

# MAPPING THE TRANSFER LANDSCAPE FOR CHABOT-LAS POSITAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

## Project Overview

In winter 2020, Chabot-Las Positas Community College District (CLPCCD) partnered with the RP Group to use extant student data from Chabot College and Las Positas College to replicate the quantitative analyses conducted in the original systemwide *Through the Gate* transfer study. With the goal of informing CLPCCD's grants and educational master planning efforts focused on transfer success, the RP Group created student transfer profiles to describe the landscape at the district level and at each of the two colleges.

This brief provides an overview summarizing (1) the quantitative profiles of students in CLPCCD's two colleges who were near or at—but did not go through—the transfer gate and (2) opportunities to increase transfer success.

For more detailed findings, please refer to the full report: *Through the Gate Replication Study: Mapping the Transfer Landscape for the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District*.

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## Introduction

Many students enter the California Community College (CCC) system with a transfer goal. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office's [\*Vision for Success\*](#), the growing guided pathways movement in the state, and the implementation of the Associate Degree for Transfer (AD-T) all aim to improve stubbornly-low transfer rates across the CCC system through more streamlined paths between postsecondary segments. Yet, what more can we do and what else do we need to learn to increase transfer success in California?

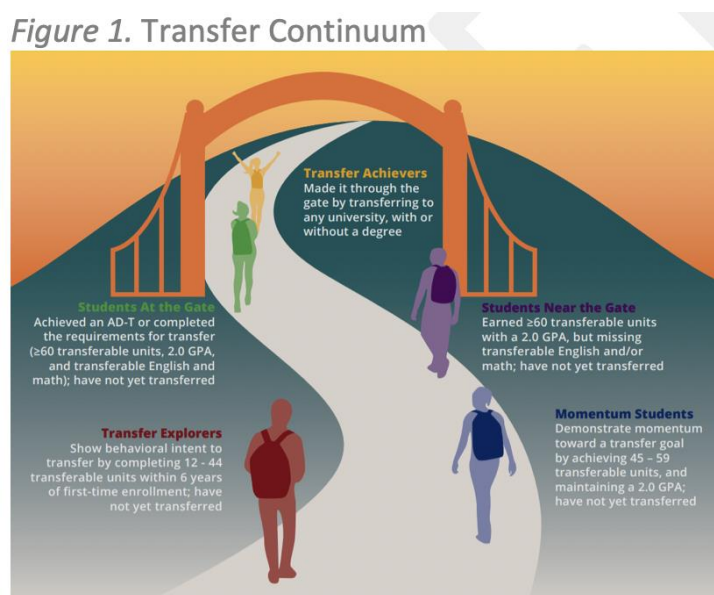
In 2016, the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group) launched a transfer study called *Through the Gate* to take a fresh look at addressing our state's transfer challenges. Doing so required recognizing transfer as a journey that a diverse group of students undertake. When taking a more nuanced look at this population, a "transfer continuum" emerged, revealing students at different points along a transfer path: transfer explorers, momentum students, students near the transfer gate, students at the transfer gate, and transfer achievers who made it through the transfer gate (see Figure 1 on the next page). Using this approach, we can better understand students' dynamic experiences and identify points of intervention that can help propel them further along the transfer continuum and through to a university. Undoubtedly, students at various junctures encounter unique barriers and require tailored supports.

## READER'S GUIDE

This brief provides an overview of results designed to (1) develop a quantitative profile of students in CLPCCD's two colleges who were near or at—but did not go through—the transfer gate and (2) begin to identify opportunities for increasing transfer success for future students. Readers will first find a brief overview of the methodology, followed by transfer profiles of students at each of the last three stages of the transfer continuum (near the gate, at the gate, and transfer achievers) and discussion of how we can leverage these findings to support their success. Finally, the brief acknowledges data limitations and suggests areas for future exploration and action. More detail can be found in the full report.

## Methodology

This study focuses on identifying strategies for increasing transfer “high-leverage” students—individuals who have completed all or most of their transfer requirements, but who do not make it “through the gate” to a university. Zeroing in on these students will provide information on: (1) how many students stopped short of the transfer gate; (2) who they are; and (3) what we can glean about opportunities to increase transfer success for future students who fit these profiles.



