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AUTHOR Cohen, Arthur M.
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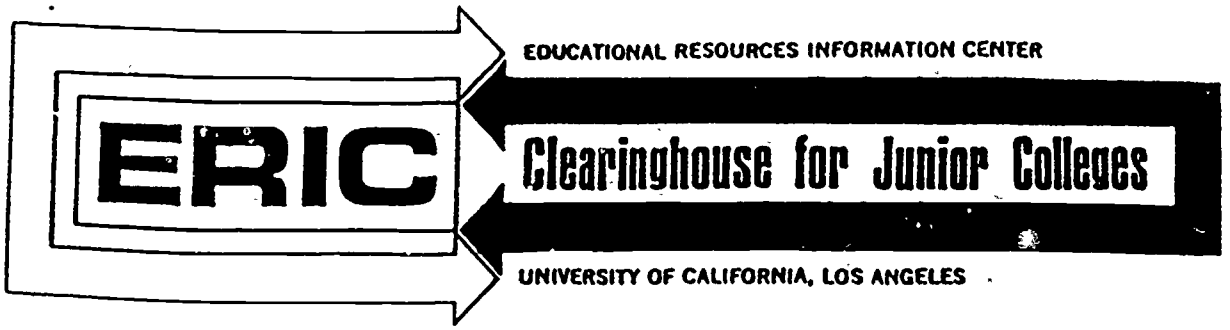
ABSTRACT

When compared with university freshmen, students beginning their collegiate studies at community colleges are less likely to attain a baccalaureate degree. After equating for differences in students' entering abilities, socioeconomic background, employment status, on-campus residence, and pattern of attendance, however, this discrepancy narrows. Because minority students are over-represented in two-year college enrollments, any differential in progress is magnified for them. Reasons for the difference in baccalaureate attainment are difficult to ascertain because of the paucity of consistent information about student aspirations and progress. While there are no reliable national data sets concerning transfer rates and student outcomes, statewide data show that well-articulated community college and public university systems lead to significant proportions of university enrollments provided by community college transfers. Though information on college effects on the transfer rate is scanty, studies suggest that the community college environment could be made more conducive to student progress if college policies were modified to encourage students to attend full time, obtain on-campus employment, and become more involved with the college. State policies and interinstitutional agreements regarding curriculum, academic support services, and financial aid also have an impact on transfer rates, and could be modified to benefit all community college matriculants. A 25-item bibliography is included. (EJV)



TRENDS AND ISSUES IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES, 1988:

MINORITY STUDENT TRANSFER

ARTHUR M. COHEN
APRIL 1988

Trends and Issues in Community Colleges, 1988:

Minority Student Transfer

Community colleges, defined as institutions accredited to award the Associate in Arts or Science as their highest degree, are found in all fifty states. Products of the expansion of publicly-supported higher education in the United States in the Twentieth Century, they enroll 4.9 million students, or around 40 percent of all people enrolled in colleges and universities in the nation. Their students have diverse aspirations: one third seek to transfer to senior institutions and eventually obtain baccalaureate degrees; one third seek job-entry skills; 15 percent seek training that will enable them to upgrade themselves in a job or career they already hold; and 15 percent seek neither degrees nor certificates but are attending only for their personal interests. Most of the students attend on a part-time basis, commuting to the institution to take a class or two per term. Most are employed for twenty hours or more per week. In some states the community colleges are marginal institutions, drawing most of their students from the groups who do not seek higher education but who want some post-secondary experience. In others they are central to the public education system, enrolling 80 percent or more of all people who begin post-secondary studies.

Because the colleges typically have few or no admissions requirements -- in some states an applicant need not even have a high school diploma -- they have attracted sizable numbers of students who would not otherwise consider college-going. They are readily accessible: in many states a community college is

within commuting distance of nearly everyone in the population. Tuition charges are typically lower than they are at the senior institutions. Most of the colleges offer courses in the evenings and on weekends, not only at the central campus but also in numerous branch centers in the cities and suburbs. Many of their occupationally relevant programs can be completed in a year or less. Accessibility and variety are the colleges' guiding principles.

