CSM TRANSFERS STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

A primary mission of the College of San Mateo [CSM] is to provide lower division academic programs enabling students to transfer. This report focuses on the number of CSM students transferring to one of the eight campuses of the University of California [UC] or one of the twenty-two campuses of the California State University [CSU], 1986/87 - 1993/94. The data presented here are the most currently available from UC and CSU.

Prior to analyzing transfer data, it is important to note that students enroll with varying educational objectives--many of which are not related to transfer. Unlike four-year institutions, CSM offers not only a curriculum leading to the baccalaureate degree, but also curricula for those seeking workforce preparation, career renewal, acquisition of basic computational and English language skills, and personal enrichment.

The major purpose of this report is to document trends in the number of CSM transfer students. The report does not explore the multitude of internal and external forces affecting transfer. Moreover, the report does not address what can be done to enhance CSM students’ access to universities. The data presented are intended to serve as the starting point for future evaluative studies of the transfer function at CSM.

CAVEATS

The data presented undercount the number of CSM students who transfer to postsecondary educational institutions. This undercounting is largely a function of the transfer accounting procedures of the California Postsecondary Education Commission [CPEC]--the agency responsible for monitoring the transfer function for the State of California. CPEC’s calculations undervalue the transfer efforts of the Community Colleges in a number of ways.

First, only the UC and CSU provide transfer data. Many students transfer to the more than 350 private colleges and universities located within California and more than 2,000 postsecondary institutions located outside the State of California. Unfortunately, this transfer data is not available.

Figure 1

CSM TRANSFERS TO UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
1986/87 - 1993/94
Second, transfer data is undercounted insofar as approximately 25 per cent of SMCCCD transfer applicants to UC and CSU decline offers of admission. In other words, an additional 180 CSM students applied to and were admitted to a UC or CSU campus in 1993/94—b ut chose to enroll at other postsecondary institutions. Although these students declined offers of admission to UC or CSU, CSM was clearly successful in assisting students to transfer.

Third, CPEC transfer data is based on reports provided by individual UC and CSU campuses regarding the number of students who were reported to have completed 12 or more Community College units. Campus reports vary in terms of the criteria used to determine who is a transfer student vs. an entering freshman.

For example, many students admitted to a UC or CSU campus directly upon high school graduation enroll in Community College course work during the Summer and/or Fall semesters prior to matriculation.

The Community College providing this course work is overlooked by CPEC transfer reports.

In addition, large numbers of students in urban areas attend several Community Colleges in more than one district prior to transfer, depending on convenience and availability of course offerings. As a result of such inconsistencies, many Community Colleges do not receive credit for assisting students to transfer.

**CSM TRANSFERS 1986/87 - 1993/94: AN OVERVIEW**

Figures 1 and 2 display the total number of students transferring to the UC and CSU from CSM, 1986/87 - 1993/94. These data indicate the following:

- 163 students transferred to UC and 557 to CSU in 1993/94. Compared to base year data for 1986/87, the number transferring to UC has increased by 41.7% [Figure 1] while the number of CSU transfers has declined by 32.1% [Figure 2].
- The total number of CSM transfers to both UC
and CSU declined by 23.0% [-215 students].

- This decline compares with an increase in total CSM enrollment during a comparable period of time. Using total enrollment figures two years prior to transfer as the base [i.e., Fall 1984 and Fall 1991], CSM enrollment increased by 12.3%.

**CSM TRANSFERS TO UC & CSU: ETHNICITY**

Figures 3 and 4 present transfer data by ethnicity for three consecutive academic years, 1991/92 - 1993/94. [The following data are for 1993/94.]

- UC Transfers: African American, 1.2%; Asian, 35.0%; Filipino, 5.5%; Hispanic, 7.4%; Native American, 0.0%; White, 46.0%; and Other, 4.9%. [See Figure 3]
- CSU Transfers: African American, 2.2%; Asian, 12.7%; Filipino, 5.9%; Hispanic, 11.7%; Native American, 0.5%; White, 46.9%; and Other, 20.1%. [See Figure 4]

**ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE TOTAL CSM STUDENT POPULATION**

In order to provide a context for the above data, the ethnicity distribution of the total CSM student population from Fall 1991 is shown in Figure 5. [Fall 1991 is the base year for comparison as most students are enrolled for at least two years before transferring.]

