

Office of the President

TO MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE:

DISCUSSION ITEM

For Meeting of November 17, 2021

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF TRANSFER POLICY IN CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to inform discussion of the changing landscape of transfer policy and how the University engages in both systemwide and statewide policy work to support academic preparation for incoming transfer students to UC and to continuously improve the University's transfer admissions process.

BACKGROUND

College transfer provides life-changing opportunities for students, allowing them to explore and enter into a wide array of possible undergraduate majors and career paths. California public higher education must provide equitable and inclusive access to all those moving through the student transfer pipeline.

Policymaking in the present transfer context is both a challenge and an opportunity to create a coherent, long-term plan for strengthening the student transfer pipeline in California. To convey the key aspects of this context, both UC-led and intersegmental policy initiatives under way are highlighted, especially with regard to their evolving nature to better meet the needs of prospective transfers.

Guiding Policy and Principles

Regental Policy

The University's undergraduate admissions process is guided by Regents Policy 2102: Policy on Undergraduate Admissions¹ and by the California Master Plan for Higher Education, where UC's commitment to serve the people of California and the needs of the State is outlined. Entrance requirements are designed to identify the top one-eighth of the State's high school graduates and transfer students who have successfully completed specified college coursework as eligible for UC admission. Furthermore, the requirements shall ensure that all eligible students are appropriately prepared for University-level work.

¹ See Regents Policy 2102: *Policy on Undergraduate Admissions*, <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/2102.html>

Delivering on its mission as a public institution, UC has historically committed to offering placement within the University for all eligible applicants who are California residents. In particular, the University “seeks to enroll, on each of its campuses, a student body that, beyond meeting the University’s eligibility requirements, demonstrates high academic achievement or exceptional personal talent, and that encompasses the broad diversity of cultural, racial, geographic, and socioeconomic backgrounds characteristic of California.”²

According to Regental policy expectations and the California Master Plan, the long-held target for the University is to maintain at least a 60:40 ratio of upper- to lower-division students to ensure sufficient upper-division spaces for California Community College transfer students. In 2018–19, UC achieved this 2:1 ratio to enroll at least one transfer for every two first-year students and maintained the goal in 2019–20 (Table 1). Notably, since 2015 the University has expanded the entering class by 10,000 more California residents, with half of them being California resident transfers. Nonresident students entering the University also grew during that same timeframe (Table 2).

Table 1. New California Resident First-Year and Transfer Students Systemwide

Academic Year	New CA Resident First-Year Enrollees	New CA Resident Transfer Enrollees	New CA First-Year to New CA Transfers Ratio	Percent Resident First-Years	Percent Resident Transfers
2015–16	33,244	14,617	2.3	69%	31%
2016–17	38,774	16,786	2.3	70%	30%
2017–18	36,949	17,310	2.1	68%	32%
2018–19	37,018	18,568	2.0	67%	33%
2019–20	36,542	18,480	2.0	66%	34%
2020–21*	38,293	19,844	1.9	66%	34%

Source: UC Accountability Report 2021, data table for *Figure 1.1.3: New CA resident freshmen and transfer students, Systemwide, 2008–09 to 2020–21*.

Note: *2020–21 is a projection.

² Excerpt from Regents Policy 2102: <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/2102.html>

Table 2: New Nonresident First-Year and Transfer Students Systemwide

Academic Year	New Nonresident Domestic First-Year Enrollees	New Nonresident Domestic Transfer Enrollees	New Nonresident International First-Year Enrollees	New Nonresident International Transfer Enrollees
2015–16	3,435	412	5,139	2,351
2016–17	3,246	463	5,531	2,690
2017–18	3,599	415	5,634	2,655
2018–19	3,794	403	5,911	2,836
2019–20	3,823	457	5,625	2,761
2020–21	3,861	460	4,783	2,653

Source: UC Info Center at <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/fall-enrollment-glance>

UC Transfer Principles

The University’s ongoing policy efforts to improve student transfer are also grounded in the following *Transfer Principles*³ that underscore fundamental factors of UC transfer:

- UC fosters transfer as a vital path leading to students’ UC degree attainment.
- UC enhances and incentivizes transfer students’ strong academic preparation.
- UC defines a UC-specific guarantee of transfer student admission.