This paper considers the role of the community colleges in facilitating baccalaureate degree achievement by minorities. It traces patterns of students entering community colleges, the environment that the institutions present, and policies and practices affecting the movement of students through the institutions; and it makes recommendations for enhancing the flow. Although it focuses on data and practices particularly concerned with the transfer of minority students from community colleges to four-year colleges and universities, it considers the transfer function as a whole since most institutional activities affect minority and majority group members equally.

The Minority Students

The ethnic minorities are highly represented in community colleges. The institutions enroll 34 percent of all White undergraduates, 39 percent of all Black students attending college, 53 percent of the Hispanics, 51 percent of the American Indians, and 43 percent of the Asians ("Fact File", 1986). Naturally, these enrollment patterns differ from state to state depending on the percentage of minorities in each state's

population and on the accessibility of the community colleges relative to the state's universities. Hispanic students comprise over 10 percent of community college enrollments in California, New Mexico, and Texas. Black students are highly represented in the community colleges of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina. The percentage of Black community college enrollment is higher than the proportion of Black 18-24 year olds in the population in several states, including Delaware, Kentucky, Ohio, and Missouri. Nationwide, minority group students constitute around 21 percent of all community college enrollments.

The phenomenon of minority group enrollment in community colleges is accentuated in cities with high proportions of minorities in their populations: Chicago, Cleveland, El Paso, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and Phoenix, among others. The reason is that the community college is a commuter institution, much like the secondary schools and the urban-based universities. By design, a commuter institution draws its students from the surrounding neighborhoods, hence its population typically reflects the ethnic and social class composition of its vicinity. The pattern of neighborhood attendance is revealed also where the community college has several campuses in the same city: at East Los Angeles College 64 percent of the students are Hispanic; at Los Angeles Southwest College 95 percent are Black; and at Los Angeles Pierce College 75 percent are White.

The community colleges receive higher proportions of the students from low socio-economic groups and with lower academic ability. In 1982, whereas 58 percent of the students from the

highest socio-economic quartile enrolled in the senior institutions, only 21 percent enrolled in the community colleges. During that same year 63 percent of the students from the highest academic quartile enrolled in the universities, but only 16 percent enrolled in the community colleges. Clearly the top students go to the four-year colleges and universities in much higher proportion than they do to the community colleges.

These disparate ability levels are reflected in the enrollment of minorities. Among 1982 high school graduates, 19 percent of the Blacks and 10 percent of the Hispanics from the lowest academic-ability quartile enrolled in the universities and 15 percent of the Blacks and 19 percent of the Hispanics from that low-ability group enrolled in the community colleges. But among students from the highest quartile of academic ability, 77 percent of the Blacks and 61 percent of the Hispanics enrolled in the senior institutions and 11 percent of the Blacks and 21 percent of the Hispanics enrolled in the community colleges. (Clowes and others, 1986).

In general, Hispanic students are overrepresented and Blacks underrepresented in the community colleges in proportion to their enrollment in senior institutions. The explanation for this is rather straightforward: Many Black students still attend the traditionally Black institutions in the South, nearly all of which grant the baccalaureate or higher degrees. But the nation has no history of senior institutions designed especially for Hispanics. And by geographical coincidence the Hispanic population is concentrated in the states that have the most

highly developed community college systems: Florida, Texas, Colorado, New York, California, and Arizona.

Transfer Rates

Calculating achievement rates for community college students is not nearly as straightforward as calculating student enrollment in general. Most measures of college student achievement center on degrees obtained. The community colleges confer around 450,000 associate degrees per year. Together with the short-term occupational certificates that they award, this yields a ratio of approximately one degree or certificate awarded each year to 10 percent of their student population. What happens to the others? Many transfer to universities short of receiving associate degrees; many enter the labor market without receiving a degree or certificate; many more did not seek degrees when they matriculated and they leave, more or less satisfied with what they attained.

