



Who Should Read

Vice President of
Enrollment Management
Director of Admissions
Provost

The State of Transfer at Flagship and More Selective Institutions

EAB Transfer Benchmarking Survey Results

3 Ways to Use This Report

- Make the case for additional investments to increase your transfer population
- Find roadblocks that are preventing students from transferring to your university
- Compare your institution's transfer practices to peers and identify areas of competitive advantage

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About the Transfer Benchmarking Initiative

Context and Use Cases for This Report

Survey Overview and Purpose

The Enrollment Management Forum administered the Transfer Benchmarking Survey to enrollment managers at flagship and more selective institutions. The survey gathered benchmarking data on enrollment divisions' transfer goals, data, staff, articulation agreements, partnerships, and budget.

Using this report, flagship and more selective institutions can compare their transfer efforts to their peers and identify areas for investment and growth. Because these survey results represent a sample of member institutions, conclusions drawn from this data may not represent the overall state of transfer student populations or institutional investments at all member institutions.

Report Structure

This report contains four sections, outlined below.

“Composition of Transfer Populations” gives context on the current state of transfer enrollments at flagship and more selective institutions, including the size of the transfer population, transfer students' academic start times, and the origination of most transfer students.

“Transfer Strategy & Concerns” gives insight into survey participants' plans for transfer enrollment, concerns about the future of transfer, and the motivation drivers of focusing on transfer enrollment.

“Staffing & Budget” details current and planned staffing levels, involvement of transfer committees, marketing spend, financial aid for transfer students, and presence of third-party partnerships.

“Working with Academic Partners” examines satisfaction with academic affairs partnerships, availability of transcript reviews and consistency of policies, speed of credit estimate delivery, and challenges with credit articulation.

Three Ways Members Can Use this Report

Members can use these benchmarks for the following purposes:

- 1 Making the case for additional investment.** Enrollment leaders can demonstrate to senior leaders how increased transfer recruitment and yield could be achieved through additional investment based on peer practices.
- 2 Focusing on areas for improvement.** Benchmark data may point to practices or policies that underperform and could be preventing transfer students from applying or yielding at higher rates.
- 3 Identifying areas of strength.** The data in this report illustrates areas where some members enjoy a competitive advantage and should continue improving their efforts to maintain this edge.

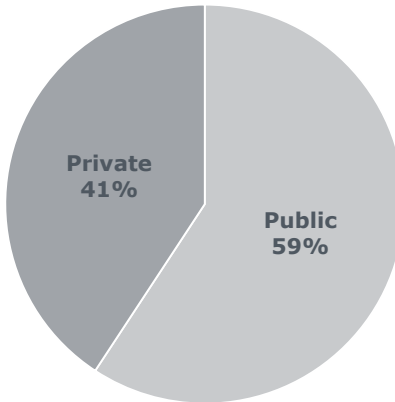
Profile of Survey Participants

Twenty-seven institutions participated in the survey¹, providing the Forum an overview of how transfer operations are conducted at member institutions, and giving insight into the challenges members face with regard to transfers.

The survey was sent to enrollment managers. A few enrollment managers designated a team member who was more knowledgeable about the state of transfer at the institution to take the survey.

Breakdown of Survey Participants by Institution Type and Role

Institution Type



Sector	Number of Participants
Public	16
Private	11

By Role

Role	Proportion	Number
VPEM	70%	19
Admissions	19%	5
Registrar	7%	2
Other	4%	1

1) This represents a 61 percent response rate for the flagship and more selective institution cohort within the Enrollment Management Forum.

Institutions Differ in Transfer Friendliness


What Does It Mean to Be “Transfer Friendly?”

Using survey data, the Forum created a scale to measure the “transfer friendliness” of each institution that participated in the survey. Survey participants that self-reported having quicker transfer credit estimates, easy-to-find online tools for prospective students, bridge programs that enrolled most of their students, and consistent course equivalency approvals were rated to be more transfer friendly than institutions that reported struggling with these components.

Several findings in this report are segmented by the degree to which the survey participants are “transfer friendly.” Transfer friendliness estimates in this report draw comparisons between participating institutions, and do not represent an institution’s overall transfer friendliness as compared to institutions that did not take the survey.


Four Degrees of Transfer Friendless

1 Exemplars
n = 2, 7% of participants




These institutions are the most-transfer friendly, with policies and practices that create a clear path for students wishing to transfer. “Exemplars” are seeking to grow transfer enrollment.

2 Leaders
n = 7, 26% of participants




Similar to “Exemplars,” “Leaders” also have transfer-friendly policies and practices. “Leaders” differ in that they want to maintain the size of their transfer population.

3 Fixers
n = 7, 26% of participants



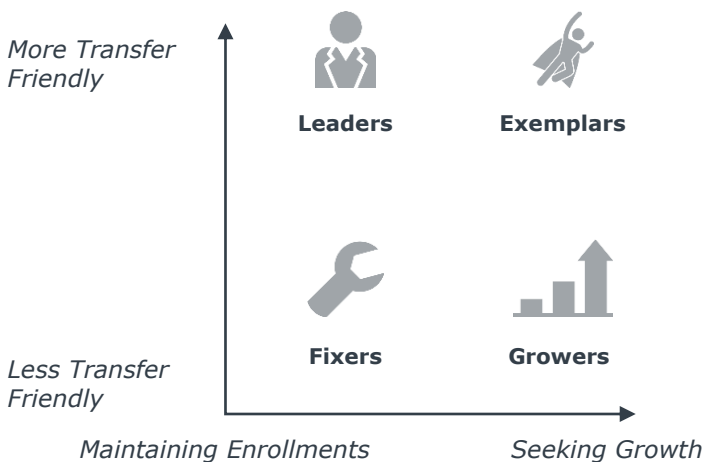
“Fixers” lack many transfer-friendly qualities compared to the “Leaders” and are seeking to maintain the size of their transfer population.

4 Growers
n = 11, 41% of participants



“Growers” lack transfer-friendly policies and practices and are seeking to grow their transfer population.

Mapping Transfer Friendliness and Growth Plans





Composition of Transfer Populations

- Origination of Transfer Students
- Timing of Transfer Student Enrollment

SECTION

1

Key Findings on Transfer Population Composition

Most Transfer Students Come from Other Four-Year Institutions

- Just over half of transfers at flagship and more selective institutions come from other four-year institutions. In comparison, at less selective, regional institutions, best practice is to have 40 percent of the student population composed of transfer students.
- At private institutions that participated in the survey, three in four transfer students come from a four-year institution.

