use of the mobile Go-Centers with more time dedicated to community college visits, transfer-specific orientation and registration days, expanded reverse transfer and

guaranteed admission programs, and dedicating more personnel to the needs of transfer students. A high-tech approach under consideration by the University of Texas at Arlington is instant messaging and online chat services.

Transfer students are an important member of the university community and a key contributor to the state's goals in closing educational gaps, both in terms of increasing the number of Texans with baccalaureate degrees as well as entering the workforce in the high-demand professions of teaching and nursing. Enrollment professionals have observed, with some formal assessment applied, that transfer students frequently enroll with an initial major/career interest in business, education (teaching), or nursing. And at the time of graduation, the top majors of transfer students, again by a combination of opinion and assessment, remain in business and education, with psychology slightly out-ranking nursing.

Community college and university professionals across the state are committed to educating the citizens of Texas, including advancing the educational goals of transfer students. While there have been and continue to be successes and improvements to the process, implications and frustrations remain:

Informing students as much as possible and educating advisors (is key). We've stopped telling students, "College is a time to explore." ... Only a couple of years from now Texas is going to see scores, if not hundreds, of transfer students arriving at universities having already reached the 30 hour limit. In fact, transfer students are already arriving as first time university students and exceed the 45 hour limit. In many cases the students will be faced with out-of-state tuition charges. ... These policies make it critical for students to more than ever very carefully consider each and every course they enroll in... The knowledge of and advising about these rules while students are at community colleges is critical.

Information contained in the survey report provides additional detail regarding the questions and responses provided through the survey process. They are at a level of detail specific to the admissions/enrollment profession, but may be of interest to policy-makers in consideration of the complexities involved in successfully accommodating transfer students through their baccalaureate degree.

Texas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) Who Provided Web-links to Transfer Information

Angelo State University	http://www.angelo.edu/dept/admissions/transfer.html
Midwestern State University	http://admissions.mwsu.edu/transferguide.asp
Sam Houston State University	http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/840502_000.pdf
Sul Ross Rio Grande College	http://rgc.sulross.edu/docs/admissions/catalog0608-02.pdf
Tarleton State University	http://www.tarleton.edu/~admissions/requirements.html#transfer
Texas A&M International Univ.	http://www.tamiu.edu/catalog/current/stu-svcs.shtml
Texas A&M University	http://admissions.tamu.edu/transfer/Default.aspx
Texas A&M Univ.-Commerce	http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/administration/Rules&Procedures/rules_procedures.asp?RID=31
Texas A&M Univ.-Texarkana	http://www.tamut.edu/admissions/0708catalog.pdf
Texas State Univ.-San Marcos	http://www.admissions.txstate.edu/future/transfer.html
Texas Tech University	http://www.admissions.ttu.edu/transfers/requirements/default.asp
Texas Woman's University	http://www.twu.edu/admissions/transfer.asp
University of Houston	http://www.uh.edu/admissions/undergraduate/apply-transfer/index.php
Univ. of Houston-Downtown	http://www.uhd.edu/admissions/transfercenter/
University of North Texas	http://www.unt.edu/catalog/undergrad/admission.htm (scroll down)
University of Texas at Arlington	http://www.uta.edu/admissions/transfer.php
University of Texas at Austin	http://bealonghorn.utexas.edu/transfer/
University of Texas at El Paso	http://www.utep.edu/catalogs/2006/2006-2008UG.pdf#GeneralInfo (see page 85)
West Texas A&M Univ.	http://www.wtamu.edu/admissions/apply_transfer.aspx

Lubbock Christian University	http://www.lcu.edu/LCU/fstudent/Admissions/AdmisRequire.htm
Southwestern Assemblies of God Univ.	http://www.sagu.edu/academics/catalogs/undergrad/0708/academicinfo.shtm
St. Edward's University	http://www.gotostedwards.com
St. Mary's Univ. of San Antonio	http://www.stmarytx.edu... (click on transfer admission)
Texas Lutheran University	http://www.tlu.edu/registrar/transfer_to_tlu
Texas Wesleyan University	www.txwes.edu

Appendix D
Transfer Practices Survey Summary:
Vice Presidents of Student Services Divisions
(Council of Student Services Vice Presidents)

Summary

The vice presidents of Student Services Divisions with Texas public universities and health science institutions were invited to respond to a survey of their services and practices with a focus upon retention efforts related to transfer students, recognizing that the recruitment and enrollment functions may or may not be included within the Student Services Division. Of the 40 potential responses, 26 were received.

