Educational Session

2863 - Opening the Door to Transfer at Highly Selective Private Institutions
Partnerships and Collaboration, Diversity and Inclusion

How many transfer students enrolled at selective colleges and universities in Fall 2017? Just three percent. In January 2021, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program and Jack Kent Cooke Foundation piloted a new model to help open the door to the Ivy League and elite liberal arts colleges. Now, the Transfer Scholars Network is a collective of 24 community colleges and four-year institutions, working to identify and guide high-achieving students through the complex admissions process. During this session, we’ll walk through the model and outcomes, elevate lessons from both sets of partners, and surface best practices that ensure student success.

Adam Rabinowitz, Senior Manager
Ben Fresquez, Senior Manager
Aspen Institute College Excellence Program
Connecting high-achieving community college students to high-graduation-rate four-year colleges and universities

Opening the Door to Transfer at Highly Selective Private Institutions

NISTS Virtual Conference | February 1, 2023

COLLEGE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Jack Kent Cooke Foundation
Today’s Agenda

- Our Work and Community College Transfer to Four-Year Institutions
- The Community College Transfer Landscape at High-Graduation-Rate Four-Year Institutions
- A Transfer Model for Community College Students to Highly Selective Institutions I

*Transfer Scholars Network*

- Strategies to Build an Ecosystem Devoted to Highly Selective Transfer
Today’s Agenda

**Our Work and Community College Transfer to Four-Year Institutions**

- The Community College Transfer Landscape at High-Graduation-Rate Four-Year Institutions
- A Transfer Model for Community College Students to Highly Selective Institutions

*Transfer Scholars Network*

- Strategies to Build an Ecosystem Devoted to Highly Selective Transfer
CEP’s Mission: Improving student outcomes through leadership & research
Access our publications and additional resources at highered.aspeninstitute.org
Bringing Together a Uniquely Diverse Alliance

137 ATI Members

High-Graduation-Rate Institutions

Four-year colleges and universities with six-year graduation rates above 70%

337 ATI-eligible institutions in the US

41% of ATI-eligible institutions are currently in the membership

50,000 more lower-income students by 2025
Today’s Agenda

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  *The Community College Transfer Landscape at High-Graduation-Rate Four-Year Institutions*

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The transfer process often fails to serve students....

80% of community college students want a bachelor’s degree

31% of community college students transfer to a four-year institution

15% of community college students will graduate with a bachelor’s degree within six years of starting college

...few community college transfers complete their four-year degrees

Source: Tracking Transfer: Measures of Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students to Complete Bachelor’s Degrees, 2021 data update
The transfer pipeline is particularly narrow at institutions where students are best positioned to graduate

### Fall 2017 Entering Class by Student Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>First-Time Students</th>
<th>Community College Transfer Students</th>
<th>Other Transfer Students</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Four-Year Nonprofit Institutions</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATI-Eligible Institutions</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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*Source: ATI analyses of National Student Clearinghouse data for the Fall 2017 cohort*
Collectively, ATI schools enroll more freshmen and fewer transfers than the national average.

ATI Institutions by Share of Incoming Student Cohort Who Are Transfer Students

- Less than 5%: 46%
- 5% to <10%: 26%
- 10% to <15%: 13%
- 15% to <20%: 8%
- 20% to <25%: 4%
- Greater than 25%: 3%

Source: ATI analyses of National Student Clearinghouse data for the Fall 2017 cohort
Private, highly selective colleges have the most ground to make up—and the greatest opportunity—to enroll community college transfers.

Competitive and less competitive institutions enroll an outsized share of transfer students in comparison to their more selective peers.

Just 3% of the Fall 2017 transfer cohort enrolled at the most highly selective colleges and universities.

Source: Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. Transfer Students At-A-Glance: Which institutions are serving their share?
Private, high-graduation-rate colleges can also drastically improve graduation rates for community college transfers.

Source: ATI analyses of National Student Clearinghouse data for the Fall 2014 transfer cohort.
How do we support more students transferring to high-graduation-rate institutions?

Partner with community colleges to ensure talented community college students not only transfer upward but attain bachelor’s degrees critical to accessing the jobs of the future.

