

# Mapping the Transfer Landscape for California Community College Students



THROUGH THE GATE TRANSFER STUDY | RESEARCH BRIEF 1 | OCTOBER 2017

## A Fresh Take on the Transfer Continuum

**Increasing transfer success in California Community Colleges (CCC) requires a fresh take.** Many students enter the system hoping to transfer, and the California Community College Chancellor's Office new Vision for Success, the growing guided pathways movement, and the recent implementation of the Associate Degree for Transfer (AD-T) all aim to help more students reach this goal. The RP Group's study is taking a new approach to informing the transfer challenge in California — zeroing in on immediate opportunities to improve student transitions to university, strengthen baccalaureate production, and enhance students' social and economic mobility, especially for underrepresented populations.

**Doing so requires us to recognize transfer as a journey that a diverse and varied group of students undertake.**

When we take a more nuanced look at this population, a “transfer continuum” emerges, revealing students at different points along a transfer path: Transfer Explorers, Momentum Students, Students Near the Gate, Students At the Gate, and Transfer Achievers who make it through the gate (see Figure 1).

**By using this approach, we can dispel some transfer myths and identify points of intervention that can help propel students further along the continuum.**

Undoubtedly, students at various junctures encounter particular barriers and require tailored supports. So, what new can we learn from these different groups of students? Who is transferring, who is not, and for what reasons? What can be done to facilitate this transition for more students, at scale?

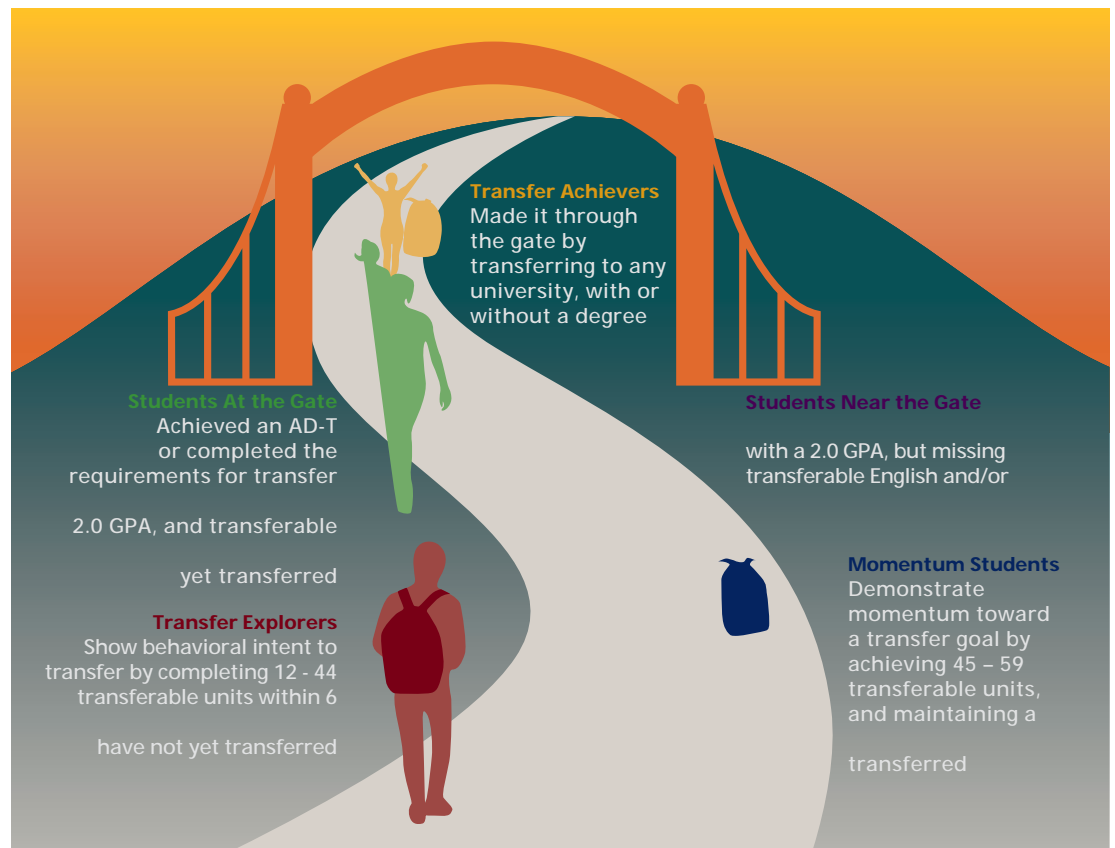


Figure 1. Transfer Continuum



## Transfer Achievers

*Students who transferred to any university, with or without a degree.*

### WHAT WE KNOW:



... , again raising questions about the benefits of, and opportunities for, helping these students secure a degree or certificate that honors their achievements and recognizes their preparation.

**increasing students' likelihood of transfer to a California State University (CSU).** While a small fraction of our transfer achievers completed this degree (~4%), most students in our sample who earned an AD-T transferred (80%). Over the short period in which CCCs have offered this new transfer option, the

**At the same time, reason for caution remains.** While the volume of AD-T earners is increasing, the **rate at which these students are transferring is trending down.** When taking region, CSU proximity, and major into account, transfer for AD-T earners can become more challenging if they are in a region without several CSUs from which to choose, if they are near CSUs with limited capacity, if they are pursuing a highly-impacted major, or if an AD-T does not exist in their major — all considerations for our CCC and CSU systems as they work together to foster the positive trajectory of this transfer strategy.

## The Role of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Region

We further explored the role of gender, race/ethnicity, and region in the experience of high-leverage learners and transfer achievers. While African-American students were significantly underrepresented in our sample (meaning, many never made it near, at, or through the gate), we

**of the African Americans who made it into our sample of** , and that both females and males overwhelmingly continued their journey toward a baccalaureate once fulfilling transfer requirements.

**likely to achieve their transfer goal** compared to other groups. **Latino students were also more likely to earn an**

**In terms of region, students in the Inland Empire were least likely to make it through the transfer gate** when compared to all other regions, even after meeting all or most of their transfer requirements. These findings indicate an opportunity to learn more about the unique obstacles these student groups face and consider policy and systems change designed to specifically support their progress.

# Next Steps: Learning Why High-Leverage Learners Get Stuck and How to Help Them Through the Gate

In the first phase, we defined the transfer continuum, quantified the number of high-leverage transfer students in our CCC system, and began examining how factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, region, and the math and English requirements for transfer impact their journey.

**This initial research points to many opportunities for further investigation**, including exploring why students who are close to achieving their transfer goal stop short of this transition, what is specifically holding back different student groups, and how we can help them continue their journey to university.

## *Through the Gate's*

**information from students themselves** — securing critical insights that can help refine existing strategies to increase transfer and inform new efforts to improve the success of high-leverage learners. In addition, we will further explore the interplay between race/ethnicity and gender in students' transfer experience and analyze the role of other factors such as GPA, receipt of financial aid, and enrollment status in students' pursuit of transfer as the project continues.

LEARN MORE [at the end of the report](#) | [Through the Gate Transfer Study](#) | [Study of 100,000 students continues](#) | [RWBUPADON](#)