Potential retention efforts targeting transfer students include faculty/academic advising, mentoring, transfer orientation, bridge programs, and one-stop locations for financial aid/bursar/registrar services. Survey respondents identified additional retention efforts, including degree audit services, academic support services--writing, tutoring and testing centers, computer labs and pre-advising for core and degree plans, targeted scholarships and special group housing, child care grants and an external childcare location. Additionally, Texas State University-San Marcos coordinates a Student Success Team with a subcommittee specifically to work with transfer students and the University of Houston-Victoria provides online support technicians in recognition of the numerous online courses delivered online. Texas A&M University offers transfer-student focused activities within the Division of Student Affairs (four variations of an orientation program) as well as university-wide initiatives (with specific academic departments or service divisions such as financial aid). The University of Houston and The University of North Texas indicated that they have a designated Transfer Center in operation. The University of Houston-Clear Lake offers a Transfer Student Peer Mentor Program and a Strategies for Learning Class (Pass Center) for students on probation/suspension, among other programs. West Texas A&M University recently hired a transfer coordinator in the Advising Center and hosts a commuter/non-traditional student group and a single parent support group.

With regard to tracking the success of transfer students within the Student Services Division, several respondents indicated this is not a function of the Division. Most tracking was referred to the Institutional Research Divisions, who provide a variety of status reports. In addition to internal data reports, some universities obtain information regarding their transfer students from external programs. These include the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the ACT Survey of Student Opinions.

Texas' public universities are very involved with their local and regional community colleges, and have many programs in place through their admission's offices targeting transfer student enrollment. Examples of programs specifically in place to enhance transfer student retention include:

- Texas A&M University/Blinn Community College's "Blinn Team Program" where students take one class at the university and three classes at the college where the students receive the benefits of being a full-time university student (access to residence halls, recreational center, etc.)
- Texas A&M University Corpus Christi participates in an inter-institutional committee comprised of key leaders with local and regional community colleges to meet quarterly and discuss articulation and transfer issues
- Texas State University-San Marcos's Transfer Advisory Council meets semi-annually with representatives from their feeder colleges to review data on the performance of their students, as well as efforts to retain the students
- The University of Houston is a partner in the University of Houston System's Joint Admission Program, an initiative to introduce transfer students to the college campus and the available academic and support services before they begin the transfer process
- University of Texas at San Antonio is participating in a Pathways Project with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, local school districts and the local community college. Reverse credit transfer is discussed, and a Joint Undergraduate Matriculation Program has been implemented to provide a path for community college students who were initially denied as freshman applicants (including a financial incentive)

Members of COSS/VP were asked their opinion regarding barriers that limit the success of transfer students in obtaining a degree following their enrollment (institutional, cultural, or policy-related). While financial concerns and a lack of scholarships were raised several times, other issues also have a negative impact on transfer students:

- Belief that an associate degree is the equivalent of a bachelor's degree
- Curricular barriers-confusion regarding transferability of courses, limited access to certain majors, difficulty in advising/registering
- Lack of adequate academic preparation
- Lack or limited support from home/family
- Need for employment while enrolled/policies that discourage less than full-time status
- Social integration and "transfer shock" in terms of a social network and acclimation to academic issues
- Timeliness of transfer evaluations and course equivalency decisions
- Transfer students often begin the application/aid/housing/enrollment processes late.

Increase Efficiency in Transfer Student Enrollment:

- Help initiate legislation that encourages community colleges to increase transfer rates and reward academic completion
- Work to develop a state-wide electronic transcript process and the sharing of admissions data between Texas institutions so that students can more easily and "electronically" transfer their records from one institution to another
- Have good articulation agreements.
- Be sure there is a strong orientation program to help students understand the culture and how they are part of our community
- Collaborate to align core curriculum and to prevent impact of excess hours

- Encourage development of commonly defined transfer cohorts for University reporting. Just as we report on commonly defined first-time-freshman cohorts that allow us to compare colleges with regard to student success performance, we could use such transfer student cohorts to track and identify which colleges are really performing.

Address Financial Concerns:

- Help address the eight semester limits on financial aid for the students who begin at community colleges; increase awareness and understanding of these policies and procedures
- Encourage increased scholarships for transfer students
- Identify ways to minimize loan debt and educate students financially.

