



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AT ILLINOIS

Inclusion and Equity Matters: The Role of Community Colleges in Diversifying the STEM Pipeline



Presented at the LSMCE Conference
24 October 2015

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Perception vs. Reality

- Pervasive perspectives
- Once the culprit, now the cheerleader
- Shifting persistent perceptions



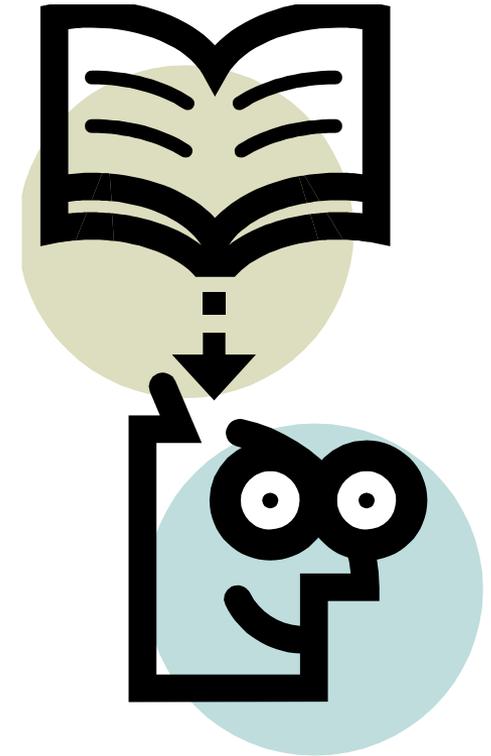
- Origins and Evolution of U.S. Community Colleges
- Student Demographics and the Community College Landscape





Top 10 Largest Number of Public Community Colleges

California	117
Texas	62
North Carolina	60
Illinois	48
New York	39
Minnesota	32
Michigan	30
Georgia	29
Ohio	26
Kansas	25



*U.S. News and World
Report 2015*



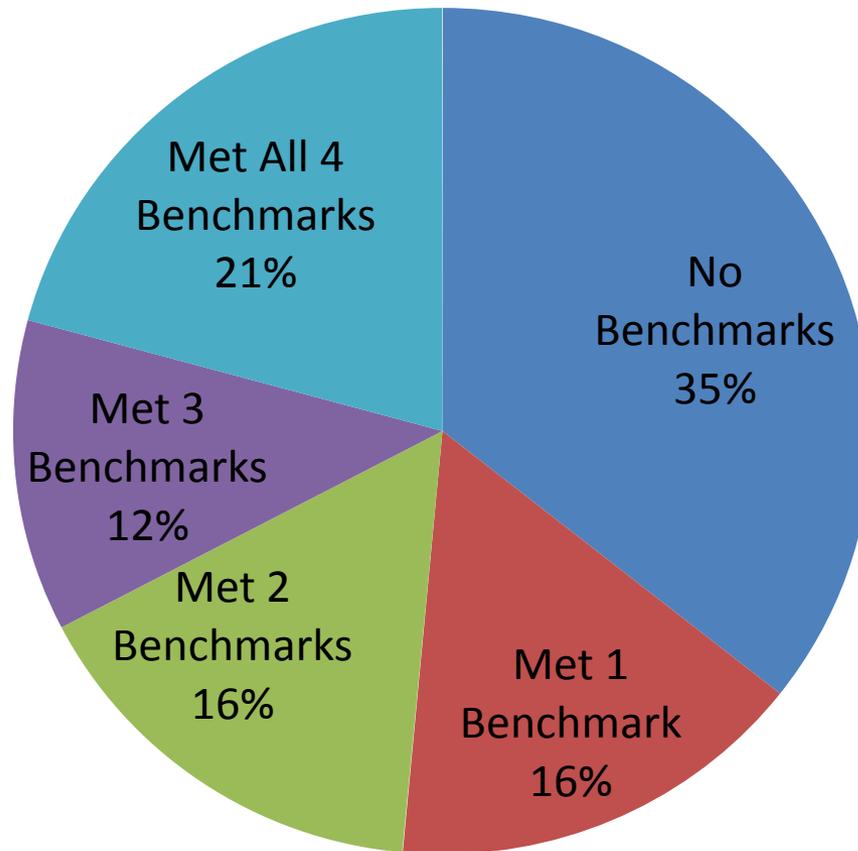
Adults with Associate's Degrees

Associate's	833,337	100.0%
White	552,863	66.3
Black	113,905	13.7
Hispanic	112,211	13.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	44,021	5.3
American Indian/Alaska Native	10,337	1.2