Nearly One in Five New Enrollments at Surveyed Institutions Are Transfer Students

- Between 10 percent and 20 percent of new enrollments at the majority of surveyed institutions are transfer students.

Few Survey Participants Bring in Transfers from Bridge Programs

- Most transfer students at surveyed institutions do not come through formally articulated bridge programs. This suggests that these institutions have a significant opportunity to partner with two-year colleges to grow the number of students transferring from two-year schools.
- The only survey participants with most of their transfers coming from a bridge program are public institutions, commonly due to state Department of Higher Education and legislative mandates.

Most Transfer Students at Flagship and More Selective Institutions Begin in the Fall

- On average, 81 percent of transfer students at institutions in this sample start in the fall.



Transfer Enrollment Data is Readily Available

12%

Report transfer data is available, but shared with the EM ad-hoc

24%

Report transfer data is regularly shared, but just with the EM

64%

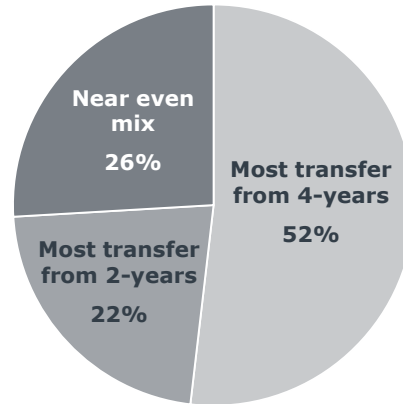
Report transfer data is regularly shared with the EM and campus

Most Students Transfer from Four-Year Institutions

Most transfer students at flagship and more selective institutions in this sample come from other four-year institutions. This may be because relatively few flagship and more selective institutions have formed partnerships with two-year colleges to attract transfer students.

Public Institutions Enroll More Transfers from Two-Year Colleges Than Private Institutions

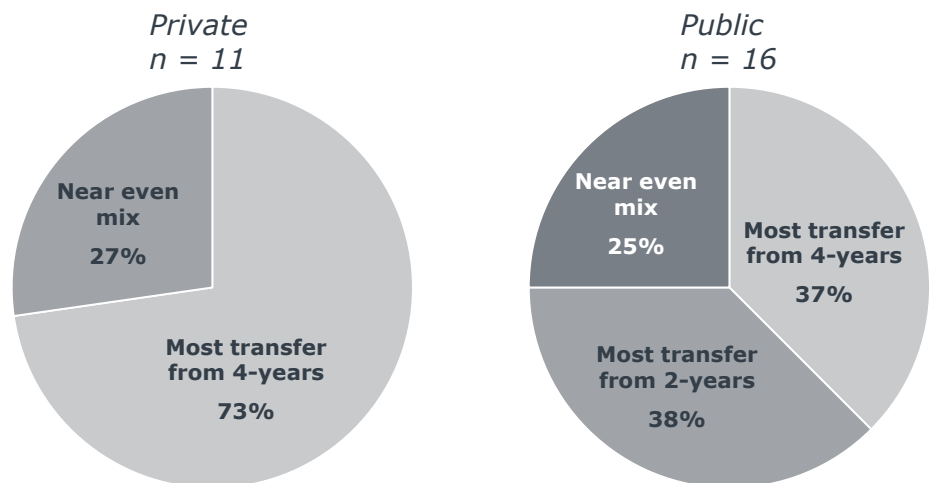
Which statement best describes your current transfer student population?



At surveyed private institutions, the transfer student population is mostly comprised of students who came from other four-year schools. At surveyed public institutions, there is more diversity in where students are transferring from – with over one third of students (38 percent) transferring from a two-year college.

Most students transferring do not come through formally articulated bridge programs, suggesting that flagship and more selective institutions can partner with two-year colleges to improve the ease of access for transfer students.

Transfer Student Origin by Sector



Bridge Programs Used Most Often at Public Institutions

Public institutions are more likely to have bridge programs in place compared to private universities, according to these survey results.

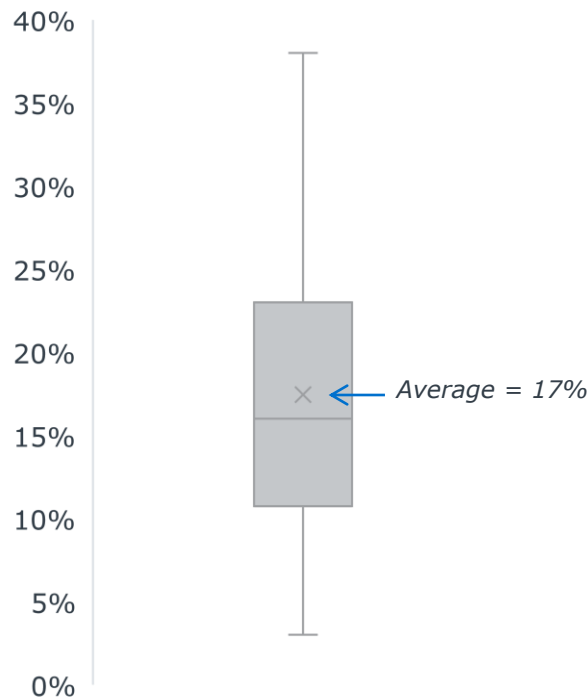
Proportion of Transfers Among New Enrollments

On average, transfer students compose nearly one fifth of new enrollments annually at surveyed institutions.

Transfer students typically start in the fall. The average proportion of transfer students at surveyed institutions that start in a term other than fall is 19 percent.

On Average, Transfers Account for Nearly One Fifth of New Enrollments

About what percentage of your new enrollments each academic year are transfer students?



Publics Have More Transfers Than Privates

20%

Proportion of transfers¹ at publics
n = 16

12%

Proportion of transfers¹ at privates
n = 10

1) Proportion of new enrollments annually that are transfer students



Transfer Strategy & Concerns

- Institution's Plans for Transfer Enrollments
- Reasons for Focusing on Transfers
- Concerns About the Future of Transfer Recruitment

SECTION

2

Key Findings on Transfer Strategy & Concerns

Differences Defined Primarily by Goals for the Future

Surveyed Institutions Split Between Growing and Maintaining Transfer Populations

- Half of surveyed institutions are trying to keep their transfer populations steady while 46 percent are trying to grow their transfer populations.
- Surveyed institutions trying to grow transfer enrollments are most concerned about competition. Conversely, those seeking to maintain transfer enrollments are more concerned about state regulations and slightly more concerned about the academic preparedness of transfer students.