Together, UC Regental policy and transfer principles provide the overarching frame for current UC transfer policymaking and direct the University’s role in intersegmental and State initiatives in which there are often distinct but overlapping priorities for student transfer across the State’s three public higher education systems.

Academic Preparation Policy

Academic preparation is the foundation for future academic success in college. As such, it is a critical focus of transfer policymaking in each of California’s education segments.

Transfer Articulation

Articulation is the practice of aligning curriculum across education segments to support students in their transition from one segment to another. Through the transfer articulation process, the University of California and the California State University (CSU) work with California Community Colleges (CCC) to determine the transferability of community college coursework to four-year institutions. Once general course transferability is established based on academic preparation policy, specific articulation agreements are administered at the systemwide and campus levels to confirm what courses count for major, breadth, and other graduation requirements, thereby outlining a clear path for CCC students to achieve a baccalaureate degree.

³ From the 2018 report of President Napolitano’s Transfer Task Force, [Enhancing the Student Transfer Pathway](#).

Given the role faculty play in shared governance structures that uphold the academic mission of higher education institutions, policies for academic requirements rely on faculty expertise to determine appropriate policy criteria. In the case of UC, Transferable Course Agreements (TCAs) identify UC-transferable courses for each community college and also indicate whether CCC courses may satisfy UC transfer admission eligibility requirements. The TCAs are updated annually so they can accurately reflect the most current curriculum. Reviews are conducted under TCA policy guidance from UC faculty.

Due to the implications for transfer planning and preparation, it is crucial to maintain clear policy to manage the dynamic components of transfer articulation. Several recent efforts to refresh the policy parameters with the intent of expanding CCC-UC articulation efforts include the following:

- 2016–17: With a growing emphasis in California on supporting students' college readiness—from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary preparation—UC initiated a comprehensive review of TCA policy and implemented revised TCA guidelines for nearly 40 academic disciplines, which were approved by the UC faculty Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) to enhance the annual TCA course review and management process.
- 2017–18: The Governor signed State Assembly Bill 705 (Chapter 745, Statutes of 2017),⁴ which clarifies the existing California Code of Regulations and ensures that community college students are not placed into remedial courses that may delay or deter their educational progress (unless evidence suggests they are highly unlikely to succeed in the college-level course). In proceeding with AB 705 implementation,⁵ many community colleges redesigned their transfer-level English and mathematics courses to allow for co-requisites in place of, or in addition to, existing course prerequisites, along with other curricular changes. As such, the TCA guidelines again required adjustments. After an expedited UC faculty review process, BOARS approved further TCA policy updates so that UC could maintain the integrity of expectations for UC-transferable courses while CCCs moved forward with flexibility and autonomy to determine their curricular redesign. These actions were done in partnership to maximize CCC students' opportunities to enter and complete transfer-level coursework in two foundational subject areas while also addressing racial equity gaps by providing students timely access to transferable courses.

Major Preparation for Transfer

Community college students considering options for transfer into their desired major at UC or CSU campuses may face some academic preparation variances that reflect important areas of emphasis within major disciplines, differences in the missions and values of each university system, and curricular imperatives set by the respective faculty. Nevertheless, streamlining major

⁴ AB 705 bill language: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB705

⁵ AB 705 implementation: <https://assessment.cccco.edu/ab-705-implementation>

preparation for similar majors across the UC or CSU systems provides CCC students with a roadmap that will help them prepare for admission to multiple campuses, as well as positions them for timely completion of a baccalaureate degree in their chosen major.

In 2010, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 1440 (Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010),⁶ which authorized California Community Colleges to design associate degrees for transfer (ADTs) in many of the most popular majors offered at CSU, and for CSU to provide guaranteed admission into the CSU system for CCC students who have earned an ADT.

The CSU system in 2010–11 began creating Transfer Model Curricula (TMCs), which serve as the template for major preparation courses in the ADTs developed by each community college. ADTs are capped at a maximum of 60 transferable semester units (or 90 quarter units) and include coursework in major preparation, as well as general education and electives.⁷ As of 2021, 2,950 active ADTs were being offered across the CSU's 40 TMC disciplines, ranging from Administration of Justice to Kinesiology to Theater Arts.

