

Texas General Academic Institutions: Increasing Successful Community College Transfer

**A Report to the Texas Legislature per House Bill 1,
86th Texas Legislature**

Fall 2020

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Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board



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Agency Mission

The mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is to provide leadership and coordination for Texas higher education and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through *60x30TX*, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.

Agency Vision

The THECB will be recognized as an international leader in developing and implementing innovative higher education policy to accomplish our mission.

Agency Philosophy

The THECB will promote access to and success in quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access and success without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access and success is unacceptable.

The THECB's core values are:

Accountability: We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.

Efficiency: We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.

Collaboration: We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.

Excellence: We strive for excellence in all our endeavors.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

Please cite this report as follows: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2020). Texas general academic institutions: Increasing successful community college transfer. Austin, TX.

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Executive Summary

Legislative Directive

The General Appropriations Act, House Bill 1, Article III-275, Section 49, 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, for the 2020-21 biennium directs the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to conduct an analysis of Texas public general academic institutions (GAIs)/universities transfer goals and practices. Section 49 requires the THECB to submit an annual report that describes the universities' efforts to increase the number, success, and persistence of Texas community college transfer students. Additionally, the legislation directs the THECB to provide GAIs performance data for community college transfer students and native students by institution and provide recommendations. The report is submitted to the Governor's Office, Senate Finance Committee, House Appropriations Committee, and the Legislative Budget Board on November 1.

This report fulfills the requirements of Article III-275, Section 49, which is included as Appendix B.

Methodology

The legislative directive requires Texas public universities to provide information about institutional transfer goals and practices to the THECB on an annual basis. In addition to using existing institutional data, the THECB staff also surveys the state's 37 public universities to better understand new approaches and emerging efforts related to transfer. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix C, and the complete responses received from each university are included in Appendix D. This report provides a snapshot of university outreach efforts and strategies and enrollment patterns, whether the students are new to higher education or transitioning from the community colleges. First-time-in-college undergraduates (FTUGs) and community college transfer students represent different proportions of the fall 2018 new student populations at the universities.

THECB staff analyzed survey responses to identify common themes related to transfer and analyzed GAIs' performance data. The performance data includes completion rates and time to degree at the GAIs for native students (students who started and continued their enrollment at a GAI) and community college transfer students (students who started at a community college and transferred to a GAI). As in previous reports, a cohort of native and community college transfer students classified as juniors is tracked for a specific time. This report includes data about the cohort of native and community college transfer students from fall 2014 through spring 2018.

Findings

Survey Responses. The analysis of the survey responses is summarized to provide an overview of efforts and strategies Texas GAIs have in place to improve transfer for community college students. More than half of the GAIs have goals specific to community college transfer students. For the remaining GAIs, community college students are not tracked separately from other transfer or freshman students.

University recruitment on community college campuses remains the most frequently implemented outreach effort. All GAIs reported participating in transfer fairs on community college campuses. In addition, all but one of the GAIs make regular publicized recruiter visits and have information booths to meet individually with potential transfer students. Another strategy GAIs implemented is to occupy office space with a permanent recruiter on a community college campus. More than one-third of the GAIs reported having a permanent presence on a community college campus.

Public universities are present on community college campuses to recruit, academically advise, and guide community college students through the transfer process.

Institutions have many articulation agreements, but also question how well the agreements address issues and challenges related to transfer.

GAIs also work with community college faculty and administrators to develop clear transfer pathways for community college students. GAIs report being partners in many articulation agreements (1,089 academic agreements and 515 workforce agreements). However, there is a common recognition that the development and maintenance of these agreements pose challenges. Some GAIs expressed doubt about the efficacy of multiple agreements.

GAIs reported that orientations experiences acclimate transfer students to their new institutions. GAIs continue to add to the number of activities and kinds of services introduced to students during orientation. Academic advising is often one of the services provided during orientation, although it occurs at other times, too. Most (92%) of GAIs require new transfer students attend mandatory advising specifically for transfer students. GAIs also report training advisors to develop expertise for assisting transfer students. Often at orientation, transfer students learn about student support programs, like tutoring, mental health counseling, learning communities, and student success offices. Most GAIs use a variety of programs to support students and promote their academic success. However, most of these programs are available to all students and not designed specifically for transfer students.

GAIs reported widespread faculty awareness of the state's mandated 42 semester credit hours of general education courses, the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC). Faculty awareness is far lower for the statewide initiative Field of Study Curriculum (FOSC) and was not widespread for the course alignment efforts of the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* (ACGM).

All GAIs participate in the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS). A majority (54%) of GAIs adopt the common numbers for some of their lower-division courses. The rest of the GAIs provide a crosswalk or provide the common number beside the institutional number to identify their courses that are in the TCCNS.

All public universities participate in the TCCNS, but not all lower-division courses offered by universities are in the TCCNS.

Seventy-one percent of GAIs' core curriculum courses are TCCNS courses. The range for the percent of TCCNS courses in the GAIs core curriculum ranges from 34 to 100%.

GAIs expressed a need to ensure that community college students who intend to transfer receive student-centric academic advising and planning.

GAIs responses indicated barriers to transfer included advising, academic planning, and courses that were not applicable to the major. Among the top-ranked barriers, only one was unrelated to advising and academic planning – lack of financial aid for transfer students.

Performance Data. The analysis of the performance data from reports submitted routinely by institutions is organized to provide information about enrollments, the rate at which students graduate, and how long it takes them to earn their bachelor's degrees at a GAIs. GAIs processed more applications for first-time-in-college students (169,378) than community college transfer students (32,183) in fall 2018. However, the percentage of community college transfer students that were accepted and enrolled was greater, at 71%, compared with 50% for new freshmen at universities.

The Emerging Research institutions (THECB Accountability System peer group) continue to be the top destination for community college transfer students, with 52% of the fall 2018 class of new community college transfer students enrolling at one of those eight institutions. Among the peer groups, the largest proportion of community college transfer students in the institutions' new student populations is found at the GAIs designated as Master's Institutions.

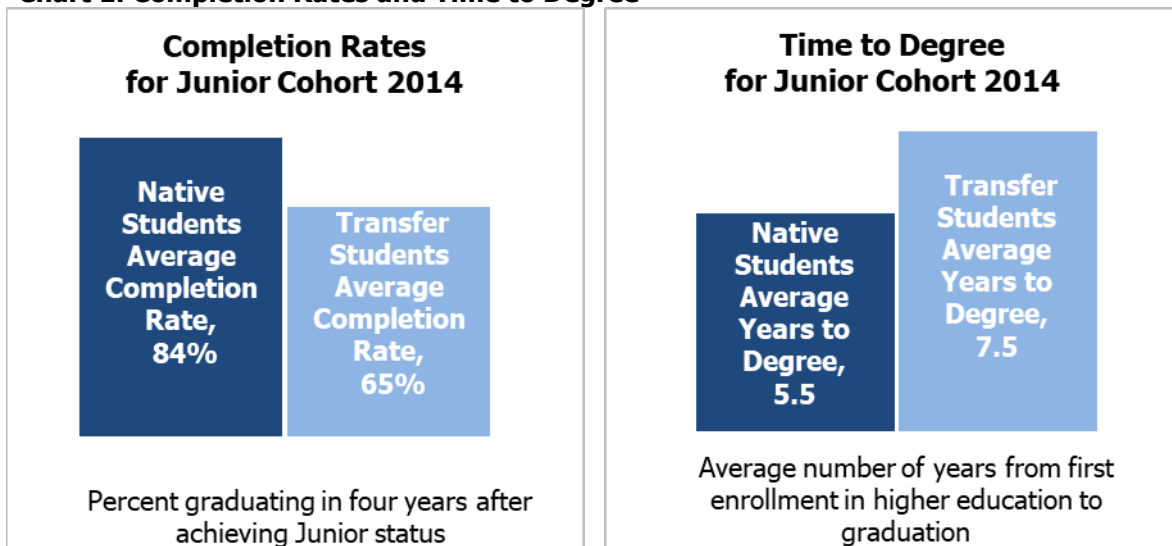
More than half the community college students transferring to a public university enrolled at one of the eight Emerging Research institutions:

<i>Texas State</i>	<i>UT-El Paso</i>
<i>Texas Tech</i>	<i>UT-San Antonio</i>
<i>UT-Arlington</i>	<i>University of Houston</i>
<i>UT-Dallas</i>	<i>University of North Texas</i>

In terms of performance data for the GAIs, the statewide completion rate for community college transfer students in the junior cohort of the report study was 65%, compared with 84% for native juniors. This is consistent with the completion rate of previous years.

The time to degree for the community college transfer students in the junior cohort was 7.5 years, compared to 5.5 for native students. The time to degree for the two groups is consistent with the time to degree of previous years.

Chart 1. Completion Rates and Time to Degree



The community college transfer students took longer to achieve junior level status than did native students. Once they entered the university, community college transfer students in the cohort who graduated with bachelor's degrees, completed their degrees in approximately the same time as their native cohort peers. Junior native students graduating in four years completed their degrees on average in 3 years after reaching junior status, and junior transfer students completed their degrees in 3.2 years on average after transferring.

Conclusion

GAIs use many different programs and strategies to attract, advise, and graduate students including customized efforts for community college students. Statewide the THECB has launched initiatives to clarify and facilitate the transfer process. Even so, community college transfer students graduate with bachelor's degrees at a lower rate of completion and take longer to do so than students who start and graduate from the same university. This difference between transfers and natives has been confirmed each year of the study of the junior cohort selected from reported data.

Improving completion rates and reducing the difference in time to degree between native and community college transfer students needs to be addressed through the combined efforts of both Texas public universities and community colleges. Texas public community colleges, GAIs, and students are likely to do things differently with the passage of Senate Bill 25 (SB 25) by the 86th Texas Legislature. The 2019 higher education transfer bill includes many changes intended to improve transfer, including:

- earlier degree planning,
- greater awareness of applicability of specific courses,
- clarification of degree requirements and the sequence of courses to complete a degree,
- better and more easily exchanged student information,
- expanded funding for dual credit courses, and
- another look at the core curriculum.

Collaboration and commitment among institutions, and clarity in messages to students about degree completion are key elements to improve transfer moving forward.

At the state level, encouraging the use of existing mechanisms, such as common course numbering, course alignment through the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project, curriculum alignment through approved mechanisms, and the Texas Core Curriculum will be important to foster continued improvement in student transfer.

Recommendation: The THECB should continue to seek ways to serve as a resource for students to better understand educational pathways and for Texas higher education institutions to provide a platform to foster the development of smooth transfer pathways.

Introduction

Legislative Directive

The General Appropriations Act, House Bill 1, Article III-275, Section 49, 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, for the 2020-21 biennium directs the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to conduct an analysis of Texas public general academic institutions (GAIs)/universities transfer goals and practices. Section 49 requires the THECB to submit an annual report that describes the universities' efforts to increase the number, success, and persistence of Texas community college transfer students. Additionally, the legislation directs the THECB to provide GAIs performance data for community college transfer students and native students by institution and provide recommendations. The report is submitted to the Governor's Office, Senate Finance Committee, House Appropriations Committee, and the Legislative Budget Board on November 1.

This report fulfills the requirements of Article III-275, Section 49, which is included as Appendix B.

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The legislative directive requires Texas public universities to provide information about institutional transfer goals and practices to the THECB on an annual basis. In addition to using existing institutional data, the THECB staff also surveys the state's 37 public universities to better understand new approaches and emerging efforts related to transfer. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix C, and the complete responses received from each university are included in Appendix D. This report provides a snapshot of university outreach efforts and strategies and enrollment patterns, whether the students are new to higher education or transitioning from the community colleges. First-time-in-college undergraduates (FTUGs) and community college transfer students represent different proportions of the fall 2018 new student populations at the universities.

THECB staff analyzed survey responses to identify common themes related to transfer and analyzed GAIs' performance data. The performance data includes completion rates and time to degree at the GAIs for native students (students who started and continued their enrollment at a GAI) and community college transfer students (students who started at a community college and transferred to a GAI). As in previous reports, a cohort of native and community college transfer students classified as juniors is tracked for a specific time. This report includes data about the cohort of native students and community college transfer students from fall 2014 through spring 2018.

In June 2019, THECB staff surveyed the GAIs to gather information about their practices. Additionally, staff analyzed data from the Coordinating Board Management (CBM) reports to show performance by institution of community college transfer and native students.