Diversity and Revenue Are Primary Reasons for Institutional Focus on Transfer Students

- Diversity and revenue are the most frequently cited reasons for focusing on growing or maintaining transfer populations.
- Fulfilling upper division capacity was only cited by private institutions as a key reason to focus on transfer enrollments, while only public institutions cited complying with state regulations.

Competition for Transfer Students Is a Top Concern

- Surveyed institutions are most concerned about increasing competition for transfer students. However, since transfers are coming primarily from other four-year schools, institutions in this sample may be able to expand their transfer pipeline through partnerships with two-year colleges.

What Most Concerns Institutions Seeking to Grow and Maintain Transfer Enrollments

	Increased competition	Increased retention	State regulations	Academic preparedness
Institutions seeking to grow transfer enrollments	✓	✓		
Institutions seeking to maintain transfer enrollments	✓		✓	✓

Transfer Enrollment Goals and Strategy

Half of surveyed institutions are trying to keep their transfer populations steady (less than 3 percent increase planned), and 46 percent are trying to grow (3 to 10 percent increase planned) or significantly grow (more than a 10 percent increase planned) their transfer populations.

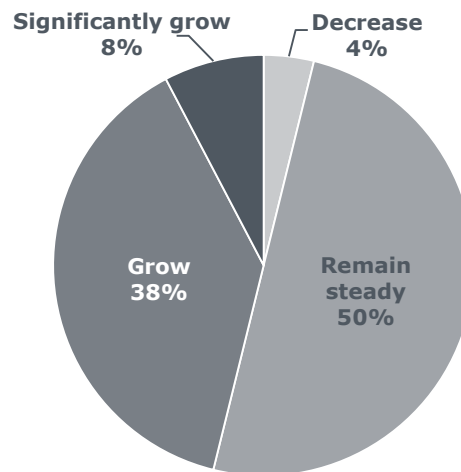
When the data is broken out by public versus private respondents, 50 percent of private institutions and 44 percent of public institutions seek to grow transfer enrollments.

Seventy-seven percent of the most transfer-friendly institutions are seeking to maintain enrollments.

The majority of surveyed institutions, especially those seeking to grow transfer populations, have a transfer strategy that is in early implementation.

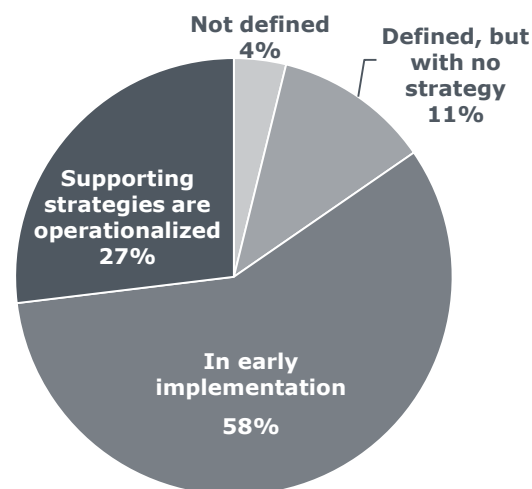
Future Plans for Transfer Enrollments Shows Near-Even Split Between Growing and Maintaining Population

In the next 1 to 3 years, are you planning for your institution's transfer population to...?



Most Surveyed Institutions Have Strategic Transfer Goals

Transfer goals at your institution are:



Reasons Institutions Focus on Transfer Students

Diversity and revenue are the most frequently cited reasons that surveyed institutions are focusing on transfer students.

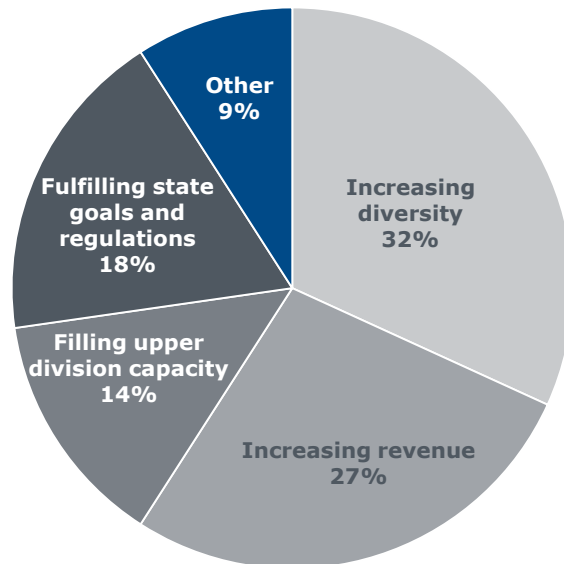
Those maintaining transfer enrollments are doing so to enhance diversity and to comply with regulations.

Those seeking to grow transfer enrollments are doing so primarily to increase revenue and diversity.

Only private institutions responded that filling upper division capacity is a key reason to focus on transfer enrollment; only publics responded that fulfilling state goals and regulations is a key reason.

Diversity and Revenue Are Key Reasons Surveyed Institutions Focus on Transfer Students

If transfer is a priority, what is primarily driving your focus on transfer student enrollment?



Sector	Diversity	Revenue
Private <i>n = 7</i>	28%	14%
Public <i>n = 15</i>	33%	33%

External Factors Affecting Transfer Goals

Surveyed institutions are most concerned about increasing competition. This concern speaks to the market realities of a shrinking traditional college-age population and more institutions focusing on non-traditional populations.