To set the context for this research, we first looked at 23,943 students who were enrolled at either Chabot College ( $n = 14,441$ ) or Las Positas College ( $n = 9,502$ ) between summer 2014 and spring 2020 and demonstrated behavioral intent to transfer, as defined by completion of at least 12 transferable units within six years.<sup>1</sup> We then tracked completion outcomes through spring 2020. Finally, we grouped these 23,943 students into five different transfer categories based on where they were on the transfer continuum (see Table 1).

Based on this sample of students:

- 46% had transferred to a university within six years (transfer achievers; compared with 30% in the RP Group's statewide study);
- 14% were near or at the gate to transfer (compared with 15% statewide);

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<sup>1</sup> Students who attended both colleges are identified with the college where they completed the greatest number of units. In the event of a tie in number of completed units, they are identified with the college they first attended.

- 9% were demonstrating momentum towards transfer (compared with 10% statewide);
- 31% were exploring transfer (compared with 45% statewide).

Table 1. Student Progression Through the Transfer Continuum

Transfer Status	District		Chabot		Las Positas		Statewide	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Transfer Achievers	46%	11,083	44%	6,371	50%	4,712	30%	583,074
Students At the Gate	7%	1,685	7%	1,022	7%	663	7%	135,557
Students Near the Gate	7%	1,596	7%	1,059	6%	537	8%	156,999
Momentum Students	9%	2,198	10%	1,373	9%	825	10%	194,639
Transfer Explorers	31%	7,381	32%	4,616	29%	2,765	45%	893,663
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>23,943</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14,441</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9,502</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,963,932</b>

Note. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Subsequent analyses focused on the 14,364 “high-leverage” students (8,452 at Chabot and 5,912 at Las Positas) who were well advanced on the transfer continuum. For transfer achievers and students at the gate, we specifically explored the impact of the AD-T. For students near the gate, we investigated the impact of math and English requirements. This analysis revealed important information about the experiences of these different groups of transfer-bound students, key progress barriers, and some unexpected successes.

## Findings

### How Many High-Leverage Students Within CLPCCD Achieve Transfer?

Our findings were positive among the key population of students who were far advanced along the transfer continuum. When looking at the success of this sample of high-leverage students (Table 2), we found that **over three-quarters of students achieved transfer (77%)**. In other words, most students who became transfer-ready, prepared to transfer, or earned an AD-T did transfer. However, despite this positive news, **23% did not transfer**, which means that **3,281 students who attended CLPCCD schools over a recent six-year period and who demonstrated the determination and academic ability to transfer ultimately did not make it through the transfer gate**.

A few notable observations when examining the demographics across the high-leverage student population:

- Las Positas had a slightly greater proportion of transfer achievers than Chabot (four percentage points greater), while Chabot had a greater proportion of students who were near the gate (three percentage points greater).
- Districtwide, the racial/ethnic groups most likely to transfer if they made it at least near the gate were Asian-American students (83%), African-American students (81%), and students of two or more races (80%), compared with 77% overall. Meanwhile, Native American and Alaska Native students (62%), students of unknown race/ethnicity (61%), and Hispanic/Latinoao/x (hereinafter referred to as Latinx) students (74%) were least likely to transfer. In the RP Group’s systemwide study, African-Americans represented the largest proportion of students who achieved transfer (75%).
- Districtwide, the racial/ethnic groups most likely to be at the gate were Filipino students (16%), Native American/Alaska Native students (15%), and students of unknown race/ethnicity (15%), compared with 12% overall. In the RP Group’s systemwide study, Latinx students (18%) and Asian-American students (18%) were most the likely to be at the gate (compared with 15% overall).
- Districtwide, the racial/ethnic groups most likely to be near the gate were students of unknown race/ethnicity (24%) and Native American/Alaska Native students (24%), compared with 11% overall. In comparison, the RP Group’s systemwide study found that Latinx students (62%) were least likely to make it through the transfer gate, compared with 67% overall).

