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## *Research Spotlight*

### **2332 - Student Views: Information for Decreasing the Leaks in the Transfer Pipeline**

Credits and Degree Pathways, Matriculation Trends and Issues

The results from a survey of over 31,000 undergraduates in a single multi-college urban university system illustrate the many challenges involved in transferring colleges. These results suggest ways in which transfer student success may be increased. These success strategies relate to students' academic preparation, college engagement, financial needs, home/environment, information, and motivation.

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## **Student Views:**

# **Information for Decreasing the Leaks in the Transfer Pipeline**

Alexandra Logue, Research Professor

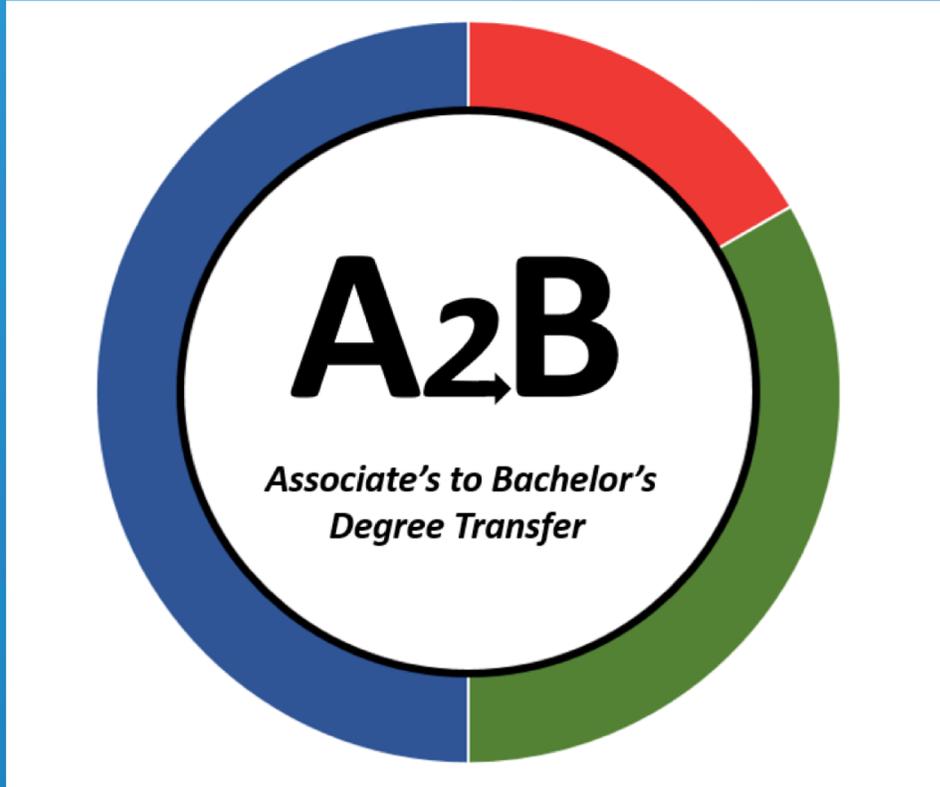
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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

NISTS 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



These projects all focus on vertical (or upward) transfer (transfer from an associate's-degree program to a bachelor's-degree program).

# Acknowledgments

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- Nayeon Yoo
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# Disclaimer

The contents of this presentation were developed in part under a grant from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

# Presentation Plan

# Topics to Be Covered in This Presentation

- Background (who is transferring and why, and what are the challenges)
- Student Survey Methodology
- Student Survey Results
- Conclusions
- Discussion