In a report released in 2013–14, *Preparing California for Its Future: Enhancing Community College Student Transfer to UC*,⁸ UC President Napolitano's Transfer Action Team identified a key priority to streamline the transfer process for prospective UC students. To that end, the UC Transfer Pathways initiative set out to identify a common set of lower-division courses as appropriate preparation for 20 of the most sought-after majors among CCC transfer applicants to UC, thus accounting for the academic interests of nearly two-thirds of the overall CCC applicant pool. CCC students who completed Pathway course requirements and general education courses with a satisfactory grade point average (GPA) would be well prepared for junior-level transfer to UC in that major.

The Pathways were developed in 2015 under joint leadership of the UC Academic Senate and the systemwide provost, and in collaboration with UC Office of the President (UCOP) and the California Community Colleges. Each Transfer Pathway identified a single set of courses for a given major that CCC students can take for transfer at any UC campus. This was an achievement that had never happened before, and the ongoing work to support UC Transfer Pathways is to ensure that each Pathway will guide prospective transfer students closer to their transfer admission goal.

Since California's four-year institutions and community colleges offer critical avenues of advancement for all students to meet their educational goals, there must be intersegmental collaboration to address how the academic preparation process can be further enhanced. As CCC students' interest in both ADTs and UC Transfer Pathways has grown over the last several years,

⁶ SB 1440 bill language: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=200920100SB1440

⁷ The requirement set forth in SB 1440 of no more than 60 semester/90 quarter units across the board for all ADT subject areas has been very difficult for disciplines in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), such as biology, chemistry, and physics. The courses in these STEM disciplines have high unit requirements in order to provide adequate major preparation for the upper division, and as a result, many community colleges have not been able to meet the required unit cap and offer an ADT in certain STEM majors.

⁸ <https://www.ucop.edu/transfer-action-team/transfer-action-team-report-2014.pdf>

significant work on transfer policy has been undertaken by the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS), as well as by the faculty Senates of the three public higher education segments, which is further detailed next.

General Education Transfer Curriculum

Since the development of the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, ease of transfer has been the cornerstone of California's three-system structure of public higher education. Transfer issues were therefore central to the concerns of legislators and members of the Commission to Review the Master Plan ("the Commission"), who examined and renewed the Master Plan in the 1980s.

In response to concerns raised by the Commission and the Legislature, embodied in Assembly Bill 1725 (Chapter 973, Statutes of 1988), faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California developed the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) in 1991 to provide a statewide, lower-division general education curriculum applicable to all CCC students transferring to a CSU or UC campus. The Academic Senates of all three segments endorsed the creation of IGETC to facilitate CCC transfer, regardless of the CSU or UC campus to which students transfer. To this day, the curriculum and its policies are overseen by ICAS, which represents CCC, CSU, and UC faculty.

Over the last year, BOARS has been working to respond to newly enacted State legislation in 2020 (Assembly Bill 1460, Chapter 32, Statutes of 2020⁹) requiring CSU to include an ethnic studies course in their general education curriculum for a baccalaureate degree.¹⁰ Because CCC students might aim to transfer to either CSU or UC and frequently follow IGETC, UC is also considering changes to incorporate a new ethnic studies requirement into IGETC to meet both the CSU ethnic studies graduation requirement and UC's academic standards.

After reviewing various policy options in consultation with the CSU, BOARS has endorsed proposals to revise the Academic Senate regulation that governs IGETC for UC¹¹ and to recommend course criteria (i.e., core competencies in ethnic studies initially recommended by the CSU Council on Ethnic Studies) that will be used to evaluate whether CCC courses meet the new IGETC ethnic studies requirement. In short, both UC and CSU are taking fundamentally the same approach to incorporating ethnic studies into IGETC. UC's internal review process for this kind of academic policy change to Senate regulations is anticipated to conclude in December 2021, shortly after the CSU Board of Trustees is expected to vote to approve their system's respective policy change.

The intended benefit of IGETC is to support students in preparing for transfer in a way that keeps their options open as they navigate a range of requirements relevant to distinct

⁹ AB 1460 bill language: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB1460

¹⁰ California State University's Task Force on the Advancement of Ethnic Studies: <https://www.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/diversity/advancement-of-ethnic-studies>

¹¹ UC Academic Senate Regulation 478: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bylaws-regulations/regulations/rpart2.html#r478>

undergraduate degree programs. The ongoing IGETC ethnic studies policy deliberations are the most recent illustration of the necessary intersegmental partnership in policymaking and policy implementation to ensure solid academic preparation of prospective CCC transfer students and also, importantly, to consider faculty input on the desired skills and content knowledge of a particular academic requirement.

