

# **Texas General Academic Institutions: Increasing Successful Community College Transfer**

**A Report to the Texas Legislature  
per Senate Bill 1, 85th Texas Legislature**

**DRAFT**

**Fall 2018**

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The mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is to provide leadership and coordination for Texas higher education and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through *60x30TX*, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.

### Agency Vision

The THECB will be recognized as an international leader in developing and implementing innovative higher education policy to accomplish our mission.

### Agency Philosophy

The THECB will promote access to and success in quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access and success without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access and success is unacceptable.

The THECB's core values are:

**Accountability:** We hold ourselves responsible for our actions and welcome every opportunity to educate stakeholders about our policies, decisions, and aspirations.

**Efficiency:** We accomplish our work using resources in the most effective manner.

**Collaboration:** We develop partnerships that result in student success and a highly qualified, globally competent workforce.

**Excellence:** We strive for excellence in all our endeavors.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

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## Executive Summary

### Legislative Directive

The General Appropriations Act, Senate Bill (SB) 1, Article III-269, Section 49, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, for the 2018-19 biennium directs the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to provide an analysis of transfer goals and practices based on reports from Texas public general academic institutions (GAIs). The rider requires the THECB to submit an annual report that describes institutions' efforts to increase the number, success, and persistence of community college transfer students.

The rider also directs the THECB to provide GAI performance data for their community college transfer students and native students. As such, this report includes recommendations to improve student transfer. This is the ninth annual report and it fulfills the directives from the Legislature. (Appendix B includes the text of Article III-269, Section 49.)

### Methodology

The legislative directive requires the GAIs to provide information about their goals and practices. To solicit the information from the GAIs, THECB staff sent a survey to all thirty-seven institutions. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix C and the complete responses received from each institution are included in Appendix D. Responses are analyzed for common themes and approaches to similar challenges; however, institutional responses were not evaluated for effectiveness.

To give further context to the narrative provided by institutions through the survey, performance data are also analyzed. The proportions of new student populations at institutions in fall 2017 are represented by first-time-in-college undergraduates (FTUG) and community college transfer students. This provides a current snapshot to consider institutional outreach and enrollment patterns, whether the students are new to higher education or transitioning from the community colleges.

Performance data also include completion rates and time to degree at institutions for native and community college transfer students. A cohort analysis based on reported institutional data compares these measures. This year, as in the past reports, a cohort of students who are either native or community college transfer students classified as juniors is followed from fall 2013 to the end of the 2017 academic year. To broaden the study this year, a sophomore cohort and a freshman cohort were also followed.

### Findings

The analysis of the data provided in the survey responses is summarized to provide an overall view of activity at Texas GAIs to improve transfer. About half of GAIs have goals specific to community college transfer students. Community college transfer students are often included in the more general grouping of all transfer students when goals are made.

Recruitment on community college campuses remains the most frequently used outreach. Placing a full-time recruitment and admissions advisor on a community college campus is a growing trend, with 41 percent of institutions now using the strategy. Other services related to outreach are website information and transfer student scholarships. All GAIs provide extensive information on their websites specific to the needs of transfer students. Most

GAIIs (86%) offer targeted financial aid in the form of scholarships and grants exclusively for community college transfer students.

Orientation remains key to acclimating transfer students to their new institutions. GAIIs continue to add to the number of activities and services introduced to students during orientation. Advising is often one of the services provided during orientation, although it also occurs at other times as well. Mandatory advising for new transfer students is found at 86 percent of GAIIs. GAIIs also report training advisors to develop expertise for assisting transfer students. At orientation, students learn about support programs. Most GAIIs use a variety of programs to support students and promote their success. Most of these programs are available to all students and not designed specifically for transfer students.

GAIIs report being partners in many articulation agreements (1,186 academic agreements and 567 workforce agreements). However, there is a common recognition of the challenges of developing and maintaining these agreements. Some institutions expressed doubt about the efficacy of multiple agreements.

GAIIs survey responses rated faculty awareness high for the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC), but faculty awareness was rated much lower for the statewide initiatives of Field of Study Curriculum (FOSC) and the course alignment of the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* (ACGM).

All GAIIs participate in the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS). To 51 percent of GAIIs, this means adopting the common numbers for some of their lower-division equivalent courses. The rest of the GAIIs provide a crosswalk or provide the common number beside the institutional number to identify their courses that are in the system. The proportions of courses that are part of the system varies greatly among institutions. The average percentage of lower-division courses with a common course equivalent in core curriculum at GAIIs responding to the survey was 71 percent.

GAIIs ranked "students transferring with excessive hours" as problematic most frequently of fifteen barriers to transfer. Second was "inaccurate and/or inadequate advising at the community college. These were the top two barriers to transfer.

GAIIs identified insufficient financial aid for transfer students and the increase in dual credit as emerging issues of concern for transfer students.

The analysis of the performance data from reports submitted routinely by institutions is organized to provide information about enrollments, the rate at which students graduate, and how long it takes them to earn their bachelor's degrees at Texas GAIIs. GAIIs process more applications for first-time-in-college students (164,334) than community college transfer students (32,734). However, the percentage of community college transfer students that are accepted and actually matriculate is greater, at 77 percent, compared to 60 percent for new freshmen at universities.

The Emerging Research institutions (THECB Accountability System peer group) continue to be the top destination for community college transfer students, with 50 percent of the fall 2017 class of new community college transfer students enrolling at one of the eight institutions. Among the peer groups, the largest proportion of community college transfer students in the institutions' new student populations is found at the Master's Institutions.

The completion rate for community college transfer students in the junior cohort of the report study was 67 percent, compared to 84 percent for native juniors. This is consistent with

the completion rate of previous years. The sophomore and freshmen cohorts demonstrated similar gaps between native and transfer students; however, the performance of transfer students is closer to the performance of native students of the same classification in the sophomore and freshmen cohorts.

The time to degree for the community college transfer students in the junior cohort was 7.6 years, compared to 5.5 for native students. Sophomores performed similarly with native sophomore graduates completing their degree in 5.4 years, and transfer graduates taking 7.1 years to graduate.

For graduates studied in each classification cohort, the amount of time spent at the community college for the transfer students is greater than the amount of time native students spent to reach the same classification. Once they were at the university, community college transfer students in the junior, sophomore, and freshmen cohorts who go on to graduate with bachelor's degrees completed their degrees in approximately the same time as their native peers in the corresponding cohort. Junior natives complete their degree in 2.1 years after reaching junior status, and junior transfer students complete their degree in 2.5 years after transferring. Sophomore natives complete their degree on average in 3.1 years after reaching sophomore status, and sophomore transfer students complete their degree in 3.1 years after transferring. The freshmen natives on average complete their degree in 4.2 years and transfer freshmen complete their degree in 3.9 year after transferring (Chart 3).

## **Conclusion**

Data analyses continue to show the trend observed in previous reports that community college transfer students have a lower completion rate and take longer to graduate than students who start and graduate from the same university. To see an improvement in the progress of transfer students toward degree completion some things will need to change. There are different opinions and research conclusions which identify problematic issues. Contributing to the problematic issues are characteristics and circumstances unique to each student that cannot be altered or controlled by the state or institutions. However, institutions' processes and priorities can be changed to improve transfer students' progress toward degree completion.

The current challenge for public institutions both two- and four-year schools is to change. GAIs do not operate in a vacuum and do not control all issues related to transfer. Community colleges students appear to spend more years at the community college than at the universities from which they eventually receive their bachelor's degree. Both types of institutions are responsible for serving students in the best way possible. Institutions can re-evaluate the distribution of their resources and the order of their priorities in serving students. For GAIs, improving completion rates and time to degree for their undergraduate population should be a top priority.

At the state level, the initiatives of common courses numbering, course alignment through the ACGM (*Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual*) Learning Outcomes Project, curriculum alignment through the Field of Study Curricula (FOSC), and the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) are top priorities. How institutions approach these initiatives is critical to how well the initiatives work to improve transfer.

## Recommendations

### Priority

- GAI resources should continue to increase their presence on community college campuses. Community colleges need to provide space, and academic counselors need to insist that students seek out information from university representatives on their campus.
- Community colleges should move students toward an early connection with universities.
- GAIs need to be heavily involved in student academic and financial advising at the community colleges. Degree guides must be easily available on institutional websites to students as they plan their own academic and financial path toward transfer.
- GAIs should increase targeted financial aid to community college transfer students to ease the financial fears and restraints for students transitioning to a university.

### Efficiency

- Texas public universities must be more diligent in aligning their courses with those in the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* (ACGM) and in using the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS) because they provide the universal language to communicate lower-division program requirements and course information. This information should be easily available on institutional websites.
- GAI faculty and administrators need to actively use the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC), the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project, and Field of Study Curriculum (FOSC) to improve transfer. When a new FOSC is approved by the THECB, the information should be published on institutional websites.
- The development of multiple articulation agreements that often compete or conflict with these statewide initiatives should be discouraged.
- Public universities and community colleges must work with software vendors to expedite solutions to transcribing and degree-auditing issues to ensure correct application of the TCC and FOSC courses toward degree requirements.

### Leadership

- GAI faculty and administrators need to be proactive instead of reactive to the statewide initiative of FOSC. Universities should provide the leadership in the efforts to align curricula for specific degree programs or groups of similar programs. Without this leadership, the void may be filled by community college faculty with less vested interest in the quality of the bachelor's degree programs and a greater interest in expanding the number of courses taught at the lower division. FOSC discussion should clarify the distinction between lower-division and upper-division courses and provide an appropriate and balanced alignment.
- Professional development must be used to increase faculty and administrator awareness of the significance of statewide initiatives, such as the TCC, the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project, and FOSC, to align courses and curriculum.

## **THECB Recommendations to the 86th Texas Legislature**

- Restructure the core curriculum to help ensure students take courses that count toward their degrees. The more standardized the core is across institutions the easier it is to ensure the courses will apply to majors.
- Require institutions of higher education to embed information about FOSC courses in degree programs posted on their websites and verify use of FOSC.
- Support an interactive online degree site that allows students to input their majors and receive a list of the required courses needed to complete a specific degree in four years.
- Require institutions to provide program course requirements to THECB, including indicators of which courses satisfy the core curriculum and field of study curriculum.
- Study the feasibility of a transfer admissions guarantee and make recommendations to the Legislature about student and institutional criteria for such a system.
- Require all types of dual credit students to file a degree plan at 30 semester credit hours. All other students are already required to file a degree plan. Require institutions document compliance.

# Introduction

## Legislative Directive

The General Appropriations Act, Senate Bill (SB) 1, Article III-269, Section 49, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, for the 2018-19 biennium directs the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to provide an analysis of transfer goals and practices based on reports from Texas public general academic institutions (GAIs). The rider requires the THECB to submit an annual report that describes the universities' efforts to increase the number, success, and persistence of Texas community college transfer students. The report also makes recommendations to improve student transfer.

Additionally, the legislation directs the THECB to provide GAI performance data for community college transfer students and native students by institution. As such, the report includes information about each institution's performance. Institutional information about programs and practices intended to encourage transfer success is presented along with statewide strategy recommendations to improve community college student transfer. This report fulfills the requirements of Article III-269, Section 49, which is included as Appendix B.

## Methodology

The legislative directive, with its twofold focus of institutional practices and performance, is addressed in two ways. In June 2018, THECB staff surveyed the GAIs to gather information about practices, and staff analyzed data from the Coordinating Board Management (CBM) reports to show performance by institution of transfer and native students.

The GAI survey responses provided information about institutional outreach efforts and services for transfer students. The survey solicited information about articulation agreements, community college program enhancements, advising, website information, financial aid and scholarships, student success programs, degree program alignment, and participation and promotion of statewide initiatives aimed at smoothing and improving transfer for Texas students. The survey also requested that institutions rank common barriers to transfer. THECB staff surveyed each Texas public university to understand institutional goals and document the following: 1) current practices serving community college transfer students, 2) barriers to student transfer, and 3) potential emerging issues. The survey responses from institutions are provided in Appendix D, and response comparisons are included in the "Analysis and Observations – Survey" section.

To address performance, the 2018 report includes analysis of applications, acceptances, and student enrollments for fall 2017. This analysis compares first-time-in-college undergraduate (FTUG) students at Texas public universities and community college transfer students applying to and enrolling in Texas public universities for the first time. Application and enrollment data show the proportions of native to community college transfer students in an institutions' undergraduate population that were new to the institution at a single point in time – fall 2017. The data also show the differences in yield (movements from application to acceptance to enrollment) of the transfer and FTUG populations at each institution.

Performance measures used in the report are "completion rates" and "time to degree." The completion rate refers to the rate at which the same cohort of students graduated with a bachelor's degree. Time to degree refers to the time in years, number of semesters, and the

accumulated attempted semester credit hours (SCH) a student takes to complete a bachelor's degree; time to degree follows the student from first enrollment in higher education at a public institution, university or community college, to graduation with a bachelor's degree. Only graduates are included in the time-to-degree calculation.

This report follows the performance, over time, for community college transfer students who reached junior-level status, based on a GAI's determination, at enrollment. The report also follows each GAI's native students who are classified as juniors during the same semester as the transfer students. Essentially, this represents a sample, or cohort of transfer, and of native students selected at the same point as transfer students in their progress toward a bachelor's degree. While the data analysis for this report, which looks at the transfer of Texas students from a public two-year college to a public university, is only a portion of the much broader spectrum of student mobility, it is useful for comparison of student achievement and the time it takes students to reach the same milestones in their academic careers.