The major issue in considering higher degree attainment is that all students entering community colleges must transfer to four-year colleges or universities before they can obtain baccalaureate degrees. Therefore there is bound to be a shortfall in the number of community college matriculants who obtain baccalaureate degrees when compared with the students who enter senior colleges as freshmen; the very necessity for leaving one institution and entering another would result in a certain amount of dropout. Astin (1982) has traced this shortfall using data from his Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). Levin and Clowes (1980) used data from the National Longitudinal Study of The High School Class of 1972 (NLS) and corroborated the

realization that initial attendance at a community college was related to a reduced probability of baccalaureate attainment.

But having noted that community college attendance is related to a reduced likelihood of baccalaureate attainment leaves many questions unanswered. How many students actually make the transition from community college to university? How many want to? Why do more students not transfer? What happens after they get to the university? What might be done to improve the transfer rates? Which policies and practices differentially affect students from minority and majority groups? These questions are not easily answered because they may be variously interpreted and because the data that may be brought to bear on them are scanty.

There are no reliable national data sets. However, figures from the states where data are collected show that around 5,000 students per year transfer from community colleges to state colleges and universities in Washington, 47,000 from California community colleges to the University of California and the California State University system, slightly more than 10,000 from community colleges to both public and private senior institutions in Illinois, and slightly fewer than 5,000 in Maryland. It is quite unuseful to attempt to extrapolate those data to arrive at a nationwide figure because of the vagaries in counting transfers between states. It is likely that any numbers that are used understate the magnitude of transfer because of the data that are missing.

One way of estimating transfer rates is to count the number

of university students whose transcripts show courses taken at community colleges. In states with well-articulated community colleges and public university systems, the community colleges provide significant proportions of the universities' undergraduates; 42% of all undergraduate students in Florida's public universities previously attended community colleges in that state. However, where the community colleges serve a different function or where the universities have clung vigorously to their freshman enrollments, the proportion is much lower; only 17% of the undergraduates in state universities in Kansas are transfers. Where the universities work closely with community colleges in their immediate area they may have more transfers than native freshmen: Arizona State University's student body includes 8,400 who were formerly students in the Maricopa Community College District in Phoenix; and the University of Massachusetts at Boston similarly has a high proportion of community college transfers.

How many students enter community colleges intending to transfer? Many studies done over the years have suggested that around three fourths of the students beginning in community colleges intend eventually to obtain the baccalaureate or higher degree. A survey of students taking classes in 24 urban community colleges in 1983 found 74 percent declaring transfer intent (Cohen, Brawer and Bensimon, 1985). In 1984 the CIRP found 76 percent declaring intentions of obtaining a baccalaureate or higher degree (Astin and Others, 1985). But these are biased samples. The urban community college study drew its students from among those taking credit classes, using the

class section as the unit of sampling, thus skewing the sample in the direction of full-time students. The CIRP surveys first-time-in-college, full-time freshmen, 90 percent of whom are aged 19 or younger.

The form of the question asking transfer intentions also biases the answers. When a person is asked, "What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?", the suggestion is raised of a goal to be reached sometime during the person's life. Few young people would acknowledge that they never expect to go further in the educational system, that they have closed off life's options. When the question is asked as, "What is the primary reason you are attending this college at this time?", significantly fewer, usually one third, say that they are in college to prepare for transfer or to get a higher degree, while one half say that they seek occupational skills. Most of the latter group expect eventually to gain higher degrees but see job entry as their first aim. In fact, many students mark both "Bachelors" as the highest degree they expect to obtain and "Gaining occupational skills" as their primary reason for attending college at that time. Their responses are perfectly consistent.

Various statewide studies corroborate the figure of around one third of the entrants' transfer intentions. The Illinois Community College Board (1986) found 32 percent of the students in that state declaring transfer intentions, the Maryland State Board for Community Colleges (1983) 31 percent, the California Statewide Longitudinal Study, (Sheldon 1982) 36 percent. These

statewide studies drew samples of all entering students, and asked why they were entering college at that time.