Survey Responses. The GAIs survey responses provided information about institutional outreach efforts and services for transfer students. The survey solicited information about:

- goals for community college transfer student enrollment, retention, and graduation,
- articulation agreements,
- community college program enhancements,
- advising,

- website information,
- financial aid and scholarships,
- student success programs,
- degree program alignment, and
- participation and promotion of statewide initiatives aimed at smoothing and improving transfer for Texas students.

The survey also requested that institutions rank common barriers to transfer. THECB staff surveyed each Texas public university to understand institutional goals and document the following: 1) current practices serving community college transfer students, 2) barriers to student transfer, and 3) potential emerging issues. The survey responses from institutions are provided in Appendix D, and response comparisons are included in the “Analysis and Observations – Survey” section.

Performance Data. The analysis of the performance data from reports submitted routinely by institutions is organized to provide information about enrollments, the rate at which students graduate, and how long it takes them to earn their bachelor’s degrees at a GAIs. GAIs processed more applications for first-time-in-college students (169,378) than community college transfer students (32,183) in fall 2018. However, the percentage of community college transfer students that were accepted and enrolled was greater, at 71%, compared with 50% for new freshmen at universities.

The performance data included in this report shows an analysis of applications, acceptances, and student enrollments for fall 2018. This analysis compares first-time-in-college undergraduate (FTUG) students at Texas public universities and community college transfer students applying to and enrolling in Texas public universities for the first time. Application and enrollment data show the proportion of native to community college transfer students in an institution’s undergraduate population that were new to the institution at a single point in time – fall 2018. The data also show the differences in yield (movement from application to acceptance to enrollment) of the transfer and FTUG populations at each institution.

*The **completion rate** refers to the percentage of students within the same cohort group who graduated with a bachelor’s degree within the timeframe of study (four years from junior status).*

semesters, and the accumulated attempted semester credit hours (SCH) a student takes to complete a bachelor’s degree. Time to degree follows the student from first enrollment in higher education at a public university, or community college to graduation with a bachelor’s degree. Only graduates are included in the time-to-degree calculation.

Performance measures used in the report are “completion rates” and “time to degree.” The completion rate refers to the rate at which the same cohort of students graduated with a bachelor’s degree. Time to degree refers to the time in years, number of

***Time to degree** refers to the average time in years, number of semesters, and the accumulated attempted semester credit hours (SCH) students within the same cohort group take to complete a bachelor’s degree within the timeframe of the study.*

This report follows the performance, over time, of community college transfer students who reached junior-level status, based on a GAI’s determination, at enrollment. The report also follows each GAI’s native students who are classified as juniors during the same semester as the transfer students. The students included in the cohort are at the same point in their

academic progress toward a bachelor's degree. While the data analysis for this report, which looks at the transfer of Texas students from public two-year colleges to public universities, is only a portion of the much broader spectrum of student mobility, it is useful for comparison of student achievement and the time it takes students to reach the same milestones in their academic careers.

The report follows the cohort of junior students at public universities – continuing natives and new transfers in fall 2014 – and tracks them through spring 2018, the most recent certified data available at the time of writing the report. This allowed THECB staff to determine the completion rates and time to degree for four years from junior status to graduation. Performance data by institution compares native and community college transfer students and are presented in this report's tables and in the "Institutional Profiles" section. Texas public GAIs' data are displayed according to their peer group in the Texas Higher Education Accountability System to allow for similar size, mission, and academic offerings.

Context and limitations. While this report has a limited scope per the legislative rider (two-year to four-year and upper division public institutions) and involves a cohort data analysis, the institutional survey responses provide evidence of the complex challenges and the many variables that influence the movement and success of students. Concurrent with the recruitment, advising, and enrollment of Texas community college transfer students, Texas public universities must address the needs of students seeking to transfer from other public and private universities, both in and out of state; students from out-of-state two-year colleges; and students with international transcripts and global educational experiences. Many of those other students have attended multiple institutions before applying to the Texas public universities that may be their final destinations. Additionally, universities must advise their returning students, who may or may not return with transfer courses.

Seven Texas public GAIs have unique circumstances, which limit their reported student data for analysis for transfer students studied. Two Texas public institutions are upper-division level only: Sul Ross University-Rio Grande College (Sul Ross-Rio Grande) and Texas A&M University-Central Texas (TAMU-Central Texas). These two institutions offer no point of comparison between their native and transfer students since all their students are transfer students.

Five Texas public institutions originally started as upper-division only institutions but recently received authority to expand into the lower-division. These institutions are:

- Texas A&M University-San Antonio (TAMU-San Antonio), which admitted freshmen in 2016;
- University of Houston-Clear Lake (UH-Clear Lake), which admitted freshmen in 2014;
- University of Houston-Victoria (UH-Victoria), which admitted freshmen in 2010;
- Texas A&M University-Texarkana (TAMU-Texarkana), which admitted freshmen in 2010; and
- University of North Texas-Dallas (North Texas-Dallas), which admitted freshmen in 2009.

Data from TAMU-San Antonio and UH-Clear Lake do not allow for comparisons. The 2014 cohort of juniors' data for UH-Victoria, TAMU-Texarkana, and North Texas-Dallas provides limited comparison because the number of native students in the cohort is small.

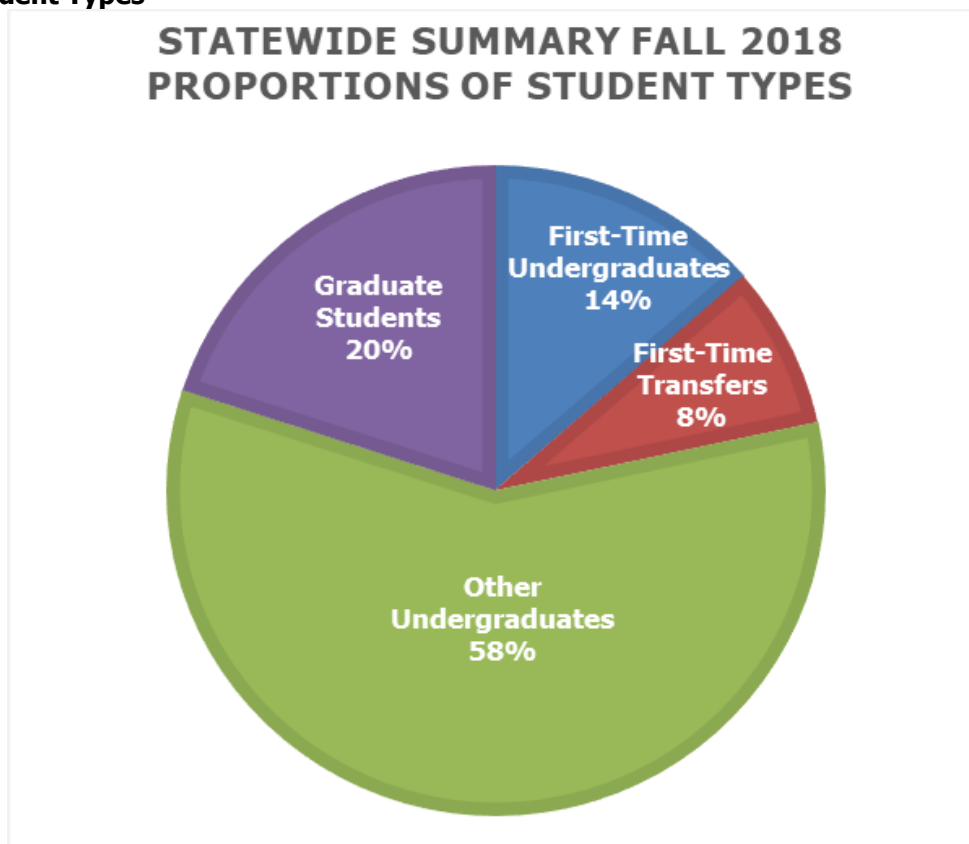
In terms of historical tracking of the student cohorts used for comparison, the separate institutions of The University of Texas-Pan American (UT-Pan American) and The University of Texas at Brownsville (UT-Brownsville) are included. These two institutions merged and became The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UT-RGV) and their fall 2018 admissions data and responses to the survey are included.

Analysis and Observations – Survey Responses

Institutional Goals for Community College Transfer Students' Success

Institutional goals for enrollment, retention, and graduation of community college transfer students are not universal at GAIs and may relate to the broader categories into which students fall. Community college transfer students may stand out as a part of the larger group of first-time transfers only the first semester of their enrollment. Once community college transfer students return for the second semester, they fall into the larger category of "other undergraduates" along with the continuing freshmen, readmitted, and returning students.

Chart 2. Student Types



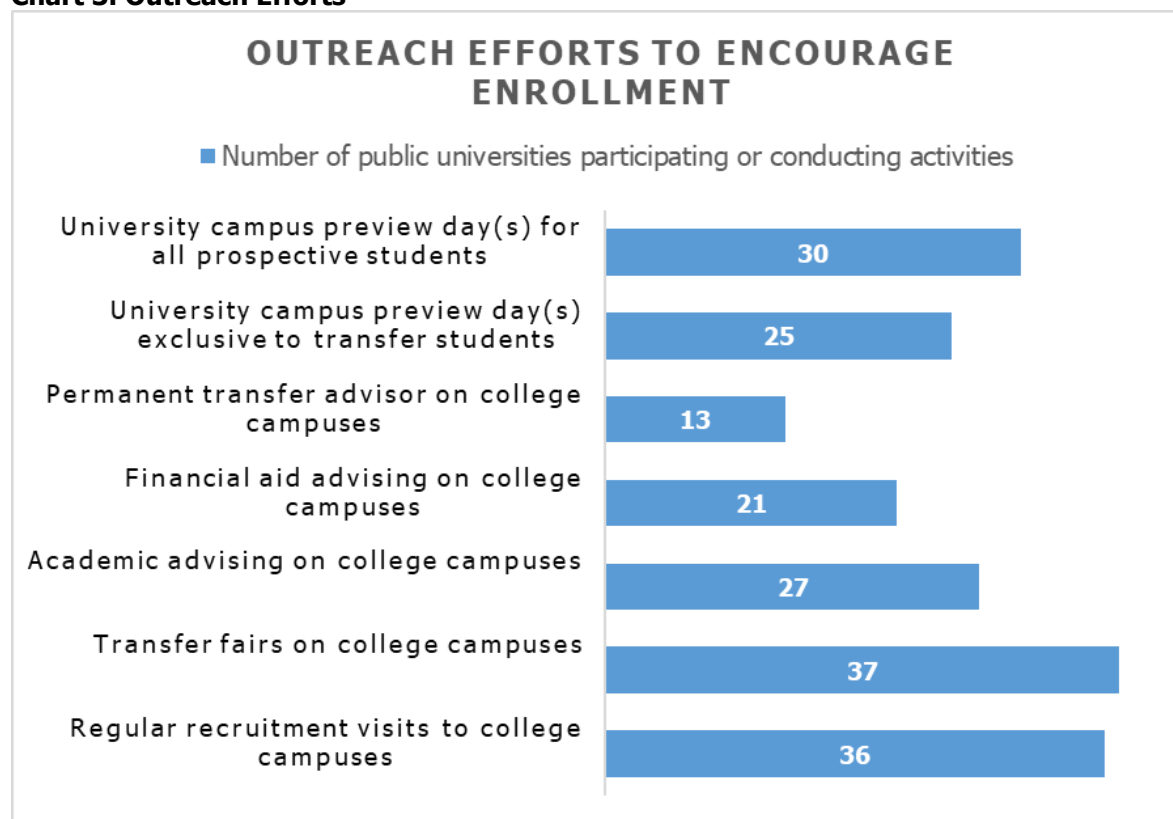
Approximately two-thirds (68%) of Texas public universities have recruitment goals in place that are specific to community college transfer students. Additionally, 44% of responding

GAIs indicated they have retention goals (first semester to second semester), and 47% of GAIs have completion goals (graduation) for community college transfer students.

Outreach Services for Transfer Students

The most common outreach to community college transfer students to encourage enrollment is GAIs recruitment efforts. All Texas public universities recruit on the campuses of community colleges. Recruiting may occur through a regularly scheduled visit of a university representative, transfer fairs, campus preview days, and/or through the placement of a permanent admissions/academic advisor on a community college campus. Marketing, budget considerations, and competition (other universities, public and private) drive recruitment activities and their success. For some smaller, rural, or remote universities, recruiting involves making some more distant community college students aware of the university. Recruiters also communicate information about their universities' facilities and campus resources, social life, extracurricular activities, and academic programs.