The report follows the cohort of junior students at public universities – continuing natives and new transfers in fall 2013 – and tracks them through spring 2017, the most recent data available. This allowed THECB staff to determine the completion rates and time to degree for four years from junior status to graduation. This year's report also tracks transfer and native sophomores (completion rates determined for five years after achieving sophomore status) and freshmen (completion rates determined six years from freshman status). Performance data by institution compares native and community college transfer students and is presented in this report's tables and in the "Institutional Profiles" section. Texas public GAIs' data are displayed according to their peer group in the Texas Higher Education Accountability System to allow for similar size, mission, and academic offerings.

## **Context and Limitations**

While this report has a limited scope per the legislative rider (two-year to four-year publics) and involves a cohort data analysis, the institutional survey responses provide evidence of the complex challenges and the many variables that influence the movement and success of students. Concurrent with the recruitment, advising, and enrollment of Texas community college transfer students, Texas public universities must address the needs of students seeking to transfer from other public and private universities, both in and out of state; students from out-of-state two-year colleges; and students with international transcripts and global educational experiences. Many of those other students have attended multiple institutions before applying to the Texas public universities that may be their final destinations. Additionally, universities must advise their returning students, who may or may not return with transfer courses.

Seven Texas public GAIs have unique circumstances, which limit their reported student data for analysis for transfer students studied in this report. Two Texas public institutions are upper-division level only: Sul Ross University-Rio Grande College (Sul Ross-Rio Grande) and Texas A&M University-Central Texas (TAMU-Central Texas). These two institutions offer no point of comparison between their native and transfer students in the tables and analyses since all their students are transfer students.

Five Texas public institutions originally were founded as upper-division institutions but recently received authority to expand into the lower-division. These institutions are as follows: Texas A&M University-San Antonio (TAMU-San Antonio), which admitted freshmen in 2016; University of Houston-Clear Lake (UH-Clear Lake), which admitted freshmen in 2014; University

of Houston-Victoria (UH-Victoria), which admitted freshmen in 2010; Texas A&M University-Texarkana (TAMU-Texarkana), which admitted freshmen in 2010; and University of North Texas-Dallas (North Texas-Dallas), which admitted freshmen in 2009.

Data from TAMU-San Antonio and UH-Clear Lake do not allow for comparisons. The 2013 cohort of juniors' data for UH-Victoria, TAMU-Texarkana, and North Texas-Dallas provides limited comparison because the number of native students in the cohort is small. Also, in terms of historical tracking of the student cohorts used for comparison, the separate institutions of The University of Texas-Pan American (UT-Pan American) and The University of Texas at Brownsville (UT-Brownsville) are included. These two institutions recently merged and became The University of Texas Rio Grande Valle (UTRGV). For fall 2017 admissions data and for the responses for the survey, the new single institution, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) is included.

## **Analysis and Observations – Survey Responses**

### **Institutional Goals for Community College Transfer Students' Success**

Community college transfer students are an important group within the student population of a public university. In terms of information submitted on the Coordinating Board Management (CBM) institutional reports from public universities for fall 2017, the statewide undergraduate population enrollment by undergraduate status indicates that approximately 17 percent were FTUG, 11 percent were transfer students new to the reporting institutions, and 72 percent were students who were continuing at the same institution. The new transfer students include students moving from a community college to a university for the first time, as well as students moving between universities, public and private.

One challenge in analyzing institutional goals and projections is that transfer students are not always tracked separately. Additionally, students coming from community colleges directly account for only a portion of all transfers. It is likely that many transfer students start at a university, then attend a community college, and then decide to attend another university to graduate. Labeling and tracking these "swirlers" as one kind of transfer student or another may be limited by the institutions' capacity to enter different identifiers into the student information systems, and then mine that data for analysis.

Approximately half (49%) of Texas public universities have recruitment goals in place that are specific to new community college transfer students. Additionally 41 percent of responding institutions indicated that retention goals (first semester to second semester) and completion goals (graduation) are in place for community college transfer students.

### **Outreach Services for Transfer Students**

The most basic and common outreach to transfer students is recruitment. All Texas public universities recruit on the campuses of community colleges. Recruiting may occur through a regularly scheduled visit of a university representative, transfer fairs, campus preview days, or through the placement of a permanent admissions/academic advisor on the community college campus. Marketing, budget considerations, and competition (other universities, public and private) drive recruitment activities and their success. For some smaller, less urban universities, recruiting involves making community college students aware of the university.

Recruiters also communicate information about their universities' facilities and campus resources, social life, extracurricular activities, and academic programs.

In addition to a regular recruitment schedule, GAIs participate in transfer fairs and special events organized by community colleges. Universities also host special events on their own campus to encourage transfer. Thirty-six of the 37 public universities reported sending representatives to transfer fairs. During recruitment visits and at transfer fairs, universities' representatives provide information specific to students' circumstances. Most universities (76%) provide academic advising and many (57%) also provide financial aid advising. Fifty-four percent offer preview days specifically for transfer students to come to the university campus and acquaint themselves with programs, services, and faculty.

A growing trend is for universities to place permanent recruiters/advisors on key feeder community college campuses to increase the university's visibility and accessibility to community college students. Forty-one percent of public universities have a permanent transfer advisor on a community college campus. This strategy was used most often when the university has only one major feeder community college.

Among new initiatives for outreach to community college transfer students, several GAIs developed programs with a focus on promoting transfer efficiency. New initiatives, offered for the first time at institutions, included meetings for community college advisors to become more familiar with the universities' academic programs and services, newly offered or revised existing degree programs, immediate admissions and enrollment at special recruiting events, scholarships and mentoring for underrepresented populations, and new staff positions for regional community college recruitment.

## **Transfer Orientation**

Orientation provides students an intense introduction to their new educational home. Twenty-three (62%) GAIs require transfer students to attend orientation. An additional eleven institutions offer but do not require it. Three institutions provide orientation to new FTUG students and transfers at the same time. The list of activities in Table 1 shows the services provided at orientation, along with the number of Texas public universities that reported including the activities in their programs for the last three years. Overall, universities are adding more activities to their orientation programs.

**Table 1.** Student Orientation Activities and Number of GAIs Offering Services

Orientation Activities	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Financial aid advising	29	34	35
Campus safety/security information session	28	33	35
Advising with professional advisors	30	31	31
Meal/food services	29	31	33
Student organizations' presentations	26	30	34
Registration	30	29	31
Mental health/counseling services presentation	24	29	33
Meetings specific to academic program majors	31	28	28
Career Services presentation	21	28	32
Campus tour	28	27	32
Health Services information session	23	25	31
Housing information session	17	24	33
Parent/family participation and sessions	23	24	28
Advising with faculty advisors	23	20	25
Assignment of student mentors	6	12	10
Assignment of faculty/staff mentors	1	5	6
Testing	Not part of survey	Not part of survey	20

*Source: GAIs survey responses*

## Advising Transfer Students

Texas public GAIs use multiple opportunities and means to advise transfer students. Initially, they use outreach and recruitment efforts to provide academic advising on community college campuses before admissions. Advising students after admissions, but before they register for courses, is also a priority. Most GAIs (86%) require new transfer students to be advised. Because of the complexity, uniqueness, and amount of information to consider when advising transfer students, most universities (86%) provide training to advisors specific to the issues relevant to transfer students.

Universities' emphasis on advising may arise from concerns that are perceived as barriers to smooth transfer. Thirty of the 37 (81%) universities surveyed identify students transferring with excessive hours as problematic. The second most frequently identified barrier was inadequate or inaccurate advising at the community college, with twenty-eight GAIs (76%) identifying this as a problem.

Also, among identified barriers to smooth transfer were students being advised to complete associate degrees prior to transferring, thereby taking courses not applicable to the bachelor's degree. Twenty-two (59%) institutions identified the completion of the associate degree as a problem when it included hours earned that become excess credits for graduating with a bachelor's degree. The top two barriers identified by universities, students transferring with excess hours and students receiving inadequate advising at the community college, are closely related to the advising focused on students completing an associate degree, instead of encouraging the progression to a bachelor's degree.

The GAIs reported that the barriers occur in the students' educational careers prior to admission and attendance at the university, and all complicate advising when students transfer.

Excessive hours and courses not applicable to a degree plan present challenges when advising transfer students. Universities try to mitigate the negative consequences of these barriers through community college outreach advising and specialized training for their own advisors. Mitigation is good, but preventative solutions require more involvement than just the GAIs.

## **Transfer Student Success Programs**

Texas public universities offer many programs to enhance and support the success of all students. Transfer students benefit from the success programs and strategies used at most universities. The most common include providing a writing lab (97%), mathematics lab (86%), discipline specific tutorial services (81%), academic early alerts for struggling students (81%), and student or faculty mentors (65%). Less common are learning communities (46%), on-campus childcare (46%), and transportation assistance (41%). A growing number of institutions offer a first-year transfer experience program (32%).

Nineteen (51%) GAIs reported adding new student success programs during the 2017-18 academic year. Of the new programs, institutions reported initiating the following to serve transfer students and encourage success:

- Implemented new technology platforms for online orientation, tutoring, advising, degree planning, and early alerts for academically at risk (5 institutions)
- Designating or increasing staff to focus on transfer student advising and success (2 institutions)
- Dual enrollment programs at a university with a community college partner (2 institutions)
- Faculty development (1 institution)
- Leadership development programs for students (2 institutions)
- Intensive and comprehensive academic coaching and advising with tutoring (7 institutions).

## **Websites**

All Texas public universities have webpages with information tailored to address the needs of transfer students (see Table 2). Typical information found on the transfer webpages is focused on transfer credit and course transferability, transfer grade point average (GPA), and financial aid/scholarship opportunities. Requirements for admissions vary by institution, and putting this information on websites is important to prospective students as they compare institutions. A recent study found that

Ultimately, most community college personnel and students rely on online resources from universities to help students navigate transfer requirements and to develop course plans. Therefore there is tremendous value in providing and maintaining accurate, easy-to access information on both community colleges and university web pages, but many [community college] representatives acknowledge that their websites are not kept up to date. (Schudde, Bradley, & Absher, 2018)

**Table 2.** Transfer Information Available on Institutions' Websites

Information Provided	Number and Percent of Institutions Providing the Information on their Websites	Number and Percent of Institutions Making Changes to Requirements
Minimum grade point average (GPA) required for transfer admissions	36 (97%)	
Minimum semester credit hours (SCH) a student is required to have to be considered for transfer admissions	37 (100%)	Four (11%) institutions report a lowered earn SCH to be considered for transfer admissions.
Number of SCH students are required to take in residence at the institution for graduation	31 (84%)	
Limit on transferable hours accepted	25 (68%)	One institution raised the limit on the number of SCH from community colleges.
Scholarship and financial aid information specific to community college transfer students	33 (89%)	
Course transfer policy	33 (89%)	
Course equivalency guides or database	30 (81%)	

Source: GAIs survey responses

## Targeted Financial Aid

For the 2017-18 academic year, 32 (86%) of GAIs reported offering institutional and/or departmental scholarships/grants designated exclusively for community college transfer students, and on average, 25 percent of their new community college transfer students were recipients of the targeted aid. This is beyond the conventional financial aid packages available for native students. Eligibility for institutional and departmental scholarships may be based on need, but merit and academic record may also be considered. The scholarships are used to attract high-performing transfer students from community colleges. The percent of transfer students who receive institutional or departmental scholarships varies widely among the public universities. Statewide, the award of targeted aid per student averaged \$2,360 and ranged from \$500 to \$9,975. The number of institutions reporting targeted aid increased by five institutions over last year, and the average percent of the new community college transfer students receiving it more than doubled from 12 percent in Academic Year 2016-17 academic year to 25 percent reported in Academic Year 2017-18.

## Articulation Agreements

All but two GAIs report having at least one articulation agreement with a community college. Survey responses indicate 1,186 academic and 567 workforce (Associate of Applied Science to a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences) articulation agreements are currently in effect among universities and community colleges, with new agreements initiated this year by 18 institutions. The reported number of articulation agreements in effect at each institution ranges from none to more than 200. The disparity among universities in the number and types

of agreements reported indicates articulation agreements between Texas public universities and community colleges mean different things to different institutions and highlights the lack standardization.

To develop articulation agreements, institutions usually engage in “vertical teaming.” Locally, most universities collaborate with community colleges in their region to align degree program curricula and courses. Vertical teaming is intended to help students avoid learning gaps and accumulating excessive hours. Their intention is to help students transfer from community colleges to universities with a level of preparation similar to that of native students. Twenty-five universities (68%) reported conducting vertical team meetings. It was noted, however, that on four occasions of institutions reporting new articulation agreements, there was an absence of any reported vertical team meetings. This once again points to the disconnected and inconsistent views of what articulations agreements are and what they should accomplish.

Texas public universities were asked to identify barriers to articulation agreements. Only six of the 37 respondents from institutions provided no answer or indicated there were no barriers. The most frequently identified barrier was lack of time and/or personnel to invest in the development and maintenance of articulation agreements. The logistical challenges of identifying and coordinating the efforts of the appropriate stakeholders (faculty, enrollment management staff, administrators, advisors, etc.) at the university, along with identifying their counterparts at multiple community colleges, were perceived as substantial barriers; and 19 of the 37 institutions’ answers conveyed this perception.