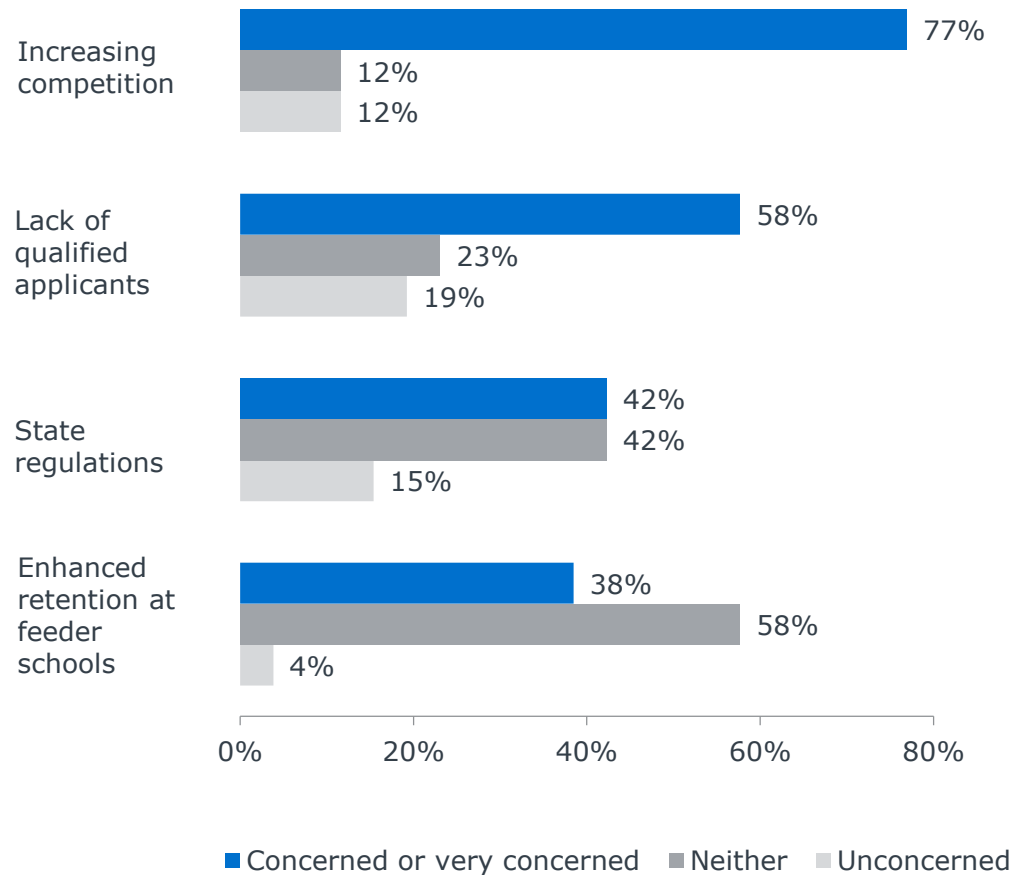
Surveyed institutions concerned about state regulations are not clustered geographically, and nearly as many private institutions are concerned about state regulations as publics.

Surveyed private institutions are much more concerned than public institutions about enhanced retention at other institutions keeping prospective students from transferring.

Unsurprisingly, survey participants that are not concerned about increased competition are above-average in terms of the size of their transfer population.

State Regulations and Enhanced Retention Are Less Concerning Than Competition and Qualified Applicants

How concerned are you with the following external forces regarding prospective transfer students?



Breakdown by Sector

Concerned About...	Publics n = 16	Privates n = 10
Increased Competition	62%	100%
Lack of Qualified Applicants	62%	50%
State Regulations	44%	40%
Enhanced Retention Efforts at Feeder Schools	25%	60%



Staffing & Budget

- Current & Future Staff Investments
- Merit Aid for Transfer Students
- Presence of Third-Party Partnerships

SECTION

3

Key Findings on Staffing & Budget

Publics Have More Transfer Staff While Privates Give More Aid to Transfers

Most Surveyed Institutions Will Grow Transfer Staff in the Near Future

- Most survey participants have two to five staff dedicated to transfer. Publics have an average of seven transfer staff while privates have an average of three.
- Survey respondents seeking to grow transfer enrollments expect to increase transfer staff by at least one FTE in the next one to three years.



Private Institutions Provide More Financial Aid Than Their Public Peers

- Private institutions in this sample provide consistently more merit and/or need-based aid to transfers than public universities.
- Among public institutions in this sample, there is wide variation in the amount of financial aid provided to transfer students.

Public and Private Institutions Have Similar Budgets for Transfer Marketing and Recruiting

- Surveyed institutions have budgets dedicated to transfer that are similar in size. In general, institutions in this sample spend less in marketing and recruiting transfer students compared to regional public and private universities.

Vendors Used More by Institutions Seeking Transfer Growth

31%

Of surveyed institutions seeking to **maintain** transfer enrollments use a 3rd party service

45%

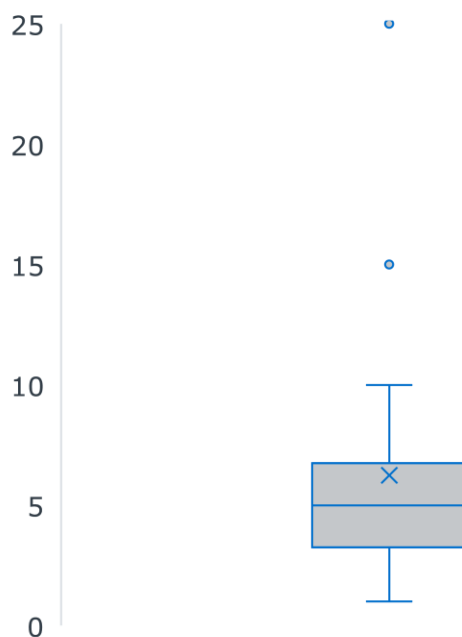
Of surveyed institutions seeking to **grow** transfer enrollments use a 3rd party service

Current Transfer Staffing and Future Staffing Plans

Most surveyed institutions have two to five staff dedicated to transfer. Two institutions, both public, were outliers in the sample. These schools had twenty-five and fifteen staff dedicated to transfer.

Most Surveyed Institutions Have Eight or Fewer Transfer Staff

How many staff members at your institution are dedicated to transfer



Publics Have More Staff Than Privates

7

Average transfer staff at surveyed public institutions
n = 15

3

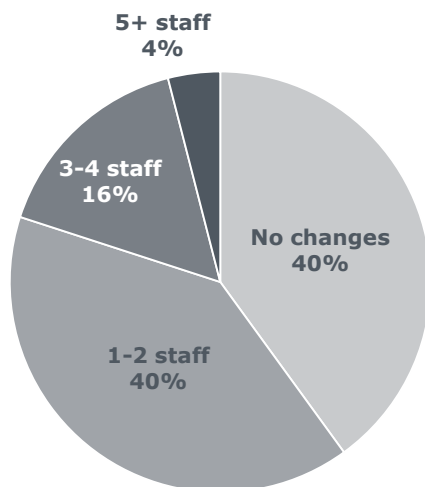
Average transfer staff at surveyed private institutions
n = 10

Plans to invest in additional transfer staff are influenced by goals for transfer enrollments. Survey participants seeking growth plan to increase transfer staff, and most respondents seeking to maintain transfer enrollments will not.

However, one third of survey participants trying to maintain transfer populations plan to grow transfer FTEs by one or more staff.