# Background

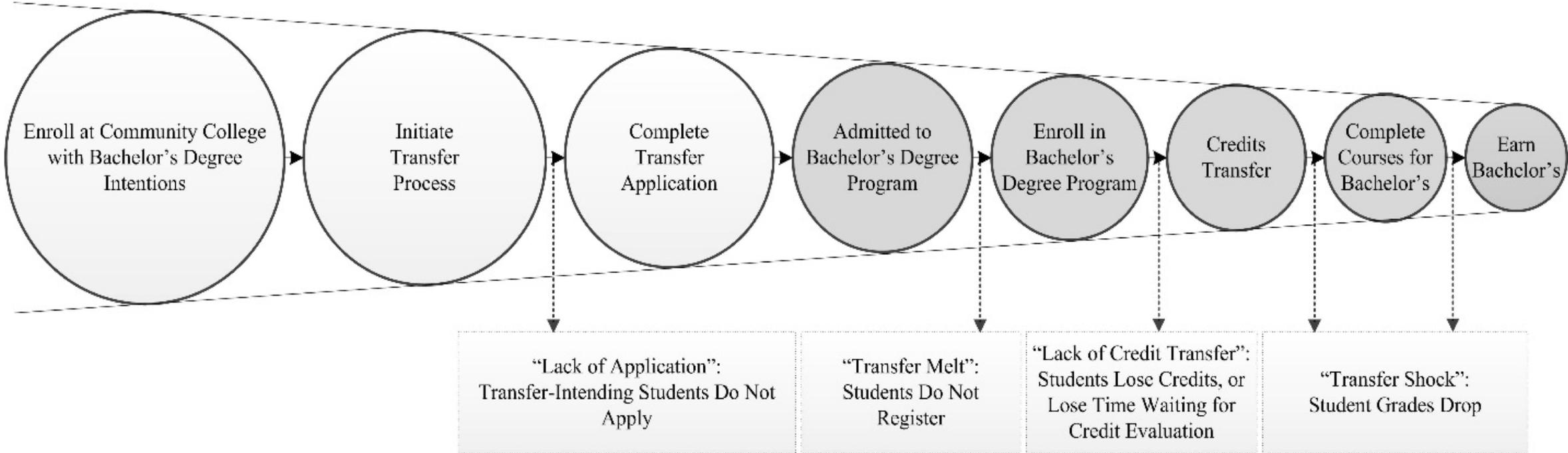
# Why Transfer from a Community College (Associate's Degree Program) to a Bachelor's Degree Program?

- Increasingly jobs require a bachelor's degree
- Over 80% of new community college freshmen intend to obtain at least a bachelor's degree
- Most community colleges only have associate's degrees
- So community college students will have to transfer to achieve their goals

# What Sorts of Students Attend Community Colleges?

- On average, students at community colleges (in associate's programs), in comparison to students in bachelor's programs, are:
  - More likely to be from underrepresented groups,
  - Have fewer financial resources, and are
  - More likely to be the first in their families to attend college.

# But What Happens to These Students' Goals? The Leaky Transfer Pipeline



# What Are the Results of the Leaks?

## National Data

- Over 80% of new community college freshmen intend to receive at least a bachelor's degree
- Six years later, only 11% have done so

## CUNY Data

- 87% of new community college freshmen intend to receive at least a bachelor's degree
- Six years later, only 15% have done so