Chart 3. Outreach Efforts

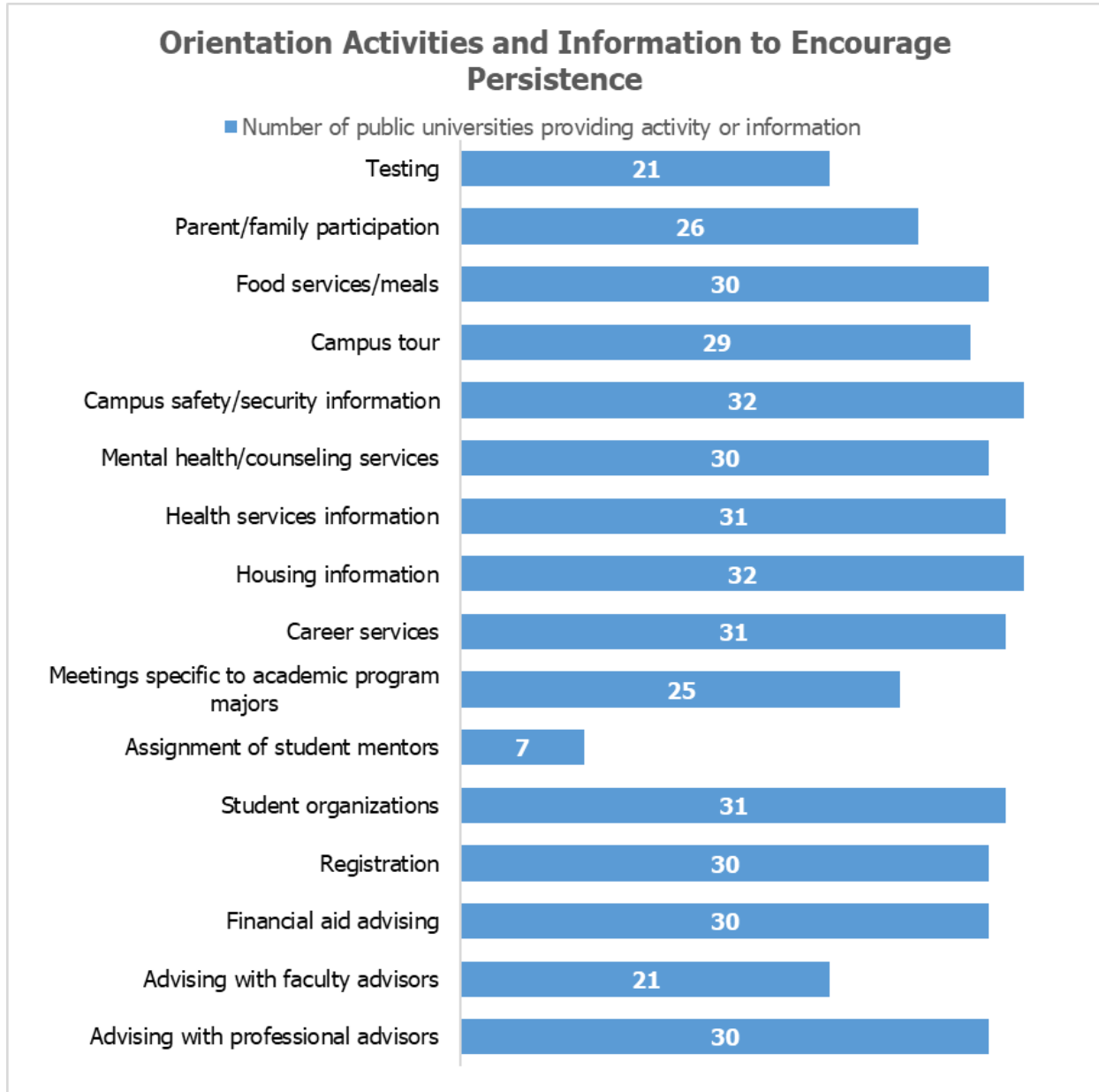


Among new initiatives for outreach to community college transfer students, several GAIs are going the distance to reach students. University of North Texas (North Texas), Tarleton State University (Tarleton), and TAMU-Texarkana are offering degree programs at satellite locations at a distance from the main campus for the first time or added an additional new location. Several other GAIs are opening regional recruiting offices to house permanent staff. The UT-RGV actively uses social media video to reach students.

Transfer Orientation to Encourage Persistence

Orientation experiences introduce students to their new educational home and its services and opportunities. Twenty-four (65%) GAIs require transfer students to attend an orientation specifically designed for transfer students. An additional eleven universities offer but do not require students to attend. Two institutions provide orientation to new FTUG students and transfers simultaneously.

Chart 4. Orientation



Advising Transfer Students

Advising is important for recruiting students to enroll and to encourage persistence at the university. Texas public GAIs use multiple opportunities and means to advise transfer students. Personal advising that occurs before enrollment and while a student is still at the community college takes initiative on the part of the GAI and the interested student. Once a student commits to enrollment at a university, the institution can be more aggressive with advising. Most GAIs (92%) require new transfer students to be advised. Because of the complexity, uniqueness, and amount of information to consider when advising transfer students, most universities (84%) provide training to advisors specific to the issues relevant to transfer students.

Universities' emphasis on advising may arise from concerns that are perceived as barriers to smooth transfer. Twenty-eight of the 37 (76%) universities surveyed identify students transferring with excessive hours as problematic. The second most frequently identified barrier was inadequate or inaccurate advising, 27 (73%) GAIs identifying this as a concern. Excessive hours and courses not applicable to a degree plan present challenges when advising transfer students. Universities try to mitigate the negative consequences of these barriers through community college outreach advising and specialized training for their own advisors.

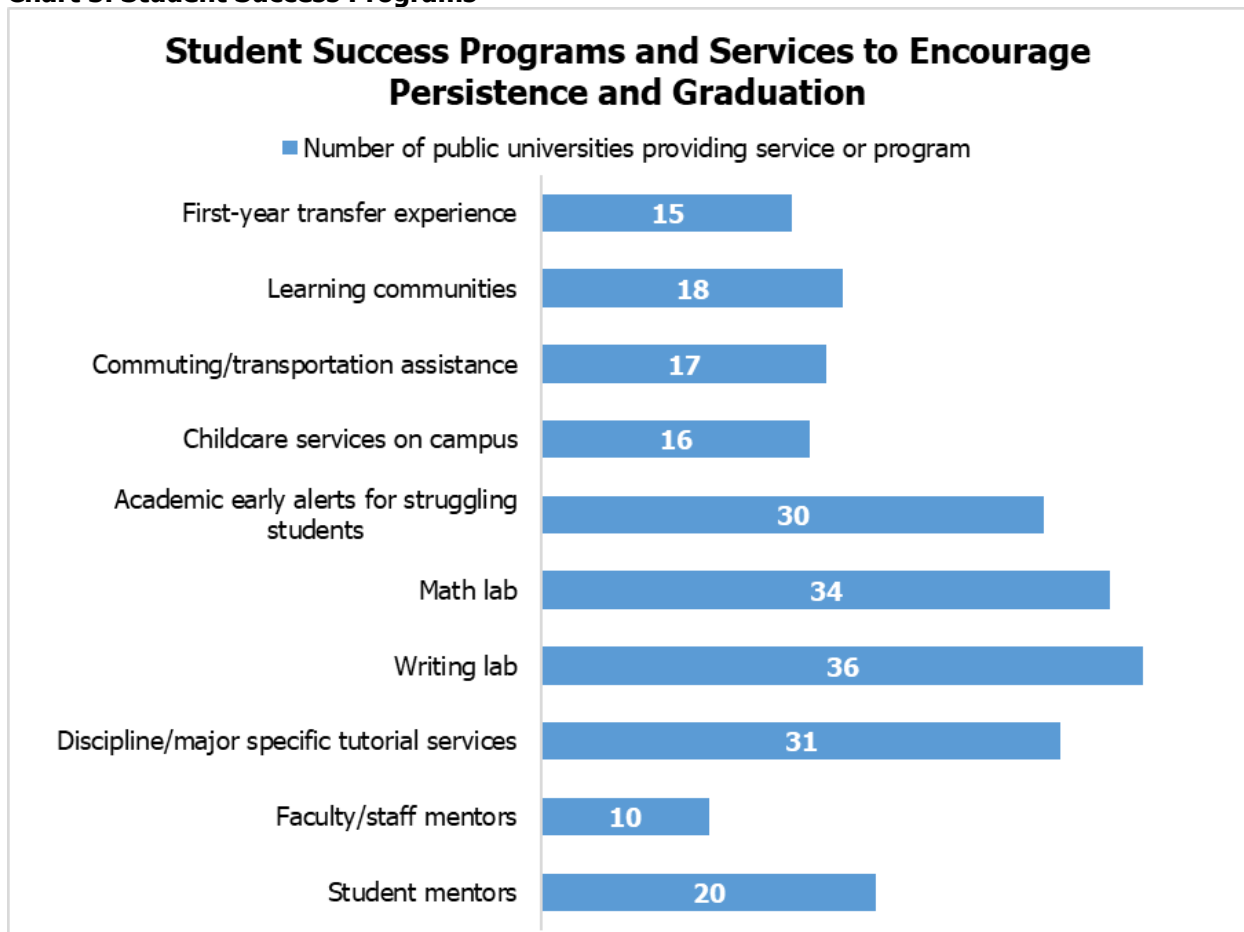
Transfer Student Success Programs

Texas public universities offer many programs to enhance and support the success of their students. Transfer students benefit from these student success programs, too. GAIs often tailor the success programs to meet the specific challenges of transfer students.

Twenty-five (68%) GAIs reported adding new student success programs during the 2018-19 academic year. Institutions reported offering peer mentoring, designating, or increasing staff to focus on transfer students, and creating a first-year transfer experience, learning communities, or transition courses. Two institutions implemented online and on-demand tutoring. A strategic change made by another institution in their degree programs was to eliminate required minors, thus freeing up hours to use more elective courses that may have been unapplied otherwise. Another institution offers a completion scholarship to students within one semester of graduation but who are no longer eligible for conventional financial aid.

Elimination of required minors and a completion scholarship are among the new strategies institutions are trying to help transfer students be successful.

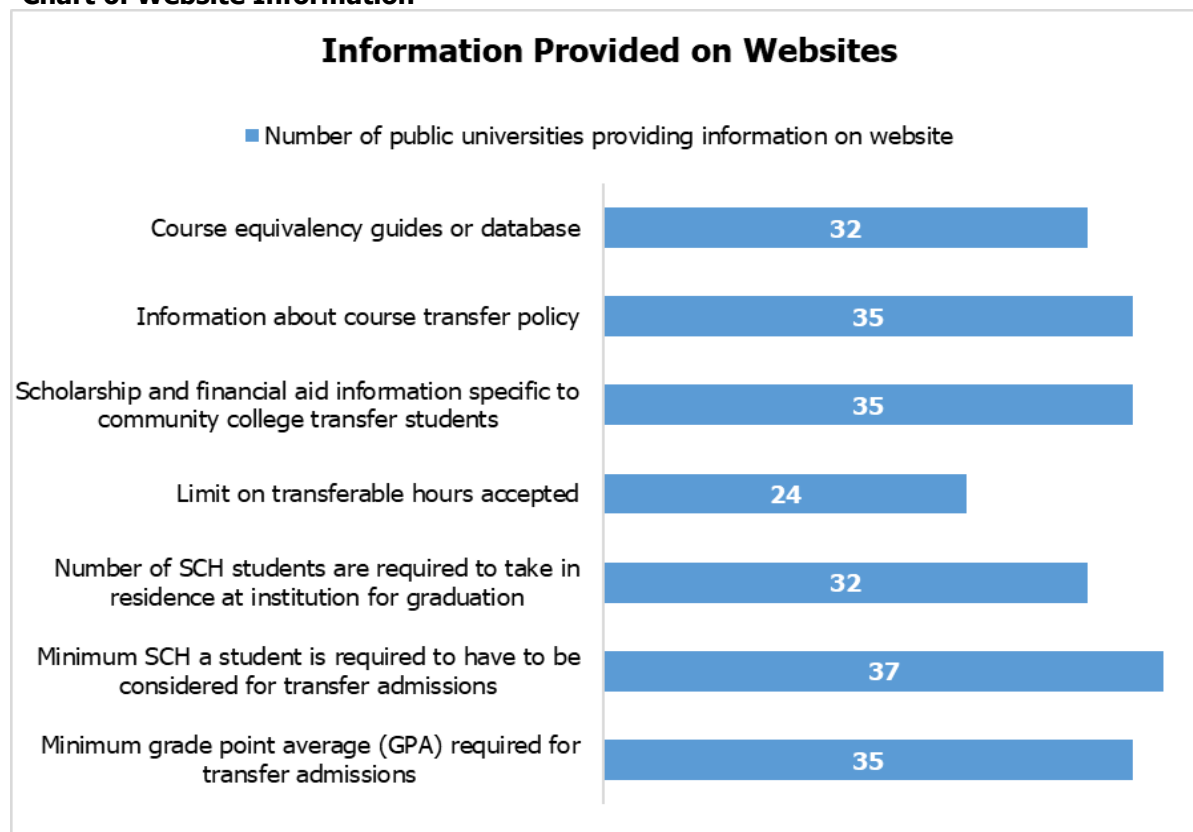
Chart 5. Student Success Programs



Websites

All Texas public universities have webpages with information tailored to address the needs of transfer students. Typical information found on the transfer webpages focuses on transfer credit and course transferability, transfer grade point average (GPA), and financial aid/scholarship opportunities. Requirements for admissions vary by institution and including such information on websites is important to prospective students.