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). [The Condition of Education 2012](#) (NCES 2012-045)



College Readiness Benchmarks Attained



2012 Condition of College and Career Readiness Retrieved from

<http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2012/index.html>



Review of Key Literature on STEM and CCs

- Women and racially/ethnically diverse groups are the fastest growing populations in the U.S. workforce
- The United States ranked 20 out of 24 countries in the percentage of 24-year-olds who had earned a first degree in the natural sciences or engineering
- 2.7 percent of African Americans, 3.3 percent of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and 2.2 percent of Hispanics and Latinos who are 24 years old have earned a first university degree in the natural sciences or engineering



- STEM job growth is expected and necessary in the U.S. to remain globally competitive (The Council of State Governments, 2010)
- Women are 60% more likely to earn a college degree than men (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), however there remains a discrepancy in STEM programs
- 32.4% of Asian American/Pacific Islander aspirants complete a Bachelors degree; 24.5% of White students, 7.9% of Hispanics and 13.2% of African Americans aspirants complete BA/BS degrees (Malcom, 2010)
- 6% of employees in STEM are African American compared to their White counterparts at 72% (Malcom, 2010)



- Low transfer rates by men and women of color make recruitment into STEM from community college populations problematic
- Studies on women of color and transfer students reveal common experiences of those in STEM, such as isolation, not belonging, discrimination, low self-confidence, and concerns of financial aid
- Starobin and Laanan (2008) ascertain that the community college environment can foster meaningful mentorship relations to encourage careers in STEM



Statement of the Problem

- Women and racial/ethnic minorities enter into STEM disciplines at lower rates than men do
- It has been arguable whether community colleges can further enhance student success for a diverse society and global workforce in lieu of low transfer rates and transfer shock (Goldrick-Rab, 2006; Townsend, 1999)
- Student attendance patterns demonstrate what is referred to as student swirl (Sturtz, 2006) whereby student behavior in obtaining a college credential is less predictable



A Study of Transfer and STEM

- Based on the aforementioned literature, the overall aims of this study were to explore prevalence of transfer type among STEM transfer students at a Midwest comprehensive university
- To look at STEM majors transfer attendance patterns (i.e., number of previous colleges) that illustrate swirling and may effect academic performance -- transfer shock as measured by overall cumulative GPA



Research Questions

- Is there an association for race/ethnicity and gender with STEM major, transfer hours earned, number of prior colleges attended, and transfer type among transfer students majoring STEM disciplines?
- Are there any between- or within-group differences in transfer type, GPA, and transfer credit hours earned by race/ethnicity among transfer STEM majors?
- Does increased mobility of attendance (i.e., two or more prior colleges attended), transfer type (e.g., vertical, lateral, reverse) or fewer transfer credit hours earned predict transfer shock (i.e., impact GPA) for STEM students?



Conceptual Underpinnings



Social Mobility

– Morgan, Grusky,
& Fields (2006)

Student Swirl

– (Selingo, 2012)

Transfer Shock

– (Hills, 1965)



Context

- Two out of every five undergraduates are transfer students. More than 8,400 students identify as transfer students
 - Almost 10% of the total student body are STEM majors
 - Over 40% STEM majors are transfer students
- 65% of the STEM majors are White (male or female)
- Students of color majoring in STEM disciplines consisted of 18% African American, 4% Asian, and 3% Hispanic/Latino. No other racial/ethnic category comprised more than 1%, while 6% of STEM majors did not designate a racial identifier



Methods

- Exploratory, ex post facto inquiry and analysis of secondary data
 - Look “backwards” to see what causes difference or condition to occur (e.g., some students swirling or not; some experiencing transfer shock)
- Data was accessed through the Institutional Research Office
- Sample included STEM student majors that transferred between 2010-2012, which yielded a total net sample of 1,064 transfer STEM students



Methods

- Data Analysis
 - Descriptive Statistics
 - Correlational Analysis
 - Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
 - Multiple Regression Analysis



Descriptive Findings

- 42% female, 58% male
- 66.3% identified as White (non-Hispanic), 12.6% African American, 3.6% Asian American/Pacific Islander, and 3.6% Hispanic, 9.5% race/ethnicity unknown and 4% nonresident-alien.
- 37.5% of White transfer STEM students were women (n=264); by contrast, females comprised the majority of STEM transfer majors for students of color (n=121)
- 65.3% STEM transfer females of color were African American