Leverage the collective wisdom of institutions across the higher education spectrum to broaden postsecondary possibilities for community college students and create a seamless, comprehensive pipeline to highly selective colleges they once dreamed of.
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A Transfer Model for Community College Students to Highly Selective Institutions

Transfer Scholars Network

- Strategies to Build an Ecosystem Devoted to Highly Selective Transfer
The Transfer Scholars Network:

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

Trusted partners with established relationships with both community colleges and highly selective institutions...

...can build the network needed to create a pool of high-achieving prospective transfers, laying the groundwork for...

...a student-facing online platform directly connecting four-year institutions to prospective transfer applicants competitive for admission.
Highlighting The Possibilities

Alumni from Year 1 of the Transfer Scholars Network

“Being nominated for TSN opened my eyes to a wealth of opportunities, including applying to a four-year institution that I never thought about.”

*Evelyn de la Rosa*

“I had an opportunity to learn about colleges I’d never heard of and talk directly with their admissions officers, allowing me to consider colleges I previously assumed would be out of reach.”

*Meelod Waheed*
The Transfer Scholars Network

Who Are They?

The Transfer Scholars

- 60% are the first in their families to attend college
- 93% have at least a 3.5 GPA
- 74% have family incomes under $50,000
- 71% are from communities of color
Highlighting The Possibilities

*Four-Year Destinations for Transfer Students*

TSN Partners

- Cornell University
- MIT
- Mount Holyoke
- Princeton University
- Pomona College
- Smith College
- Williams
- Yale

High-Graduation-Rate Institutions

- Columbia University
- Fordham University
- George Mason University
- Georgia Tech
- Howard University
- NYU
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- University of Texas at Austin
- Temple University
- University of Virginia
- Wellesley
TSN’s Aims in Our Early Years

Stage I: Build the Blueprint (2019 – 2020)
Convene community colleges, highly selective ATI institutions, and partners to understand the resources and supports needed to create a transfer system.

Stage II: Launch the Model (2021 – 2022)
Run a closed-door pilot to obtain “proof of concept” for the model, refine it to address partner and student needs, and launch a network of students.

Stage III: Sustain the Network (2023 and beyond)
Solidify a model and associated activities that a growing number of institutional partners can embed in their recruitment, admissions, and completion strategies.
Stage I: Building the Blueprint for TSN

We convened 20 nationally-recognized community college and four-year leaders to tackle two questions:

- How would a new transfer system help connect more community college students to selective institutions?
- How would this new system help expand transfer pipelines across participating partners and elevate the importance of transfer more broadly?

Snapshots from the October 2019 National Planning Summit
The Aspen Institute, Washington, DC
Where we landed...

Participating Community Colleges

INCLUDING

Must Have:
- Leadership commitment
- A focus on strong 2-year advising practices

Supported by an intermediary and philanthropy

Must Have:
- A pool of talented community college transfer students
- An online platform
- High-quality information on transfer Evaluation and storytelling

Committed Four-Year Partners

INCLUDING

Must Have:
- Generous financial aid
- Leadership and staff buy-in
- Transfer strategies, goals, and investments
- Clear academic pathways

Leveraging the ATI network of high-graduation-rate four-year institutions and other partners to create a new transfer system
### TSN’s Aims in Our Early Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage I</th>
<th>Build the Blueprint</th>
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Major Components of the Transfer Scholars Network

1. **TSN partners** work together to **identify prospective transfers** with demonstrated financial need that have the academic credentials and diverse experiences to thrive at (and enrich) highly selective institutions.

2. Community college partners **execute a student nomination campaign**, rooted in evidence that early, proactive outreach to community college students can seed their interest in transfer to high-graduation-rate colleges and universities, especially institutions that offer substantial financial aid.