Transfer Admissions Policy

California's public higher education segments have long worked together to provide access and opportunity for students seeking to transfer, with or without a guarantee of admission. Over the last decade, greater emphasis has been placed on policy approaches that involve guaranteeing admissions to all CCC transfer students under specific qualifying conditions.

Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADTs)

Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADTs) are two-year associate degrees that are fully transferable to CSU. Policy underlying the ADT stipulates that students who earn such a degree and meet CSU's minimum eligibility requirements are guaranteed priority admission to a CSU campus, though not necessarily to a particular campus or major.¹² The policy is also designed to guarantee that an ADT earner will enter the CSU system at junior standing and will need to complete only 60 additional semester units (or 90 quarter units) to earn a bachelor's degree in a CSU program that has been deemed as similar.

CSU campuses facing access demands beyond the resources available to serve students have defined a "local admission priority area" for CCC transfer students as a measure of enrollment management. If a student is not admitted to the CSU campus of their choice, their application may be redirected to one or more alternative CSU campuses that offer a similar program and have admission capacity. It will be up to the student to evaluate each admission opportunity to decide which option is best for them. The CCC Chancellor's Office reports that CCC students are rapidly undertaking ADTs as the means to successful transfer to the CSU.¹³

Although the ADTs were originally designed as a CCC-CSU transfer policy, UC takes into account the ADT status of UC transfer applicants and includes ADTs as one of several key criteria used to select junior transfers from CCCs.¹⁴

¹² Full terms and conditions of the Associate Degree for Transfer guarantee:

<http://www.adegreewithaguarantee.com/ProgramGuaranteeTermsConditions.aspx>

¹³ <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/Reports/2021-sosreport-final-a11y.pdf?la=en&hash=3BE193227EBC64C5FD666A0D9C8F6DC40F599E49>

¹⁴ Guidelines for Implementation of University Policy on Undergraduate Admissions:

https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/committees/boars/documents/guidelines-implementation-of-ug-admission-rev-7-2019.pdf

Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG)

Transfer Admission Guarantees (TAGs) are agreements between an individual student and a specific UC campus as to the preparation required for transfer to a specific major at that campus only. Since the 1980s, UC has administered the TAG program as a way to guarantee CCC students admission to a particular major at the UC campus of their choice, provided they fulfill certain GPA and course requirements. Campuses currently offering TAG agreements include Davis, Irvine, Merced, Riverside, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz.

As with UC's policies on academic preparation, policies regarding transfer admission selection requirements are tied to guiding principles.¹⁵ These principles indicate that UC campus academic departments or divisional Academic Senate committees determine TAG eligibility requirements, including, but not limited to, course grades, GPA in specific courses and/or overall GPA. While not specific to TAGs, UC's Senate regulation for admission to advanced standing as a transfer student also provides similar guidance on the particular terms of admission eligibility. It acknowledges that specific curricular or GPA requirements fall under the purview of departments and degree programs in each campus division and shall be approved by the appropriate divisional committee. The minimum acceptable GPA will be set by each division and must be at least 2.4 and cannot exceed 3.0.¹⁶

Pathways+

As a way of streamlining the transfer process for students while maintaining an emphasis on solid academic preparation, Transfer Pathways are a common set of major-based preparatory courses offered across all nine UC undergraduate campuses for the 20 majors most sought after by CCC transfer applicants. Under the 2018 memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the California Community Colleges and UC, the University would guarantee admission to the UC system for all qualifying CCC transfer applicants, effective for students starting at a community college in fall 2019. The UC Academic Senate developed a new admissions guarantee policy based on CCC students completing one of the UC Transfer Pathways and achieving the requisite GPA. Where an ADT meets or exceeds the major requirements of a UC Transfer Pathway for the same major—as determined by the UC Academic Senate in consultation with the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges—it is accepted in lieu of the UC Transfer Pathway for purposes of the admission guarantee.

UC faculty designed Pathways+ (plus) to align with the Transfer Pathways majors for academic preparation and to leverage the guarantee mechanism of a TAG. In other words, CCC students are to complete one of the UC Transfer Pathways, which includes major preparatory coursework accepted across all nine UC campuses, and to submit a TAG agreement for that Pathway major.