Chart 6. Website Information



Targeted Financial Aid

For the 2018-19 academic year, 29 (78%) GAIs reported offering institutional and/or departmental scholarships/grants designated exclusively for community college transfer students, and on average, 33% of their new community college transfer students were recipients of the targeted aid. This is beyond the conventional financial aid packages available for all eligible students. Eligibility for institutional and departmental scholarships may be based on need, but merit and academic record also may be considered. Sometimes scholarships are used to attract high-performing transfer students from community colleges. The percentage of transfer students who receive institutional or departmental scholarships and the amount of the awards varies widely among the public universities. Statewide, the award of targeted aid per student averaged \$2,051 per year and ranged from \$575 to \$9,422.

With current levels of targeted support, lack of financial aid (federal, state, and institutional) for transfer students continues to be one of the top-ranked barriers to transfer.

Articulation Agreements

Survey responses indicate 1,089 academic and 515 workforce (Associate of Applied Science to a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences) articulation agreements are currently in effect among universities and community colleges, with new agreements initiated by 16 institutions. The reported number of articulation agreements in effect at each institution ranges from none to more than 400.

Views about articulation agreements are disconnected and inconsistent. Some institutions suggest there are other instruments, such as degree guides, that accomplish the same purpose with less difficulty and better reliability.

To develop articulation agreements, institutions usually engage in “vertical teaming.” Vertical teams of discipline-specific faculty help students avoid learning gaps and accumulating excessive hours. Their intention is to level the preparation of students from community colleges with preparation of native university students in the same program. Twenty-seven universities (73%) reported conducting vertical team meetings. It was noted, however, some institutions report new

articulation agreements but do not report vertical team meetings. The reverse is also true; institutions report vertical team meetings but do not report an articulation agreement as the result. This points to the disconnected and inconsistent views of what articulations agreements are and suggest that other instruments, such as degree guides, may accomplish the same purpose.

The survey asked Texas public universities to identify barriers to articulation agreements. Four of the 37 respondents provided no answer or indicated there were no barriers. The most frequently identified barrier was a lack of resources to invest in the development and maintenance of articulation agreements and to resolve the logistical challenges of identifying and coordinating the efforts of the appropriate stakeholders (faculty, enrollment management staff, administrators, advisors, etc.) at the university. Twenty-four of the 37 institutions’ answers identified a perceived challenge with time and/or personnel.

GAIs reported curriculum alignment as a barrier to creating articulation agreements because:

- major requirements and core curriculum are not integrated at the community college.
- study skills courses required in some community colleges’ core curriculum are not required in bachelor’s degrees at universities.
- institutional and programmatic missions of the institutions differ, with technical programs not preparing students for academic baccalaureate degrees in the same field or discipline area.
- students are sometimes encouraged to take a mix of academic and technical hours when the ultimate goal for the student is to transfer and graduate with a bachelor’s degree.
- nonstandard course titles used by community colleges can confuse students and advisors.
- there is a limit on the semester credit hours for bachelor’s degrees (120 SCH).
- accreditation standards for bachelor’s degree with requirements for a certain amount of institutional and upper-division credit cannot be satisfied by lower-division transfer courses.
- community colleges requesting university courses to be offered at their campuses stretches institutional resources and is inefficient.
- revising the agreement is necessary each time one of the partnering institutions makes curricular changes.

- articulation agreements cannot guarantee institutional admission to students.
- some degree programs are specialized with few common course requirements; and community colleges cannot efficiently offer preparatory courses that require specialized faculty.
- programmatic accreditation requirements may limit acceptance of transfer credit from community colleges.
- changing and competing curriculum linkages are already in effect through statewide initiatives.

GAIs reported location as a barrier to creating articulation agreements when:

- geographic isolation and distance from the closest community college make development difficult.
- community college transfer student population is made up of students from many community colleges not a single major feeder school.
- community colleges prefer agreements with their primary transfer institutions rather than institutions that receive fewer of their transferring students.
- large urban areas are home to multiple community colleges and universities that compete for the same students.

Articulation agreements are considered a means to smooth transfer. However, this conventional approach without standardization to clarify student and course transfer may not adequately address the complexity and specialized nature of academic planning, continuously evolving disciplines of study, and the increased mobility of students. With the variety of agreements, challenges of creating them, and the necessity of continual maintenance, assessing the collective success and value of articulation agreements is difficult.

Although touted as a means to smooth transfer, articulation agreements are often inadequate in addressing the challenges faced by institutions in the organizationally decentralized and diverse Texas higher education landscape.

Statewide Initiatives

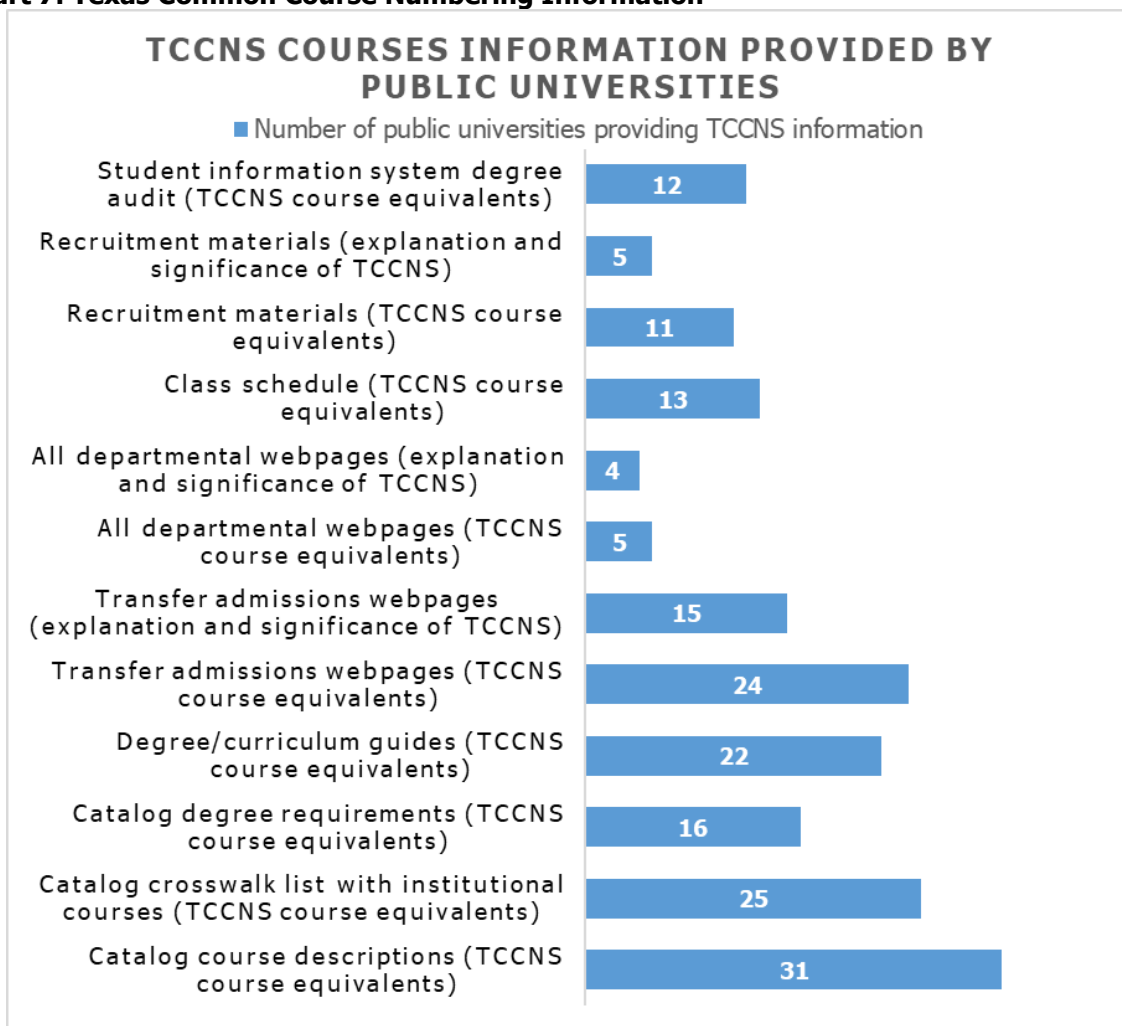
Statewide initiatives such as the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* (ACGM), the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS), Texas Core Curriculum (TCC), Field of Study Curricula (FOSC), and the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project are intended to help with course and curricular alignment. The need for local vertical teaming efforts and multiple articulation agreements may be lessened by successful statewide initiatives to improve transfer. Considering the increased mobility of students, local customization of programs and courses may create unintended hindrances, which could be avoided by adjusting courses and curricula to be aligned with statewide initiatives.

ACGM. The ACGM has been a publication of the THECB from the mid-1980s and was originally called the *Community College Course Guide Manual*. Over the years it has evolved with name changes and to include course descriptions and learning outcomes. In 1996, the TCCNS course numbers appeared in the ACGM. Only courses approved by the board of the THECB and appearing in the ACGM are active in the TCCNS.

TCCNS. The use of a common course numbering system, the TCCNS, has been operational in Texas since the mid-1990s and mandated in state statute since 2003. All community colleges have adopted the common numbering system as their institutional numbering system for academic courses. Nineteen (54%) of the 35 GAIs offering lower-division courses indicate they use the TCCNS as the institutional numbering system for lower-division courses that have TCCNS equivalents. The remaining GAIs use a crosswalk matrix to match their institutional course numbers with the TCCNS number. Universities are required to provide the TCCNS number next to the institutional course prefix and number at the beginning of each course description if the course has a common number equivalent. GAIs also must include in their electronic catalog a list of all common courses offered, along with an explanation of the common course numbering system and its significance.

For some GAIs that use common numbers for their equivalent courses, the institution does not distinguish between their common courses and their non-common lower-division courses. This lack of distinction may create the impression that a greater number of courses are common than actually are.

Chart 7. Texas Common Course Numbering Information



The proportion of each institution's lower-division inventory of courses that are part of the ACGM/TCCNS, either based on course number or on crosswalk assignment, varies greatly

among GAIs. The survey asked Texas public universities for their number of lower-division courses with a common number equivalent and their number of courses without a TCCNS equivalent. The average percentage of lower-division courses listed in the 2018-19 academic catalogs at the institutions with common course equivalent was 41% based on the responses to the survey.

In 2018-19 catalogs, Texas public universities list more lower-division courses without an ACGM/TCCNS equivalent than courses with an ACGM/TCCNS equivalent.

The survey asked institutions about common course equivalents included in core curriculum. The average percentage of lower-division courses with common course equivalents in the institutions' core curriculum for those GAIs providing responses was 72%.

When the public

universities were asked about the number of TCCNS course equivalents included in the major requirements for bachelor's degrees, responses with specific numbers were less frequent. Of the 35 institutions offering lower-division courses, 27 provided numbers, but others either provided no numbers or indicated the information was not available.

ACGM Learning Outcomes Project, Core Curriculum, and FOSC. The ACGM/TCCNS courses are the building blocks of the other THECB initiatives intended to facilitate and improve transfer efficiency. Key among these have been the Texas Core Curriculum, FOSC, and the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project. The success of these initiatives depends on how well universities and community colleges embrace and implement them. Faculty and advisor involvement with, and awareness of, the initiatives is essential.