Ten institutions identified the necessary alignment of curriculum as a barrier to the development of articulation agreements. Curriculum issues were reported to arise under the following circumstances when: (1) major requirements and core curriculum are not integrated, (2) community college curriculum is viewed by the GAI as inadequate for student preparation, (3) institutional and programmatic missions of the institutions differ, often resulting in excess hours, (4) technical hours cannot be accepted to apply to academic degree programs, and (5) nonstandard course titles are used by community colleges.

Another barrier, cited by six GAIs, was the inability to identify, connect, and cooperate with the appropriate contacts at the community colleges when trying to establish an agreement. Two GAIs cited location as a barrier; one institution in a less densely populated area has only one community college within easy driving distance. The other institution citing location indicated that because of its densely populated area, with many community colleges and universities nearby and a large pool of “swirling” students, it created challenges to effective agreements. Students transferring from many different colleges was also cited by another institution as a challenge; this was not attributed to location, but instead was seen as a consequence of unpredictable student mobility. Another respondent pointed out that an articulation agreement cannot guarantee a student’s admission to the institution or a program, if admissions standards are selective.

Several institutions reported that the value of multiple articulation agreements are not necessarily worth the effort of development. One institution indicated that “because so many degree and curriculum linkages are already in effect, such as core curricula, [Transfer Evaluation System]TES, [Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual] ACGM, Texas Tuning, transfer compacts, Fields of Study, [Texas Common Course Numbering System] TCCNS and curriculum alignment plan[s], developing specialized articulation agreements has a return on investment that is questionable.” Another indicated that, to avoid duplication of effort, their

degree guides “provide Texas common course numbering for each undergraduate major. . . . In some cases, community colleges insist on creating their own transfer guides or documents. This seems counter-productive since we have [them] already.” A third institution with a small staff “found it more productive to create transfer advising guides. . . . This allows flexibility. It also allows the students to ‘shop’ degree programs at any point.” Another institution summed up their experience with articulation agreements as “positive, however, the articulation is a cumbersome way of helping transfer on the individual student level. Articulations declare cooperative relationships between institutions, but do not have practical informational or guidance help for students.”

Articulation agreements are considered a means to smooth transfer. However, this conventional approach without standardization to clarify student and course transfer may not adequately address the complexity and specialized nature of academic planning, continuously evolving disciplines of study, and the increased mobility of students. With the variety, challenges of creating, and the necessity of continual maintenance, assessing the collective success and value of articulation agreements is difficult, if not impossible.

## **Statewide Initiatives**

Statewide initiatives such as the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS), Texas Core Curriculum, the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual* (AGCM) Learning Outcomes Project, and Field of Study Curricula (FOSC) are intended to help with course and curricular alignment and thereby may lessen the need for local vertical teaming efforts and multiple articulation agreements. Considering the increased mobility of students, local customization of programs and courses may create unintended hindrances, which could be avoided by adjusting courses and curricula to be aligned with statewide initiatives.

The use of a common course numbering system, the TCCNS, has been encouraged in Texas since the mid-1990s and mandated in state statute since 2003. All community colleges have adopted the common numbering system as their institutional numbering system for academic courses. Eighteen (51%) of the 35 GAIs offering lower-division courses indicate that they use the TCCNS as the institutional numbering system for lower-division courses that have TCCNS equivalents. The remaining GAIs use a crosswalk matrix to match their institutional course numbers with the TCCNS number. Institutions are required to provide the TCCNS number next to the institutional course prefix and number at the beginning of each course description, if the course has a common number equivalent. GAIs also must include in their electronic catalog a list of all common courses offered, along with an explanation of the common course numbering system and its significance.

Most institutions comply with THECB rules in identifying common courses in their descriptions, especially if they do a crosswalk. For some GAIs that use common numbers for their equivalent courses, the institution does not distinguish between their common courses and their non-common lower-division courses. This lack of distinction may create the impression that a greater number of courses are common than actually are. Additionally, a comprehensive list that would help clarify which courses are actually common is sometimes difficult to locate. The deeper one delves into institutional websites, catalog, and departmental pages, the less frequently information about the TCCNS appears. Table 3 provides the number of institutions that report communicating information about course equivalents to those in the common numbering system, as well as other related information, and where the information may be found.

**Table 3.** GAIs' Placement and Type of TCCNS Information

Placement of Information	Type of Information	Number of Institutions
Catalog course descriptions	Course Equivalents	27
Catalog crosswalk list	Course Equivalents	19
Catalog degree requirements	Course Equivalents	13
Degree/curriculum guides	Course Equivalents	18
Transfer admissions webpages	Course Equivalents	19
Transfer admissions webpages	System Explanation & Significance	13
Departmental webpages	Course Equivalents	3
Departmental webpages	System Explanation & Significance	2
Class schedule	Course Equivalents	5
Recruitment materials	Course Equivalents	4
Recruitment materials	System Explanation & Significance	3
Degree audit system	Course Equivalents	7

*Source: GAIs survey responses*

The proportion of each institution's lower-division inventory of courses that are part of the TCCNS, either based on course number or crosswalk assignment, varies greatly among GAIs. Texas public universities were asked for their number of lower-division courses with a common number equivalent and their number of courses without a TCCNS equivalent. As mentioned, two institutions do not offer lower-division courses: TAMU-Central Texas and Sul Ross-Rio Grande. Table 4 shows the distribution of common courses and non-common courses listed in the 2017-18 academic catalogs of GAIs. The average percentage of lower-division courses with common course equivalents in academic catalogs at the institutions providing responses was just 39 percent.

**Table 4.** Number and Percentage of Common and Non-common Lower-division Courses Offered

Institution	Number of lower-division courses <b>with</b> a common course equivalent	% of lower-division courses <b>with</b> a common course equivalent	Number of lower-division courses <b>without</b> a common course equivalent	% of lower-division courses <b>without</b> a common course equivalent
Angelo	153	99%	1	1%
Midwestern	146	35%	276	65%
Sul Ross	144	34%	274	66%
TAMU-Galveston	61	58%	45	42%
TAMU-San Antonio	58	83%	12	17%
TAMU-Texarkana	86	44%	110	56%
UH-Clear Lake	120	72%	47	28%
UH-Downtown	150	51%	147	49%
UH-Victoria	56	58%	40	42%
UNT-Dallas	109	45%	131	55%
UT-Permian	36	nd	*	nd
UT-Tyler	108	33%	217	67%
SFA	192	32%	401	68%
TAMI	171	46%	201	54%
Tarleton	142	34%	272	66%
WTAMU	136	40%	205	60%
Lamar	119	21%	452	79%
Prairie View	153	24%	472	76%
Tx Southern	123	24%	392	76%
TWU	189	42%	265	58%
TAMU-Commerce	141	54%	118	46%
TAMU-CC	132	46%	157	54%
TAMU-Kingsville	144	38%	239	62%
Sam Houston	66	9%	685	91%
UT-RGV	190	28%	496	72%
TxStU	*	nd	*	nd
TTU	251	40%	377	60%
UH	121	12%	861	88%
UNT	181	22%	657	78%
UT-Arlington	155	23%	508	77%
UT-Dallas	*	nd	*	nd
UT-El Paso	148	21%	565	79%
UT-San Antonio	216	45%	265	55%
TAMU	176	23%	592	77%
UT-Austin	207	12%	1467	88%

\* Survey response did not include number. nd - not determined

Source: GAIs survey responses

Institutions also were asked about common course equivalents included in core curriculum. The average percentage of lower-division courses with common course equivalents in the institutions' core curriculum for those GAIs providing responses was 71 percent, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Number and Percentage of Common and Non-common Lower-division Courses in Core Curriculum

Institution	Number of lower-division core courses <b>with</b> a common course equivalent	% of lower-division core courses <b>with</b> a common course equivalent	Number of lower-division core courses <b>without</b> a common course equivalent	% of lower-division core courses <b>without</b> a common course equivalent
Angelo	57	98%	1	2%
Midwestern	61	64%	34	36%
Sul Ross	51	86%	8	14%
TAMU-Galveston	47	84%	9	16%
TAMU-San Antonio	47	87%	7	13%
TAMU-Texarkana	51	84%	10	16%
UH-Clear Lake	71	97%	2	3%
UH-Downtown	70	67%	35	33%
UH-Victoria	39	100%	0	0%
UNT-Dallas	62	83%	13	17%
UT-Permian	49	nd	*	nd
UT-Tyler	66	69%	30	31%
SFA	74	77%	22	23%
TAMI	68	86%	11	14%
Tarleton	53	76%	17	24%
WTAMU	67	81%	16	19%
Lamar	45	57%	34	43%
Prairie View	77	87%	12	13%
Tx Southern	53	100%	0	0%
TWU	58	54%	49	46%
TAMU-Commerce	78	88%	11	12%
TAMU-CC	48	100%	0	0%
TAMU-Kingsville	89	73%	33	27%
Sam Houston	66	65%	36	35%
UT-RGV	63	57%	48	43%
TxStU	*	nd	*	nd
TTU	70	47%	78	53%
UH	51	36%	92	64%
UNT	61	43%	81	57%
UT-Arlington	52	50%	51	50%
UT-Dallas	*	nd	*	nd
UT-El Paso	38	13%	262	87%
UT-San Antonio	89	66%	45	34%
TAMU	100	52%	93	48%
UT-Austin	65	34%	129	66%

\* Survey response did not include number. nd - not determined

Source: GAIs survey responses

When the public universities were asked about the number of TCCNS course equivalents included in the major requirements for bachelor’s degrees, responses with specific numbers were less frequent. Twenty-seven institutions provided numbers, but others either provided no numbers or indicated the information was not available.

**Table 6.** Number and Percentage of Common and Non-common Lower-division Courses in Major Requirements

Institution	Number of lower-division major courses <b>with</b> a common course equivalent	% of lower-division major courses <b>with</b> a common course equivalent	Number of lower-division major courses <b>without</b> a common course equivalent	% of lower-division major courses <b>without</b> a common course equivalent
Angelo	153	99%	1	1%
Midwestern	*	nd	*	nd
Sul Ross	120	29%	298	71%
TAMU-Galveston	3	7%	40	93%
TAMU-San Antonio	58	83%	12	17%
TAMU-Texarkana	53	66%	27	34%
UH-Clear Lake	51	55%	41	45%
UH-Downtown	130	52%	121	48%
UH-Victoria	12	100%	0	0%
UNT-Dallas	184	83%	39	17%
UT-Permian	13	nd	*	nd
UT-Tyler	84	38%	139	62%
SFA	*	nd	*	nd
TAMI	*	nd	*	nd
Tarleton	134	42%	184	58%
WTAMU	126	39%	201	61%
Lamar	47	8%	571	92%
Prairie View	161	44%	207	56%
Tx Southern	70	15%	392	85%
TWU	*	nd	*	nd
TAMU-Commerce	105	63%	62	37%
TAMU-CC	141	47%	157	53%
TAMU-Kingsville	55	21%	206	79%
Sam Houston	*	nd	*	nd
UT-RGV	*	nd	*	nd
TxStU	*	nd	*	nd
TTU	181	38%	299	62%
UH	8	13%	52	87%
UNT	120	23%	398	77%
UT-Arlington	134	32%	287	68%
UT-Dallas	*	nd	*	nd
UT-El Paso	71	21%	262	79%
UT-San Antonio	216	48%	233	52%
TAMU	111	24%	361	76%
UT-Austin	140	nd	*	nd

\* Survey response did not include number. nd - not determined

Source: GAIs survey responses

Active courses in the TCCNS that may be offered by community colleges must be included in the THECB's ACGM. The ACGM provides the course descriptions and the student learning outcomes for TCCNS courses. Faculty from both public universities and two-year colleges collaborate to develop the courses.

The ACGM/TCCNS courses are the building blocks of several THECB initiatives intended to facilitate and improve transfer efficiency. Key among these are the Texas Core Curriculum, FOSC, and the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project. The success of the initiatives depends on how well they are embraced and promoted in Texas' individual institutions, both at universities and community colleges. Faculty and advisor involvement with, and awareness of, the initiatives is essential.

The most prominent initiative is the core curriculum. All GAIs report that their faculty are aware of the Texas Core Curriculum but report that only 54 to 57 percent of their faculty are aware of the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project and FOSC. When asked how they are raising awareness and implementing state initiatives, all GAIs reported work by faculty committees, councils, and administrative offices to discuss and bring about changes.

## **Barriers to Transfer**

Numerous barriers to transfer exist and, for purposes of the report and survey, can be categorized as problems associated with advising; financial constraints on institutions for services and on students in paying for their education; and programmatic challenges, such as admissions, capacity, and course scheduling. There were no problems identified that were common to all institutions. The GAIs were asked to rank 15 barriers to transfer identified in previous survey years and to add any others not included in the list. As noted previously under advising, "students transferring with excessive hours" was the barrier cited most frequently, followed by "inaccurate and/or inadequate advising at the community college," which ranked second in frequency. Lack of financial support for transfer students was ranked third.

The "Ranked Barriers to Transfer" in Table 6, provides the number of institutions that ranked an item as being a problem and also the number of institutions that ranked the item as their most problematic. Very few GAIs chose to rank all of the items.