*Table 2. Distribution of High-Leverage Students by Transfer Status*

Transfer Status	District		Chabot		Las Positas		Statewide	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
<b>Transfer Achievers</b>	77%	11,083	75%	6,371	80%	4,712	67%	583,074
<b>Students At the Gate</b>	12%	1,685	12%	1,022	11%	663	16%	135,557
<b>Students Near the Gate</b>	11%	1,596	13%	1,059	9%	537	18%	156,999
<b>Total</b>	100%	14,364	100%	8,452	100%	5,912	100%	875,630

*Note.* Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

## What Can We Learn from Transfer Achievers?

When looking at the paths transfer achievers took, a substantial majority of these students transferred without earning a CCC degree or certificate (55%), indicating a potential opportunity to help these students secure a credential that signals their readiness for higher education and employment prior to transfer. Males (62%) were more likely than females (49%) to transfer without any degree or certificate. There were few notable differences observed between the two colleges.

When we examined the role of race/ethnicity, we found the following notable differences:

- Among students who transferred, Asian-American students (64%) were most likely to transfer without a degree or certificate (compared with 55% overall). The same result was found in the RP Group's systemwide study (74% among Asian-American students compared with 69% overall). However, at Las Positas, African-American students (66%) were most likely to do so, followed by Asian-American students (63% compared with 57% at Las Positas overall).
- Latinx students (21%) were the group most likely to earn an AD-T prior to transferring (compared with 15% among all students who transferred). The same pattern was found not only at both colleges but also within the RP Group's systemwide study (19% compared with 14% overall).

## What Can We Learn From Students At the Transfer Gate?

In the CLPCCD cohort, **1,685 students (12%) stopped at the transfer gate, despite accomplishing transfer-ready status or securing an AD-T**. This is a significant number of students who, in a recent five-year period, likely could have made the transition to a university to earn a bachelor's degree. The vast majority (85%) of students who remained at the transfer gate became **eligible for transfer by achieving transfer-ready status rather than completing an AD-T** (15%). However, AD-T completion rates of students at the gate were higher at Chabot (18%) than at Las Positas (10%). These low AD-T completion rates beg the question: *What are the opportunities that exist to get students on an established AD-T path appropriate for their major?*

The story for the 1,100 students who reached the transfer gate but who did not continue their education at the community college and did not earn an AD-T is more discouraging. Not only did these students stop short of transferring, but **many also left without a college credential**. Specifically, when looking at transfer-ready students who exited the system, 37% of students left without a degree or certificate compared with 54% in the RP Group's statewide study.

Districtwide, when we examined the role of race/ethnicity in AD-T completion among students at the transfer gate, we found the following notable differences:

- Pacific Islander students (25%) and African-American students (24%) at the gate were more likely to have earned an AD-T than students of other racial/ethnic groups (compared with 15% overall). In contrast, in the RP Group's systemwide study, Latinx students at the gate were most likely to have earned an AD-T (6% among Latinx students compared with 4% overall).
- Students of unknown race/ethnicity (95%) and White students (89%) at the gate were most likely to become transfer-ready without earning an AD-T (compared with 85% overall). In the RP Group's systemwide study, students of unknown race/ethnicity (88%) and Asian-American students (87%) were most likely to become transfer-ready without earning an AD-T compared with 80% overall.

## What Can We Learn From CLPCCD Students Near the Transfer Gate?

In the CLPCCD cohort, 1,596 students (11%) were near the transfer gate. These students showed momentum toward transfer but had not yet met critical academic milestones required to achieve this goal. When looking at what happened to students who were near the transfer gate over time, we again see that many of these students left the district without tangible evidence of their achievements. While 34% of students exited with a degree or certificate (compared with 31% in the RP Group's statewide study), **745 (47%) of the students who were near the gate left the district without earning a credential** (compared with 49% statewide) and 19% were still enrolled in the district (compared with 20% statewide).

