

NISTS 2023

BE A CONNECTOR FOR TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS

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The following presentation was given at the 21st Annual Conference for the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students. Please cite responsibly and direct questions to the original presenter(s).

Educational Partner/Sponsor Session

2866 - Nudging Transfer Students to Application Success: Findings from Common App Pilot Initiatives

Matriculation Trends and Issues, Credits and Degree Pathways

Much attention has been given to nudging interventions designed to encourage student success. Join Common App as we present findings from pilot initiatives aimed at nudging transfer and community college students to application submission. Share innovative strategies you have used to nudge students from application through enrollment. Learn how Common App is continuing to evolve to ensure all students are represented and supported in the application process.

Batanya M. Gipson, *Director, Community College and Transfer Student Engagement*

Trent Kajikawa, *Senior Manager, Data Analytics and Research*

Emily Blumenfeld, *Senior UX Researcher/ Designer*

Ariana Ortega, *Product Manager*

Common App



Nudging transfer students to application success: findings from Common App pilot initiative

Batanya Gipson, Director Community College & Transfer Student Engagement

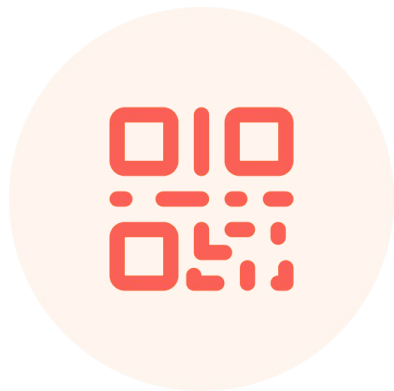
Ariana Ortega, Product Manager

Trent Kajikawa, Senior Manager, Data Analytics and Research

Emily Blumenfeld, Senior UX Researcher

February 2023

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What's your position or role?

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Agenda

- Overview: why guaranteed admissions
- Common Transfer Guarantee pilot results
- Revisiting our approach
- Approach from the field
- Questions

Why guaranteed admissions?

Common App transfer data

2021–2022

113K

Transfer applicants
(+6.5% y-o-y)

254K

Transfer applications
(+12% y-o-y)

41%

Previously attended
a 2yr college*

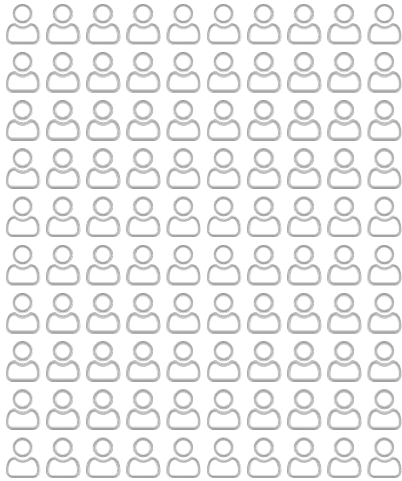
Top sending colleges

1. Northern Virginia Community College
2. Santa Monica College
3. Community College of Rhode Island
4. Community College of Philadelphia
5. Nassau Community College
6. CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College
7. Wake Technical Community College
8. Miami Dade College
9. New York University
10. Pasadena City College
11. De Anza College
12. Houston Community College
13. Syracuse University
14. CUNY Hunter College
15. University of Massachusetts-Amherst

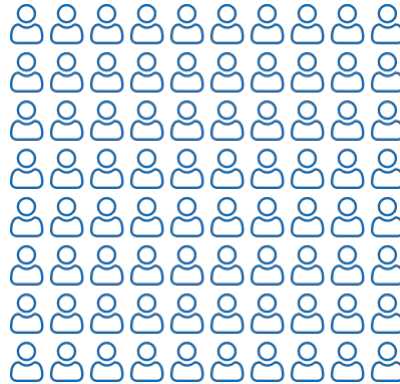
* Includes Carnegie classifications for Associate's; Special Focus Two-Year; and Baccalaureate/Associate's; Associate's Dominant colleges

Currently, only a fraction of community college students make it through to earn a bachelor's degree.