Institutions Seeking Transfer Growth Plan to Add FTEs

How many additional FTEs do you plan to dedicate to transfer within the next 1 to 3 years?



Privates Growing Transfer Staff More Than Publics

60%

Of privates plan to grow transfer staff by at least 1 FTE
n = 10

40%

Of publics plan to grow transfer staff by at least 1 FTE
n = 15

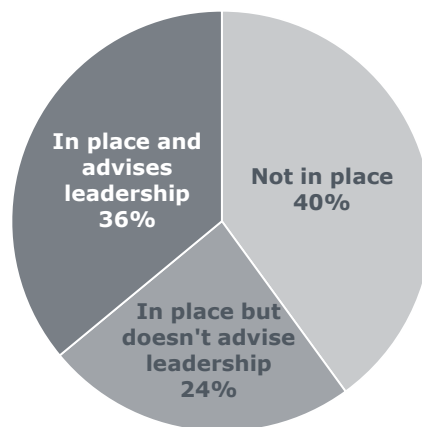
Cross-Functional Transfer Committees

Survey participants seeking to grow transfer enrollments have a cross-functional committee in place 75 percent of the time. Those seeking to maintain enrollments have one in place 46 percent of the time.

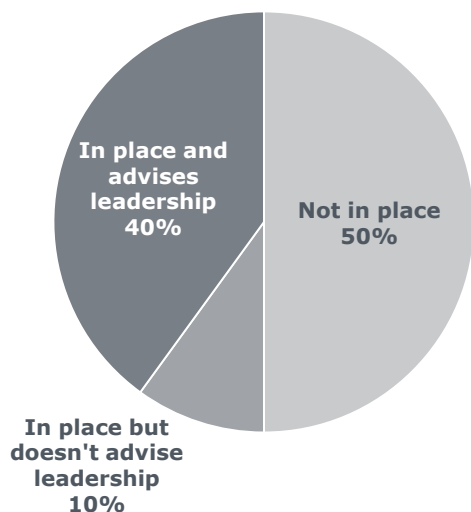
Half of private institutions that were surveyed do not have a cross-functional enrollment management committee compared to 34 percent of publics.

Cross-Functional Committees May Help Institutions Grow Transfer Enrollments to Desired Levels

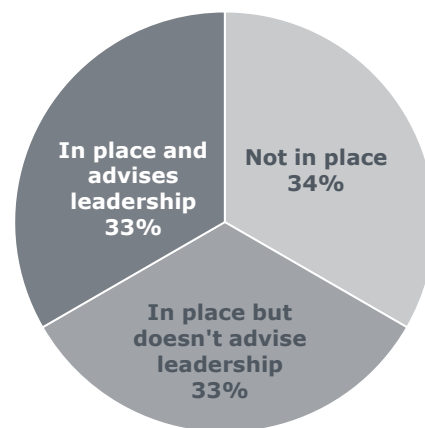
A cross-functional enrollment management committee with a transfer charge is...



Private
n = 10



Public
n = 15

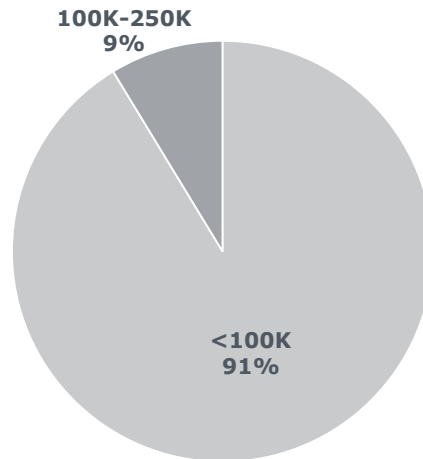


Budget Size and Use of Third-Party Services

Most surveyed institutions spend less than \$100,000 on transfer marketing and recruiting. Only two survey participants have transfer marketing budgets higher than \$100K; one public and one private. Both seek to grow transfer enrollments.

Most Surveyed Institutions Have Similar Budget Sizes

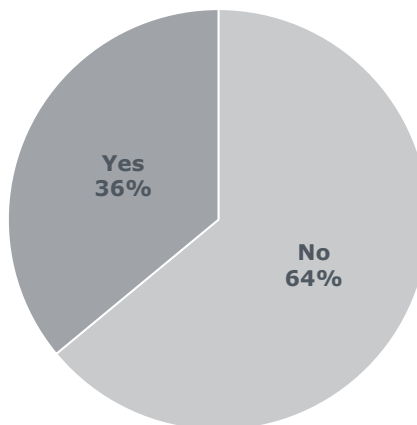
What is the size of the budget allocated to transfer marketing and recruiting at your institution?



More private institutions use a 3rd party service compared to publics. Because surveyed private institutions on average have fewer staff dedicated to transfer, they may rely on third party services more than publics.

Most Surveyed Institutions Do Not Use 3rd Party Transfer Services

Do you partner with a third party to assist with transfer student identification, recruitment, and enrollment?



Privates Use a 3rd Party Most Often

60%

Of privates use a third party transfer service
n = 10

20%

Of publics use a third party transfer service
n = 15

Publics and Privates Vary Greatly on Aid Awarded

Nearly half of surveyed institutions provide incoming transfer students with \$10,000 or more in financial aid. All private institutions in the survey sample offer aid packages of at least \$10,000, likely because the cost of attendance at these private institutions is higher, on average, than at a public university.

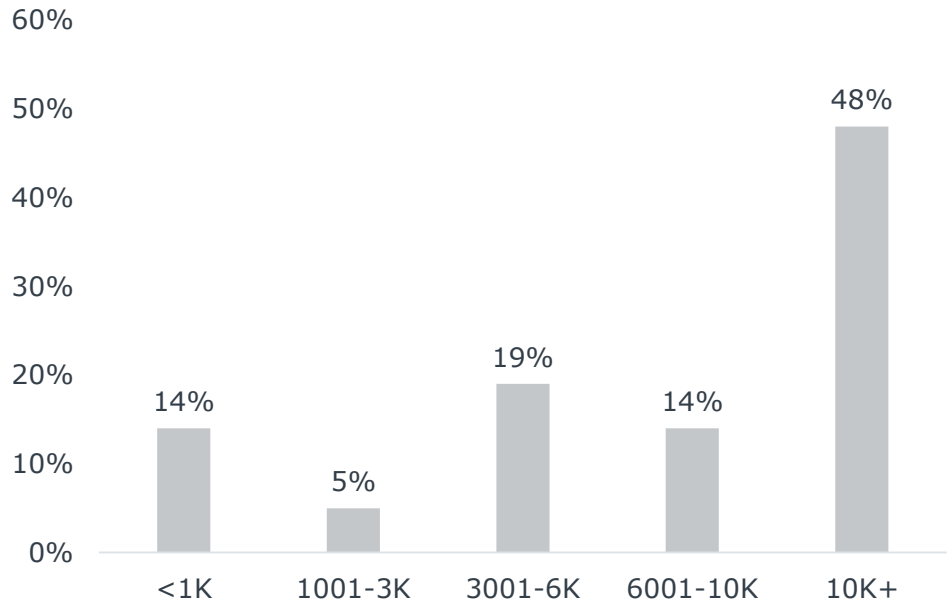
The amount of financial aid given to students transferring to public institutions substantially varies. Most publics offer transfer students \$3000 or more in financial aid.