Transfer.

How many students actually transfer? The question cannot be answered because the ways of counting transfer vary. Some students attend community college and university concurrently; others start in the university as freshmen, drop out to spend a term or two in the community college, then come back to the university; some take a couple of courses at a community college in the summer after high school graduation and then enter the university; some enter community college, drop out for a period of years, and then enter the university; some finish two years at a community college and transfer to a university in mid-year or out of state. All of the above students would be counted as transfers by some modes of reckoning, none of them by others.

The number of transfers can be estimated by counting the Associate Degree recipients who move on to universities in the subsequent term. This mode of reckoning yields around 250,00-300,000 students transferring per year. Another 300,000-400,00 university students have taken courses in community colleges at some time during their academic careers. But these figures are only estimates based on woefully incomplete data. A single college may have more or less reliable information but it is impossible to compare with corresponding data from other colleges because of the varying definitions in reporting procedures. The same holds true for statewide studies.

Clifford Adelman of the United States Education Department's

Office of Research reaches a reasonable conclusion for transfer rates. As he puts it, "One out of five individuals who attend two-year colleges eventually attends a four-year college, irrespective of either type of institution. This is the true 'de facto transfer rate' (1988, p.40)."

College Effects

Data on students entering all types of colleges nationwide yield some information on college effects on the transfer rate but the community college portion of the samples is typically small. Using CIRP data Astin (1983) has calculated institutional effects by controlling for up to 100 variables. He concludes that "a baccalaureate-oriented freshman who enrolls initially at a community college has a 16 percent better chance of becoming a dropout than a comparable student who enrolls at a public four-year college (p. 125.)." However he admits that most of the differential rate is due to the entering characteristics of the students, the fact that few community colleges have on-campus residents, and that community college students tend to work more hours per week and take fewer classes. After equating for students who reside away from home and who work less than twenty hours per week, Astin finds the discrepancy between expected and actual dropout rates among community college entrants drops to 7 percent.

Several analysts have relied on data from the NLS which surveyed a sample of high school seniors and did follow-up surveys in several subsequent years. The sample included 825 students who enrolled initially in 85 two-year colleges. Velez (1985) used the NLS 1976 follow-up, which showed 42 percent of

the four-year college entrants and 12 percent of the two-year college entrants completing the baccalaureate, and concluded that where one began college had an important effect on attainment. He also noted that "Living quarters had the largest significant effect on the probability of finishing college" and that "students who had work-study jobs had a 23 percent higher probability of finishing college (p. 197)." Pascarella (1986) used NLS data to calculate student progress after nine years. He found fourteen variables accounting for 17 percent of the variance in persistence and 24 percent of the variance in baccalaureate attainment. Anderson (1981) ran twenty-six variables to find that community college entrants were less likely to persist through the sophomore year. She acknowledged, "It is true that these variables explain only a small proportion of the variance in persistence....[T]he intervening variables included in the models mediated only a small proportion of the effects of college, work and residence." (pp. 13-14).

The difficulty in disaggregating the effects of community colleges from the characteristics of the students who enter them is magnified in the attempts to describe the community colleges' special effects on minority students. In general, students who enter community colleges instead of universities are of lower academic ability, lower socio-economic class, and have lower academic aspirations. The various studies that have attempted to control for those variables frequently also attempt to control for the fact that minority students are more likely to enter community colleges than universities. Here, though, the

difference is much greater for Hispanic students than for Blacks, and much less for Asian students; hence the term, "minority student" loses much of its precision. Still, the best estimates suggest that White students, who comprise 75 percent of community college enrollment obtain 85 percent of the associate degrees; Black students, 13 percent of enrollment, obtain 8 percent of the Associate Degrees; Hispanic students, 6 percent of enrollment, obtain 4 percent of the degrees. The California Postsecondary Education Commission, calculating transfer rates as a ratio of full-time freshmen entering college two years earlier, finds that Blacks comprise 10 percent of the freshmen and seven percent of the transfers and Hispanics comprise 17 percent of the community college freshmen and 9 percent of the transfers. (Overall, a total of 2 percent of the community college matriculants transfer to the University of California and 10 percent to the California State University system.)