For every **100**
community college students



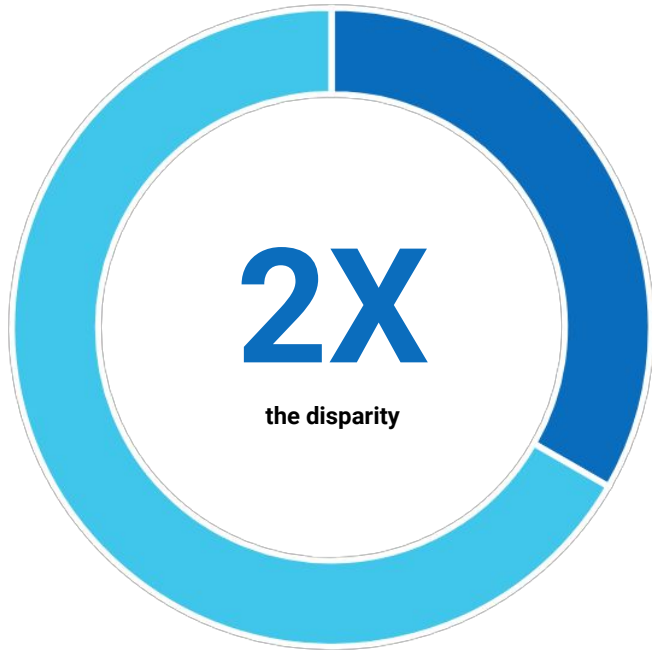
80 in 100
intend to earn a bachelor's degree



14 in 100
earn a bachelor's degree in 6 years



Transfer inequity



- **White** students are twice as likely to transfer as **Black and Latinx** students
- **Higher-income** students are twice as likely to transfer as **lower-income** students
- **Low-income students** are 2.4x more likely to start at a community college compared to students from the highest income quartile
- **Hispanic students** are 1.6x more likely and **Black students** are 1.3x more likely to start at a community college compared to white students
- Students using the Common App for transfer (AY 21–22) were 2x more likely to be **first-generation** compared to first-year students

Transfer students want enhanced preadmit and postadmit/preenrollment services



Per AACRAO, few strategic initiatives exist for transfer students.



56% of community college officials say that engaging prospective students is their top technology priority.



31% of primarily 2YR institutions have no FTES to recruit transfer students.



88% of the institutions that serve transfer students have at least one institutional-transfer partner.



Engagement rates among institutional-transfer partners are relatively low.



Few institutions have a transfer credit equivalency solution for prospective students.

The field calls for a transfer solution

NACAC

National Association of College Admission Counseling

A national survey conducted by NACAC showed that many counselors feel less knowledgeable about transfer policies at area four-year colleges.

NACAC Transfer Center

CCRC

Community College Research Center

Students can benefit from clear and relevant information about transfer options even before enrolling in a community college.

Transfer Playbook

AACRAO

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

Students have the right to clearly know how credits transfer. Clearly stated and publicized policies will prevent prospective students from completing inappropriate courses in the hope of transferring to your college.

Guide to Best Practices

MISSION

Common App is a nonprofit membership organization committed to the pursuit of access, equity, and integrity in the college admission process.