Thirty percent of privates and 44 percent of publics plan to increase aid given.

Sixty-six percent of institutions seeking to grow transfer enrollment plan to increase the amount of aid given.

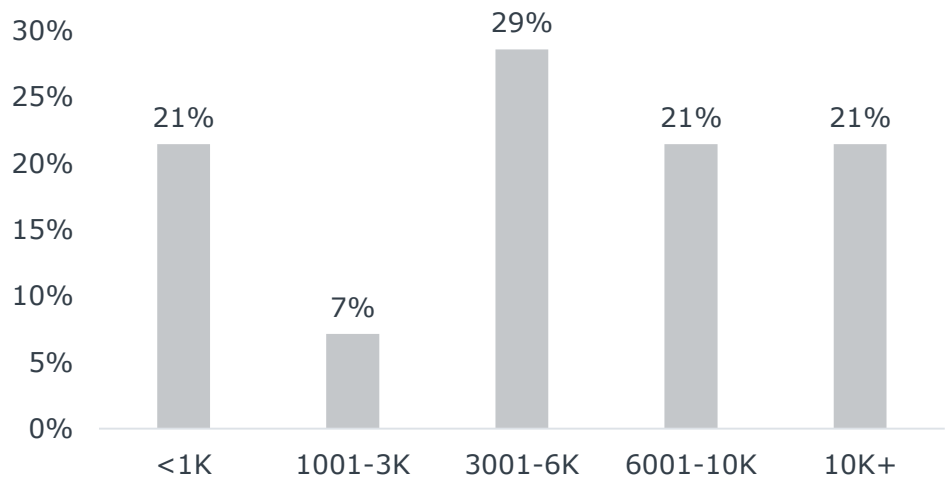
Privates Consistently Provide the Highest Amounts of Aid; Publics Vary Considerably

What is the average financial aid award (need and/or merit) a new transfer student receives?



100%
of surveyed privates provide \$10K or more in scholarships for transfers

Average Transfer Financial Aid Award, Publics Only





Working with Academic Partners

- Satisfaction with Academic Affairs Partnerships
- Transcript Reviews & Policies
- Credit Articulation Estimates
- Challenges With Articulation

SECTION

4

Key Findings on Working with Academic Partners

Critical Areas for Enhancing Transfer Friendliness

Articulation Is Challenging for Most Survey Participants, Especially Those Seeking Transfer Growth

- Seventy-four percent of surveyed institutions identified at least one challenge with articulation agreements.
- Surveyed institutions seeking to grow transfer populations are currently experiencing the most challenge with two-year college articulation agreements. Of these, over half have out-of-date agreements that don't optimize credit transfer.

Credit Estimates and Transcript Reviews Pose an Obstacle to Transfer

- Few institutions reported that their credit recognition and transcript review policies were easy to access online; at most institutions, both public and private, policies were difficult for prospective transfer students to find online.



Credit Evaluation Estimates Are Most Often Provided After Admissions Decisions

- One quarter of surveyed institutions provide official credit evaluation estimates before or when the admission decision is delivered to the student.

A Course Equivalency Policy Is in Place at Most Surveyed Public Institutions

- Sixty percent of publics in this sample have a consistent course equivalency policy in place and make consistent decisions about accepting credit; privates are evenly split, with one third that has consistent policy decisions, one third that has inconsistent decisions, and one third that has no policy in place.
- Seventeen percent of all surveyed institutions don't have formal course equivalency policies in place.

Academic Affairs Partnerships Are Somewhat Satisfactory

- Most survey respondents are "somewhat satisfied" with advising for transfer students, course equivalency turnaround time, making two- to four-year pathways, and flexibility in articulation standards.

Challenges with Articulation Agreements

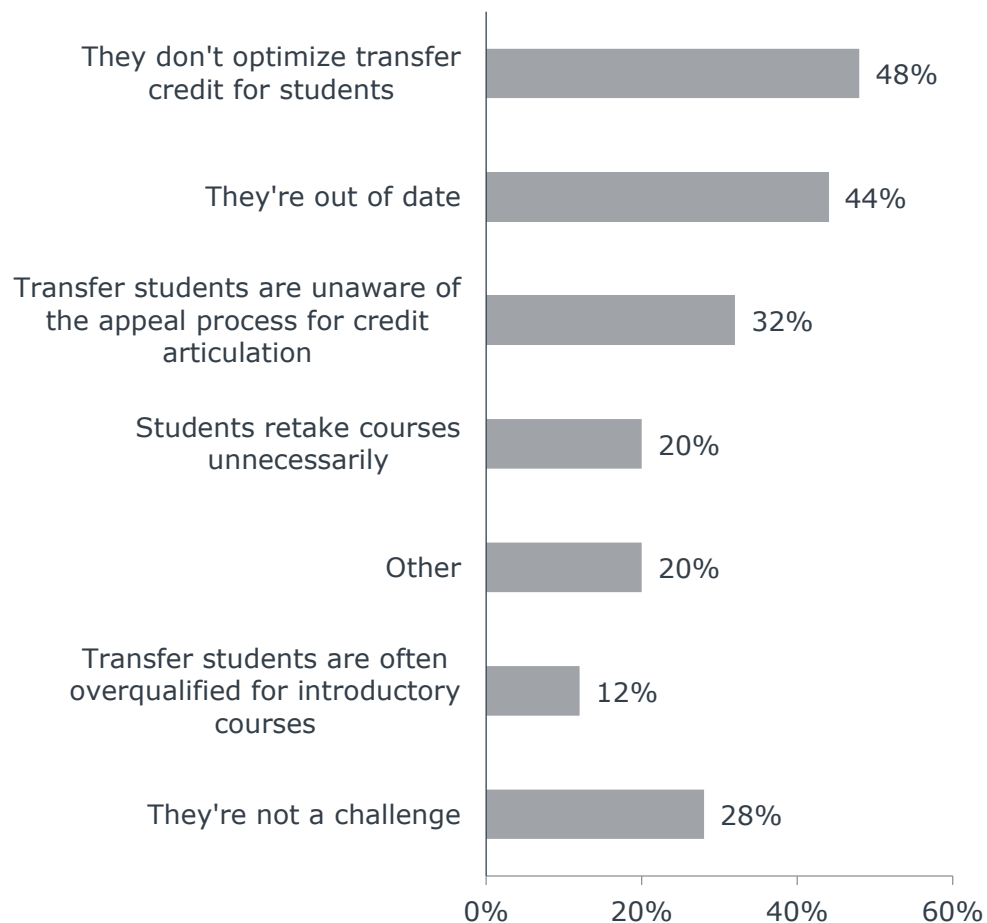
Nearly half of surveyed institutions reported having articulation agreements that are out of date and don't optimize credit for transfer students. At nearly one third of surveyed institutions, transfer students are unaware of the appeal process for credit articulation. Forty-five percent of private institutions cited this as a challenge compared to 19 percent of respondents at public institutions.