Included in core curriculum, 28% of universities' courses are not in the ACGM/TCCNS and not available to community college transfer students before they transfer. This is even more complicating if those unavailable specialized courses also are used to satisfy major degree requirements. Using specialized, uncommon courses for core and for major requirements may put transfer students at a disadvantage.

The ACGM has provided student learning outcomes for TCCNS courses since 2010. Faculty from both public universities and two-year colleges collaborate to develop the courses through the Learning Outcomes Project. The collaboration involves a comprehensive review of syllabi developed and used at public colleges and universities throughout the state. Institutions select courses to be included in core curriculum, and universities must identify their common course equivalents included in their core curriculum. FOSC committees selected and sometimes established new ACGM courses to create a lower division curriculum for selected degree programs.

The most prominent initiative is the core curriculum. All GAIs report that their faculty are aware of the Texas Core Curriculum, but they report that only 54 to 57% of their faculty are aware of the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project and FOSC. When asked how they are raising awareness and implementing state initiatives, all GAIs reported work by faculty committees, councils, and administrative offices to discuss and bring about changes.

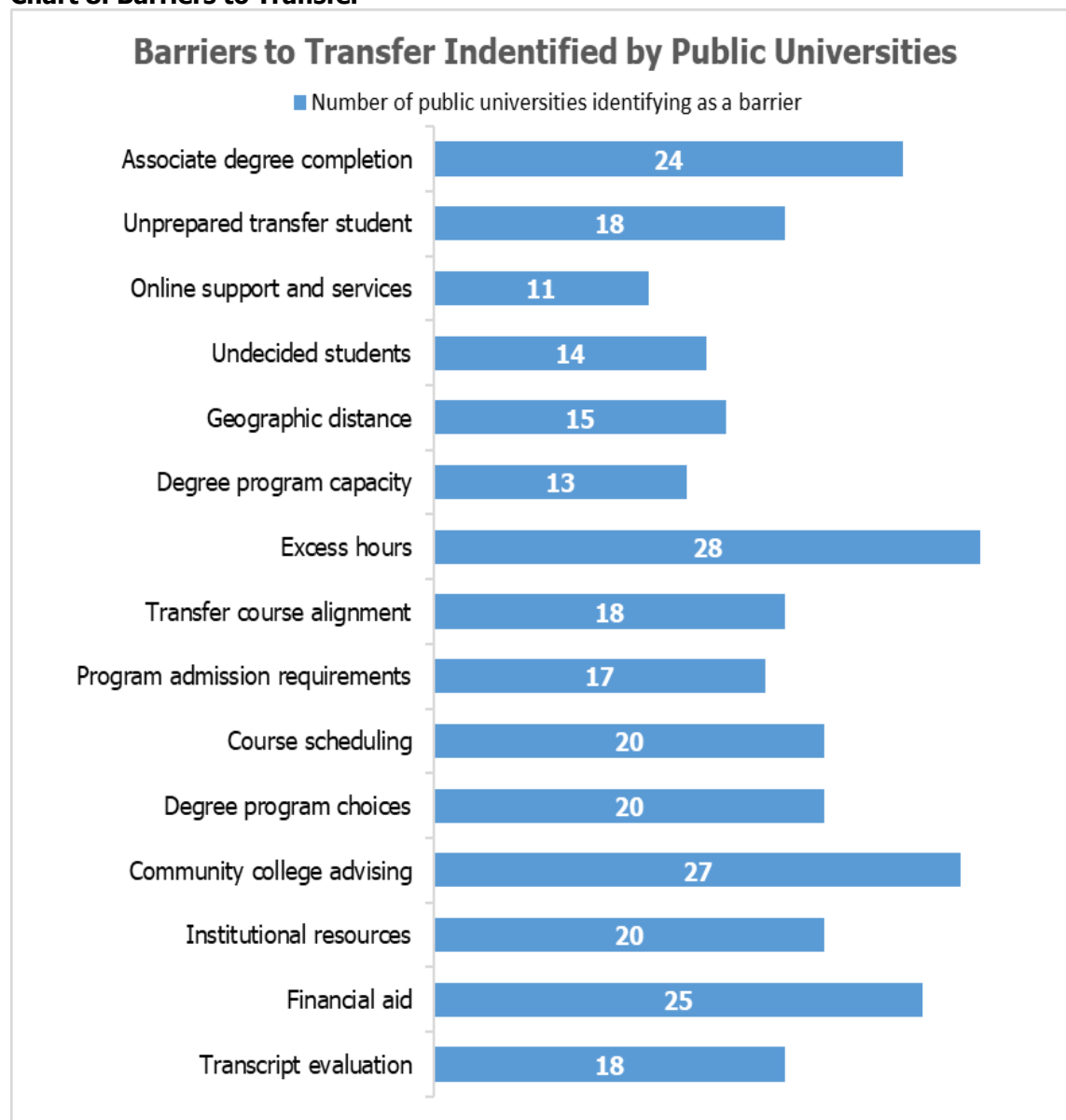
Barriers to Transfer

The GAIs were asked to rank 15 barriers to transfer identified in previous survey years and to add any others not included in the list. Numerous barriers to transfer exist and, for purposes of the report and survey, can be categorized as: problems associated with advising; financial constraints on institutions for services and on students in paying for their education;

and programmatic challenges, such as admissions, capacity, and course scheduling. There were no problems identified that were common to all institutions.

Chart 8 provides the number of institutions that ranked an item as being a problem. Few GAIs ranked all the items.

Chart 8. Barriers to Transfer



Not included in the chart but identified as a barrier was the diverse nature of transfer students. Transfer students can be traditionally aged full-time students, veterans, working parents coming back after stopping out, migrating students who bring a mixed bag of courses from a long list of previously attended institutions, online-only students, students from technical non-transfer programs at community colleges, commuting students, and students seeking on-campus housing. Low unemployment with many readily available jobs was also cited as a barrier because potential students are less conscious of the benefits of continuing their education.

The survey asked institutions about changes they made to overcome the transfer barriers experienced by students. Twenty-three universities indicated they had made changes to smooth transfer. Eighteen institutions made changes to their systems or processes to facilitate transfer including better and more recruitment, and improved advising, transcript evaluations, and registration. Three institutions mentioned modifying curriculum or prerequisites for program admission to better accommodate the courses transfer students bring with them. One institution increased their transfer scholarships. Two institutions worked on articulation agreements, and one provided training on FOSC to advisors.

Emerging Issues

GAIs identified emerging issues as being either specific to their own institution and its processes or as statewide in their impact. Specific to institutions and identified by multiple GAIs were the need for funds and resources to provide better services, such as:

- transcript evaluation,
- the number of courses offered and scheduled,
- advising, and
- information sharing.

Issues identified as emerging by multiple institutions that may have a statewide impact were:

- proliferation of dual credit with the result of accumulation of courses not applicable to bachelor's degrees,
- baccalaureate degrees offered at community colleges that include courses that do not align with university degree programs,
- community college students completing technical workforce courses and seeking to transition to academic programs at universities, and
- lack of financial aid programs that effectively address the needs of transfer students.

Issues identified as likely to cause barriers in the future by single institutions, but which may affect other institutions are:

- declines in transfer student enrollment at universities because of free tuition at community colleges, low unemployment, and out-of-state institutions recruiting Texas students,
- failure to follow math pathways, and
- field of study curriculum.

Analysis and Observations – Performance Data

Applications, Acceptances, and Enrollments

There are differences among the institutions in the proportion of the student population made up of new freshmen, continuing native students, community college transfer students, transfer students from other universities, and graduate students. These differences are attributable to many factors including, but not limited to, location, population growth and

migration patterns, longevity of existence as a standalone institution, historical mission of the institution, changes in degree programs, financial resources, and leadership.

In this report, applications for undergraduate university admission are limited to two groups: FTUGs and transfer students who are transferring from a Texas public community college to a Texas public university. The report looks at fall 2018.

Many more students apply, are accepted, and start at universities as first-time undergraduates than community college transfer students. However, the yield or percentage of accepted community college transfer students who enroll is greater.

The two groups behave differently. The data show that the number of applicants and the number of acceptances for FTUGs is much higher than for community college transfer students; however, a higher percentage of accepted transfer students enroll. This pattern exists in data for all previous years of the study and may mean that transfer students are more certain than FTUGs of their choice of institutions from which they wish to graduate with a bachelor's degree.

As Table 1 shows some institutions distinguish themselves within their peer group as a top destination for community college transfer students:

- The University of Houston (UH) enrolled 2,311 community college transfer students, the most for the Emerging Research institutions and for any institution statewide.
- TAMU, as one of the two Research institutions, enrolled 1,045 students, more than three times that of UT-Austin, which enrolled 227 community college transfer students.
- Sam Houston State University (Sam Houston) enrolled 1,092 transfer students, the most for the Doctoral institutions.
- Tarleton State University enrolled the most transfer students for Comprehensive Institutions, with 645 students.
- University of Houston-Downtown (UH-Downtown) enrolled the most transfers for Master's institutions, with 748 students.

Table 1. Fall 2018 FTUG and Community College Transfer Applicants, Acceptances, and Enrollments

Institution	FTUG Apply	FTUG Accept	FTUG % of Apply	FTUG Enroll	FTUG % of Accept	Transfers Apply	Transfers Accept	Transfers % of Apply	Transfers Enroll	Transfers % of Accept
Angelo	3,521	2,523	72%	1,192	47%	237	197	83%	145	74%
Midwestern	3,124	2,516	81%	830	33%	331	294	89%	179	61%
Sul Ross	1,364	858	63%	336	39%	79	64	81%	46	72%
Sul Ross-Rio Grande	*	*	*	*	*	128	125	98%	85	68%
TAMU-Galveston	752	717	95%	337	47%	54	51	94%	43	84%
TAMU-Central Tx	*	*	*	*	*	203	180	89%	135	75%
TAMU-San Antonio	3,360	2,184	65%	551	25%	800	743	93%	512	69%
TAMU-Texarkana	2,868	1,811	63%	202	11%	189	167	88%	109	65%
UT-Tyler	2,790	2,060	74%	843	41%	815	795	98%	523	66%
UT-Permian	783	647	83%	348	54%	274	264	96%	187	71%
UH-Clear Lake	1,148	799	70%	302	38%	940	888	94%	674	76%
UH-Downtown	4,275	3,568	83%	1,058	30%	1,154	1,086	94%	748	69%
UH-Victoria	3,495	2,865	82%	297	10%	394	340	86%	222	65%
UNT-Dallas	1,636	1,372	84%	357	26%	334	314	94%	231	74%
Master's	29,117	21,921	75%	6,653	30%	5,932	5,508	93%	3,839	70%
Lamar	5,455	4,574	84%	1,472	32%	489	446	91%	277	62%
Prairie View	6,735	5,178	77%	1,927	37%	388	321	83%	162	50%
SFA	9,158	7,393	81%	2,176	29%	672	653	97%	443	68%
Tarleton	7,048	5,594	79%	2,120	38%	942	907	96%	645	71%
TAMI	4,299	3,442	80%	1,315	38%	494	429	87%	350	82%
WTAMU	3,857	3,291	85%	1,030	31%	535	502	94%	348	69%
Comprehensive	36,552	29,472	81%	10,040	34%	3,520	3,258	93%	2,225	68%
Sam Houston	11,597	9,108	79%	2,739	30%	1,833	1,768	96%	1,092	62%
TAMU-Commerce	4,600	2,440	53%	902	37%	780	708	91%	478	68%
TAMU-CC	8,746	7,594	87%	1,981	26%	520	470	90%	281	60%
TAMU-Kingsville	7,145	5,487	77%	1,224	22%	366	338	92%	231	68%
Tx Southern	10,505	6,183	59%	1,364	22%	607	373	61%	217	58%
TWU	5,776	4,898	85%	1,220	25%	1,033	1,033	100%	497	48%
UTRGV	11,044	8,945	81%	4,504	50%	1,487	1,422	96%	927	65%
Doctoral	59,413	44,655	75%	13,934	31%	6,626	6,112	92%	3,723	61%
TxStU	23,963	18,959	79%	6,030	32%	2,504	2,331	93%	1,578	68%
TTU	23,324	14,823	64%	5,648	38%	1,897	1,546	81%	1,126	73%
UT-Arlington	11,463	9,048	79%	3,299	36%	2,954	2,844	96%	1,807	64%
UT-Dallas	11,641	9,347	80%	3,539	38%	1,479	1,301	88%	996	77%
UT-El Paso	9,933	9,932	100%	3,137	32%	1,164	1,140	98%	828	73%
UT-San Antonio	16,351	12,889	79%	4,805	37%	2,148	1,982	92%	1,421	72%
UH	20,336	12,882	63%	4,922	38%	3,448	3,215	93%	2,311	72%
UNT	16,091	12,637	79%	4,365	35%	2,691	2,628	98%	1,806	69%
Emerging Research	133,102	100,517	76%	35,745	36%	18,285	16,987	93%	11,873	70%
TAMU	30,712	20,371	66%	10,130	50%	2,108	1,203	57%	1,045	87%
UT-Austin	31,009	15,258	49%	7,673	50%	1,455	285	20%	227	80%
Research	61,721	35,629	58%	17,803	50%	3,563	1,488	42%	1,272	85%
Statewide Summary	169,378	142,224	84%	84,006	59%	32,183	29,524	92%	22,926	78%

Source: CBM001 & CBM00B.