VISION

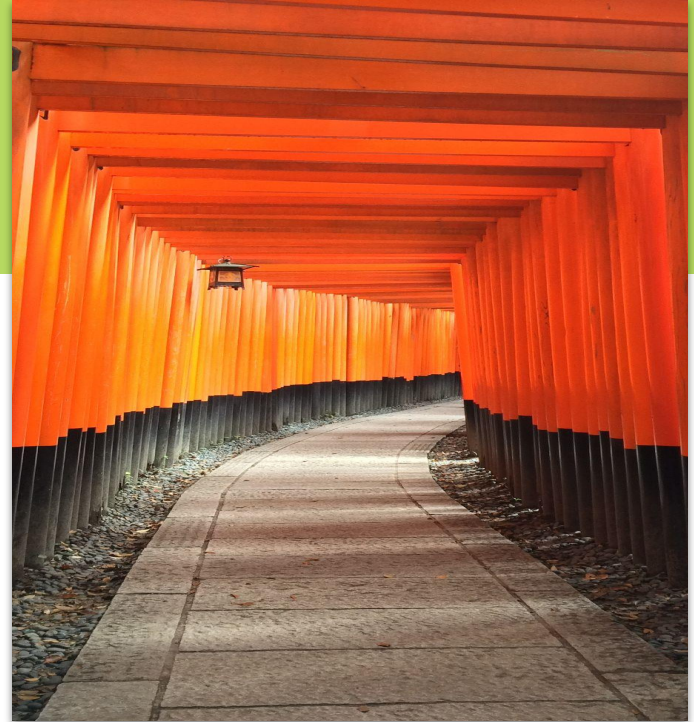
Be the trusted source to access, afford, and attain opportunity for all.

Common Transfer Guarantee pilot

2021–2022

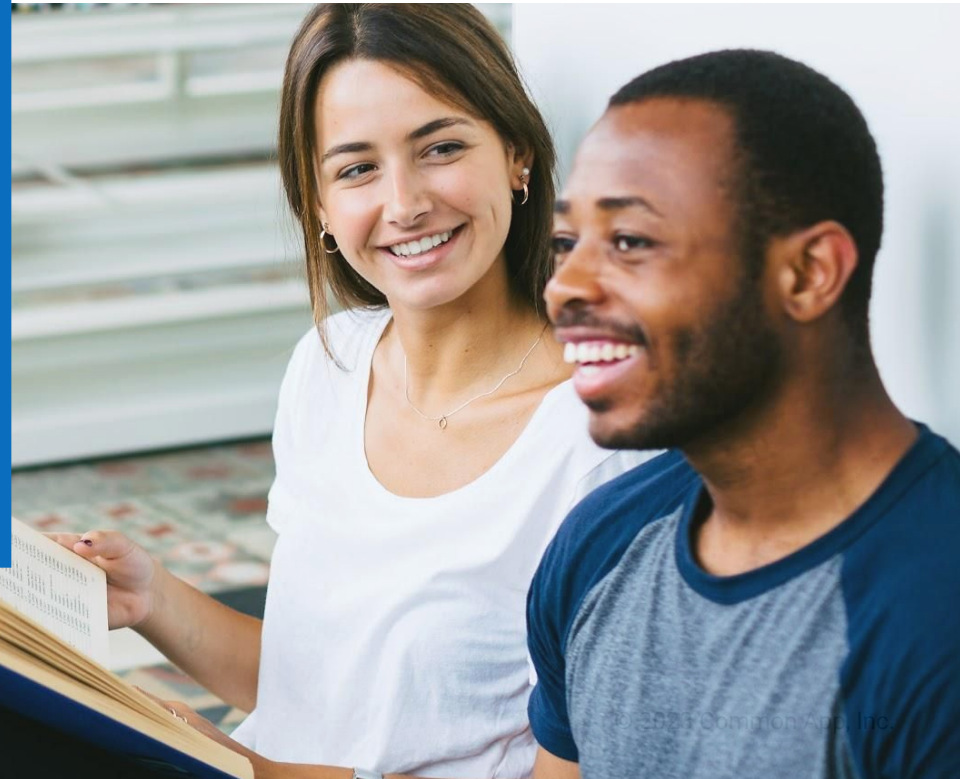
Common Transfer Guarantee (CTG) pilot program

Promote visibility for guaranteed admission
policies for students who meet certain criteria



CTG vision: Common App students are knowledgeable of transfer options when planning for their academic future.

CTG goal: Common Transfer Guarantee will make transfer admission options more visible and accessible for students.



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Does your college have guaranteed admissions or articulation agreements with partner colleges?

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What do you call this type of agreement at your college?