# Purposes of TOP Research

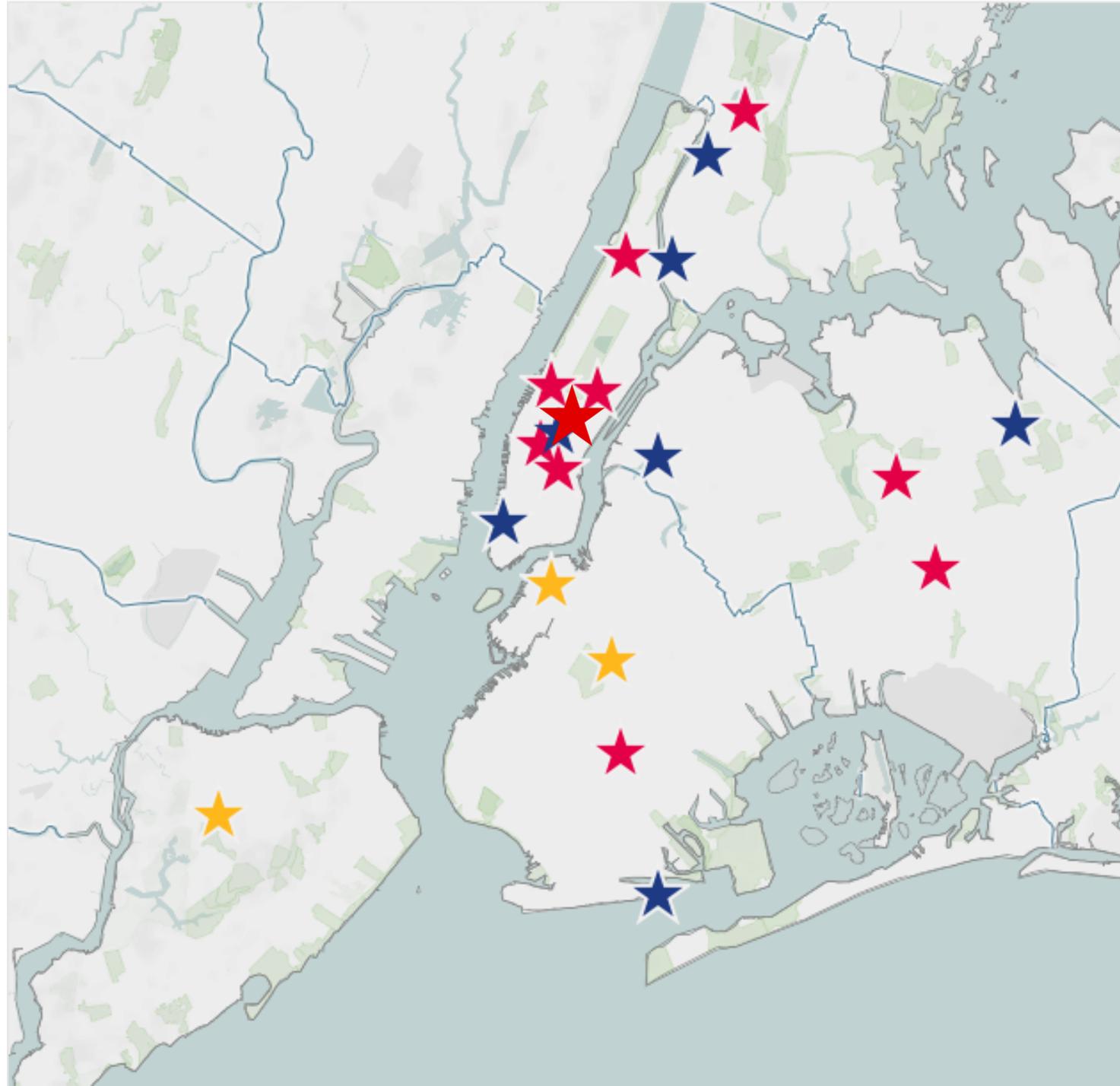
- Where are the major leaks in the pipeline?
- What variables are associated with those leaks?
- What are the possible *malleable factors* (aspects of the higher education environment that can be modified) that can decrease the leaks and increase the output of this pipeline?
- What specific interventions might address the leaks?



## The City University of New York as a Laboratory for Studying Transfer



- One Board of Trustees and one budget
- 20 undergraduate colleges in the 5 boroughs of NYC
  - 7 community colleges (associate's programs)
  - 3 comprehensive colleges (associate's and bachelor's programs)
  - 10 senior colleges (bachelor's programs)
- 240,000 matriculated undergraduates
- About 20,000 students transfer from one CUNY college to another each year
- Over 50% of bachelor's-degree recipients are transfers



# Why Study Student Views?

- May help us understand why students leak out of the transfer pipeline
- May give us information about what is actually going on with regard to transfer
- May help suggest interventions to increase transfer student success

## November 19, 2021 Exchange on a CUNY Senior College SubReddit

- Student 1: Can somebody PLEASE explain why transfers get the latest enrollment date...I am a junior with 60+ credits and my enrollment date [for spring 2022] still didn't start and more than half of the classes I am required to take are completely full....LIKE why am I being penalized for transferring?
- Student 2: Tell me about it I'm in the same boat it's f\*\*\*\*\* ridiculous
- Student 1: The cuny system is a joke :)))
- Student 3: Same here! It's so frustrating!
- Student 4: it's horrible. Request an overtally [enrollment over the course limit] whenever possible I would say
- Student 1: Every time I request an overtally they ignore me :) LMAOOO

# Student Survey: Methodology

# Survey Structure and Comparisons

- Questions were divided into General Background, General Situation in College, and Transfer Sections
- Survey had 6 branches, depending on (a) whether a student was in an associate's or bachelor's program, and (b) had never transferred, had transferred most recently from an associate's program, or had transferred most recently from a bachelor's program
- Primary comparisons were between:
  - **Branch 1** (associate's program, never transferred),
  - **Branch 4** (bachelor's program, never transferred), and
  - **Branch 5** (bachelor's program, transferred most recently from an associate's program, i.e., **vertical transfer students**)
- Survey had 50-65 questions, depending on branch

# Administration of Survey

In February-March 2020, we sent an initial email (plus reminders) to each full-time and part-time CUNY student, inviting them to participate and providing a unique link to the survey, if they met the following criteria:

- Enrolled in associate's or bachelor's program
- At least 18 years of age
- They had a valid email address and/or cell phone number in our database

Emails sent to a total of 188,037 students.