**Table 7.** Barriers to Transfer Ranked by GAIs as Problematic

Barrier	Number of GAIs ranking the barrier as problematic	Number of GAIs ranking the barrier as the most problematic
Students transferring with excessive hours	30	8
Inaccurate and/or inadequate advising at the community college	28	6
Lack of financial aid support for transfer students	24	5
Insufficient staff and/or financial resources at your institution to facilitate transfer of students from community colleges	23	5
Inadequate course scheduling and/or course rotations to meet the needs of new transfer students	23	1
Students advised to complete an associate degree that includes courses not applicable to the bachelor's degree prior to transferring	22	2
Transfer students' interest/demand for degree programs not offered at your institution	17	1
Program admission requirements that are different from your institution's admission requirements	17	1
Lack of course and program alignment with community colleges	16	2
Lack of timely and/or accurate transcript evaluation	14	2
Students undecided about their major	14	0
Transfer students unprepared for the rigor of university curriculum	14	0
Degree programs at capacity at your institution	11	2
Distance from areas with large community college student population	9	2
Lack of adequate and appropriate services for online transfer students	8	0

Source: GAIs survey responses

Twelve institutions identified and perceived a barrier to be different from the survey's list. Those twelve barriers were as follows:

- Prerequisite requirements for major courses not taken at community college
- Community college advisor not fully understanding institution's degree program offerings and opportunities
- Lack of a regional appreciation of the value of a four-year college degree
- Cost of living in the region and wide availability of jobs
- Lack of opportunity for vertical teaming and articulation agreements with community colleges
- Lack of unified core curriculum among different degree programs
- Lack of technologies and strategies for communication with prospective students
- Complexity of region and swirling students
- Increase of non-applicable dual credit courses
- Excessive [semester credit] hour rules that create financial burden for students especially if they stay at the community college too long or change majors
- Technical and workforce associate degree and certificate holders who transfer with intent to major in an academic field instead of an applied degree program
- Unofficial transcripts evaluations not available to students

The survey asked institutions about changes they have made to overcome the transfer barriers experienced by students. Twenty-three universities indicated they had made changes to smooth transfer. Eleven institutions reviewed and updated processes to facilitate transfer including better use of technology and adding staff. Two institutions mentioned an emphasis on course alignment with community colleges, including the increased use of the TCCNS. Eight institutions cited their participation in regional consortia, vertical teams, and articulation agreements with partner community college as a means to overcome barriers. Two institutions increased their presence on community college campuses to recruit and advise students. Changes that required substantial monetary investments to overcome barriers included an institution opening an off-campus facility to be closer to transfer students and another is providing targeted scholarship funds to more transfer students.

## **Emerging Issues**

The GAIs surveyed were asked to identify emerging issues at their institutions that are likely to cause barriers to transfer. Nineteen of the 37 public universities responded with specifics about what they perceive as emerging challenges. The issue most frequently cited as emerging was the lack of financial aid for transfer students (five institutions). A second category of concerns was related to how community colleges function and advise students. Two institutions were concerned that the increase in dual credit offered through community colleges, without adequate care in advising high school students, would result in students taking courses and receiving credits that would not apply to a bachelor's degree. Another institution indicated that the differences in technical and academic transfer courses is not adequately explained to students. Students are not aware of the limited applicability of technical courses. Another institution cited the issue of students in academic programs who take courses that will not be applicable to their chosen major at a university because community college advising was not aligned and specific to the bachelor's degree program at the university. One institution specifically mentioned students' lack of mathematics readiness from high school and the lack of alignment at the community colleges with university-preferred mathematics courses which would give students the greater flexibility of entering more degree majors. Students are advised into general mathematics courses rather than college algebra.

GAIs raised a concern about the increase in the applied bachelor's degrees at community colleges, noting such programs are often duplication of efforts, as universities already offer applied bachelor's degrees. Institutions reported challenges in offering upper-division courses frequently enough to accommodate transfer students' needs.

## **Analysis and Observations – Performance Data**

### **Applications, Acceptances, and Enrollments**

There are differences among the institutions in the proportions of the student population made up of new freshmen, continuing native students, Texas community college transfer students, transfer students from other universities, and graduate students. These differences are attributable to many factors including, but not limited to, location, population growth and migration patterns, longevity of existence as a standalone institution, historical mission of the institution, changes in degree programs, financial resources, and leadership.

In this report, applications for undergraduate university admission are limited to two groups: FTUG and transfer students who are transferring from a Texas community college to a Texas public university. These two groups behave differently. The data reveal that the number of applicants and the number of acceptances for FTUG are much higher than for transfer students; however, a higher percentage of accepted transfer students actually enroll. This pattern is observed in data for all previous years of the study.

Table 8, "Fall 2017 Texas FTUG and Community College Transfer Applicants, Acceptances, and Enrollments", shows that, statewide and for the Emerging Research Institutions, the top destination for community college transfer students for fall 2017 was UH, with 2,285 students. For the two Research Institution flagships, TAMU enrolled 1,344 community college transfer students, more than double that of UT-Austin, which enrolled 451 community college transfer students. Among the other peer groups, the top destinations for community college transfer students were Sam Houston State University (Sam Houston) for the Doctoral Institutions, with 1,212 students; Tarleton State University (Tarleton) for Comprehensive Institutions, with 656 students; and University of Houston-Downtown (UH-Downtown) for Master's Institutions, with 711 students.

**Table 8.** Fall 2017 Texas First-Time-in-College Undergraduates (FTUG) and Community College Transfer Applicants, Acceptances, and Enrollments

Institution	FTUG Apply	FTUG Accept	FTUG % of Apply	FTUG Enroll	FTUG % of Accept	Transfers Apply	Transfers Accept	Transfers % of Apply	Transfers Enroll	Transfers % of Accept
Angelo	3,634	2,625	72%	1,239	47%	212	176	83%	129	73%
Midwestern	2,862	2,033	71%	771	38%	325	285	88%	182	64%
Sul Ross	1,393	872	63%	330	38%	88	70	80%	51	73%
Sul Ross-Rio Grande	0	0	0%	0	0%	116	116	100%	87	75%
TAMU-Galveston	876	798	91%	357	45%	66	54	82%	40	74%
TAMU-Central Tx	0	0	0%	0	0%	202	175	87%	136	78%
TAMU-San Antonio	6,301	2,242	36%	550	25%	1,007	792	79%	561	71%
TAMU-TeXarkana	3,114	2,032	65%	192	9%	148	133	90%	90	68%
UT-Tyler	2,359	1,520	64%	681	45%	815	801	98%	545	68%
UT-Permian	878	715	81%	410	57%	297	282	95%	194	69%
UH-Clear Lake	1,009	729	72%	277	38%	788	734	93%	530	72%
UH-Downtown	3,761	3,168	84%	952	30%	1,121	1,058	94%	711	67%
UH-Victoria	3,396	2,950	87%	280	9%	425	389	92%	234	60%
UNT-Dallas	1,448	1,081	75%	308	28%	306	287	94%	201	70%
Master's Institution	31,031	20,765	67%	6,347	31%	5,916	5,352	90%	3,691	69%
Lamar	5,440	4,252	78%	1,481	35%	516	471	91%	286	61%
Prairie View	5,656	4,418	78%	1,880	43%	380	340	89%	153	45%
SFA	9,351	7,344	79%	2,299	31%	716	679	95%	462	68%
Tarleton	6,929	5,240	76%	1,865	36%	966	912	94%	656	72%
TAMI	4,678	3,240	69%	1,196	37%	441	380	86%	308	81%
WTAMU	4,077	3,507	86%	1,063	30%	536	481	90%	348	72%
Comprehensive	36,131	28,001	77%	9,784	35%	3,555	3,263	92%	2,213	68%
Sam Houston	12,108	9,000	74%	2,732	30%	2,033	1,957	96%	1,212	62%
TAMU-Commerce	4,784	2,404	50%	850	35%	799	671	84%	471	70%
TAMU-CC	8,652	7,757	90%	2,190	28%	575	536	93%	301	56%
TAMU-Kingsville	6,623	4,953	75%	1,098	22%	368	329	89%	221	67%
Tx Southern	10,030	6,712	67%	1,650	25%	743	626	84%	315	50%
TWU	5,627	4,717	84%	1,270	27%	1,129	1,129	100%	558	49%
UTRGV	10,308	8,311	81%	4,442	53%	1,530	1,416	93%	871	62%
Doctoral Institution	58,132	43,854	75%	14,232	32%	7,177	6,664	93%	3,949	59%
TxStU	23,787	17,385	73%	5,821	33%	2,647	2,417	91%	1,637	68%
TTU	17,943	14,389	80%	5,048	35%	1,501	1,384	92%	1,007	73%
UT-Arlington	10,275	7,931	77%	3,119	39%	3,033	2,846	94%	1,791	63%
UT-Dallas	10,417	8,270	79%	2,891	35%	1,556	1,364	88%	949	70%
UT-El Paso	8,965	8,965	100%	3,342	37%	1,175	1,139	97%	791	69%
UT-San Antonio	15,428	12,232	79%	4,873	40%	2,054	1,837	89%	1,284	70%
UH	19,773	12,391	63%	4,697	38%	3,330	3,081	93%	2,285	74%
UNT	15,287	12,043	79%	4,523	38%	2,607	2,519	97%	1,821	72%
Emerging Research	121,875	93,606	77%	34,314	37%	17,903	16,587	93%	11,565	70%
TAMU	31,321	22,026	70%	10,628	48%	2,364	1,344	57%	1,167	87%
UT-Austin	29,698	14,419	49%	7,209	50%	1,429	583	41%	451	77%
Research Institution	61,019	36,445	60%	17,837	49%	3,793	1,927	51%	1,618	84%
Statewide Summary	164,334	137,151	83%	82,464	60%	32,734	29,914	91%	23,028	77%

Source: CBM001 & CBM00B. FTUG applicants - students who applied on CBM00B with no previous college work, seeking a bachelor's or an associate degree. These results were matched to CBM001 for those coded as first-time undergraduates. Transfer applicants - students who applied as transfer on CBM00B, seeking a bachelor or associate degree. These results were matched back six years to CBM001 to make sure students were FTUG at a CTC and not a university. These results were matched to CBM001 for same fall year as application year to see if student enrolled.

Several institutions experienced a large increase in the number of community college transfer students transferring to the institutions when compared to fall 2016. Texas Southern University (Texas Southern) experienced the largest increase with 83 percent more new community college transfer students. TAMU-San Antonio enrolled 69 percent more, and Sul Ross State University (Sul Ross) had an increase of 59 percent.

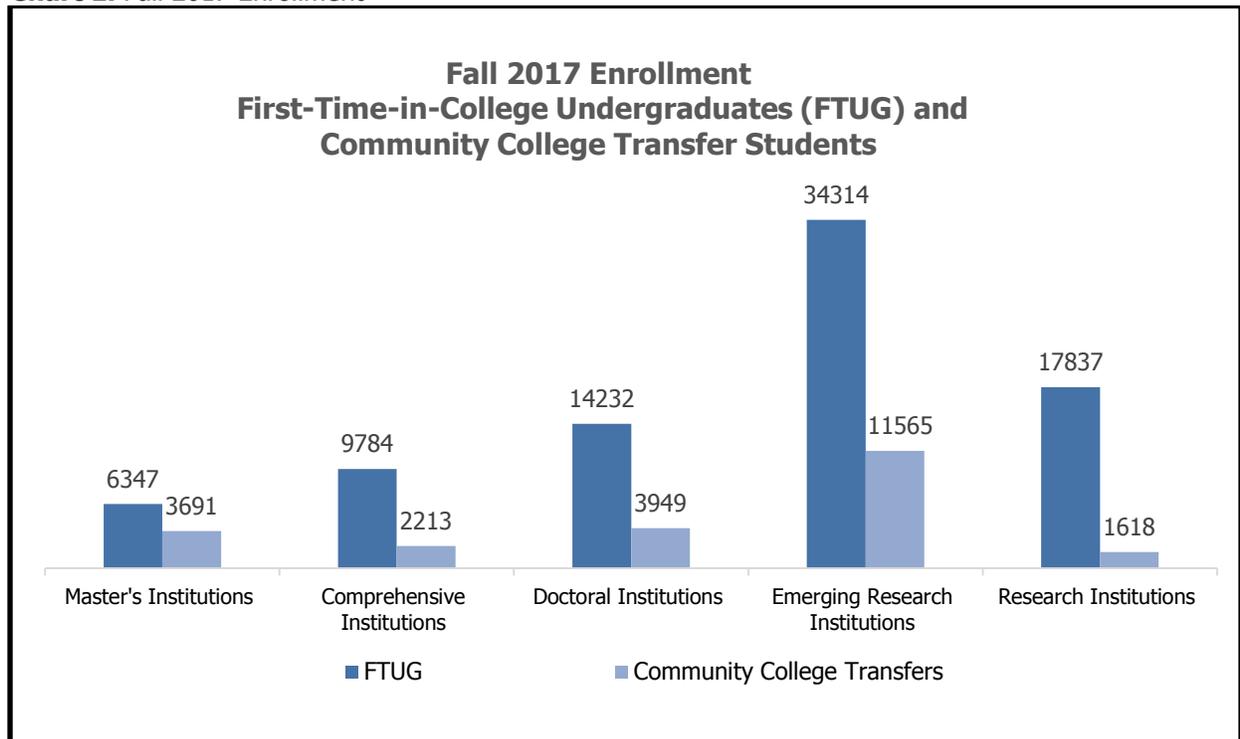
Table 9 and Chart 1 show the distribution of the FTUG and community college transfers among the peer groups. The eight Emerging Research Institutions enrolled 50 percent of the state’s new community college transfer students for fall 2017. Another 43 percent of the community college transfer students chose to attend a Master’s, Comprehensive, or Doctoral institution. The greatest difference for a single peer group was at the Research Institutions. Twenty-two percent of new FTUG started at the Research institutions, while only 7 percent of community college transfer students enrolled at these institutions.