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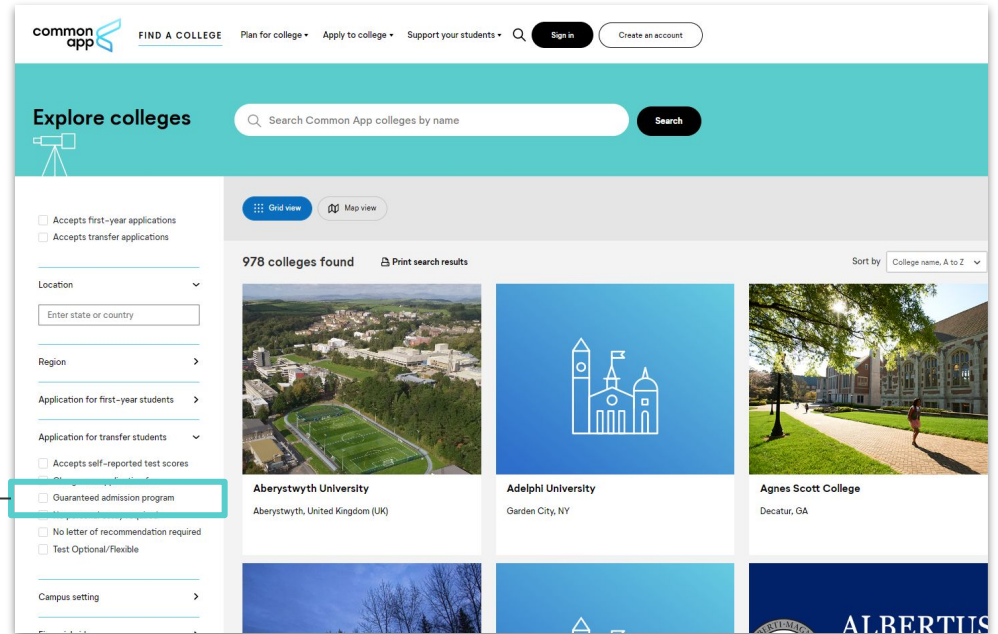
CTG phase 1 approach

Method/tactic	Transfer students supported	Transfer pathways supported	Aligned admission agreement(s)	Intended Impact
Nudge students who started a Common App for transfer application to submission by emailing them options for guaranteed admission (including articulation agreements).	Community college student seeking transfer to a 4yr college	Vertical	Guaranteed admission agreement; Articulation agreements	Increased visibility of guaranteed admission options for Common App for transfer students. Increased number of Common App students submitting an application.

Explore Colleges updates and alignment began in June 2021

Exploration

Students are able to filter for colleges with guaranteed admissions in Explore Colleges.



Email campaign launched October 2021

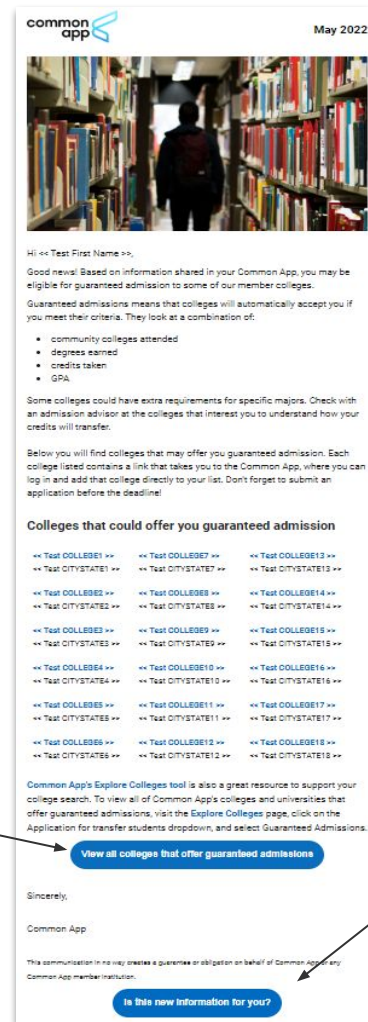
Targeted information

Emails were sent on a monthly basis to notify transfer students of their matches.