Further analyses provide insights into the barriers that held these students back and the opportunities that exist to support students like them in the future. **Slightly more than a third (36%) of students who were near the transfer gate were missing both transfer-level math and English (compared with 51% statewide).**<sup>2</sup> Only 14% of students near the transfer gate were only missing transfer-level English (compared with 8% statewide). However, 50% of students near the transfer gate were only missing transfer-level math—even more than the 42% seen statewide.

Districtwide, when we examined the role of gender in the completion of transfer-level English and math among students near the gate, we found that:

- Male students (42%) were more likely than female students (30%) to be missing both math and English, while female students (59%) were more likely than male students (41%) to be missing only math. The same pattern was found in the RP Group's systemwide study.

Districtwide, when we examined the role of race/ethnicity in the completion of transfer-level English and math among students near the gate, we found that:

- White students (42%) and Asian-American students (40%) were more likely than students of other races to be missing both math and English (compared with 36% overall). In the RP Group's systemwide study, students of unknown race/ethnicity (58%) and Asian-American students (58%) were more likely than students of other races to be missing both math and English (compared with 51% overall).
- Pacific Islander students (60%), Latinx (60%) students, and African-American students (55%) were most likely to be missing only math (compared with 50% overall). In the RP Group's systemwide study, Latinx students (52%) and students of two or more races

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<sup>2</sup> For the systemwide study, transfer-level English completion was flagged as completion of any single transfer-level English. For the CLPCCD district analysis, local requirements for completion of transfer-level English included the completion of two specific transfer-level English requirements, and it is unclear if other institutions in the state have similar multi-course English transfer requirements.



(52%) were more likely than students of other racial/ethnic groups to be missing only math (compared with 41% overall).

- Asian-American students (30%) and Filipino students (25%) were more likely to be missing English only (compared with 14% overall). In the RP Group’s systemwide study, Asian-American students (16%) were more likely than students of other racial/ethnic groups to be missing only English (compared with 8% overall).

## Data Limitations

In conducting this research, the following key limitations should be noted. In determining which students demonstrate behavioral intent to transfer, one way to identify these students is through their stated educational goal. However, the disadvantage to this approach is the timeliness and accuracy of this information when students begin their journey at an institution. As such, our data analysis focused specifically on those whose course-taking patterns indicated a strong likelihood of intent, defined as completion of at least 12 transferable units. However, there are certainly students (most notably those classified as transfer explorers) who may not have intended to transfer, despite completing transferable units, thus resulting in an over-representation of students classified as transfer explorers. Related to transferable units, another key limitation is the identification of the “right” transferable units. For this study, transferable units were flagged as those from any course that met a state university course requirement, but it is unknown whether those units meet specific course requirements for students’ transfer pathways.

## Looking Ahead

The majority of CLPCCD students who become transfer-ready or prepared to transfer ultimately wind up transferring. However, nearly a quarter of seemingly transfer-motivated students are not being supported in ways that facilitate them crossing this threshold. As CLPCCD moves forward, the following findings warrant exploration and action:

- Asian-American and African-American students, as well as students of two or more races, were more likely than students of other racial/ethnic groups to achieve transfer. In general, where relatively high transfer successes are found (within and across colleges), CLPCCD should identify potential practices that may be contributing to those outcomes so that they can be adapted elsewhere.
- Half of students who were near the gate were missing transfer-level math, with the likelihood higher among females and students who exited without any credentials. With the implementation of AB 705, there may be increased opportunities for students to complete transfer-level English and math requirements sooner. Therefore, it will be important to track the impact that the removal of barriers to access has on students’ progression to completion and to identify the necessary supports they need to complete these courses and progress to completion.

- At the gate students were more likely to be transfer-ready (without an AD-T) than to have earned an AD-T. However, the majority of AD-T earners at CLPCCD eventually transfer. For students who are at or near the gate, auditing their coursework to determine if they are eligible for a degree and/or identifying specific courses they may be missing that are preventing them from transferring could proactively boost their completion rates to a level that is comparable to that of students who earned an AD-T.

The population in this report's sample displayed the determination and academic ability to transfer, yet many did not achieve this critical milestone. The more we can understand about the experiences of students as they navigate their transfer pathways, the better policies and practices can be tailored to maximize the likelihood of these students' ultimate success.