**Table 9.** Statewide Distribution of Students by Peer Groups

Peer Group	First-Time-in-College Undergraduates (FTUG)	Community College Transfers	Percent of Statewide FTUG	Percent of Statewide Community College Transfers
Master's Institutions	6,347	3,691	8%	16%
Comprehensive Institutions	9,784	2,213	12%	10%
Doctoral Institutions	14,232	3,949	17%	17%
Emerging Research Institutions	34,314	11,565	42%	50%
Research Institutions	17,837	1,618	22%	7%
Statewide Summary	82,464	23,028		

Source: CBM001 & CBM00B.

**Chart 1.** Fall 2017 Enrollment



## Completion Rates

Completion rates are one measure of performance and success used by the THECB. For the study of community college transfer students, completion rates are determined as a percent of the fall 2013 cohort group of natives and transfers who are classified by their institutions as juniors and who graduate within the subsequent four years.

$$\text{Completion Rate for Natives} = \frac{\text{Natives in cohort who graduate in four years}}{\text{Total Natives in cohort}}$$

$$\text{Completion Rate for Transfers} = \frac{\text{Transfers in cohort who graduate in four years}}{\text{Total Transfers in cohort}}$$

There were 44,790 native students and 15,067 community college transfer students classified as juniors in fall 2013 and included in the cohort. Statewide, the completion rate for native students was 84 percent, with 37,743 native students graduating, and the completion rate for transfer students was 66 percent, with 9,929 transfer students graduating within four years of transferring and being classified as juniors.

The overall statewide performance of natives included in the 2013 cohort group of juniors is consistent with the performance of the native juniors reported in the previous years. The performance of transfer students in the latest cohort demonstrated a slight increase of two percentage points in the completion from last year's cohort transfers. However, as Table 10 indicates, there has been very little change in the completion for either natives or community college transfer students in the cohorts, and the gap in completion has not narrowed. While 83 to 84 percent of natives graduated in four years, only 64 to 68 percent of transfer students did so, as Tables 10 and 11 show.

**Table 10.** Differences in Completion Rates for Junior Cohorts 2005-2013

Cohort Year	Total Juniors - Natives			Total Juniors - Transfers			Difference
	Total	Total Graduates	Percent Graduating in 4 years	Total	Total Graduates	Percent Graduating in 4 years	Percent Graduating in 4 years
FALL 2013	44,790	37,743	84%	15,067	9,929	66%	18%
FALL 2012	42,884	35,956	84%	15,150	9,672	64%	20%
FALL 2011	41,185	34,341	83%	14,069	9,076	65%	18%
FALL 2010	40,042	33,593	84%	13,824	9,121	66%	18%
FALL 2009	39,987	33,566	84%	12,462	8,277	66%	18%
FALL 2008	39,394	33,157	84%	11,569	7,930	69%	16%
FALL 2007	38,720	32,461	84%	11,517	7,875	68%	15%
FALL 2006	38,355	31,898	83%	11,951	7,991	67%	16%
FALL 2005	37,695	31,153	83%	11,486	7,709	67%	16%
Average			84%			67%	17%

Source: Coordinating Board CBM009

**Table 11.** Junior Fall 2013 Cohort Completion Rate within Four Years after Junior Status

Institution and Peer Group	Native Juniors Total	Native Junior Graduates	Percent Native Juniors Graduating in 4 years	Transfer Juniors Total	Transfer Junior Graduates	Percent Transfer Juniors Graduating in 4 years
Angelo	679	573	84%	15	8	53%
Midwestern	387	319	82%	128	85	66%
Sul Ross	103	80	78%	30	18	60%
Sul Ross-Rio Grande				105	48	46%
TAMU-Galveston	200	176	88%	36	31	86%
TAMU-Central Tx				94	58	62%
TAMU-San Antonio				499	303	61%
TAMU-Texarkana	50	44	88%	92	60	65%
UT-Brownsville	395	294	74%	67	27	40%
UT-Tyler	321	273	85%	324	205	63%
UT-Permian	187	146	78%	105	64	61%
UH-Clear Lake				807	508	63%
UH-Downtown	385	248	64%	860	473	55%
UH-Victoria	41	31	76%	214	113	53%
UNT-Dallas	22	15	68%	168	121	72%
Master's Institutions	2771	2200	79%	3544	2122	60%
Lamar	799	601	75%	150	91	61%
Prairie View	799	651	81%	92	67	73%
SFA	1354	1180	87%	239	163	68%
Tarleton	868	735	85%	516	389	75%
TAMI	562	461	82%	200	119	60%
WTAMU	679	540	80%	285	197	69%
Comprehensive Institutions	5061	4168	82%	1482	1026	69%
Sam Houston	1437	1211	84%	694	492	71%
TAMU-Commerce	439	346	79%	376	234	62%
TAMU-CC	786	603	77%	314	193	61%
TAMU-Kingsville	537	416	77%	162	124	77%
Tx Southern	407	255	63%	85	42	49%
TWU	492	386	78%	400	283	71%
UT-Pan American	1859	1342	72%	509	329	65%
Doctoral Institutions	5957	4559	77%	2540	1697	67%
TxStU	2991	2492	83%	820	595	73%
TTU	3138	2722	87%	496	375	76%
UT-Arlington	1628	1345	83%	1159	693	60%
UT-Dallas	1342	1181	88%	795	555	70%
UT-El Paso	1660	1167	70%	591	299	51%
UT-San Antonio	2416	1960	81%	603	425	70%
UH	2679	2172	81%	981	595	61%
UNT	2576	2168	84%	1181	785	66%
Emerging Research	18430	15207	83%	6626	4322	65%
TAMU	6696	6251	93%	586	524	89%
UT-Austin	5875	5358	91%	289	238	82%
Research Institutions	12571	11609	92%	875	762	87%
Statewide Summary	44790	37743	84%	15067	9929	66%

Source: THECB CBM009

As an addition to the study of juniors and for comparison, this year's report includes an examination of a sophomore and a freshman cohort. The sophomore cohort includes students that were classified as sophomores in fall 2012. The freshman cohort were students classified

as freshmen in fall 2011. Since the junior cohort is followed for four years beyond their classification as a junior, the sophomore cohort is followed for five years beyond their classification as a sophomore, and the freshmen cohort is followed for six years beyond their classification as freshmen. This is done to compare a roughly equivalent six-year period for the completion rates of the three cohorts. A gap in the completion rates of native and transfer students is also evident when comparing the two groups within the sophomores and freshmen cohorts; however, the gap in the rates is not as wide as it is for the juniors.

Included in the fall 2012 sophomore cohort, there were 47,973 native students and 13,616 total community college transfer students. Statewide, the completion rate for native sophomores was 75 percent, and the completion rate for transfer students was 61 percent, a difference of 14 percentage points. Fewer native sophomores graduated within five years than did native juniors in four years. The same is true for the transfer students; however, the gap in completion rates for native and transfer sophomores is smaller at 14 percentage points, compared to native and transfer juniors where the gap is 18 percentage points.

Included in the fall 2011 freshmen cohort, there were 86,138 native students and only 4,381 transfer students. Statewide, the completion rate for native freshmen was 55 percent, and the completion rate for transfer freshmen was 44 percent, a difference of 11 percent. The number of native sophomores and juniors is similar (around 45,000) as is the number of transfer sophomores and juniors (around 14,000) in the cohorts. The number of native students in the freshmen cohort is much greater, nearly twice the number of each of the other native groups in the sophomore and junior cohorts. The difference in the number of freshmen transfer students as compared to sophomore and junior transfer students is also greater.

The differences in the makeup of the cohorts is attributable to how students are selected for the cohort-based classification. The freshmen natives include all new students starting as first-time-in-college students with no accumulation of semester credit hours and freshmen who are continuing students but have not earned enough academic credit to be classified as sophomores. The completion rates of the freshman cohort is lower than the completion rates for the sophomore and junior cohorts, but the difference between natives and transfers for the freshman cohort is smaller. Table 12 provides a comparison of completion (graduation) rates for students in the different classifications.

**Table 12.** Completion Rate of Cohorts by Peer Groups

Peer Group	Juniors Graduating in Four Years			Sophomores Graduating in Five Years			Freshmen Graduating in Six Years		
	Natives	Transfers	Δ	Natives	Transfers	Δ	Natives	Transfers	Δ
Master's Institutions	79%	60%	20%	65%	51%	14%	38%	38%	0%
Comprehensive Institutions	82%	69%	13%	70%	61%	9%	44%	41%	3%
Doctoral Institutions	77%	67%	10%	64%	59%	4%	42%	39%	3%
Emerging Research	83%	65%	17%	72%	60%	13%	55%	48%	7%
Research Institutions	92%	87%	5%	89%	84%	5%	83%	82%	1%
Statewide Summary	84%	66%	18%	75%	61%	14%	55%	44%	11%

Source: THECB CBM009

The institutional completion information for the sophomore and freshman cohorts of is presented in Tables 13 and 14.

**Table 13.** Sophomore Fall 2012 Cohort Completion Rate within Five Years after Sophomore Status

Institution and Peer Group	Native Sophomores Total	Native Sophomore Graduates	Percent Native Sophomores Graduating in 5 years	Transfer Sophomores Total	Transfer Sophomore Graduates	Percent Transfer Sophomores Graduating in 5 years
Angelo	850	591	70%	48	24	50%
Midwestern	461	319	69%	138	75	54%
Sul Ross	136	92	68%	22	16	73%
Sul Ross-Rio Grande				31	18	58%
TAMU-Galveston	254	198	78%	38	24	63%
TAMU-Central Tx				43	28	65%
TAMU-San Antonio				132	88	67%
TAMU-Texarkana	70	56	80%	52	28	54%
UT-Brownsville	471	284	60%	300	122	41%
UT-Tyler	362	271	75%	199	92	46%
UT-Permian	204	139	68%	165	99	60%
UH-Clear Lake						
UH-Downtown	600	278	46%	338	143	42%
UH-Victoria	57	29	51%	101	55	54%
UNT-Dallas	26	20	77%	73	42	58%
Master's Institution	3491	2277	65%	1680	854	51%
Lamar	960	600	63%	163	90	55%
Prairie View	1049	676	64%	73	45	62%
SFA	1471	1134	77%	275	178	65%
Tarleton	998	732	73%	305	200	66%
TAMI	592	404	68%	112	59	53%
WTAMU	736	505	69%	182	102	56%
Comprehensive Institution	5806	4051	70%	1110	674	61%
Sam Houston	1578	1188	75%	677	452	67%
TAMU-Commerce	470	321	68%	231	123	53%
TAMU-CC	865	586	68%	266	155	58%
TAMU-Kingsville	662	436	66%	142	101	71%
Tx Southern	660	282	43%	168	64	38%
TWU	625	410	66%	298	181	61%
UT-Pan American	2017	1157	57%	278	147	53%
Doctoral Institution	6877	4380	64%	2060	1223	59%
TxStU	3269	2457	75%	1343	867	65%
TTU	3389	2659	78%	682	436	64%
UT-Arlington	1694	1222	72%	1001	523	52%
UT-Dallas	964	802	83%	445	297	67%
UT-El Paso	1872	1090	58%	460	220	48%
UT-San Antonio	3012	2067	69%	727	472	65%
UH	3027	2151	71%	1551	915	59%
UNT	2810	2078	74%	1374	793	58%
Emerging Research	20037	14526	72%	7583	4523	60%
TAMU	6570	5939	90%	685	600	88%
UT-Austin	5192	4583	88%	498	395	79%
Research Institution	11762	10522	89%	1183	995	84%
Statewide Summary	47973	35756	75%	13616	8269	61%