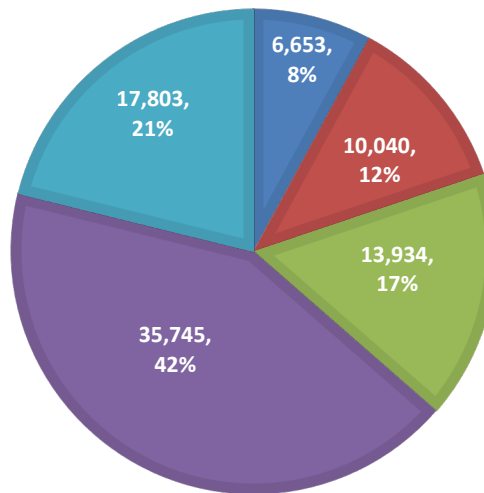
Note: FTUG applicants are students who applied on CBM00B with no previous college work, seeking a bachelor's or an associate degree. These results matched to CBM001 for those coded as first-time undergraduates. Transfer applicants are students who applied as transfer on CBM00B, seeking a bachelor or associate degree. These results were matched back six years to CBM001 to make sure students were FTUGs at a two-year institution and not a university. These results matched to CBM001 for same fall year as application year to see if student enrolled.

Chart 9. Distribution by Peer Group FTUG

FALL 2018 FIRST-TIME UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT

- Master's
- Comprehensive
- Doctoral
- Emerging Research
- Research

Statewide FTUG Enrollment 84,006



The Research institutions (TAMU and UT-Austin) enroll a much larger proportion of the state's FTUGs (21%) than the state's community college transfers students (5%, the smallest proportion). Comprehensive and Doctoral institutions enroll roughly the same proportions of the state's FTUG and community college transfer students.

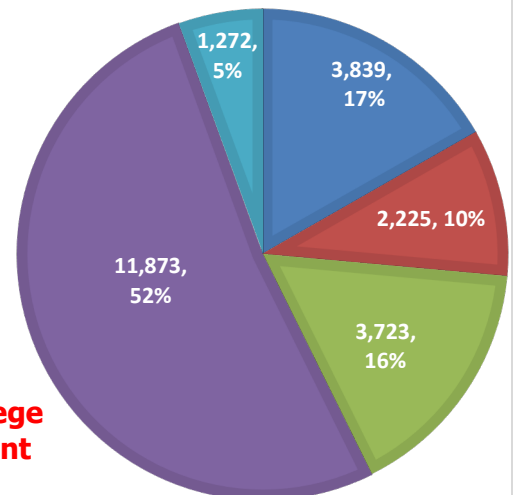
The number of FTUG is much larger than the number of community college transfer students enrolled each fall and the proportions of each enrolled at institutions of the Accountability Peer Groups differs.

Chart 10. Distribution by Peer Group Community College Transfer Students

FALL 2018 COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER ENROLLMENT

- Master's
- Comprehensive
- Doctoral
- Emerging Research
- Research

Statewide Community College Transfer Student Enrollment 22,926



The Emerging Research institutions enrolled more than 50% of the community college transfer students in fall 2018.

Completion Rates

Completion rates are one measure of performance and success used by the THECB. For the study of community college transfer students, completion rates are determined as a percentage of the fall 2014 cohort group of natives and transfers who are classified by their institutions as juniors and who graduate within the subsequent four years.

$$\text{Completion Rate for Native Students} = \frac{\text{Junior Native Students in cohort and graduated in graduate in four years}}{\text{Total Native Students in cohort}}$$

$$\text{Completion Rate for Transfer Students} = \frac{\text{Juniors Transfer Students in cohort who graduate in four years}}{\text{Total Transfer Students in cohort}}$$

There were 46,586 native students and 15,669 community college transfer students classified as juniors in fall 2014 and included in the cohort. Statewide, the completion rate for native students in this cohort was 84%, with 39,300 native students graduating, and the completion rate for transfer students in the cohort was 65%, with 10,207 transfer students graduating within four years of transferring and classified as juniors.

The overall statewide performance of native students included in the 2014 cohort group of juniors is consistent with the performance of the native junior students reported in previous years. The performance of transfer students in the latest cohort demonstrated a slight decrease of one percentage point in the completion from the 2017-18 cohort transfers. However, as Table 2 and Chart 11 indicate, there has been little change in the completion for either native or community college transfer students in the cohorts. While 83 to 84% of native students graduated in four years, only 64 to 68% of transfer students did.

Table 2. Completion Rates for Junior Cohorts 2005-2014

Cohort Year	Total Juniors Natives	Total Junior Natives Graduates	Percent Graduating in 4 years	Total Junior Transfers	Total Junior Transfer Graduates	Percent Graduating in 4 years	Difference Percentage Graduating in 4 years
Fall 2014	46,586	39,300	84%	15,669	10,207	65%	19%
Fall 2013	44,790	37,743	84%	15,067	9,929	66%	18%
Fall 2012	42,884	35,956	84%	15,150	9,672	64%	20%
Fall 2011	41,185	34,341	83%	14,069	9,076	65%	18%
Fall 2010	40,042	33,593	84%	13,824	9,121	66%	18%
Fall 2009	39,987	33,566	84%	12,462	8,277	66%	18%
Fall 2008	39,394	33,157	84%	11,569	7,930	69%	16%
Fall 2007	38,720	32,461	84%	11,517	7,875	68%	15%
Fall 2006	38,355	31,898	83%	11,951	7,991	67%	16%
Fall 2005	37,695	31,153	83%	11,486	7,709	67%	16%
Average			84%			66%	17%

Source: Coordinating Board CBM009

Chart 11. Completion and Enrollment Trends

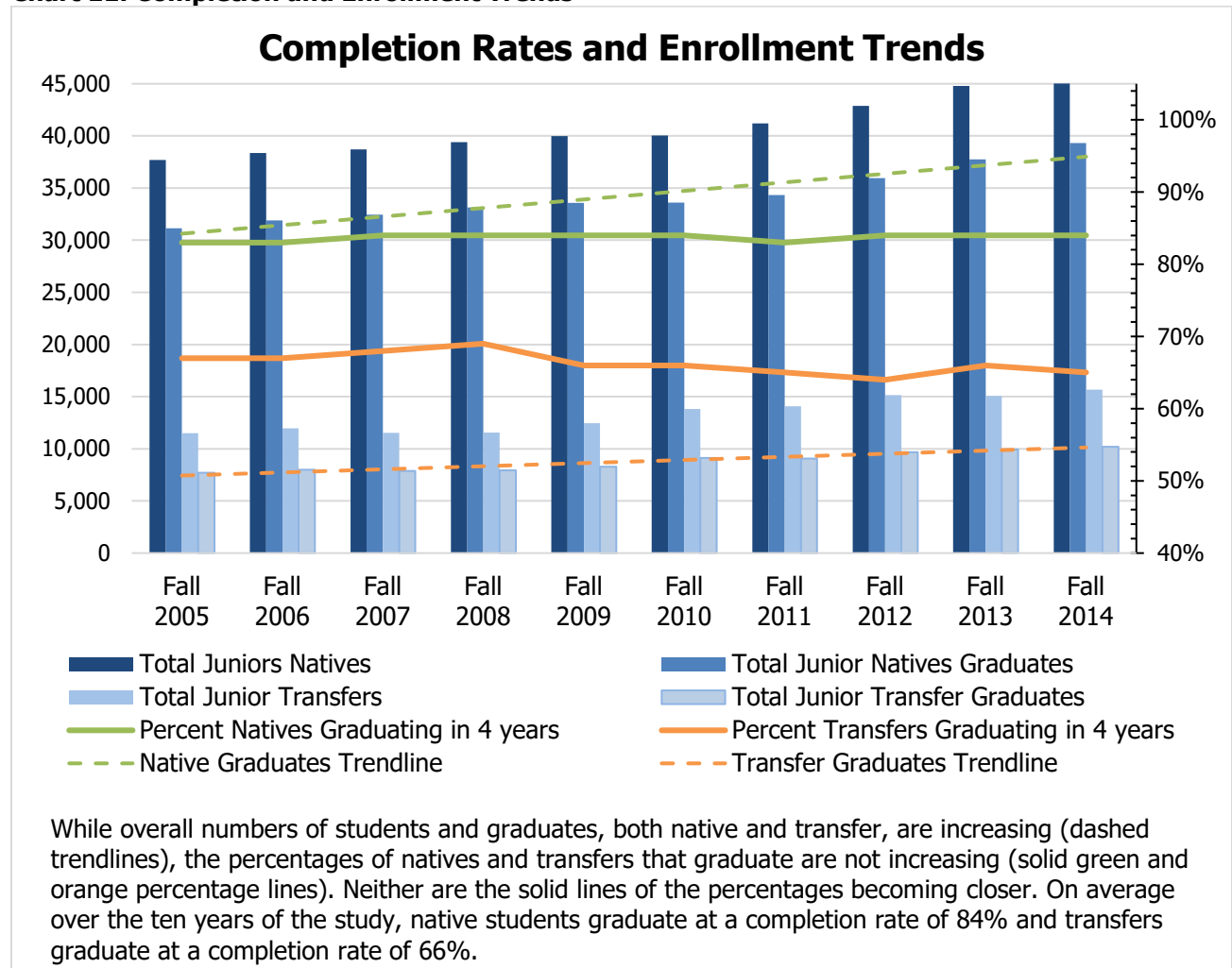


Table 3 shows the number of students and completion rates by institution and by peer groups for the students groups (native and community college transfers) included in the Fall 2014 cohort. The range for the completion rates for native students in the Fall 2014 cohort is from 65% to 94%. The range for the completion rates for community college transfers is 48% to 88%.

Table 3. Junior Fall 2014 Cohort Completion Rate within Four Years after Junior Status

Institution and Peer Group	Native Juniors Total	Native Junior Graduates	Percent Native Juniors Graduating in 4 years	Transfer Juniors Total	Transfer Junior Graduates	Percent Transfer Juniors Graduating in 4 years
Angelo	592	487	82%	12	9	75%
Midwestern	356	289	81%	107	70	65%
Sul Ross	85	73	86%	21	10	48%
Sul Ross-Rio Grande				*	*	*
TAMU-Galveston	215	181	84%	27	21	78%
TAMU-Central Tx				117	80	68%
TAMU-San Antonio				437	265	61%
TAMU-Texarkana	60	52	87%	93	60	65%
UT-Brownsville	568	399	70%	71	40	56%
UT-Tyler	354	306	86%	309	199	64%
UT-Permian	197	154	78%	196	125	64%
UH-Clear Lake				701	397	57%
UH-Downtown	457	343	75%	1,004	561	56%
UH-Victoria	55	40	73%	200	107	54%
UNT-Dallas				181	120	66%
Master's Institutions	2,940	2,325	79%	3,562	2,097	59%
Lamar	841	650	77%	129	70	54%
Prairie View	789	594	75%	91	69	76%
SFA	1,345	1,169	87%	212	163	77%
Tarleton	1,026	886	86%	493	353	72%
TAMI	568	460	81%	233	157	67%
WTAMU	675	549	81%	316	224	71%
Comprehensive Institutions	5,244	4,308	82%	1,474	1,036	70%
Sam Houston	1,406	1,185	84%	669	478	71%
TAMU-Commerce	445	348	78%	417	253	61%
TAMU-CC	803	663	83%	272	183	67%
TAMU-Kingsville	582	450	77%	122	91	75%
Tx Southern	463	303	65%	75	30	40%
TWU	520	426	82%	485	341	70%
UT-Pan American	2,065	1,455	70%	467	305	65%
Doctoral Institutions	6,284	4,830	77%	2,507	1,681	67%
TxStU	3,165	2,664	84%	898	636	71%
TTU	3,172	2,763	87%	540	366	68%
UT-Arlington	1,731	1,465	85%	1,142	668	58%
UT-Dallas	1,366	1,210	89%	926	659	71%
UT-El Paso	1,773	1,273	72%	624	334	54%
UT-San Antonio	2,461	1,988	81%	570	399	70%
UH	2,803	2,271	81%	1,346	781	58%
UNT	2,845	2,367	83%	1,181	768	65%
Emerging Research	19,316	16,001	83%	7,227	4,611	64%
TAMU	6,624	6,200	94%	631	547	87%
UT-Austin	6,178	5,636	91%	268	235	88%
Research Institutions	12,802	11,836	92%	899	782	87%
Statewide Summary	46,586	39,300	84%	15,669	10,207	65%