Expand Student Services Responsibilities:

- Dedicate a professional(s) to focus primarily on transfer student transition
- Develop a task force within the Division to focus on the Transfer Year Experience to create a seamless environment for transfer students
- Enhance assessment efforts related to transfer students
- Encourage close relationships with academic/enrollment offices which handle many of the transition tasks
- Formulate a committee to research these concerns as they relate to transfer students. However, these concerns are not germane to transfer students—many freshmen and international students experience the same problems
- Make sure we (Student Services personnel) provide strong support through transfer centers, learning centers, and money management centers, and make sure students know about the services available.

In summary, while Student Services Divisions at the public universities across Texas are composed differently and may or may not have direct oversight of transfer student enrollment, the retention of all students—including transfer students—is a key mission of the Division. The survey seems to indicate that there is awareness of transfer issues and the need for targeted services and interventions. Most respondents indicated that they have fairly well-developed “up front” services including targeted admissions programs and orientation specifically for transfer students. However, the efforts targeting transfer students after their arrival on campus appeared to be more varied and loosely coordinated. As a group, Student Services leaders may wish to follow the suggestion of a colleague:

“(We should) embrace transfer student issues as a growing trend with the new majority of non-traditional students in order to create a culture of support and understanding of transfer student issues. (We should) facilitate enthusiasm with presidents for the opportunity for enrollment growth through retention of large transfer populations who are more likely to transfer again.”

Appendix E

Committee Organization/Meetings Conducted

Committee Membership

Gretchen Bataille, Chair, University of North Texas
David Daniel, University of Texas at Dallas
James Gaertner, Sam Houston State University
Tim Hudson, University of Houston-Victoria
Vic Morgan, Sul Ross State University
Jon Whitmore, Texas Tech University

Staff Support

Rissa Potter, Executive Director, CPUPC

Committee Meetings Conducted (Summary of Action Items)

October 2, 2007

- Members will continue to review/edit the charge to the committee
- Suggest to the Coordinating Board that a representative of the Institute for the Study of Transfer Students be included in planning the Transfer Summit
- Suggest the Association of Texas Colleges and Universities (ATCU) provided an announcement at the ATCU meeting to encourage participation in the Institute for the Study of Transfer Students and the Coordinating Board's Transfer Summit, and to express that this committee is interested in collaborating with community colleges
- Forward Coordinating Board and Legislative Budget Board (LBB) data elements to the committee, specifically those regarding transfer data
- Draft an institutional survey to identify current partnerships with community colleges and perceptions of best practices.

February 19, 2008

- Committee members attended the Coordinating Board's Transfer Summit
- Members reviewed results of surveys on transfer policy completed with the assistance of the Texas Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers (TACRAO) and the Council of Student Services Vice Presidents (COSS/VP).

March 5, 2008

- Prepare a list of potential recommendations related to transfer improvement/efficiency within the categories of State, Coordinating Board and institutional action
- Committee members will be invited to add to the list of recommendations and also to narrow the list to the top 3-4 action items per category
- The TASFAA survey on transfer students and financial aid will be revised, forwarded to TASFAA leadership, and distributed to TASFAA members for completion
- Prepare a committee report for the July 23 CPUPC meeting.
- Chairman Bataille will sign letters to TACRAO, COSS/VP and TASFAA leadership thanking them for their support in designing and administering the transfer surveys.

Appendix G Committee Charge

The initial meeting of the committee included consideration of a charge. Strategies discussed include:

- Improving relations with community colleges
- Increasing transfer graduation rates
- Considering the development of financial incentives for 2- and 4-year institutions to ease/encourage the transfer to 4-year institutions
- Addressing scholarship/financial aid issues
- Identifying opportunities to facilitate communication (among institutions, with students/parents, other key groups such as high schools, etc.)
- Developing statewide capacity to enroll and support the growing number of new college juniors.

From this list, members expressed an interest in learning about arrangements/efforts currently utilized throughout the state, including compilation of best practices and identifying existing impediments to the transfer process. Additional suggested strategies/charges for this committee include:

- Surveying institutions to learn where partnerships presently exist (MOU's, etc.)
- Collecting data such as: how many students transfer, how many succeed, how many credits are not accepted/lost for transfer, etc.
- Identifying models of good practice that are working well, and highlighting why they are successful
- Understanding concerns of the community colleges
- Understanding concerns/challenges at the student level (perhaps involve consultants, perhaps lead to proposed legislation)
- Recognizing the various needs of different types of institutions, such as urban, semi-rural and rural (geographic dispersion)
- Preparing a year-end report for July 2008.