Source: THECB CBM009

**Table 14.** Freshmen Fall 2011 Cohort Completion Rate within Six Years after Freshmen Status

Institution and Peer Group	Native Freshmen Total	Native Freshmen Graduates	Percent Native Freshmen Graduating in 6 years	Transfer Freshmen Total	Transfer Freshmen Graduates	Percent Transfer Freshmen Graduating in 6 years
Angelo	1942	846	44%	251	130	52%
Midwestern	847	409	48%	45	11	24%
Sul Ross	480	126	26%	38	10	26%
Sul Ross-Rio Grande				*	*	*
TAMU-Galveston	685	461	67%	17	12	71%
TAMU-San Antonio				74	35	47%
TAMU-Texarkana	212	78	37%	40	15	38%
UT-Brownsville	1718	435	25%	273	95	35%
UT-Tyler	734	398	54%	18	6	33%
UT-Permian	404	173	43%	26	9	35%
UH-Clear Lake						
UH-Downtown	1775	423	24%	120	19	16%
UH-Victoria	225	67	30%	20	7	35%
UNT-Dallas	86	36	42%	7	*	*
Master's Institutions	9108	3452	38%	930	352	38%
Lamar	2430	775	32%	163	40	25%
Prairie View	2161	759	35%	34	17	50%
SFA	3117	1651	53%	154	78	51%
Tarleton	1870	978	52%	71	35	49%
TAMI	1028	522	51%	38	19	50%
WTAMU	1339	602	45%	98	42	43%
Comprehensive Institutions	11945	5287	44%	558	231	41%
Sam Houston	2844	1642	58%	234	122	52%
TAMU-Commerce	1044	445	43%	64	20	31%
TAMU-CC	1810	850	47%	71	25	35%
TAMU-Kingsville	1533	567	37%	33	13	39%
Tx Southern	1810	382	21%	116	27	23%
TWU	1264	563	45%	81	30	37%
UT-Pan American	3416	1284	38%	107	40	37%
Doctoral Institutions	13721	5733	42%	706	277	39%
TxStU	5326	3131	59%	213	116	54%
TTU	5140	3320	65%	444	241	54%
UT-Arlington	3269	1795	55%	258	100	39%
UT-Dallas	1725	1218	71%	54	27	50%
UT-El Paso	3980	1379	35%	168	48	29%
UT-San Antonio	6101	3220	53%	126	52	41%
UH	4943	2699	55%	693	350	51%
UNT	4501	2439	54%	176	84	48%
Emerging Research	34985	19201	55%	2132	1018	48%
TAMU	9106	7518	83%	55	45	82%
UT-Austin	7273	6060	83%			
Research Institution	16379	13578	83%	55	45	82%
Statewide Summary	86138	47251	55%	4381	1923	44%

Source: THECB CBM009

\* Redacted for FERPA

The statewide data show that when native juniors are compared to native sophomores, juniors have a higher completion rate. The same is true for transfer students when statewide data are compiled; transfer juniors have a higher completion rate than transfer sophomores. However, the amount of the difference in completion rates between the classifications of

sophomore and junior for native and transfer students is not the same. The native juniors graduate at a rate that is 9 percent points greater than native sophomores. Statewide, transfer juniors graduate at a rate that is only 5 percentage points greater than transfer sophomores. Sophomore natives graduate at a rate that is 20 percentage points better than freshmen natives, while sophomore transfers graduate at a rate that is 17 percentage points better than freshmen transfers.

Overall, the benefit of acquiring more hours that result in a change of classification from freshmen to sophomore to junior is not the same for natives and transfer students. Transfer students do not appear to improve their completion as much by acquiring more hours when compared to native students in the cohorts.

### Completion Rate and Financial Aid

Transfer students are eligible to receive many types of financial aid. Pell Grants are a need-based form of federal aid that are used in THECB reporting as an indicator of students who come from financially disadvantaged circumstances. Table 15 shows that in the peer group categories, the performance gap between natives and transfer students is greater for students without Pell. The cohort groups' difference statewide for students without Pell is 21 percent. There also is a performance gap between natives and transfer students eligible and receiving Pell, but it is not as great. The cohort groups' difference statewide for students with Pell is 15 percentage points.

**Table 15.** Peer Group Completion Rate for Junior Fall 2013 Cohort, With and Without Pell Grants

Peer Group Institutions	Native Juniors Completion with Pell	Transfer Juniors Completion Rate with Pell	Difference in Completion Between Native and Transfer Juniors with Pell	Native Juniors Completion Rate w/o Pell	Transfer Juniors Completion Rate w/o Pell	Difference in Completion Rates Between Native and Transfer Juniors w/o Pell
Master's	76%	60%	16%	83%	60%	23%
Comprehensive	80%	67%	13%	86%	73%	13%
Doctoral	74%	67%	7%	80%	66%	15%
Emerging Research	80%	66%	14%	85%	64%	20%
Research	89%	86%	3%	93%	88%	5%
Statewide Summary	80%	66%	15%	87%	66%	21%

Source: CBM009

The percent of transfer juniors with Pell and without Pell were similar among the peer groups. This highlights the difference in performance of native students receiving and not receiving Pell. Native students with Pell had a lower completion rate than natives without Pell. However, for the most part, transfer students with Pell completed their degree in similar numbers as transfer students without Pell. This pattern of completion also was seen in previous years' studies.

Table 16, shows completion rates for natives who receive Pell has been between 7 and 9 percent less than the completion rate of natives without Pell for the last five years of the cohort

study, while the completion rates for transfer students with and without Pell has a range of difference between -1 to 3 percentage points. For native students, being without Pell seems to improve how likely the student is to graduate within four years after obtaining junior status. For transfer students, being able to graduate in four years after obtaining junior status is equally likely with or without Pell.

**Table 16.** Completion Rate of Cohorts for Native and Transfer Juniors, With and Without Pell

Cohort Year	Native Juniors Completion with Pell	Native Juniors Completion w/o Pell	Completion Difference Native Juniors (w/o Pell - Pell)	Transfer Juniors Completion Rate with Pell	Transfer Juniors Completion Rate w/o Pell	Completion Rate Difference among Transfer Juniors (w/o Pell - Pell)
2013 Cohort	80%	87%	7%	66%	66%	0%
2012 Cohort	79%	87%	8%	64%	63%	-1%
2011 Cohort	78%	87%	9%	64%	64%	0%
2010 Cohort	79%	87%	8%	65%	68%	3%
2009 Cohort	79%	87%	8%	66%	67%	1%

Source: CBM009

As noted, statewide and peer-group data indicate that for community college transfer students who graduated, whether they received Pell Grants made little difference in their four-year completion rates. However, for individual institutions, there are differences that do not mirror the collective pattern. Table 17 shows the completion rate of native juniors and community college transfer students who graduated at each institution and either received Pell or did not. A total of 16 of the 38 institutions show a better completion for their community college transfer students with Pell than for their transfer students without Pell. Most of these 16 institutions are in the Master's, Doctoral, or Emerging Research peer groups. There also are six institutions which have a completion rate for natives receiving Pell higher than the completion rates of natives without Pell.

Table 17 also shows the fall 2013 junior cohort and the number of students at each institution who graduated either receiving or not receiving Pell. The populations of natives and transfers differ in the proportions of students receiving or not receiving Pell. Most native students in the cohort who graduated did not receive Pell, but most of the transfer graduates did. Of native graduates, 41 percent received Pell, while 62 percent of transfer graduates were eligible for and received Pell.

**Table 17.** Completion Rate by Institution for Junior Fall 2013 Cohort, With and Without Pell Grants

Institutions and Peer Groups	Native Juniors Graduates with Pell	Native Juniors Graduates w/o Pell	Native Juniors Completion Rate with Pell	Native Juniors Completion Rate w/o Pell	Transfer Juniors Graduates with Pell	Transfer Juniors Graduates w/o Pell	Transfer Juniors Completion Rate with Pell	Transfer Juniors Completion Rate w/o Pell
Angelo	245	328	81%	87%	*	*	*	*
Midwestern	132	187	80%	85%	62	23	70%	58%
Sul Ross	51	29	74%	85%	10	8	56%	67%
Sul Ross-Rio Grande	*		*		44	*	50%	*
TAMU-Galveston	34	142	79%	90%	12	19	80%	90%
TAMU-Central Tx					44	14	60%	67%
TAMU-San Antonio					215	88	61%	60%
TAMU-Texarkana	19	25	90%	86%	44	16	69%	57%
UT-Brownsville	247	47	75%	71%	24	*	42%	*
UT-Tyler	110	163	88%	83%	106	99	58%	70%
UT-Permian	56	90	73%	82%	32	32	56%	67%
UH-Clear Lake					292	216	66%	59%
UH-Downtown	201	47	67%	57%	308	165	54%	57%
UH-Victoria	13	18	68%	82%	53	60	50%	55%
UNT-Dallas	11	*	73%	*	78	43	77%	64%
Master's Institution	1120	1080	76%	83%	1328	794	60%	60%
Lamar	307	294	72%	78%	54	37	57%	66%
Prairie View	468	183	80%	87%	50	17	70%	81%
SFA	516	664	84%	90%	96	67	66%	71%
Tarleton	321	414	79%	89%	212	177	73%	79%
TAMI	361	100	81%	84%	108	11	60%	52%
WTAMU	236	304	78%	81%	101	96	68%	70%
Comprehensive	2209	1959	80%	86%	621	405	67%	73%
Sam Houston	512	699	82%	86%	256	236	73%	69%
TAMU-Commerce	195	151	76%	83%	165	69	63%	59%
TAMU-CC	272	331	74%	79%	122	71	59%	67%
TAMU-Kingsville	228	188	75%	81%	96	28	79%	70%
Tx Southern	198	57	62%	63%	30	12	49%	50%
TWU	219	167	76%	83%	193	90	74%	65%
UT-Pan American	1027	315	72%	72%	286	43	65%	61%
Doctoral Institution	2651	1908	74%	80%	1148	549	67%	66%
TxStU	941	1551	80%	86%	343	252	73%	72%
TTU	731	1991	83%	88%	214	161	74%	77%
UT-Arlington	731	614	83%	82%	452	241	62%	56%
UT-Dallas	372	809	91%	87%	340	215	70%	70%
UT-El Paso	834	333	70%	70%	252	47	52%	45%
UT-San Antonio	1003	957	79%	83%	289	136	70%	72%
UH	1063	1109	81%	81%	380	215	66%	53%
UNT	869	1299	81%	87%	429	356	66%	67%
Emerging Research	6544	8663	80%	85%	2699	1623	66%	64%
TAMU	1398	4853	91%	94%	183	341	88%	90%
UT-Austin	1551	3807	88%	93%	147	91	84%	80%
Research Institution	2949	8660	89%	93%	330	432	86%	88%
Statewide Summary	15473	22270	80%	87%	6126	3803	66%	66%

Source: CBM009 \*FERPA Restricted

## Time to Degree

Time to degree is another measure of student performance. Time to degree considers the number of years, the number of semester credit hours (SCH) attempted, and the number of semesters students take to complete their degrees. Within the junior fall 2013 cohort, time to degree is compared for native and transfer students.

As Table 18 indicates, previous transfer student groups that were part of the cohorts of the study had time to degree measures that clustered at 7.5 years, and native students had time to degree that clustered at 5.4 years. When measured by SCH, natives attempted 133, on average, and transfer students attempted an additional 7 SCH to acquire 140 at graduation. Transfer students also enrolled in one additional semester. Natives appear more likely to be continuously enrolled. The “stop outs” that transfer students are more likely to take may result in inefficiencies, including degree requirements changed during their absence and repeating courses as refreshers. Whatever the cause, the result is that transfer students enroll in one semester more than natives, accumulate an additional seven SCH, and extend their time to degree by approximately two years.

**Table 18.** Statewide Summary Time to Degree, Fall 2005-2013 Junior Cohorts

Cohort Year	Natives				Transfers			
	Total Native Junior Graduates	Native Juniors Average Time to Degree Years	Native Juniors Average Number of SCH Attempted	Native Juniors Average Number of Semesters	Total Transfer Junior Graduates	Transfer Juniors Average Time to Degree Years	Transfer Juniors Average Number of SCH Attempted	Transfer Juniors Average Number of Semesters
2013	37,743	5.5	133.5	10.1	9,929	7.6	140.3	11.3
2012	35,956	5.5	134.8	10.1	9,672	7.6	142	11.4
2011	34,341	5.4	136.4	10.1	9,087	7.6	142.9	11.3
2010	33,593	5.4	137.5	10.1	9,121	7.7	143.9	11.4
2009	33,565	5.4	138.4	10	8,277	7.7	144	11.3
2008	33,157	5.4	139.1	10	7,930	7.5	145	11.3
2007	32,461	5.4	142.3	9.9	7,875	7.4	144.2	11.2
2006	31,898	5.4	142.9	9.9	7,991	7.4	145.9	11.3
2005	31,153	5.4	143.6	10	7,709	7.3	146.3	11.2

Source: THECB, CBM001 CBM009

Table 19 presents the differences in time expended in years, SCH attempted, and number of semesters enrolled by natives and transfers by institution. The difference in SCH attempted varied widely from institution to institution, with several institutions graduating, on average, their community college transfer students with fewer hours attempted than their native students. All GAIs had an average time to degree in years for their transfer students that was higher than that of their natives.