31,511 responded (16.8% response rate).

# Student Survey: Results

# Student Demographics

## Comparison of Respondent and Population Characteristics

Student Characteristic	Invited Population n = 188,037	All Respondents n = 31,511	1 n = 8,389	Branch 4 n = 9,304	5 n = 7,176
Gender (% female)	57.2	67.6	67.4	65.2	69.5
Race/ethnicity (% White)	20.2	18.4	11.7	21.3	20.3
Age (% ≥ 25 years)	28.0	30.7	26.3	10.7	51.9
Program (% associate's)	37.6	37.4	100.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage full-time	74.2	79.4	83.3	89.7	69.2
Pell Grant (% recipient)	54.4	56.4	64.3	61.0	53.8
High school GPA <sup>a,b</sup>	80.9(8.1)	81.9(8.1)	77.2(7.5)	85.6(6.5)	78.8(7.6)
Cumulative GPA <sup>a,b</sup>	2.8(0.8)	3.0(0.8)	2.5(1.0)	3.0(0.7)	2.9(0.7)

<sup>a</sup>Values ranged from 0 to 100 for High school GPA and 0 to 4 for cumulative GPA; M(SD) are shown.

<sup>b</sup>The 17.7% missing values for high school GPA, and the 9.3% for cumulative GPA were imputed using multiple imputation.

# Malleable Factor: Information and College Support

Question	All	Branch		
	Respondents	1	4	5
	<i>M(SD)(n)</i>	<i>M(SD)(n)</i>	<i>M(SD)(n)</i>	<i>M(SD)(n)</i>
Support at current college <sup>a</sup>	4.8(1.6)(28,806)	5.2(1.5)(7,634)	4.8(1.5)(8,494)	4.6(1.6)(3,215)
Instructors/staff understand me <sup>a</sup>	4.6(1.6)(28,357)	4.8(1.6)(7,532)	4.4(1.6)(8,339)	4.4(1.7)(6,465)
Instructors/staff understood me at previous college <sup>a</sup>				5.3(1.6)(6,251)

<sup>a</sup>Rated from 1 (low) to 7 (high).

# Malleable Factor: Motivation

Question	All Respondents	1	Branch 4	5
	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)	%(n)
Expect to get $\geq$ bachelor's	74.8(29,737)	65.3(7,831)	81.5(8,679)	76.6(6,904)
Current college encouraged me to transfer to bachelor's		65.9(7,000)		
Previous college encouraged me to transfer to bachelor's				69.6(6,461)

# Malleable Factor: Financial Needs

Question	All	Branch		
	Respondents	1	4	5
Job this semester [%](n)	53.1(31,471)	46.6(8,371)	47.7(9,296)	61.5(7,169)
Food insecurity: M(SD)(n) <sup>a</sup>	2.8(1.8)(23,853)	2.9(1.9)(6,587)	2.5(1.7)(6,741)	3.0(1.8)(5,583)
Housing insecurity: M(SD)(n) <sup>a</sup>	2.2(1.8)(18,434)	2.4(1.9)(5,130)	1.9(1.6)(5,140)	2.4(1.9)(4,374)

<sup>a</sup>Rated from 1 (low) to 7 (high).

# Malleable Factor: Home and Noncollege Environment

Question	All	Branch		
	Respondents	1	4	5
	%( <i>n</i> )	%( <i>n</i> )	%( <i>n</i> )	%( <i>n</i> )
> 40 mins to campus?	57.8(31,181)	56.5(8,271)	61.8(9,215)	57.8(7,111)
Child < 5 yrs old	7.8(31,166)	9.6(8,262)	3.0(9,204)	10.5(7,114)
Provide care $\geq$ 10hrs/week	25.1(31,153)	27.6(8,258)	17.7(9,201)	31.1(7,108)