More public than private institutions reported that transfer students take courses unnecessarily with 25 percent of publics identifying this as a challenge compared to 9 percent of respondents at private institutions.

For over one quarter of survey respondents, articulation agreements are not a challenge.

Articulation Agreements That Don't Optimize Transfer Credit Is the Challenge Cited by Most Survey Participants

What, if any, pain points are you experiencing related to articulation? (select all that apply)



Transfer Credit Review and Course Equivalency Policy

Few institutions reported having easy to find credit recognition and transcript review policies for students online.

Fifty percent of private institutions and 21 percent of public institutions reported that transcript review and transfer credit policies are not available online.

Forty percent of privates and 50 percent of publics reported they were available online, but hard to find.

Improving the speed and accuracy of preliminary transfer credit reviews can drive increased enrollments and is an opportunity for improvement for most of the survey participants.

Half of surveyed institutions have a consistent course equivalency policy in place. Most publics (60 percent) have a consistent course equivalency policy in place, while one third of privates do as well.

Seventeen percent of surveyed institutions don't have a formal course equivalency policy in place and decisions are managed inconsistently.

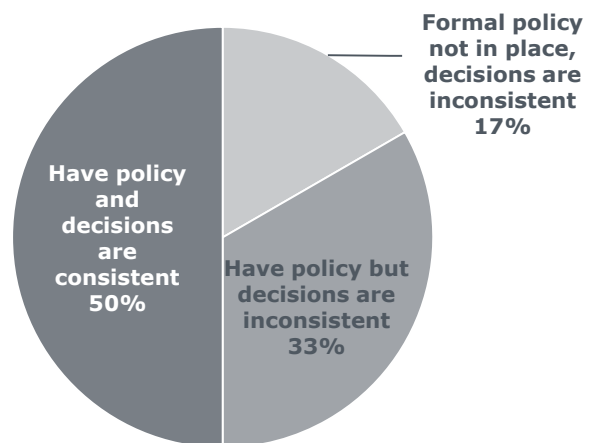
Most Transfer Credit Reviews and Policies Are Hard to Find or Unavailable Online

Transcript review and transfer credit recognition policies are:



Half of Surveyed Institutions Have a Consistent Equivalency Policy

Which statement best describes formal course equivalency policy at your institution?



Official and Unofficial Credit Articulation Estimates

Providing credit articulation estimates quickly and accurately is a key element of making the transfer process easier for prospective students. Just half of participating institutions provided unofficial credit estimates consistently prior to enrollment deposit.

Only one institution reported providing real-time, self-service articulation estimates for prospective students.

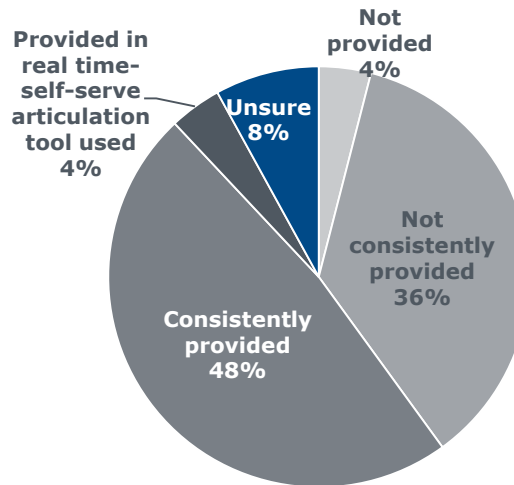
Website tools can help deliver unofficial estimates to prospective students; 33 percent of surveyed private institutions have a tool on their website compared to 66 percent of public institutions.

Only 25 percent of surveyed institutions provide official credit estimates before or when the admission decision is delivered to the student. Providing official credit estimates early in the admissions process provides a competitive advantage in recruiting transfer students by making it clear to students what their time to degree completion will be.

Eighty-seven percent of publics and 50 percent of privates give credit estimates after the admissions decision.

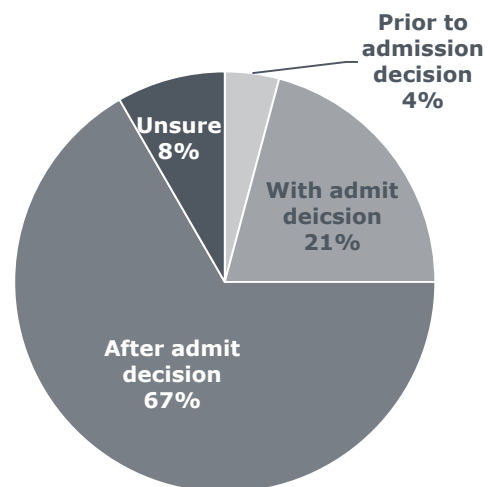
Half of Institutions Provide Unofficial Credit Estimates Consistently

Prior to enrollment deposit, unofficial credit evaluations are:



Most Official Credit Estimates Are Provided After Acceptance

Official credit evaluations are provided:



Academic Affairs Partnerships Is An Area to Improve

Most survey respondents are somewhat satisfied with their academic affairs partnerships. However, low rates of full satisfaction show there's progress to be made to make these partnerships more successful.