**Table 19.** Average Time to Degree-Years, SCH Attempted, and Semesters for Fall 2013 Junior Cohort

Institutions and Peer Groups	Native Juniors			Transfer Juniors			Difference in Average		
	Average Time to Degree	Average No of SCH Attempted	Average No of Semesters	Average Time to Degree	Average No of SCH Attempted	Average No of Semesters	Time to Degree Between Transfer and Native Juniors	No. of SCH Attempted Between Transfer and Native Juniors	No. of Semesters Between Transfer and Native Juniors
Angelo	5.7	132.1	10.6	9.1	114.9	9.5	3.5	-17.2	-1.1
Midwestern	5.6	140.8	10.6	8.0	138.5	11.2	2.4	-2.3	0.7
Sul Ross	5.5	138.9	9.9	7.4	148.9	10.4	2.0	10.1	0.6
Sul Ross-Rio Grande				7.1	137.9	11.6			
TAMU-Galveston	5.1	141.0	9.6	7.7	162.3	12.1	2.6	21.2	2.5
TAMU-Central Tx				7.0	150.5	11.3			
TAMU-San Antonio				8.9	143.3	12.5			
TAMU-Texarkana	5.5	122.9	10.3	8.0	135.9	11.2	2.5	12.9	0.9
UT-Brownsville	5.9	135.6	10.7	10.1	141.1	12.2	4.3	5.5	1.6
UT-Tyler	5.6	127.7	10.3	7.1	137.9	11.0	1.5	10.2	0.6
UT-Permian	5.7	130.3	10.7	9.0	135.0	11.4	3.3	4.7	0.7
UH-Clear Lake				8.1	140.1	11.8			
UH-Downtown	6.4	143.5	11.8	8.5	141.1	12.0	2.1	-2.4	0.2
UH-Victoria	5.4	134.5	9.9	8.9	140.3	11.9	3.6	5.8	2.0
UNT-Dallas	6.5	119.3	11.8	8.7	128.2	10.9	2.2	8.8	-0.9
Master's	5.7	135.2	10.6	8.3	140.1	11.7	2.5	4.9	1.2
Lamar	6.0	143.1	11.0	9.0	136.0	11.1	3.0	-7.1	0.1
Prairie View	5.4	146.2	10.0	8.1	157.6	11.9	2.7	11.3	1.8
SFA	5.3	132.2	9.8	7.4	137.5	10.8	2.1	5.3	1.0
Tarleton	5.5	133.1	10.3	8.8	131.8	10.9	3.3	-1.3	0.6
TAMI	6.1	137.9	11.1	7.1	142.3	11.5	1.0	4.4	0.3
WTAMU	5.8	126.5	10.6	9.0	128.4	11.1	3.3	1.9	0.5
Comprehensive	5.6	136.0	10.4	8.4	135.3	11.1	2.8	-0.7	0.7
Sam Houston	5.5	133.6	10.2	7.4	143.4	11.3	1.9	9.8	1.1
TAMU-Commerce	5.6	135.8	10.1	8.3	135.7	10.9	2.7	-0.2	0.8
TAMU-CC	5.7	137.0	10.5	7.7	144.1	11.8	2.0	7.1	1.3
TAMU-Kingsville	5.7	136.7	10.5	7.8	150.1	11.8	2.1	13.4	1.3
Tx Southern	5.7	151.6	10.4	8.3	154.3	11.4	2.6	2.7	1.0
TWU	5.4	139.9	10.0	8.2	142.4	11.6	2.8	2.5	1.6
UT-Pan American	6.3	142.2	11.6	7.8	140.2	12.0	1.4	-2.0	0.4
Doctoral	5.8	138.6	10.7	7.8	142.4	11.5	2.0	3.8	0.8
TxStU	5.5	131.9	10.2	7.6	141.7	11.8	2.1	9.8	1.6
TTU	5.5	136.8	10.2	6.9	146.4	11.3	1.3	9.6	1.1
UT-Arlington	5.6	136.0	10.3	7.3	138.8	11.2	1.8	2.7	0.9
UT-Dallas	4.9	131.3	9.1	7.1	143.3	11.0	2.1	12.0	1.9
UT-El Paso	5.7	140.0	10.8	7.5	140.5	11.8	1.8	0.4	1.1
UT-San Antonio	5.8	138.3	10.8	7.3	142.6	11.7	1.5	4.3	0.9
UH	5.5	136.6	10.3	6.7	142.1	11.2	1.3	5.6	0.9
UNT	5.3	133.2	9.8	7.2	136.4	10.9	1.8	3.2	1.1
Emerging Research	5.5	135.4	10.2	7.2	140.9	11.3	1.7	5.6	1.1
TAMU	5.3	129.3	9.9	6.0	138.6	10.5	0.7	9.3	0.6
UT-Austin	5.1	126.0	9.3	6.3	139.9	10.3	1.3	13.9	1.0
Research	5.2	127.8	9.6	6.1	139.0	10.5	0.9	11.2	0.8
Statewide Summary	5.5	133.5	10.1	7.6	140.3	11.3	2.1	6.8	1.2

Source: THECB, CBM001 CBM009

This report includes an examination of a sophomore cohort and a freshman cohort for time to degree. The differences in the time to degree of native and transfer students is also evident when comparing the two groups within the sophomore cohort, as Table 20 shows.

**Table 20.** Average Time to Degree-Years, SCH Attempted, and Semesters for Fall 2012 Sophomore Cohort

Institutions and Peer Groups	Native Sophomores			Transfer Sophomores			Δ Averages Native and Transfer		
	Average Time to Degree	Average No. SCH Attempted	Average No. of Semesters	Average Time to Degree	Average No. SCH Attempted	Average No. of Semesters	Time to Degree Soph.	SCH Attempted Soph.	Number of Semesters
Angelo	5.6	133.7	10.5	7.3	144.3	11.5	1.7	10.6	1.0
Midwestern	5.5	139.9	10.3	8.1	134.5	11.3	2.6	-5.4	0.9
Sul Ross	5.3	134.7	9.8	6.3	133.6	10.0	1.0	-1.1	0.3
Sul Ross-Rio Grande				8.2	140.0	11.9			
TAMU-Galveston	5.0	141.2	9.4	6.9	152.5	11.2	1.9	11.3	1.8
TAMU-Central Tx				7.6	132.8	9.8			
TAMU-San Antonio				8.9	137.6	12.1			
TAMU-Texarkana	5.6	124.8	10.4	7.3	130.8	11.0	1.7	5.9	0.6
UT-Brownsville	5.8	135.1	10.5	7.7	135.6	11.3	2.0	0.4	0.8
UT-Tyler	5.5	130.5	10.3	6.5	141.2	10.9	1.0	10.7	0.7
UT-Permian	5.7	131.8	10.5	7.1	146.2	11.5	1.4	14.4	1.0
UH-Clear Lake									
UH-Downtown	6.5	142.4	11.7	7.7	145.8	11.7	1.2	3.4	0.0
UH-Victoria	5.7	138.1	10.6	7.7	141.8	11.7	2.1	3.7	1.1
UNT-Dallas	5.3	134.3	10.0	8.7	140.4	12.9	3.5	6.1	2.9
Master's	5.7	135.9	10.5	7.7	140.4	11.5	2.0	4.5	1.0
Lamar	5.9	142.3	10.9	7.4	145.0	11.6	1.5	2.8	0.7
Prairie View	5.3	145.7	9.9	7.4	163.9	11.4	2.1	18.2	1.5
SFA	5.3	133.6	9.8	7.0	139.7	11.2	1.7	6.1	1.4
Tarleton	5.5	134.0	10.2	7.5	132.9	10.5	2.0	-1.2	0.3
TAMI	6.0	140.2	10.8	8.1	150.4	11.9	2.1	10.2	1.0
WTAMU	5.6	129.2	10.4	7.9	128.6	10.7	2.3	-0.6	0.3
Comprehensive	5.5	137.1	10.2	7.5	139.3	11.0	1.9	2.2	0.8
Sam Houston	5.4	134.5	10.1	6.6	145.5	11.3	1.2	11.0	1.2
TAMU-Commerce	5.4	137.0	10.0	7.8	139.5	11.1	2.4	2.5	1.0
TAMU-CC	5.6	140.4	10.5	7.4	146.2	11.6	1.7	5.8	1.0
TAMU-Kingsville	5.8	139.8	10.6	6.8	148.4	11.3	1.0	8.7	0.8
Tx Southern	5.6	151.7	10.3	8.0	165.5	11.9	2.4	13.8	1.6
TWU	5.4	139.5	10.0	7.3	143.8	11.1	1.9	4.4	1.2
UT-Pan American	6.3	145.3	11.5	7.7	144.7	12.2	1.4	-0.6	0.7
Doctoral	5.7	140.4	10.6	7.1	145.9	11.4	1.4	5.5	0.9
TxStU	5.4	131.5	10.1	6.5	139.7	11.3	1.1	8.2	1.2
TTU	5.4	135.1	10.1	6.3	141.8	11.0	0.9	6.6	0.9
UT-Arlington	5.5	137.3	10.2	6.9	144.8	11.2	1.4	7.5	1.0
UT-Dallas	4.9	133.5	9.0	6.6	143.5	10.7	1.7	10.0	1.7
UT-El Paso	5.5	141.5	10.5	7.5	138.5	11.4	2.0	-3.0	0.9
UT-San Antonio	5.7	138.0	10.6	6.7	145.0	11.4	1.0	7.0	0.8
UH	5.4	137.5	10.1	6.6	145.5	11.5	1.2	8.0	1.3
UNT	5.2	134.3	9.7	6.4	140.5	10.9	1.1	6.2	1.2
Emerging Research	5.4	135.7	10.1	6.6	142.5	11.2	1.2	6.8	1.1
TAMU	5.3	130.4	9.8	5.4	135.5	10.1	0.1	5.1	0.2
UT-Austin	5.1	127.9	9.3	5.8	135.5	10.0	0.7	7.7	0.7
Research	5.2	129.3	9.6	5.5	135.5	10.0	0.4	6.2	0.4
Statewide Summary	5.4	134.6	10.0	6.7	141.7	11.1	1.3	7.1	1.1

Source: THECB, CBM001 CBM009

However, the differences for the freshmen cohort provide less clarity because of the disparity in the number of students in the native and transfer groups, as indicated in Table 21.

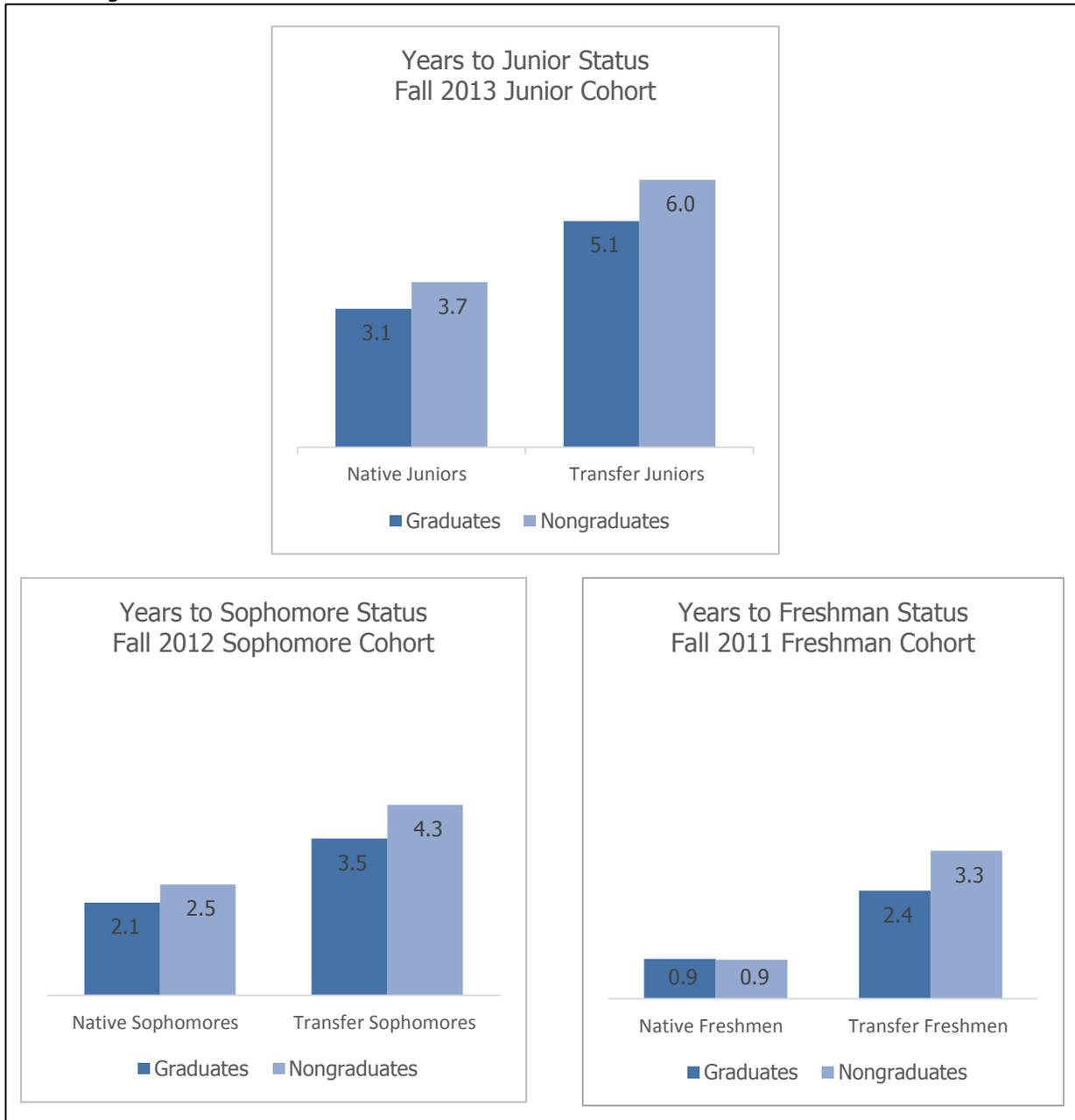
**Table 21.** Average Time to Degree-Years, SCH Attempted, and Semesters for Fall 2011 Freshmen Cohort