College Environment

What is the environment in the community college? It is designed for easy access. It makes few demands of those who participate. Student clubs, societies, and government are decidedly marginal. Classes are as likely to be offered in the evening as in the morning. It is not disparaging to say that the community college environment is a cross between the comprehensive high school and the community center. It is

certainly quite unlike the selective four-year college with which it is sometimes untowardly compared.

Various researchers have sought relationships between intra-institutional environments and college outcomes, particularly student retention and dropout. Harrower and others (1980) interviewed various groups of students (Black, Hispanic, veteran, mature women, traditional, nontraditional, and former) asking why some students stay in college while others drop out. Findings were: most students agreed that the better students tended to get more help from the faculty; mature women, Blacks, and veterans felt a lack of caring; Blacks and mature women worried about finances, in particular the paucity of on-campus jobs; women and Hispanic students saw the financial aid office as understaffed and discriminatory; faculty play a key role in student retention through their attitudes toward teaching and their caring or not caring about student success. McCartan similarly found that the faculty attention to teaching and the courses themselves are the primary alterable variables in the college, much more influential than the counseling offices and the career centers (1986).

One line of study of college environments has taken researchers into the institutions where they spend time visiting classrooms and talking with staff and students. Using this observational technique in a community college in Arizona Richardson and others (1983) found the staff placing few demands for students to read and write. London (1978) spent several months in a community college in Massachusetts, concluding that

the institution supported the limited aspirations of its blue collar student population. Weis (1985) studied a community college in the northeast with a predominately Black student population and found the students reproducing their own community culture within the institution. In her analysis she reported that students are not passive recipients of an education; instead they mediate and transform school values based on their own class, gender, race, and goals. The culture they produce mitigates the effect that the school can have on them. The students want to remain members of their own community even while they learn the codes of a new, school-based culture. The supportive network of family and friends contrasts with the individual attainment available in the college. The two desires conflict, with students embracing and rejecting the college at one and the same time. "Paradoxically the individual must place himself or herself outside of networks that enable survival in order to attempt survival in the cultural mainstream (p. 126)."

These various analyses of the community college environment affirm that the community college is not like a traditional institution with a faculty dedicated to inquiry, students committed to study, and a sequestered enclave that supports both. Nor is it like the community itself where argot changes rapidly, personal support groups dominate behavior, and irrationality may be more influential than intellect. The college is somewhere between. The staff may want all their students to succeed but they dare not stray too far from the core academic model of literacy and rationality. The students dare not, or perhaps cannot, break from their own culture; three or four hours per week in class cannot

overcome the influence of job, friends, family, and a lifetime of behavioral norms.

State Policies.

The community college reflects the mores of its district, but it is also a product of the state. State policies and funding formulas in large measure determine patterns of curriculum, student access, and eventually, student outcomes.

Kintzer and Wattenbarger (1985) studied state policies as they relate to the movement of students between community colleges and universities and found varying policies between states or between colleges in the same state resulting in inconsistent expectations for students, loss of credits by students who do transfer, and such reconcilable but irritating procedures as different institutional calendars. They found formal, legal policies in eight states where the legislature or the systemwide governing board spells out details regarding the movement of students between institutions: Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Texas. These regulations specify the curriculums and examinations that shall be accepted by all units in the system. Important to such regulations are a common calendar and course-numbering system along with interinstitutional committees to consider the necessary details.

State system transfer policies not written into law were in effect in around twenty states, particularly where the universities and the community colleges were under the same organization, such as in Hawaii and Kentucky. Other states with

general policies had intersegmental agreements in which one institution agrees to recognize the general education core and to give full credit for courses taken and grades earned. Not incidentally, the highest transfer rates have been in the states where the regulations are strictest.