3. Students join TSN via an online platform, where they submit demographic and academic information and are **instantly connected to senior four-year admissions leaders** early in the admission process.
Points of contact at participating community colleges will identify students with the following criteria:

- A minimum 3.5 GPA
- A minimum of 15-30 credits for first-year students and 30-60 credits for second-year students
- Intent to apply for transfer admission after associate completion and transfer-ready based on their educational journey
- Adjusted gross family income or personal income of <$100,000
- Holistic record of achievement (e.g., extracurricular activities, leadership, volunteer service, resilience, life experience)
- No previously documented attendance or enrollment at a four-year institution

With these criteria in mind, the students that make up the Transfer Scholars Network will not only be well-positioned to thrive at any four-year institution, but...

...ideally reflect the diversity we see at community colleges across the country, spanning socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, age, and professional/life experiences.
Stage II: Launching the Model

Four Core Accomplishments Through the TSN Pilot

1. Established a network of...
   - 10 Aspen Prize and leading community colleges
   - 14 Four-year ATI member institutions

2. Obtained proof of concept...
   - 120 TSN students applied to four-year partners
   - 115 enrolled at high-graduation-rate institutions
   - 20% enrolled at four-year partners

3. Solidified the network through partner and student engagements

4. Generated results that led to national press...
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Transfer Scholars Network

Strategies to Build an Ecosystem Devoted to Highly Selective Transfer
TSN’s Aims in Our Early Years

Stage I  Build the Blueprint  2019 – 2020
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Stage III  Sustain the Network  2023 and beyond
Solidify a model and associated activities that a growing number of institutional partners can embed in their recruitment, admissions, and completion strategies
Four Lessons Learned from Students and Partners

- **Early outreach matters;** engage students as early as possible in the transfer process

- **Tap into growing interest among highly selective institutions;** identify and engage transfer-specific staff, speaking to enrollment and equity opportunities

- **Lead with affordability-focused messaging;** highly selectives are often cheaper since they meet full demonstrated need

- **Tailor resources/tools and special engagements to biggest barriers to transfer**
  - *Fit/belonging at transfer destinations*
  - *Credit transfer policies*
  - *Transfer admission and major advising*
How do COMMUNITY COLLEGES make the case to highly selective institutions?

• The high school senior population is shrinking nationwide; community college transfers represent an alternative pipeline of talented students ready to thrive and make an impact.

• We need to produce more graduates with bachelor’s degrees to fill the jobs of the future; community college transfers are just as well-positioned as first-time, full-time peers to graduate.

• Transfers can have a transformational impact on your campus; community college transfers are poised to assume leadership positions and offer diverse perspectives that support a culture of belonging and widespread student success.

• Community college transfer presents an opportunity to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities; students are more likely to be older and hail from lower-income and underrepresented backgrounds.
### Emerging Partnerships

**What happens when it works?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>San Jacinto College</th>
<th>Bowdoin</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Launched first-ever informational webinars for San Jacinto students</td>
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<td>• Sponsored fly-ins and other admissions opportunities for admitted San Jacinto students</td>
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<td>• Regular engagement and communication among admissions officers</td>
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<tr>
<th>NOVA</th>
<th>Northern Virginia Community College</th>
<th>Pomona College</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Pomona admitted first student from NOVA in its history</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>That student is one of the first-ever community college admits to Pomona</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Admissions officers co-host workshops and informational webinars</td>
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<th>Broward College</th>
<th>Princeton University</th>
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<td>• Began “orientation webinar” series for interested Broward College students</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exploring regular virtual engagements</td>
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<tr>
<td>• More students are considering destinations outside the region, sparking deeper collaboration with other partners in the network</td>
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What’s Next for TSN?

• **Expanding the network;** engage additional community colleges and four-year institutions nationwide

• **Sponsoring more community college–highly selective engagements;** host strategy-focused and practice-sharing webinars, and potentially in-person events around issues of interest

• **Supporting more equitable transfer practice;** develop shared resources and guidelines to inspire effective credit transfer and ensure transfer student belonging

• **Introducing dedicated advising;** supplement institutional support of TSN students with insights and counsel from external experts
Questions?

Share your reflections in the Zoom chat

Visit TSN at transferscholars.org

or email us at info@transferscholars.org
PLEASE COMPLETE A SESSION EVALUATION
(via the conference app)

This session's id# is: 2863

Thank you for attending!