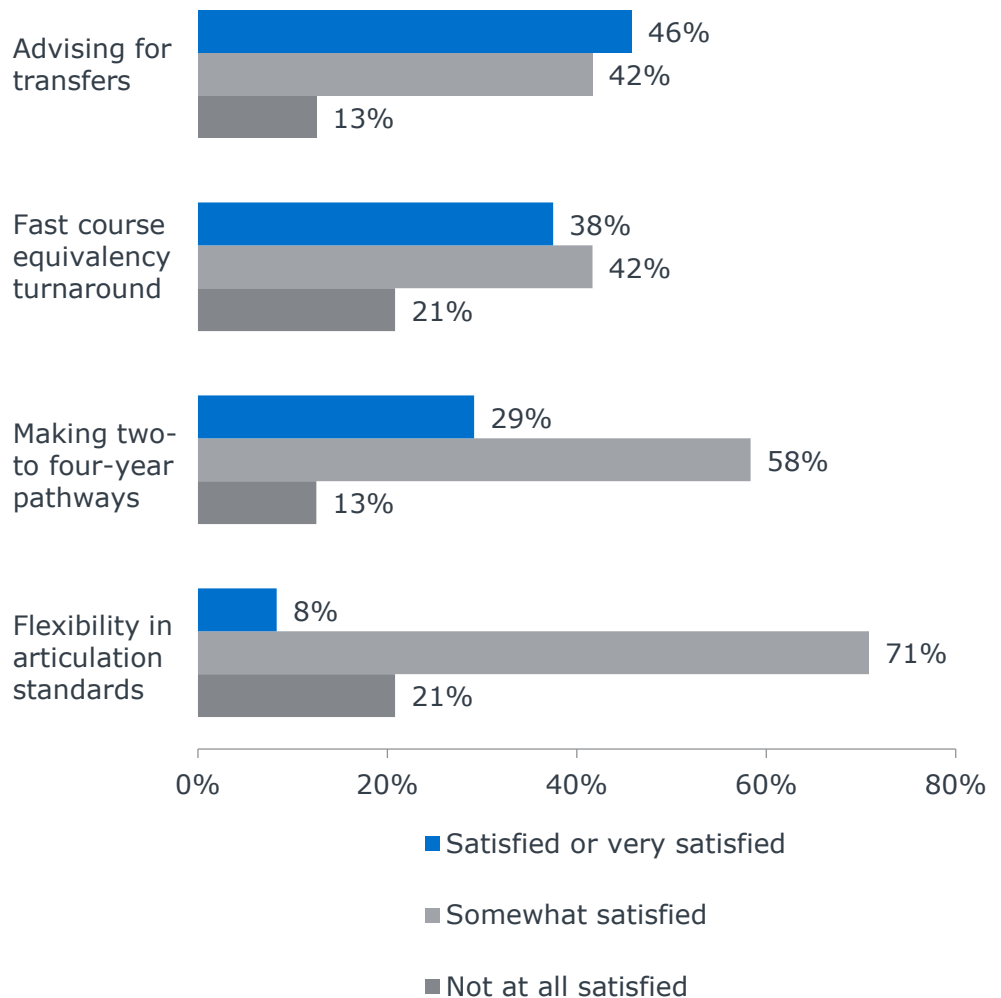
The category with the least satisfaction for enrollment managers is flexibility in articulation standards, with only eight percent of survey participants reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied; seventy-one percent of respondents were somewhat satisfied with this.

Survey respondents are most satisfied with advising for transfer students, with about 46 percent of respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied.

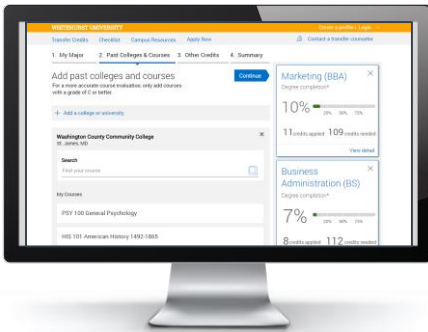
However, when broken out by institutional sector, 60 percent of public institutions reported being satisfied or very satisfied with academic advising compared to only 30 percent of private institutions.

Survey Respondents Are Mostly Satisfied with Advising, but Two-Year Pathways and Articulation Standards Are Unsatisfactory

How satisfied are you working with academic affairs partners in the following areas:



EAB Resources for Transfer



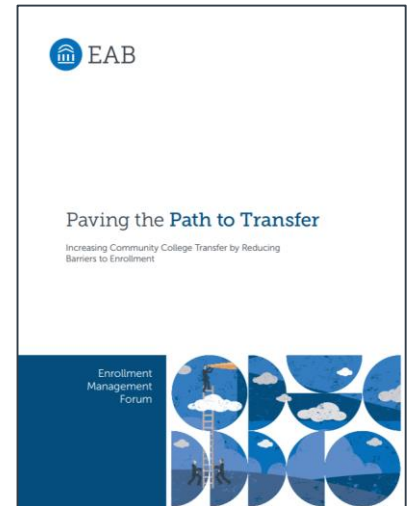
Improve Transfer Success with EAB's Transfer Portal

The Transfer Portal is a student-facing technology designed to meet prospective transfer students where they are. Fueled by SIS and Degree Audit data, the Portal offers prospects real-time credit estimates, best-fit major recommendations, and customized application support to answer their key questions and guide them to apply. An admissions-facing dashboard provides unparalleled insight into your pipeline to help identify and engage with prospects earlier and inform your recruitment strategy.



A Compendium of EAB's Research and Insights on Transfer

Our research helps members enhance the recruiting, application, and college experience of transfer students, through expert advice on streamlining processes (like credit evaluation), eliminating bias toward transfer students, partnering with community colleges, and preparing transfer students for academic success.



Best Practices for Increasing Community College Transfer

This study identifies eight best practices on how enrollment managers can grow transfer enrollment. Learn how conventional recruitment, application, and admission processes fail to address transfer students' leading concerns as they consider the four-year option and what enrollment offices can do to reduce barriers and expand the recruitment funnel.



We help schools support students
from enrollment to graduation and beyond

> Find and enroll your
right-fit students

> Support and graduate
more students



> Prepare your institution
for the future

⊗ **ROOTED IN RESEARCH**

7,500+ Peer-tested
best practices

500+ Enrollment innovations
tested annually

⊗ **ADVANTAGE OF SCALE**

1,500+ Institutions
served

3.7 M+ Students supported
by our SSMS

⊗ **WE DELIVER RESULTS**

95% Of our partners continue
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