States in a third category had only general policies affecting transfer, usually voluntary agreements achieved between institutions. These types of agreements, negotiated between the staff of the single sets of institutions, appear in around fifteen states. Kintzer and Wattenbarger noted that in the prior fifteen years the number of formal state articulation or transfer agreements had not increased substantially.

In 1987 the Center for the Study of Community Colleges condcuted phone interviews with the director or assistant director of community college education in every state to determine state policies and activities regarding transfer. Findings were that 11 states were operating especially funded projects to enhance transfer, 27 had other activities under way, seven had legislative mandates to promote transfer and 43 had negotiated agreements. As example, California had allocated $3 million to establish transfer centers in 20 colleges; Colorado and Michigan had mandated that institutions develop college articulation plans; New Jersey had appropriated funds for colleges that would develop plans to recruit minority students; and Ohio had funded the development of programs to facilitate the transfer of credit between institutions (Center for the Study of Community Colleges, April 1988).

Increasing the Transfer Rates

The various researchers, policy makers, and groups studying either the transfer function of community colleges, the movement of minority students through the educational system, or both, have made recommendations intended to smooth the flow of students from one type of institution to another. Most of them recognize that the only way to improve the transfer rates for minorities is to stimulate the community colleges and the universities to attend to the transfer function in its entirety. They also recognize that the numbers are deceptive: there are too many ways of counting transfers and the percentage of students transferring is particularly difficult to calculate. That percentage would go up if the colleges reduced the intake of students who are not likely to transfer as, for example, requiring that all students either matriculate in a degree program or stop taking classes for college credit. This would have the effect of reducing the denominator so that the transfer ratio would increase even if the absolute number stayed the same.

The most recent sets of recommendations were generated in projects funded by the Ford Foundation under the first phase of its Urban Community Colleges Transfer Opportunities Program, as reported by Cohen, Brawer, and Bensimon (1985), and by Donovan and others (1987). Ford also supported Richardson and Bender's (1987) studies of minority student access and achievement, whose recommendations are also summarized in this section, along with recommendations that Astin (1983) has made, those emanating from the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges' Urban Colleges Commission (1988) and those suggested by the people and

practices involved in the second round of UCCTOP funding.

Most of the recommendations refer to the policies that affect the movement of students between institutions or to the practices presumed to be influential in enhancing transfer awareness among the staff and students within institutions. Some of the recommendations include those that states should effect. Others relate to interinstutional relationships and to practices within the colleges.

A major recommendation is that state-level policies should be made more formal so that students who do desire to move from community colleges to universities find places available for them. Guaranteed admission at the junior level does much to stimulate transfer, especially when a university redirects many of its applicants for the freshman class to the local community colleges.

A second major recommendation is for the states to create a system for rewarding colleges that effect higher transfer rates. This can be done by setting aside sums to be paid to the colleges on the basis of the number of their students completing a certain number of units and matriculating at a senior institution within a specified time. A formula could be devised whereby the per capita bounty would be paid relative to the percentage of increased transfers from year to year.

Other recommendations to state agencies include:

- Building common student bases so that it is possible to track students through all the states' higher education institutions and gain better information on student flow;
- Common course numbering throughout the state's colleges

and universities;

- Requiring that community colleges include between 15 and 30 transferable units in all programs and that the universities accept these units at full credit.

Interinstitutional connections can be made stronger if the staff within community colleges and universities work together to identify and encourage transfers. These interinstitutional connections include:

- Standing committees and faculty exchange between institutions along departmental lines to sustain curriculum articulation;
- Dual admission or advanced placement of students;
- A variety of coordinated student support services, including advisement and financial aid developed and maintained by counselors and admissions officers;
- Collecting information on intentions from entering students and alerting the institution to which they are likely to transfer so that early contact may be made;
- Identifying the characteristics of successful transfers so that the information may be fed back to the sending institution;
- Inviting other institutions' staff to participate in all ceremonial occasions;
- Effecting a big brother or big sister arrangement so that former students act to inform and stimulate current students;
- Building a financial aid consortium so that students who matriculate at community colleges with intentions of transferring can see just how financial aid packages will carry them through the community college and oninto the university.