Descriptive Findings

- 70% of STEM transfer students were in one of five majors
 - Biology (42.2%), Computer Science (10.8%), Applied Computer Science (8.7%), Mathematics (8.7%) and Chemistry (6.5%)
- When examining the data for STEM majors by gender and race/ethnicity, 6 out of every 10 females majored in Biology irrespective of race
- Biology was also the most pursued STEM major among male transfer students, accounting for one-third of men of color and 31.5% of White males



Evidence of Swirling

Examples of 48 Transfer Patterns/Transfer Type

- No degree 2-vertical
- No degree 4-vertical
- 2-4 traditional vertical
- 4-4 traditional lateral
- Vertical/lateral (e.g., 0-4; 2-4)
- 2-2-4-4 lateral/vertical/lateral
- 4-2; 4-0 reverse
- Multiple lateral swirl 4-4-4
- Multiple lateral/vertical swirl 2-2-2-4
- Multiple reverse/vertical swirl (e.g., 4-2-4-2-4)



Correlational Analysis

- Significant positive correlations between race and major, two-year credits earned, and transfer hours earned
- Higher amounts of two-year credits and transfer hours earned were positively associated with White and nonresident-alien or race unknown transfer STEM students
- Negative association between transfer type and race as higher values on transfer type reflected multiple transfer/swirling. This relationship was associated with students of color
- Gender and major were positively correlated, as well as gender with transfer type, illustrating a high degree of association between gender with vertical and multiple transfer



Post-hoc Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable	(I) Race	(J) Race	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	
Major	Student of color	White	-1.268*	.254	.000	
		Race unknown/NRA	-1.177*	.344	.002	
	White	Student of color	1.268*	.254	.000	
		Race unknown/NRA	.092	.300	.986	
	Race unknown/NRA	Student of color	1.177*	.344	.002	
		White	-.092	.300	.986	
	Overall credit hours attempted	Student of color	White	-14.448*	3.807	.001
			Race unknown/NRA	-21.103*	5.107	.000
		White	Student of color	14.448*	3.807	.001
Race unknown/NRA			-6.656	4.195	.304	
Race unknown/NRA		Student of color	21.103*	5.107	.000	
		White	6.656	4.195	.304	



ANOVA

	Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Major	Between Groups	270.264	2	135.132	11.340	.000
	Within Groups	12642.945	1061	11.916		
Overall credit hours attempted	Between Groups	46921.020	2	23460.510	10.725	.000
	Within Groups	2320829.607	1061	2187.398		
Overall credit hours earned	Between Groups	52916.271	2	26458.135	14.921	.000
	Within Groups	1881370.969	1061	1773.205		
Transfer credit hours attempted	Between Groups	11664.638	2	5832.319	6.458	.002
	Within Groups	951885.530	1054	903.117		
Transfer credit hours earned	Between Groups	11453.176	2	5726.588	6.400	.000
	Within Groups	943030.319	1054	894.716		
Two-year credit hours earned	Between Groups	24795.651	2	12397.826	7.792	.000
	Within Groups	1373037.985	863	1591.006		



Multiple Regression

- Higher credit hours attempted ($b = -1.788$, $t = -5.451$, $p < .001$) and transfer hours earned ($b = 2.509$, $t = 6.788$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted transfer shock (i.e., lower GPAs) among STEM transfer students of color
- Overall credit hours earned reflected better GPAs among student of color transfer STEM majors ($b = -.591$, $t = -4.263$, $p < .001$)



Limitations

- Study was not drawn from a probability sample as there was no random selection of transfer students
- No claims of being representative of the entire transfer population or STEM majors
- Establishing cause-effect relationships is more difficult than in experiments
- The findings yielded few statistically significant associations, and those emerging can only suggest the possible causation



Conclusions

- Community colleges will be in demand given the increased need for postsecondary attainment for gainful employment
- Despite the transfer function not being seamless across two- and four-year contexts, it still carries a utilitarian function poised to be a catalyst for optimization of educational and career planning
- Exploration of student swirl with segmentation theories needed





Implications for Practice & Research

- Practitioners must ensure seamless continuity of matriculation that will not obstruct educational progress between various segments of higher education
- Future studies need to focus on the crucial needs of this population, their perceptions of transfer readiness, self-efficacy, and whether either foster capital in the form of currency to be spent upon transfer
- Also important is research that gauges student satisfaction with their transfer institutions as well as the receiving universities in facilitating a seamless transition from two- to four-year



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Questions



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