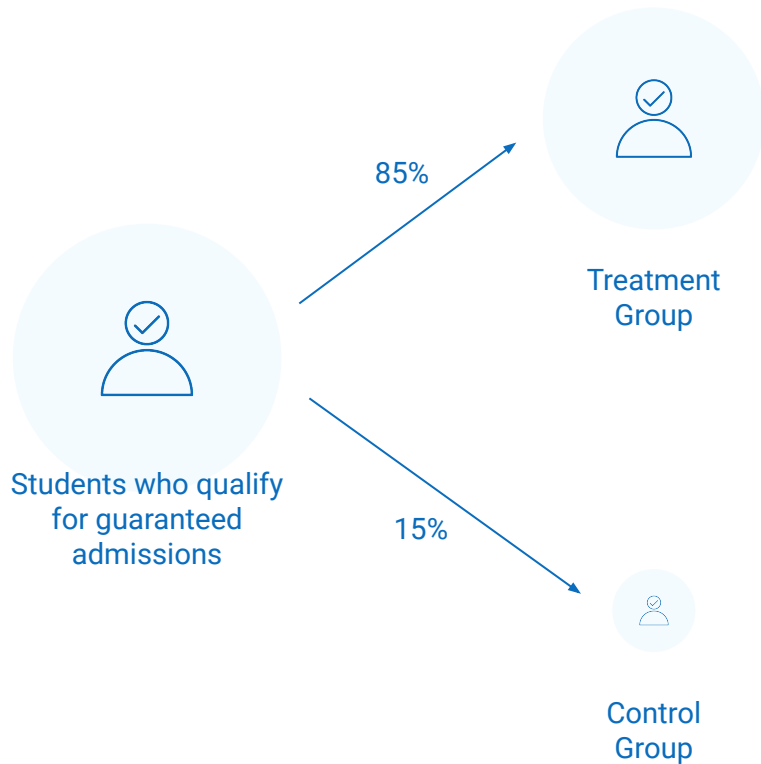
Link to
Explore
Colleges

Customized
list of colleges

Link to
mini-survey;
Full survey
sent
separately



Throughout phase 1 of the pilot, we collected data to help us evaluate next steps.



Data collection

- **Quantitative data:** We tracked quantitative data around engagement with emails and the application (i.e. number of applications submitted to a suggested match, number of students enrolled in a suggested match).
- **Survey data:** We sent out a surveys to students and members to track satisfaction rates.
- **Interviews and focus groups:** We conducted interviews with students to gather qualitative feedback and answer any remaining open research questions.

Results - inconclusive

Outcomes

- Recruited 25 participants from 13 states, 1 international, 16 private, 8 public
- Successfully launched CTG in October 2021
- 45k emails were sent to qualified students with a **61.2%** average open rate
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis completed September 2022.

Analysis

- Nudging campaign had **no significant impact** on students submitting a transfer application.
- Many survey and interview participants indicated they:
 - were unaware of guaranteed admission prior to receiving the email.
 - wanted more clarity and specifics around eligibility.
 - were motivated to look into the listed colleges.
 - felt more relaxed about the application process.

Continuing questions

- Should the strategy be more focused on highlighting 2YR/4YR partnerships?
- When is the best time to communicate guaranteed admissions information to students?
- How can Common App best engage its membership to impact transfer?

Recommendations

- Consider a regional approach
- Determine a best use case for nudging
- Consider an in-app solution
- Identify multiple channels to introduce CTG information to students
- Determine the best time(s) to introduce CTG information to students
- Revamp the communication approach

Moving forward

How does Common App maximize our place in the admissions process to impact transfer?

“By the end of May I had made the decision to transfer. And I started asking q’s about how to do it properly. Should I finish the semester and just wait? I decided to take the fall off and then transfer in the spring”

Assume student mobility

Assume that every student will seek transfer at some point in their academic journey and equip them with the language and information they need to make informed transfer decisions.

When is the best time to communicate transfer admission options to students?