The interinstitutional connection applies also to the secondary schools. The flow of minority students into and through the community colleges has been notably enhanced by such ventures as LaGuardia's Middle College, wherein the community college operates a program for students beginning at grade ten.

Miami-Dade's recently inaugurated Black Student Opportunity Scholarship Program bodes also to bolster minority student enrollment and retention. Through the program scholarships, a financial aid account, mentors, and sponsors are put together so that beginning in the tenth grade the track to the baccalaureate is made clear and feasible for a selected group of students. The colleges that do not have this depth of involvement must at least recruit potential transfers by working deliberately and continually with the high school staff and by making scholarship funds available; the once a year "College Day" visit is far too meager.

Many recommendations consider the community college environment itself. Within the colleges much can be done to change the climate so that transfer receives high priority. These recommendations include:

- Establishing a student-accessible, computerized advising system;
- Student testing at entry and mandatory placement in classes in which the instruction is cast at their level;
- Exit testing so that a data base is built on what students have learned;
- Honors programs in which the better students are given a considerably enriched environment;
- Increased employment of staff members from minority groups;
- University courses offered at the community college so that students in effect obtain advanced placement;
- Emphasizing the employment of full-time staff members to teach transfer classes and, where that is not feasible, conducting training sessions regarding transfer for the part-time faculty members.

Some of these intramural recommendations are designed to be

simply effected at minimal expense:

- Including a special section in the college catalogue showing students how they can package courses and obtain continuing information about transfer requirements;
- Sending the names of potential minority student transfers to neighboring universities;
- Preparing special information packets and distributing them to all students indicating transfer intentions;
- Designating responsibility for transfer to a high academic officer and establishing special transfer committees;
- Building more writing and independent research assignments into the curriculum in all programs.

Many recommendations are designed to gain greater student involvement with the college. The campus designed for commuters suffers in comparison with a residential institution because its students have considerably less contact with the college. As a way of mitigating that marginal contact, community colleges have been encouraged to move toward:

- Establishing week-end or week-long retreats for students anticipating transfer;
- Conducting special orientation sessions for potential transfer students;
- Organizing more cultural and social events designed to keep people on campus beyond scheduled classtime;
- Enforcing required faculty office hours and regular conferences between students and advisors;
- Organizing student study and peer support groups;
- Making more on-campus employment opportunities available for students;
- Organizing tours of universities and obtaining free or discounted tickets to university cultural events.

Practically all these recommendations relate to transfer for all students; they are not peculiar to the advancement of

minority students. However, by definition, if transfer increases for all students, minority students will be affected.

If all the recommendations were collapsed into one statement, it would read: Identify the potential transfers early and monitor their progress through the college, making frequent direct contact with them until they complete their community college studies and enter the university.

SUMMARY

When compared with university freshmen, students beginning their collegiate studies in community colleges are less likely to attain the baccalaureate. However, after equating for differences in the students' entering abilities, socio-economic background, employment status, on-campus residences, and pattern of attendance, the difference is slight. Because minority-group students are overrepresented in the two-year colleges -- they enroll 34 percent of all White undergraduates, 39 percent of the Blacks, 53 percent of the Hispanics, and 43 percent of the Asians -- any differential in progress is magnified for them.

A clear picture of the reasons for the difference in baccalaureate attainment is impossible to draw because of the paucity of consistent information about student aspirations and progress. However, the community college environment could be made more conducive to student progress if college policies were modified so that students were encouraged to attend full time, obtain on-campus employment, and otherwise gain greater involvement with their studies and with the college. State poliicies and inter-institutional agreements regarding curriculum, academic support services, and financial aids could

also enhance transfer rates and thus benefit all the community college matriculants who aspire to the baccaluareate.

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