Sponsored Session

3003 - **History has its Eyes on Transfer: National Perspectives on Current and Emerging Transfer Reform Efforts**

Leadership and Strategic Planning, Diversity and Inclusion

Ascendium Education Group and ECMC Foundation—both national philanthropies with strategic commitments to improving transfer and completion outcomes for low-income, Black, Latinx and Indigenous learners—will discuss the national landscape of transfer reform strategies from the unique vantage point of their diverse and varied portfolios. With context and insights from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, this conversation will zoom out to identify areas of progress, momentum and innovation, as well as credit mobility challenges yet unmet.

**Carolynn Lee, Senior Program Officer**
Ascendium Education Group

**Saúl Valdez, Program Officer**
ECMC Foundation

**Doug Shapiro, Executive Director**
National Student Clearinghouse Research Center
History Has Its Eyes on Transfer

National perspectives on current and emerging transfer reform efforts

February 23, 2022
Agenda

The Story of Transfer
• Context, Landscape & Data - perspectives from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

This is Not a Moment, It’s the Movement
• Progress, Momentum & Challenges Still Unmet - perspectives from two national funders

What Comes Next?
• Your perspectives
Introductions
My name is Alexander....

Carolynn Lee
Senior Program Officer
Ascendium Education Group

Saúl Valdez
Program Officer, College Success
ECMC Foundation

Douglas Shapiro
Vice President of Research and Executive Director
National Student Clearinghouse Research Center
The Story of Transfer
You’ll Be Back! (Please??)

- Enrollments show no sign of recovery in second year of pandemic.
- Four-year schools followed pre-pandemic trend in 2020, declining by about 1% or less. They fell more steeply in 2021.
- Two-year schools plunged in 2020, and then fell steeply again in 2021.
- Will students come back? When?
Existing Equity Gaps: 6-Year Upward Transfer Outcomes

Students entering community college in Fall 2014

Percentage point change from 2010 (increase/decrease)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Lower Income (Bottom 40%)</th>
<th>Higher Income (Top 40%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entering Students Who Transfer</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers Who Had Earned Assoc</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers Who Earn Bachelor's</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entering Students Who Earn Bachelor's</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage point change from 2010:
- -0.7
- +8.3
- +5.2
- +1.3

nscresearchcenter.org/stay-informed/tracking-transfer/

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Pandemic Effects on Equity Gaps in Transfer Pathways

Academic Year 2020-21 and Fall 2021

- Number of transfers in AY 2020-21 compared to 2019-20
  - Lateral -12%
  - Reverse -16%
  - Upward -1.3%

- Number of transfers in Fall 2021 compared to Fall 2020
  - Lateral +0.2%
  - Reverse -0.9%
  - Upward -1.6%

- Transfers fell the most among BIPOC students, particularly when underlying demographic trends are accounted for.

nscresearchcenter.org/transfer-mobility-and-progress/
Pandemic Effects on Equity Gaps in Upward Transfer
Academic Year 2020-21 and Fall 2021

• Community college students who could access competitive four-year colleges were able to take advantage of openings.

• The most selective four-year schools gained upward transfer students, while less selective ones lost.

• Upward transfer in Fall 2021 compared to Fall 2020:
  – Highly Selective  +2.7%
  – Less Selective   -8.9%
  – Out-of-state     +8.1%
  – In-state        -2.6%

Change in Upward Transfer Enrollment
AY 2020-21 Compared to AY 2019-20

Barron’s Category of destination institution

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Pandemic Effects on Equity Gaps in Upward Transfer Fall 2021

- Compared to Fall 2020, all R/E groups declined in numbers of upward transfers.
- Black, Latinx and Pacific Islanders lost the most ground.

Change in Upward Transfer Enrollment, Fall 2021 Compared to Fall 2020

Change in Upward Transfer Enrollment, Fall 2021 Compared to Fall 2020

nscresearchcenter.org/transfer-mobility-and-progress/
Key Takeaways

1. Transfer outcomes were not good, even before the pandemic. They were also inequitable.
2. Transfer pathways are constrained during the pandemic.
3. Equity gaps in transfer pathways worsened during the pandemic.