"Personally, I've had counselors bring up apprenticeships and work placements but not community college, which I wish they would have. I definitely wanted to research other options - I don't know if I was super serious about it but I did want to know my options."

Reach students earlier

Introduce students and parents to transfer admission options and the transfer process at the high school level or as early as possible to help inform overall academic planning.

Should the approach focus on highlighting 2YR/4YR partnerships?

“It’s nice to know that certain colleges have different requirements per majors, I may not have known to ask that. I didn’t really know that my credits wouldn’t transfer the way that I was expecting – so that’s good info for people to know in general when transferring.”

Facilitate a pathway

Work with community colleges and their 4YR partners to facilitate clear pathways for qualified students seeking transfer at different points in their academic career.

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If your college has an admissions partnership agreement, how do you communicate or promote it to your students?

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When do you feel is the optimal time for students to get this information?

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Empowering transfer students

Strategy	Transfer students supported	Transfer pathways supported	Aligned admission agreement	Intended impact
<p>Facilitate a pathway by providing students with early information and a simple application process to transfer from community college to their chosen 4-yr college.</p>	<p>High school and first year community college students with limited academic credits who are considering or actively seeking transfer to a partner college.</p>	<p>Vertical Transient Concurrent Swirling</p>	<p>Articulation agreement</p>	<p>Increased participation in articulation pathways from community college to a partner 4yr college.</p>
<p>Provide “just-in-time” information and resources about guaranteed admission options to nudge hesitant transferring and returning students to application submission.</p>	<p>Community college, 4-year, or returning transfer students with accumulated credits seeking transfer.</p>	<p>Vertical Lateral Swirling</p>	<p>Guaranteed admission agreement</p>	<p>Increased knowledge of guaranteed admission agreements between 2yr and 4yr colleges.</p>

Approach from the field

Community College Workgroup

9

Community
College

9

US states

2

Public
organizations

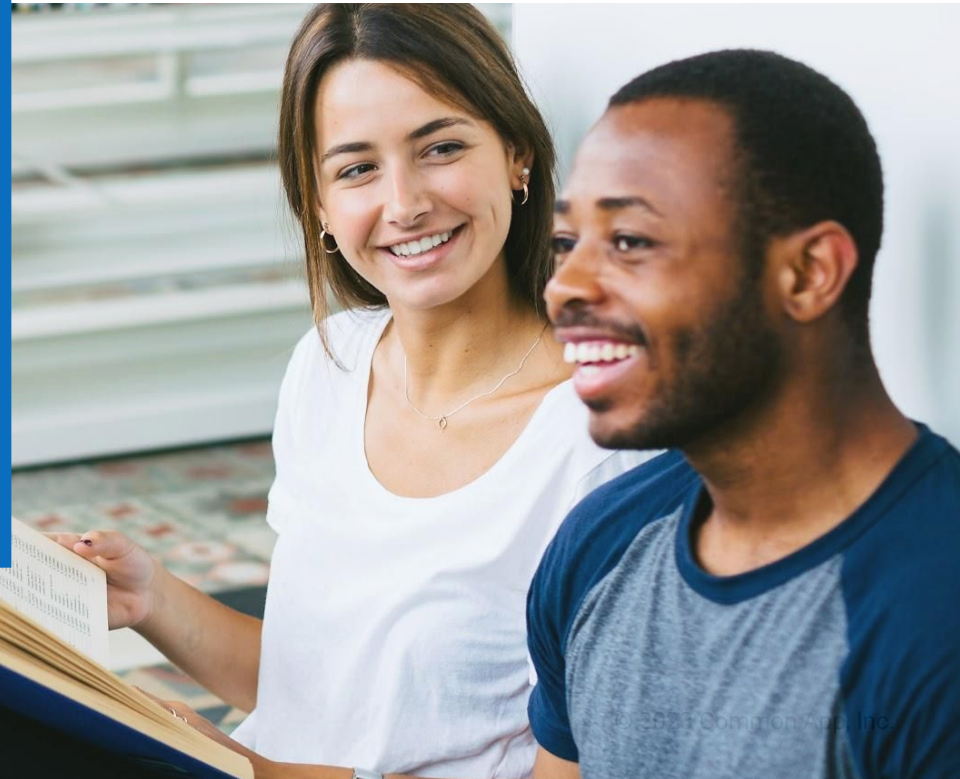
Topic: How can Common App help strengthen the pathway from 2 to 4-year colleges?

