

A note on the methodology of the Transfer Cohort Report

This report uses the same transfer methodology used by Bahr, Hom & Perry (2005). In brief, the method involves tracking cohorts of first-time college students for six years to determine if they show “behavioral intent to transfer”. A student becomes eligible to potentially enter a cohort by enrolling for the first time at any California Community College (CCC). Students may be concurrently enrolled in high school (aka “special admits”), may be high school drop-outs, or may be high school graduates at the time of their initial enrollment. Students are assigned a cohort year according to the academic year in which they first enroll at a CCC.

The initial group or cohort of first-time students is evaluated six years after initial enrollment in order to determine if they have shown behavioral intent to transfer. If by six years after initial enrollment a student has completed twelve credit units and attempted transfer-level math or English then the student enters into the Transfer Cohort and that student’s transfer outcome is calculated for a variety of time frames ranging from three years after initial enrollment to as high as twelve years after initial enrollment, time allowing. Obviously, more recent cohorts will have a smaller range of time windows available with the most recent cohort showing transfer rates for just three years, four years, five years and six years after initial enrollment at a CCC.

It is important to note that although the Transfer Cohorts are not finalized until six years after initial enrollment, transfer rates can be retroactively calculated for this group for years three, four and five. The transfer rates are calculated using an official methodology developed in 2001 by the Chancellor’s Office in consultation with constituent groups and adopted by the Transfer Data Technical Workgroup (TDTW). The cohorts are first-time college students with a minimum of 12 units earned who attempted a transfer level math or English course. The outcome is transfer to a four-year institution within six years of initial enrollment. A data match with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) identified the public and private four-year transfer institutions, as well as other institutions located outside California. Dividing the number of students with enrollments at a Bachelors-granting institution by the total size of the Transfer Cohort yields the transfer rate. The data mart provides the overall transfer rate for each Transfer Cohort as well as transfer rates for various sub-populations included in the Transfer Cohorts.

This methodological explanation is partially excerpted from a longer document available at: <http://www.ccctransfer.org/TransferReport.pdf>

References

Bahr, P. R., Hom, W., & Perry, P. (2005). College transfer performance: A methodology for equitable measurement. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 13 (1), 73-87.