More on

**Enrollments**
nscresearchcenter.org/stay-informed/Enrollments/

**Transfer Enrollments**
nscresearchcenter.org/transfer-mobility-and-progress/

**Upward Transfer Outcomes**
nscresearchcenter.org/stay-informed/tracking-transfer/
This is Not a Moment,
It’s the Movement
Ascendium Education Group

We’re a nonprofit organization that serves as a:

- Provider of student success and financial wellness solutions
- Federal student loan guarantor
- Postsecondary education and workforce training philanthropy

We’re committed to helping people reach their educational and career goals.
Our Education Philanthropy Program

We work to improve outcomes for learners from low-income backgrounds:

with an emphasis on helping these sub-groups reach their education and career goals:

- first-generation students
- incarcerated adults
- rural community members
- students of color
- veterans
The Change We Seek

We hope our work contributes to a future where more low-income learners earn degrees and credentials in postsecondary education and workforce training that improve their labor market success and socioeconomic mobility.
Our Education Philanthropy Program

Ascendium supports change through investments in:

Capacity building  Data infrastructure  Partnerships & networks  Evidence building  Policy change

We fund initiatives at every stage of development — from promising but untested approaches to proven practices ready to be brought to scale.
Our Four Focus Areas

Remove Structural Barriers to Success

Reduces or eliminates institutional or systemic barriers for learners from low-income backgrounds, especially in underrepresented groups.

Streamline Key Learner Transitions

Supports efforts that streamline transitions through better data sharing, improved collaboration and more effective educational and workforce training systems.

Expand Postsecondary Education in Prison

Addresses barriers facing currently incarcerated adults who don't have equitable access to high-quality postsecondary education.

Support Rural Postsecondary Education and Workforce Training

Supports efforts to better understand rural learners and postsecondary providers so that more rural learners from low-income backgrounds can meet their goals.
Our Investment Priorities

Streamline Key Learner Transitions

Explore diverse pathways to and through postsecondary education and workforce training.

Ease transitions between, and returning to, postsecondary providers.

Smooth transitions between postsecondary education and the workforce.
Streamlining: Learning Mobility

Progress & Momentum

National Scale

• Tackling Transfer, Equity Transfer Initiative

State & Regional Coordination

• University of Washington/CCRI, UNITE-LA, Kent State

Targeted Problem-Solving

• Degrees When Due - Reverse Transfer; NACUBO - Strategic Finance; Michigan Community College Association - Workforce programs; MDRC & NASH- Faculty Bias

Innovation

• SOVA & WASC Senior
ECMC Foundation

Our Mission
To improve higher education and career success among underserved populations through evidence-based innovation.

Our Vision
All learners unlock their fullest potential.

Our Approach
We believe in and practice a culture of humility—one that is built on a foundation of active listening, evidence-based innovation, a commitment to learning, and open dialogue with partners in the field.
Approach

We prioritize investments that advance systemic change

- Build transformative postsecondary leaders
- Provide and institutionalize wraparound student support
- Reduce barriers to persistence
- Improve and expand career pathways
Core Funding Areas

We make grants in two focus areas

- **College Success**: Students enrolled in two- and four-year colleges/universities
- **Career Readiness**: Adult learners

- **Transfer pathways to four-year colleges/universities; bachelor’s degrees**
- **Industry-informed, portable short-term credentials, up to and including associate degrees**

- **Family-sustaining wages and upward mobility**
Core Funding Areas

Our initiatives include

- Transformational Partnerships Fund
- CTE Leadership Collaborative
- Innovative Financing Models
- Improving Online CTE
- Basic Needs Initiative
- Single Mother Student Success
- Catalyzing Transfer Initiative
Catalyzing Transfer Initiative (CTI)

Overview

ECMC Foundation launched CTI in 2021 and provided $4.5 million to five leading organizations to improve the transfer pipeline:

- American Association of Community Colleges
- Education Commission of the States
- Institute for Higher Education Policy
- State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

While 80% of students enrolled in public two-year institutions aim to earn a bachelor’s degree, only 15% of students who start at a community college earn a bachelor’s degree within six years.
Catalyzing Transfer Initiative (CTI)

Activities to date

• CTI grantees launched their projects and identified their state and institutional partners.

• Coordinated five virtual CTI grantees meetings to share progress with each other.

• Hosted five virtual funder group meetings to discuss transfer student strategies amongst national philanthropic partners.
Looking Ahead

Progress & Momentum

• Improving credit mobility and transfer will continue to be significant for our College Success strategy (20+ active grants related to transfer student success).

• Commitment to drive institution-level reform, influencing statewide policy changes, and informing the national landscape while addressing pandemic-related challenges.

• Transfer needs major reform - “I may not live to see our glory, but I will gladly join the fight.”
What Comes Next?
Tomorrow There’ll Be More of Us

State/Regional Efforts
National Cohort Participant(s)
Blow Us All Away

• What’s next for transfer?
• What questions do we still need to answer?
• What does the data tell us?
• Where do we go from here?
Want to connect with Ascendium?

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Thank You