Takeaways:

- Joint advertising between 2 and 4 year colleges would be welcomed.
- Students can apply to both 2 and 4 year colleges at once to establish a pathway.
- Have an initiative to grab students 4-year students don't admit.
- Students using the Common App to apply to a 4 year can apply to the partnering 2 year for free.
- Help combat negative student perceptions of community college by reinforcing that they are viable options.

“While only a limited number of dual- and guaranteed-enrollment programs now exist – most of them too new to measure yet how well they work – there has been a flurry of additional agreements over the last few months.”

[A new way to help college students transfer: Admit them to two schools at once](#), Hechinger Report, June 29, 2022



Joint/dual admissions programs

- Typically assign advisers from the universities to students who are still in community colleges
- The students usually don't have to reapply to transfer or pay application fees or admission deposits
- Some private universities promise scholarships to participants who maintain certain grade-point averages
- Can be program specific

Example

[UC New Dual Admission pilot program](#)

- New transfer path for California high school students who are ineligible for admission to UC
- Eligible applicants receive a letter inviting them to participate in the pilot program and a conditional offer of UC admission to the six campuses that participate in the Transfer Admission Guarantee program.
- Includes provisional information about federal, state and University financial aid.
- Students are invited to enroll at a California Community College, knowing they have a guaranteed spot at a UC campus if they complete the transfer requirements.

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What do you see as benefits or successes to a partnership with 2 year or 4 year colleges?

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What do you see as pain points or challenges to a partnership with 2 year or 4 year colleges?

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Can Common App support a pathways model?

- One application in Common App
- Configured and supported internally by the college
- Data transfer by the college
- College adds questions to their Common App that allows application review for two campuses



Penn State Wilkes-Barre offers bachelor's and associate degrees on a scenic estate close to Wilkes-Barre.

Questions

✓ General

Academics

In this section of the application, you will make decisions about your program of interest and the campus you would like to attend. Please begin by choosing the type of degree you would like to complete.

Type of Degree*

Baccalaureate (4-year) X ▾

Intended Major/Program of Study*

Accounting X ▾

End Campus*

University Park – main campus X ▾

* **Start Campus** is considered your first choice campus. It will be the campus in which we first consider you for admission. Most majors allow you to start at any of our Penn State campuses and then after two years, transition to the campus where your major completes. This is known as the 2+2 plan. If you see campuses listed here that are different than your "End Campus", this means you can start at that campus and after two years, you may transition to your end campus to complete your degree.

Start Campus*

University Park – main campus X ▾

***NOTE:** Selecting an alternate choice campus is required of all first-year students. Our promise to you is that you will be evaluated for each campus in the order you specify. If you fulfill the admission requirements for your first choice campus, you will be accepted there. Providing an alternate choice campus will expedite the admissions process should we not be able to make you an offer of admission to your first choice campus.

Alternate Start Campus*

Wilkes-Barre X ▾

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How can Common App help support the work you are already doing with your 2 year or 4 year college partners?

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Questions?



Where do we go next?

ideas.commonapp.org

Connect with us



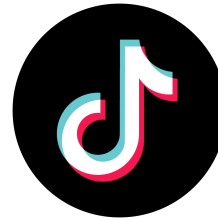
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Thank you

Your feedback is important to us

Please take a moment to complete our session evaluation

Batanya Gipson - bgipson@commonapp.org

Ariana Ortega - aortega@commonapp.org

Emily Blumenfeld - eblumenfeld@commonapp.org

Trent Kajikawa - tkajikawa@commonapp.org