Source: THECB CBM009

Completion Rate and Financial Aid

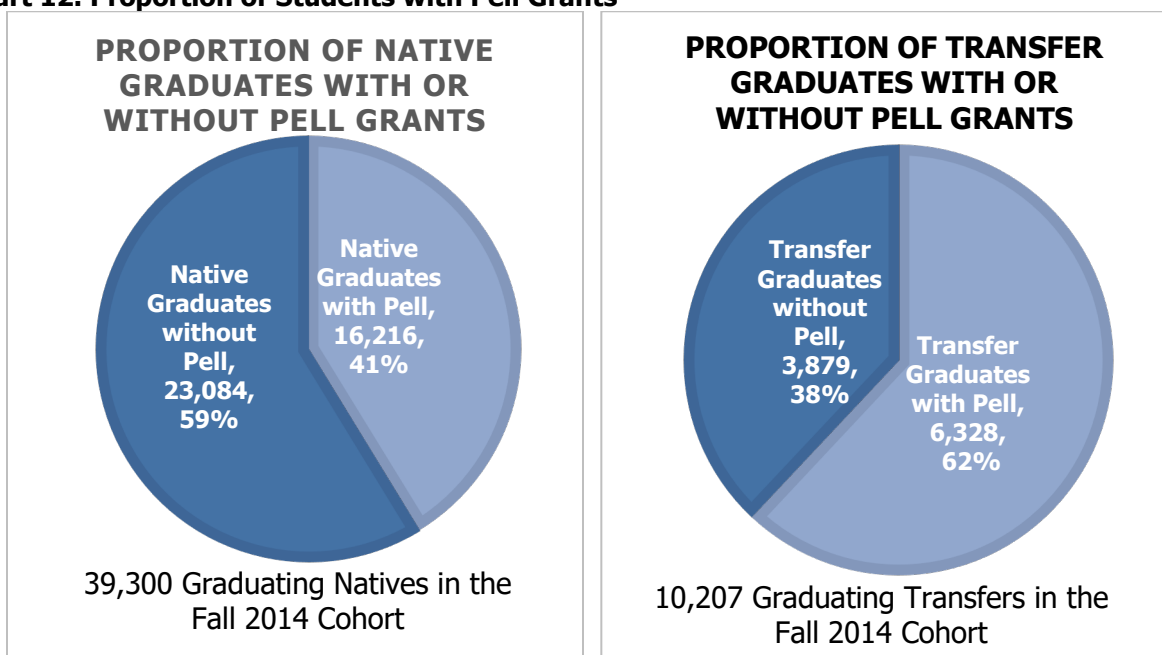
Transfer students are eligible to receive different types of financial aid. Pell Grants are a need-based form of federal aid that are used in THECB reporting as an indicator of students who come from financially disadvantaged circumstances.

A larger proportion of the transfer graduates relied on Pell Grants to fund their education than did native students graduates.

The populations of native and transfer students differ in the proportions of students receiving or not receiving Pell. Most native students in the cohort who graduated did not receive Pell, but most of the transfer graduates did. Approximately three of every five transfer graduates received Pell

Grants but only two of every five native graduates received Pell. The proportion of recipients to non-recipients for each group is the reverse.

Chart 12. Proportion of Students with Pell Grants



There are also differences in the completion rates of Pell Grant recipients and non-recipients within each group of the junior cohort. At the statewide level, native students with Pell had a lower completion rate than natives without Pell. However, for the most part, transfer students with Pell completed their degrees at a similar rate as transfer students without Pell. Previous years' studies also show this pattern of completion. Table 4 shows completion rates for native students who receive Pell has been between 7 and 9% less than the completion rate of native students without Pell for the most recent years of the cohort study, while the completion rates for transfer students with and without Pell has a range of difference between -1 to 3 percentage points.

Table 4. Completion Rate of Cohorts for Native and Transfer Juniors, With and Without Pell

Cohort Year	Native Juniors Completion with Pell	Native Juniors Completion w/o Pell	Completion Difference Native Juniors (w/o Pell - Pell)	Transfer Juniors Completion Rate with Pell	Transfer Juniors Completion Rate w/o Pell	Completion Rate Difference among Transfer Juniors (w/o Pell - Pell)
2014 Cohort	80%	88%	8%	65%	65%	0%
2013 Cohort	80%	87%	7%	66%	66%	0%
2012 Cohort	79%	87%	8%	64%	63%	-1%
2011 Cohort	78%	87%	9%	64%	64%	0%
2010 Cohort	79%	87%	8%	65%	68%	3%
2009 Cohort	79%	87%	8%	66%	67%	1%

Source: CBM009

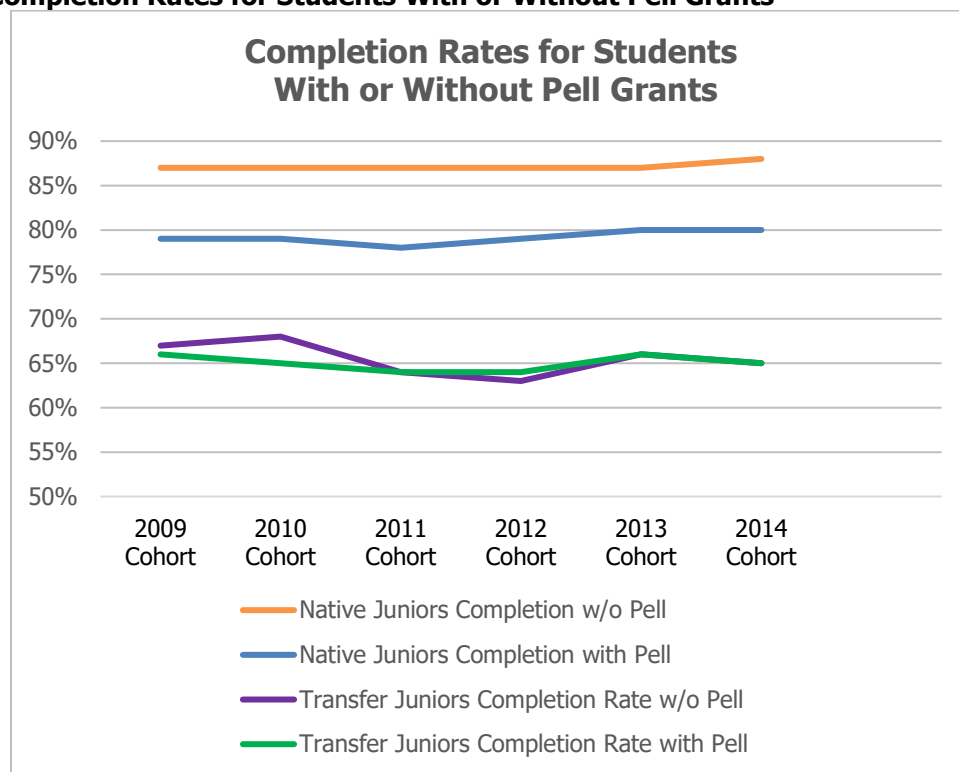
Chart 13. Completion Rates for Students With or Without Pell Grants

Table 5 shows the completion rate of native juniors and community college transfer students who graduated at each institution and either received Pell or did not. The patterns observed with the statewide level data are not always observed at individual institutions. Nineteen institutions show a better completion for their community college transfer students with Pell than for their transfer students without Pell. The Master's and Doctoral Institutions peer groups include most of the institutions that do not follow the statewide pattern.

Table 5. Completion Rate by Institution for Junior Fall 2014 Cohort, With and Without Pell Grants

Institutions and Peer Groups	Native Juniors Graduates with Pell	Native Juniors Graduates w/o Pell	Native Juniors Completion Rate with Pell	Native Juniors Completion Rate w/o Pell	Transfer Juniors Graduates with Pell	Transfer Juniors Graduates w/o Pell	Transfer Juniors Completion Rate with Pell	Transfer Juniors Completion Rate w/o Pell
Angelo	222	265	83%	82%	*	*	75%	75%
Midwestern	129	160	77%	85%	35	35	65%	66%
Sul Ross	48	25	81%	96%		7	30%	64%
Sul Ross-Rio Grande	*	*	*	*	29	*	41%	25%
TAMU-Galveston	38	143	75%	87%	13	8	87%	67%
TAMU-Central Tx	*	*	*	*	55	25	65%	78%
TAMU-San Antonio	*	*	*	*	193	72	62%	57%
TAMU-Texarkana	21	31	84%	89%	42	18	65%	64%
UT-Brownsville	330	69	70%	70%	35	5	59%	42%
UT-Tyler	123	183	88%	86%	106	93	60%	70%
UT-Permian	73	81	82%	75%	73	52	65%	62%
UH-Clear Lake	*	*	*	*	244	153	59%	54%
UH-Downtown	271	72	79%	64%	379	182	58%	51%
UH-Victoria	23	17	64%	89%	56	51	52%	55%
UNT-Dallas	*	*	*	*	81	39	70%	60%
Master's Institution	1,279	1,046	78%	81%	1,347	750	60%	57%
Lamar	322	328	75%	79%	39	31	54%	54%
Prairie View	437	157	73%	82%	50	19	76%	76%
SFA	541	628	84%	90%	99	64	72%	85%
Tarleton	361	525	82%	90%	210	143	71%	73%
TAMI	370	90	81%	80%	137	20	69%	61%
WTAMU	219	330	78%	84%	142	82	71%	71%
Comprehensive	2,250	2,058	79%	86%	677	359	70%	72%
Sam Houston	501	684	82%	86%	243	235	72%	71%
TAMU-Commerce	203	145	76%	81%	162	91	61%	61%
TAMU-CC	297	366	81%	84%	120	63	66%	70%
TAMU-Kingsville	265	185	76%	79%	69	22	76%	71%
Tx Southern	243	60	65%	67%	23	7	40%	39%
TWU	249	177	80%	85%	220	121	74%	65%
UT-Pan American	1,124	331	71%	70%	266	39	66%	63%
Doctoral Institution	2,882	1,948	74%	81%	1,103	578	67%	66%
TxStU	981	1,683	82%	86%	377	259	70%	71%
TTU	715	2,048	81%	89%	193	173	62%	76%
UT-Arlington	783	682	85%	84%	436	232	60%	56%
UT-Dallas	334	876	88%	89%	399	260	71%	71%
UT-El Paso	937	336	73%	69%	276	58	54%	52%
UT-San Antonio	1,013	975	78%	83%	249	150	69%	71%
UH	1,010	1,261	81%	81%	489	292	60%	55%
UNT	953	1,414	81%	85%	423	345	68%	62%
Emerging Research	6,726	9,275	80%	85%	2,842	1,769	64%	64%
TAMU	1,496	4,704	91%	94%	212	335	85%	88%
UT-Austin	1,583	4,053	87%	93%	147	88	86%	90%
Research	3,079	8,757	89%	94%	359	423	86%	88%
Statewide Summary	16,216	23,084	80%	88%	6,328	3,879	65%	65%

Source: CBM009 *FERPA restricted or not available

Time to Degree

Time to degree is another measure of performance. Time to degree considers the number of years, the number of semester credit hours (SCH) attempted, and the number of semesters students take to complete their degrees. Within the junior fall 2014 cohort, time to degree is compared for native and transfer students.

Historically transfer students in the annual cohort study of juniors take about 7.5 years to graduate, and native students had time to degree of 5.4 years.