# Malleable Factor: College Engagement and Belongingness

Question	All	Branch		
	Respondents	1	4	5
Fit in at current college <sup>a</sup>	4.9(1.6)(28,755)	5.2(1.6)(7,629)	4.8(1.6)(8,436)	4.9(1.7)(6,589)
Fit in at previous college <sup>a</sup>				5.3(1.7)(6,235)
Hard making friends at current <sup>a</sup>	3.9(1.8)(26,552)	3.9(1.8)(6,945)	4.0(1.8)(7,998)	3.9(1.8)(6,076)
Hard making friends at previous <sup>a</sup>				3.3(1.9)(5,293)
% have $\geq 1$ good friend at current <sup>b</sup>	63.2(29,687)	65.3(7,854)	75.6(8,733)	52.6(6,814)
% have $\geq 1$ good friend at previous <sup>b</sup>				81.8(6,473)
% with extracurricular involvement <sup>b</sup>	22.3(29,509)	19.9(7,801)	30.5(8,644)	17.0(6,805)

<sup>a</sup> Rated from 1 (low) to 7 (high) ; M(SD)(n) are shown.

<sup>b</sup> %(n) are shown.

# Reported Transfer Timeline for Fall 2019 (classes began 8/27/19)

College*	2019/2	2019/3	2019/4	2019/5	2019/6	2019/7	2019/8
A	Yellow		Red			Blue	
B			Yellow		Red		Blue
C		Yellow		Red			Blue
D	Yellow			Red			Blue
E			Yellow	Red		Blue	
F			Yellow		Red	Blue	
G		Yellow			Red		Blue

*Note.* Bachelor's colleges with complete information from at least 75 students (n = 79-143).

-  Median Application Month
-  Median Admission Month
-  Median Month Transfer Credit Evaluation Completed

# Malleable Factor: Motivation (What's the Biggest Challenge You Face in Getting a Bachelor's Degree?)

Challenge	All	1	4	5
	Respondents n=22,013	n=7,238	n=1,252	n=1,585
	%	%	%	%
Acceptance	10.2	17.4	8.9	4.2
Cost	32.9	39.4	25.0	35.5
Family time	7.2	5.8	6.6	9.2
Grades	25.7	21.3	35.4	22.6
Time working	11.6	8.0	9.5	15.3
Other	6.7	4.7	6.1	9.0
None	5.7	3.3	8.5	4.1

# Malleable Factor: Motivation (Which Stage of the Associate's-to-Bachelor's-Degree Process Presents the Biggest Barrier for Students?)

Question	Branch		
	1 %(n)	4 %(n)	5 %(n)
Application to bachelor's	13.5(816)	11.1(810)	8.8(531)
Enrollment in bachelor's	14.0(846)	15.4(1,118)	11.4(688)
Getting good grades after transferring	28.0(1,692)	24.9(1,813)	33.9(2,043)
Transfer of credits	40.8(2,468)	44.9(3,267)	40.5(2,439)
Other	3.6(220)	3.8(275)	5.4(325)

# Malleable Factor: Information and College Support (When I have Met With an Advisor the **Most** Important Topics That I have Typically Wanted to Discuss Have Been)

Topic	All Respondents %
Courses needed	46.2
Current courses	45.8
Academic plans	45.0
Financial Aid	27.9
<b>Transfer</b>	<b>23.0</b>
Career/job plans	19.1
Mental health	8.6
Other Financial concerns	5.7

*Note.* 7,826 students from branch 1 responded to this survey item. Percentages add to greater than 100% because each student could give up to three answers.

# Malleable Factor: Motivation (Branch 5 [Transferred Associate's to Bachelor's]: Why Did You Transfer to Your Current College?)

Reason	All Respondents n=6,383 %
College had a major/program I wanted	63.0
College's location	35.9
College's reputation	31.3
College's cost	21.1
My dual-degree program concludes here	6.6
The kinds of students who attend this college	5.0
Academic problems at my previous college	3.2

*Note.* Percentages add to greater than 100% because each student could select any number of responses that applied.



# Malleable Factor: Information and College Support (Policy and Practice Knowledge)

Question	Branch		
	1	4	5
More credits transfer if have Associate's degree	83.0(2,340)	71.2(1,768)	84.1(3,825)
Students who transfer are told how credits transfer before registration at new college	80.5(2,776)	70.8(3,030)	57.3(4,647)
Students who transfer are told how credits transfer before having to pay money to new college	72.9(2,140)	67.3(2,457)	57.6(3,969)

*Note.* The percentages of students agreeing with each statement are shown and the numbers of students answering each item are shown.