¹⁵ Guiding Principles on Notification to Changes to Major Preparation and Admission Selection Requirements for California Community College Transfer Students:
https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/committees/boars/documents/major-prerequisite-transfer-principles-2019.pdf

¹⁶ UC Academic Senate Regulation 476: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bylaws-regulations/regulations/rpart2.html#r476>

By completing a Transfer Pathway and a campus-based TAG in the same major, Pathways+ students position themselves to be well-prepared for competitive admission across the UC system while simultaneously securing a guarantee of admission to their selected TAG campus. Students are able to enjoy the advantages of a guarantee while gaining strong preparation for multiple UC campuses given their completion of Pathways requirements, which promotes timely post-transfer degree completion. Fall 2021 CCC applicants were the first cohort to participate in the new Pathways+ opportunity. UC is monitoring intended policy outcomes before engaging in any further revisions to planning or implementation.

Beyond TAGs, UC continues to offer enrollment opportunities to all qualified transfer applicants who are not admitted to campuses where they applied, through the use of the Transfer Referral Pool.

New Developments in Transfer Policy

Recent State legislative actions awaiting forthcoming implementation plans will have significant impact on student transfer.

Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act of 2021

The Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act of 2021 (AB 928) signed by the Governor in early October seeks to produce a single, common lower-division general education pathway for CCC students transferring to UC and CSU and establishes an “Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Implementation Committee” that has overlapping responsibilities with what ICAS currently oversees. The policy approach of this new law prioritizes alignment of transfer curriculum requirements with the overall structure of ADTs, which originated as associate degrees designed specifically for transfer to the CSU system. Although there are many similarities between the CSU and UC undergraduate programs, important differences do exist that should be considered in this process because they reflect the richness of educational opportunities available to transfer students.

Dual Admissions

The Higher Education Budget Act Trailer Bill (AB132) passed by the California Legislature and approved by the Governor in July 2021 requests that the University of California “establish a dual admissions program as a separate transfer pathway for first-time freshman applicants.”¹⁷ Dual admission language in AB 132 partially mirrors recommendations made in the 2021 Recovery with Equity report from the Governor’s Council for Post-Secondary Education.¹⁸ The report recommended that higher education segments be required “to create a two-tiered, guaranteed dual admission process to a campus and major of choice for otherwise qualified applicants who are missing up to three courses in their A–G sequence in math or language (Tier I) or who are UC/CSU eligible but did not apply (Tier II)” (p. 48).

¹⁷ AB 132 bill language: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB132

¹⁸ https://postsecondarycouncil.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2021/03/Recovery-with-Equity_2021Mar25-12pm.pdf

UC has a standing dual admission policy. UC Academic Senate Regulation 476.D states that:

Applicants who at the time of graduation from high school do not meet the criteria of Regulations 419 [test score requirement] and 424 [A–G and GPA requirement], but who stand in the upper 12.5 percent of their graduating classes, as determined by criteria established by the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools, and who have achieved a GPA of at least 3.0 in such of the courses prescribed by Regulation 424 as they have completed, may apply simultaneously for admission to a California Community College and for conditional admission to a campus of the University, subject to the satisfaction at the Community College of the provisions of Regulation 476 B and C.¹⁹

Consistent with AB 132 and Academic Senate Regulation 476.D, UC can develop and implement a dual admission program as a separate pathway that targets students who apply to UC as first-year college students and have high school GPAs of 3.0 and above, but who are ineligible for admission because of deficiencies in A–G college preparation course completion.

Looking Forward

Considering that policy often sets the stage for actualizing change, the transfer policy initiatives in California will bring much to bear on the future status of the transfer student pipeline. Because the state’s four-year institutions and community colleges are critical avenues of opportunity for all students to meet their educational goals, it is imperative that UC collaborate with the CCC and CSU systems to address how the transfer process can be further enhanced, especially through continuous improvement cycles and intersegmental policymaking.

KEY TO ACRONYMS

ADT	Associate Degree for Transfer
BOARS	Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools
CCC	California Community Colleges
CSU	California State University
GPA	Grade point average
ICAS	Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TAG	Transfer Admission Guarantee
TCA	Transferable Course Agreement
TMC	Transfer Model Curricula
UCOP	University of California Office of the President

¹⁹ UC Academic Senate Regulation 476: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bylaws-regulations/regulations/rpart2.html#r476>