As Table 6 shows, previous transfer student groups that were part of the cohorts of the study had time to degree measures that clustered at 7.5 years, and native students had time to degree that clustered at 5.4 years. When measured by SCH, native students attempted 132.6, on average, and transfer students attempted an additional 6.8 SCH to acquire 139.4 at

graduation. Transfer students also enrolled in one additional semester. Native students appear more likely to be continuously enrolled. The “stop outs” that transfer students are more likely to take may result in inefficiencies, including degree requirements that changed during their absence and repeating courses as refreshers. Whatever the cause, the result is that transfer students enrolled in one semester more than native students, accumulating an additional seven SCH and extending their time to degree by approximately two years.

Table 6. Statewide Summary Time to Degree, Fall 2005-2014 Junior Cohorts

Cohort Year	Total Native Junior Graduates	Native Juniors Average Time to Degree in Years	Native Juniors Average Number of SCH Attempted	Native Juniors Average Number of Semesters	Total Transfer Junior Graduates	Transfer Juniors Average Time to Degree in Years	Transfer Juniors Average Number of SCH Attempted	Transfer Juniors Average Number of Semesters
2014	39,300	5.5	132.6	10.1	10,207	7.5	139.4	11.4
2013	37,743	5.5	133.5	10.1	9,929	7.6	140.3	11.3
2012	35,956	5.5	134.8	10.1	9,672	7.6	142	11.4
2011	34,341	5.4	136.4	10.1	9,087	7.6	142.9	11.3
2010	33,593	5.4	137.5	10.1	9,121	7.7	143.9	11.4
2009	33,565	5.4	138.4	10	8,277	7.7	144	11.3
2008	33,157	5.4	139.1	10	7,930	7.5	145	11.3
2007	32,461	5.4	142.3	9.9	7,875	7.4	144.2	11.2
2006	31,898	5.4	142.9	9.9	7,991	7.4	145.9	11.3
2005	31,153	5.4	143.6	10	7,709	7.3	146.3	11.2

Source: THECB, CBM001 CBM009

Table 7 presents the differences in time expended in years, SCH attempted, and the number of semesters enrolled by native and transfer students by institution. The difference in SCH attempted varied widely from institution to institution, with several institutions graduating, on average, their community college transfer students with fewer hours attempted than their native students. All GAIs had an average time to degree in years for their transfer students that was higher than that of their natives.

Table 7. Average Time to Degree in Years, SCH Attempted, and Semesters for Fall 2014 Junior Cohort

Institutions and Peer Groups	Native Juniors Average Time to Degree	Native Juniors Average No. of SCH Attempted	Native Juniors Average No. of Semesters	Transfer Juniors Average Time to Degree	Transfer Juniors Average No. of SCH Attempted	Transfer Juniors Average No. of Semesters	Δ Time to Degree Between Transfer and Native Juniors	Δ No. of SCH Attempted Between Transfer and Native Juniors	Δ No. of Semesters Between Transfer and Native Juniors
Angelo	5.7	133.4	10.5	9.0	136.7	12.7	3.3	3.3	2.2
Midwestern	5.5	136.7	10.3	7.7	133.5	11.3	2.2	-3.2	0.9
Sul Ross	5.5	136.8	9.9	7.5	138.9	12.5	2.0	2.1	2.6
Sul Ross-Rio Grande									
TAMU-Galveston	5.4	138.8	10.0	9.0	165.1	12.0	3.7	26.3	2.1
TAMU-Central Tx				7.7	136.8	10.6			
TAMU-San Antonio				9.1	143.2	12.6			
TAMU-Texarkana	5.6	121.0	10.6	8.6	129.6	10.7	3.0	8.6	0.1
UT-Brownsville	5.8	136.9	10.7	10.8	142.4	12.0	5.0	5.5	1.4
UT-Tyler	5.6	127.7	10.3	7.6	135.3	11.0	2.0	7.7	0.7
UT-Permian	5.8	132.1	10.8	8.4	138.8	12.1	2.6	6.7	1.3
UH-Clear Lake				8.0	141.2	12.0			
UH-Downtown	6.4	142.8	11.7	8.4	140.1	11.9	2.0	-2.7	0.1
UH-Victoria	5.4	132.6	10.0	8.9	138.4	11.7	3.5	5.8	1.8
UNT-Dallas				8.9	132.4	11.9			
Master's	5.7	135.2	10.6	8.4	139.2	11.8	2.6	4.1	1.2
Lamar	5.9	140.6	11.0	9.6	140.6	11.7	3.7	0.0	0.7
Prairie View	5.4	149.0	10.2	7.1	153.0	11.5	1.7	4.0	1.2
SFA	5.3	131.3	9.9	7.6	143.0	11.7	2.3	11.6	1.8
Tarleton	5.5	132.1	10.3	8.6	133.3	11.0	3.1	1.2	0.7
TAMI	6.1	136.2	11.1	7.5	142.5	12.0	1.4	6.3	0.9
WTAMU	5.7	125.1	10.5	8.5	123.4	10.8	2.8	-1.7	0.3
Comprehensive	5.6	135.1	10.4	8.2	135.9	11.3	2.6	0.8	0.9
Sam Houston	5.4	132.5	10.1	7.3	142.1	11.4	1.9	9.6	1.3
TAMU-Commerce	5.5	136.2	10.3	8.5	135.7	11.2	3.0	-0.4	0.9
TAMU-CC	5.7	137.4	10.5	8.3	144.6	12.0	2.6	7.2	1.5
TAMU-Kingsville	5.6	136.4	10.3	7.1	143.9	11.8	1.5	7.5	1.5
Tx Southern	5.7	151.6	10.4	8.4	162.0	11.9	2.7	10.4	1.4
TWU	5.5	138.4	10.0	8.0	135.3	11.1	2.5	-3.1	1.0
UT-Pan American	6.3	140.4	11.6	7.9	139.0	12.2	1.6	-1.3	0.6
Doctoral	5.8	137.9	10.6	7.9	139.9	11.5	2.1	2.0	0.9
TxStU	5.6	130.6	10.3	7.3	142.0	11.7	1.8	11.4	1.4
TTU	5.5	136.3	10.3	6.6	146.2	11.1	1.0	9.9	0.8
UT-Arlington	5.6	134.5	10.3	7.4	137.0	11.1	1.9	2.5	0.9
UT-Dallas	4.9	131.7	9.0	7.0	139.7	10.9	2.1	8.0	1.8
UT-El Paso	5.8	140.0	10.9	7.4	141.9	12.0	1.7	1.9	1.2
UT-San Antonio	5.8	136.7	10.7	7.4	140.1	11.6	1.6	3.4	0.9
UH	5.4	135.6	10.1	6.8	141.4	11.3	1.4	5.8	1.1
UNT	5.3	131.3	9.8	6.8	137.4	11.0	1.4	6.1	1.1
Emerging Research	5.5	134.3	10.2	7.1	140.2	11.3	1.6	5.9	1.1
TAMU	5.3	129.0	9.9	5.9	137.9	10.5	0.5	8.9	0.6
UT-Austin	5.0	124.5	9.2	6.2	141.3	10.7	1.2	16.8	1.4
Research	5.2	126.8	9.6	6.0	138.9	10.6	0.8	12.1	1.0
Statewide Summary	5.5	132.6	10.1	7.5	139.4	11.4	2.0	6.8	1.3

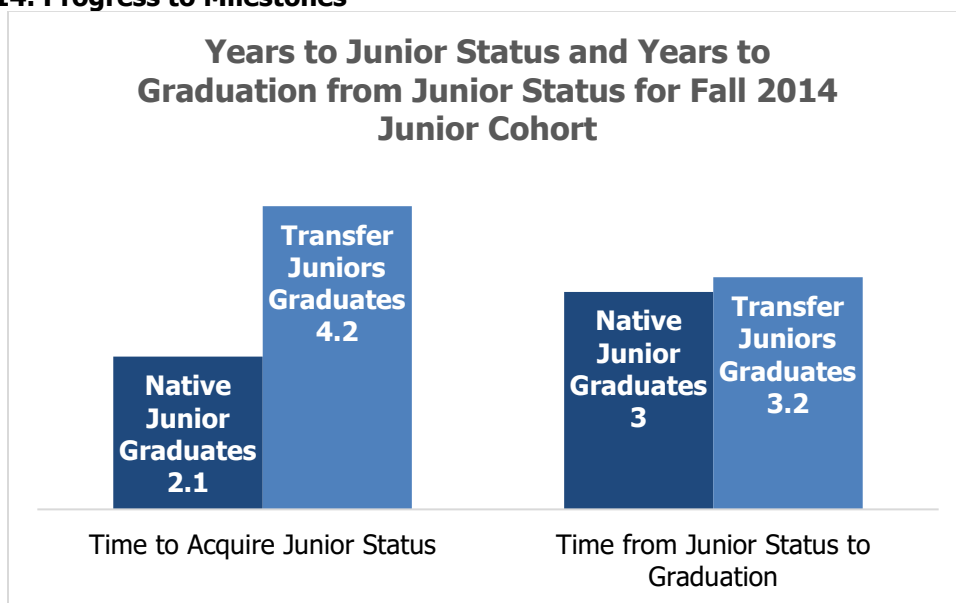
Source: THECB, CBM001 CBM009. Note: Δ means difference.

In years to degree, the range of averages for native graduates at the GAIs is 4.9 years to 6.4 years. The range of averages for transfer graduates starts at 5.9 and reaches a high of 10.8 years. In SCH, the range of averages for natives at GAIs is 121 to a high of 151.6. The range for transfer graduates is 123.4 to 165.1 SCH. The range for natives for number of semesters enrolled is 9 to 11.7, while for transfers, the range of averages is 10.5 to 12.7 semesters.

For native students in the cohort, their first enrollment and their higher education experience is at a university. As mentioned, for transfer students in the cohort, their first enrollment and their higher education experience is at the community college until the point of transfer and achievement of junior status.

Chart 14 shows the time expended by graduating students in the cohort as they moved forward to junior status. The statewide average for native students to achieve junior status was 2.1 years, and the statewide average for transfer students was 4.2 years. The transfer students in the cohort took twice as long as the native students to achieve junior status.

Chart 14. Progress to Milestones



Note: The difference in the sum of time for each of the periods (to junior status and to graduation from junior status) and the time to degree, as indicated in Table 7, is attributable to rounding and adding two averages.

The other segment of time to consider is the time to graduation after acquiring junior status. This segment of time for the cohort students' progress toward bachelor's degree completion takes place concurrently for all the graduating students. The second segment of time takes place in the same environment and under the same conditions of student support at each university from the time of acquiring junior status.

Chart 14 also shows how quickly the graduating students in the cohort move forward from junior status to graduation. While the transfer juniors do not advance as quickly as their native classmates toward graduation, the difference is small. The statewide average for native students is 3.0 years, and the statewide average for transfer students is 3.2 years from junior status to graduation.

Conclusions

GAIs use many different programs and strategies to attract, advise, and graduate students including customized efforts for community college students. Statewide the THECB has launched initiatives to clarify and facilitate the transfer process. Even so, community college transfer students graduate with bachelor's degrees at a lower rate of completion and take longer to do so than students who start and graduate from the same university. This difference between transfers and natives has been confirmed each year of the study of the junior cohort selected from reported data.

Improving completion rates and reducing the difference in time to degree between native and community college transfer students needs to be addressed through the combined efforts of both Texas public universities and community colleges. Texas public community colleges, GAIs, and students are likely to do things differently with the passage of Senate Bill 25 (SB 25) by the 86th Texas Legislature. The 2019 higher education transfer bill includes many changes intended to improve transfer, including:

- earlier degree planning,
- greater awareness of applicability of specific courses,
- clarification of degree requirements and the sequence of courses to complete a degree,
- better and more easily exchanged student information,
- expanded funding for dual credit courses, and
- another look at the core curriculum.

Collaboration and commitment among institutions, and clarity in messages to students about degree completion are key elements to improve transfer moving forward.

At the state level, encouraging the use of existing mechanisms, such as common course numbering, course alignment through the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project, curriculum alignment through approved mechanisms, and the Texas Core Curriculum will be important to foster continued improvement in student transfer.

Recommendation: The THECB should continue to seek ways to serve as a resource for students to better understand educational pathways and for Texas higher education institutions to provide a platform to foster the development of smooth transfer pathways.

Appendices

(Available at: <http://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/reports/legislative/>)

Appendix A: Institutional Profiles

Appendix B: The General Appropriations Act, House Bill 1, Article III-275,
Section 49, 86th Texas Legislature, Regular Session

Appendix C: Transfer Survey Instrument 2019

Appendix D: Institutional Survey Responses



This document is available on the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website](#).

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