***Note.* All of these statements are false.**

Malleable Factor: Information and College Support (Branch 5 [Transferred Associate's to Bachelor's]): From where did you get most of your information about transfer when you were at your previous associate's-degree college? (n = 6,537)

- 32.9% websites
- 18.3% college staff other than faculty members

# Conclusions

# Conclusions:

## Why Are These Results Important and What Can they Tell Us That Can Help Transfer Students?

- Respondents are largely disadvantaged students, with substantial financial concerns, and report many demands on their time (particularly in the case of the vertical transfer students, who are older than the other groups).
- Students choose a college based more on the program it has than its location, perhaps contributing to large reported commuting times.
- Results suggest we are disproportionately losing nonWhite and Pell recipient students in the vertical transfer process.
- Yet the great majority of community college students want at least a bachelor's.

## Conclusions (continued)

- Respondents report feeling more supported by community than senior colleges.
- Yet a higher percentage of vertical transfer students expect to get bachelor's than feel they were encouraged to do so by their community college.

## Conclusions (continued)

- Traditional bachelor's students are more likely to report having friends and being involved in extracurricular activities than students who have attended community colleges.
- Vertical transfer students are less likely to report having friends, and other measures of belongingness, in their bachelor's than their associate's college.
- At each college, the median time when a transfer student reported finding out how their credits would transfer was less than two months before classes started, when course choices would be limited.
- Despite respondents reporting that transfer and transfer credits are the largest challenges in the associate's to bachelor's-degree process, more immediate concerns seem to dominate students' sessions with advisors.

# Conclusions (continued)

- Respondents' knowledge of CUNY transfer policy and practice appears to be quite limited, which would inhibit their ability to make optimal choices concerning transfer.
- Respondents report being most likely to obtain their information from websites. However, CUNY online transfer information is limited (see Logue, Jordan, Townsell, Bellettiere, & Torres, in press, *Community College Review*).

# Conclusions (continued)

These findings suggest that, to ensure that vertical transfer is an equitable process leading to a bachelor's degree, prospective and actual vertical transfer students need additional support in terms of:

- Money
- Time
- Making friends and engaging in college
- Information

## Stay tuned for:

- A subsequent report on the over 30,000 answers to this survey's two open-ended questions:
  - (1) What advice would you give students who want to transfer
  - (2) What part of the transfer process would you change?
- The results from a survey on transfer we just completed of approximately 4,000 CUNY faculty.

# Additional A2B Projects

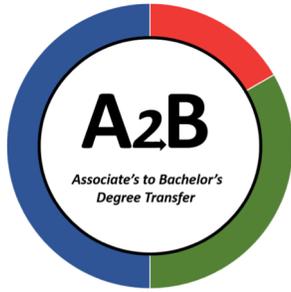


Additional funders: Heckscher Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Petrie Foundation

# Additional A2B NISTS 2022 Presentations

- Gentsch, K., Yoo, N., & Logue, A. W. Longitudinal analysis of transfer students and the complexities of transfer-related data. (poster)
- Kurzweil, M., Buonocore, C., & Vora, P. Sunshine! Using system data to help students, advisors, and leaders improve credit articulation. (on-demand video)
- Torres, R. I., & Wutchiett, D. Growing transfers in the humanities: Characteristics and motivations associated with major choice. (on-demand video)

# Questions, Comments, and Discussion



# Thank you!



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A2B (Associate's to Bachelor's) website:

<https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/oira/policy/a2b/>

**\*\*Please complete a session evaluation (Session #2332)\*\***



## Survey Questions Constructed Based on:

- Prior research,
- A review of transfer information available on websites and in printed materials of six CUNY colleges,
- The results from 17 student focus groups at three CUNY colleges previously conducted by TOP,
- Feedback from a panel of about 30 transfer researchers and transfer professionals.

## Survey Structure

- Survey Questions in True/False, Multiple Choice, Continuous 7-Point Likert Scale, and Open-Ended Formats
- Questions Divided Into General Background, General Situation in College, and Transfer Sections
- Survey had six branches (for associate's and bachelor's students who had never transferred, had transferred most recently from an associate's program, and had transferred most recently from a bachelor's program) with some different questions for each branch (50-65 questions per branch)