

Transfer Troubles: Problems and Policies Involving Transfer from Community Colleges to 4-Year Colleges

Kevin J. Dougherty

**Associate Professor of Higher Education and
Senior Researcher, Community College Research Center
Teachers College, Columbia University**

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Topics To Be Covered

- Renewed Importance of Transfer
- Inequalities by Social Background
- Student Experience Variables
- Explaining Background Effects
- Institutional Variables Affecting Transfer
- Needed Research
- Policy Implications

Renewed Importance of Transfer

- **More students are pursuing a B.A.**
 - Drop in value of H.S. diploma, rising B.A. premium
 - States are encouraging more B.A. attainment
- **More B.A. aspirants are starting at community colleges**
 - Rapidly rising 4-year tuition, lagging student aid, stagnant family incomes
 - States are encouraging starting at community colleges

Transfer Rates by Social Background

1989-90 CC entrants: Percentage who transferred by spring 1994 to four-year colleges

All students	25%
Male	26%
Female	25%
Top SES quartile	41%
Bottom SES quartile	10%
White, non-Hispanic	26%
Black, non-Hispanic	16%
Hispanic	25%
18 or below in age	39%
19 to 21 in age	22%
22 or above in age	8%

Net Social Background Differences

- **SES:** Significant difference in transfer rate, net of other background variables.
- **Gender:** Very small net difference in transfer rate, and it is not statistically significant.
- **Race-Ethnicity:** Net difference in transfer rate, but it is not statistically significant.
- **Age:** Significant net difference.

Student Experience Variables

- **Significant impact** (net of social background)
 - H.S. academic preparation
 - Educational aspirations in H.S.
 - Parental status at college entry
 - Working less than 40 hours at college entry
 - Enrollment status
 - Major or college program
- **No significant net impact:** occupational aspirations; marital status; academic and social integration

Explaining Background Effects

- **SES:** differences in high school academic preparation and educational aspirations.
- **Age:** differences in high school educational aspirations and – once in community college -- parental status, enrollment status, college program.
- **Race/ethnicity:** differences in high school once control educational aspirations (acting as suppressor variable).

Institutional and State Programs and Policies Affecting Transfer

- Specialized retention services, especially for minority students
- Transfer advisement programs
- College curricular emphasis (debate over impact of degree of vocationalization)
- State articulation policies (debate over impact)

Needed Research

- **Causes of SES Gap:** Much left unexplained.
- **Sources of Student Parental Status Effect.**
- **The Impact (by Student Type) of These Factors:**
 - Differences in CC commitment to transfer
 - Differences in CC vocational emphasis
 - Differences in particular state articulation policies and arrangements
 - Differences in credit acceptance practices at 4 year colleges.
 - Differences in aid provision for transfers at 4 year colleges

Policy Implications

- Reduce gaps in precollege academic preparation
- Reduce gaps in educational aspirations
- Reduce impact of parental status
- Improve retention services
- Increase transferability of occupational credits and degrees
- Further develop community college B.A. programs