- CSM Total Enrollment: African American, 3.6%; Asian, 13.1%; Filipino, 5.4%; Hispanic, 11.8%; Native American, 0.7%; White, 63.5%; Other, 1.9%.
- UC Transfers: All ethnic groups—with the exception of Asians—transfer in numbers less than their proportional share of total CSM enrollment. [See Figures 3 and 5]
- CSU Transfers: With the exception of White students, all ethnic groups transfer in numbers that roughly approximate their proportional share of total CSM enrollment. [See Figures 4 and 5]
- Asian and White students comprise 59.6% of the transfers to CSU and 81.0% of the transfers to UC. This pattern closely reflects Statewide data regarding community college transfers.
- The decline in the number of African American students transferring to UC since 1991/92 is of concern. However, it is important to note that UC admitted only 306 African American transfer students from the entire California Community College system in 1993/94.

**TRANSFER STUDENTS: A STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE**

In 1960, the California State Legislature passed the Master Plan for Higher Education. This legislation specifically sought to assure a place in California’s higher education system for all citizens motivated to pursue postsecondary education. The Master Plan identifies transfer as the “cornerstone” of California’s system of public higher education. The ideals embodied in the 1960 Master Plan have largely become reality:

- Each year, more than 55,000 Community College students transfer to UC and CSU.
- 50.2% of all CSU baccalaureate degrees awarded in 1994 went to transfer students.
- 27.9% of all UC baccalaureate degrees awarded in 1994 went to transfer students.

Beyond this, numerous factors affect the enrollment of transfer students at UC and CSU:

- Enrollment management restrictions placed on
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Figure 5
FALL 1991 CSM TOTAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY ETHNICITY
[Context: Point of comparison for 1993/94 transfer population]
N = 15,167

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASIAN</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISPANIC</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIVE AMERICAN</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FILIPINO</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFRICAN AMERICAN</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIVE AMERICAN</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

Why are there variations in the patterns of transfer and the absolute number of CSM transfer students to UC and CSU? Similarly, why are there ethnic variations in transfer? The changing nature of the educational objectives of new students is a factor. Socioeconomic variations are also important. Numerous studies demonstrate success in transfer is strongly influenced by family background, parental education, academic preparation, and income.

It remains to be determined the implications of these differences for developing new transfer programs, modifying existing ones, or marketing our programs differently. More research is needed to assess college mechanisms for identifying and counseling potential transfer students, determining their transfer rates, and monitoring student progress through completion of their lower-division curriculum.

It is beyond the scope of this report to answer the above questions. Similarly, it is not the intention of this report to develop or propose an assessment indicator of the transfer function. It is clear, however, that multiple indicators of institutional effectiveness in terms of transfer success are needed.

Any measure of transfer effectiveness must take into account the diversity of missions of a comprehensive community college which attracts and enrolls students with transfer potential, students with vocational and other career-related objectives, as well as students with both short-term academic and non-academic goals.

total transfer enrollment at UC and CSU;
• Continually changing transfer requirements;
• The number of openings in a student’s transfer major program;
• Availability of scholarships, financial aid, and housing;
• Varying transfer outreach and recruitment efforts by individual UC and CSU campuses; and
• Competing family and employment commitments of potential transfer students.

TRANSFER STUDENTS: A CSM PERSPECTIVE

Overall, the increase in transfers to UC speaks well of the academic preparation and support services which students receive at CSM. It is worth noting that nearly all of these transfer students were not eligible for admission to UC after initially completing their high school studies.

At the same time, the overall number of CSM transfers to CSU has declined. While many internal and external factors are at work, part of the decline can be attributed to changes in educational finance brought about by California’s economic recession of the early 1990’s. The impact of this fiscal malaise is reflected in a 12 per cent decline in total CSU enrollment [44,000 students] between 1990 and 1993--many of whom would have been transfer students.

The number of high school graduates in San Mateo County has declined during this period. Moreover, a greater proportion of San Mateo County high school graduates enroll directly in four-year colleges and universities than their Statewide counterparts: 61% vs. 53%. However, San Mateo County K-8 enrollments increased by approximately 10% between 1990 and 1993. These enrollment increases portend a potential increased demand for CSM transfer programs.

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