Institutions and Peer Groups	Native Freshmen N=47,251			Transfer Freshmen N=1,923			Δ Averages Native and Transfer		
	Average Time to Degree	Average No. SCH Attempted	Average No. of Semesters	Average Time to Degree	Average No. of SCH Attempted	Average No. Semesters	Time to Degree	No. of SCH Attempted	No. of Semesters
Angelo	5.5	132.4	10.3	7.2	146.6	11.4	1.6	14.3	1.1
Midwestern	5.4	140.1	10.1	6.3	124.8	8.9	0.9	-15.3	-1.2
Sul Ross	5.3	134.9	9.5	8.4	138.4	9.2	3.1	3.5	-0.3
Sul Ross-Rio Grande				*	*	*			
TAMU-Galveston	5.1	139.6	9.6	6.8	145.0	9.2	1.7	5.4	-0.4
TAMU-Central Tx									
TAMU-San Antonio				8.6	154.6	12.3			
TAMU-Texarkana	5.9	126.4	10.6	8.1	122.8	10.8	2.2	-3.6	0.2
UT-Brownsville	5.7	134.1	10.4	6.9	140.4	11.0	1.3	6.3	0.7
UT-Tyler	5.4	131.4	10.1	6.2	147.0	10.8	0.7	15.6	0.8
UT-Permian	5.6	129.8	10.3	9.8	130.8	10.3	4.2	1.0	0.0
UH-Clear Lake									
UH-Downtown	6.0	140.2	11.1	8.1	132.4	10.3	2.1	-7.8	-0.8
UH-Victoria	5.3	138.1	10.1	6.6	135.7	12.3	1.3	-2.4	2.2
UNT-Dallas	5.3	136.4	9.7	8.5	159.0	13.0	3.3	22.6	3.3
Master's	5.5	135.3	10.2	7.4	142.0	11.1	1.9	6.7	0.8
Lamar	5.7	141.1	10.6	7.9	145.4	11.2	2.2	4.3	0.5
Prairie View	5.3	145.6	9.9	6.5	165.6	12.1	1.3	20.0	2.2
SFA	5.2	134.8	9.7	6.2	145.1	10.5	1.0	10.3	0.8
Tarleton	5.4	134.3	10.0	6.4	141.0	10.2	1.0	6.7	0.2
TAMI	5.8	138.1	10.5	5.9	144.9	10.5	0.1	6.9	0.0
WTAMU	5.6	128.2	10.3	7.1	139.0	11.2	1.6	10.8	1.0
Comprehensive	5.4	136.8	10.1	6.7	144.9	10.8	1.3	8.2	0.8
Sam Houston	5.2	133.9	9.8	6.1	142.2	10.6	0.9	8.3	0.8
TAMU-Commerce	5.4	137.0	9.9	6.7	138.7	10.6	1.3	1.7	0.7
TAMU-CC	5.4	138.6	10.1	7.8	143.6	10.8	2.4	5.0	0.7
TAMU-Kingsville	5.7	138.5	10.4	6.8	148.8	10.8	1.2	10.4	0.4
Tx Southern	5.5	148.1	10.1	8.1	163.6	12.7	2.6	15.4	2.6
TWU	5.3	138.7	9.8	7.3	149.5	11.9	2.0	10.8	2.1
UT-Pan American	6.1	143.4	11.1	7.9	153.6	11.7	1.8	10.1	0.6
Doctoral	5.5	138.9	10.2	6.9	146.9	11.1	1.4	8.1	0.9
TxStU	5.4	131.4	10.0	6.2	141.7	11.1	0.9	10.3	1.1
TTU	5.3	134.4	9.9	5.7	145.8	10.4	0.3	11.5	0.5
UT-Arlington	5.3	136.9	9.9	6.9	148.3	11.2	1.5	11.3	1.3
UT-Dallas	4.9	133.3	9.1	6.8	149.4	11.5	1.9	16.2	2.4
UT-El Paso	5.4	139.6	10.2	6.9	143.1	10.9	1.5	3.5	0.6
UT-San Antonio	5.5	136.3	10.2	7.3	142.7	11.1	1.7	6.4	0.9
UH	5.3	136.1	9.9	5.7	143.1	10.4	0.4	7.0	0.4
UNT	5.2	134.3	9.6	5.7	139.8	10.2	0.5	5.5	0.6
Emerging Research	5.3	135.0	9.9	6.0	144.0	10.6	0.7	9.0	0.7
TAMU	5.2	131.5	9.8	5.0	142.0	9.6	-0.2	10.5	-0.2
UT-Austin	5.0	128.1	9.3						
Research	5.2	130.0	9.5	5.0	142.0	9.6	-0.1	12.0	0.0
Statewide Summary	5.3	134.2	9.9	6.5	144.1	10.8	1.1	9.9	0.9

Source: THECB, CBM001 CBM009

To provide more insights into the progress of the different cohort groups, Chart 2 compares the time spent at the community college before reaching a classification status of freshmen, sophomore, or junior at transfer. The charts show the difference between the students who went on to graduate and those who have not yet graduated.

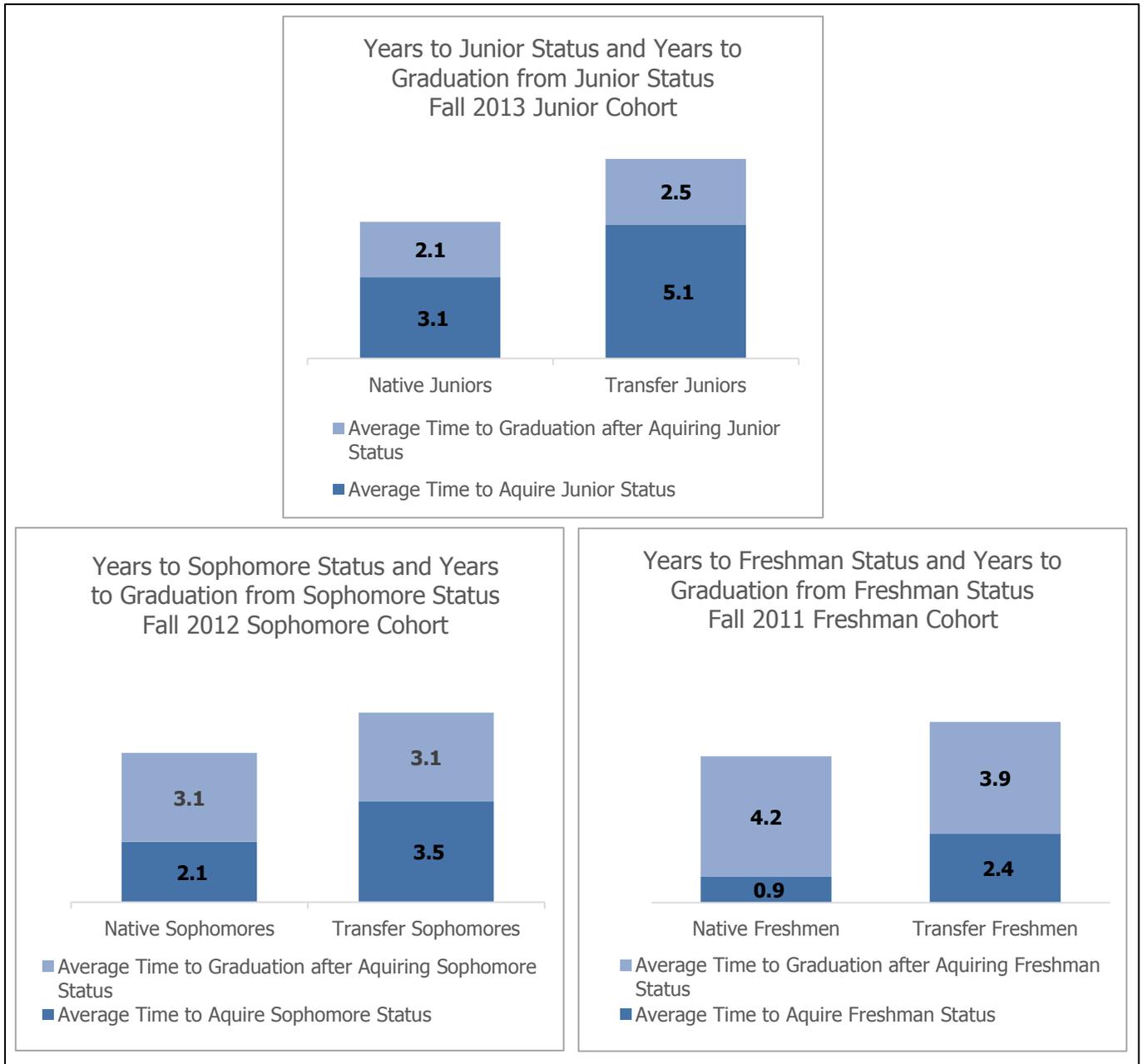
**Chart 2.** Years to Status at Transfer for Juniors, Sophomores, and Freshmen Graduates and Nongraduates



For all cohorts, the native students take less time at the university to reach a classification status and be included in a cohort than do transfer students to reach the same classification status at the community college. For all students in each cohort, transfer students who do not graduate take the most time to reach the benchmark for inclusion in the cohorts.

In terms of progress toward graduation for the students who do graduate after achieving the status of freshmen, sophomore, or junior, transfer students perform close to their native classmates as indicated in Chart 3.

**Chart 3.** Years to Classification and Years to Graduation for Freshmen, Sophomore, and Junior Cohorts



The difference in the sum of time for each of the periods (to classification status and to graduation from classification status) of Chart 3 and the time to degree, as indicated in tables 19, 20, and 21, is attributable to rounding and adding two averages. Even so, the pattern is approximately the same and occurs consistently at the institutional level.

## Conclusion

The survey responses and performance data indicate that there are different challenges for transfer students than those experienced by native students. Texas public universities identify and address some of the barriers to smooth transfer and timely degree completion. Data analyses continue to show the trend observed in previous reports that community college transfer students have a lower completion rate and take longer to graduate than students who start and graduate from the same university. This difference between transfers and natives has been confirmed each year of the study of the junior cohort selected from reported data. Completion rates and time to degree, in years, have changed little since the first junior cohort was studied in 2010. A similar gap is seen for the sophomore and freshmen cohorts included in this year's study.

To see an improvement in the progress of transfer students toward degree completion some things will need to change. There are different opinions and research conclusions which identify problematic issues. Contributing to the problematic issues are characteristics and circumstances unique to each student that cannot be altered or controlled by the state or institutions. There are characteristics and circumstances unique to GAIs as well, which may be beyond alteration. However, institutional processes and priorities are subject to change.

The current challenge for public institutions both for two- and four-year schools is to change. GAIs do not operate in a vacuum and do not control all issues related to transfer and the progress of community college students toward a bachelor's degree. Community college students appear to spend more time at the community college than at the universities from which they eventually receive their bachelor's degree. Both are responsible for serving students in the best way possible. An opportunity to change presents itself every day. Institutions can re-evaluate the distribution of their resources and the order of their priorities in serving students. For GAIs, improving completion rates and time to degree for their undergraduate population should be the top priority. At the state level, the initiatives of common course numbering, course alignment through the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project, curriculum alignment through the FOS, and the Texas Core Curriculum are top priorities. How institutions approach these initiatives is critical to how much they help or hinder students.

## Recommendations

### Priority

- GAI resources should continue to increase their presence on community college campuses. Community colleges need to provide space, and academic counselors need to insist that students seek out information from university representatives on their campus.
- Community colleges should move students toward an early connection with universities.
- GAIs need to be heavily involved in student academic and financial advising at the community colleges. Degree guides must be easily available on institutional websites to students as they plan their own academic and financial path toward transfer.
- GAIs should increase targeted financial aid to community college transfer students to ease the financial fears and restraints for students transitioning to a university.

### Efficiency

- Texas public universities must be more diligent in aligning their courses with those in the *Lower-Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM)* and in using the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS) because they provide the universal language to communicate lower-division program requirements and course information. This information should be easily available on institutional websites.
- GAI faculty and administrators need to actively use the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC), the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project, and Field of Study Curriculum (FOSC) to improve transfer. When a new FOSC is approved by the THECB, the information should be published on institutional websites.
- The development of multiple articulation agreements that often compete or conflict with these statewide initiatives should be discouraged.
- Public universities and community colleges must work with software vendors to expedite solutions to transcribing and degree-auditing issues to ensure correct application of the TCC and FOSC courses toward degree requirements.

### Leadership

- GAI faculty and administrators need to be proactive instead of reactive to the statewide initiative of FOSC. Universities should provide the leadership in the efforts to align curricula for specific degree programs or groups of similar programs. Without this leadership, the void may be filled by community college faculty with less vested interest in the quality of the bachelor's degree programs and a greater interest in expanding the number of courses taught at the lower division. FOSC discussion should clarify the distinction between lower-division and upper-division courses and provide an appropriate and balanced alignment.

- Professional development must be used to increase faculty and administrator awareness of the significance of statewide initiatives, such as the TCC, the ACGM Learning Outcomes Project, and FOSC, to align courses and curriculum.

### **THECB Recommendations to the 86th Texas Legislature**

- Restructure the core curriculum to help ensure students take courses that count toward their degrees. The more standardized the core is across institutions the easier it is to ensure the courses will apply to majors.
- Require institutions of higher education to embed information about FOSC courses in degree programs posted on their websites and verify use of FOSC.
- Support an interactive online degree site that allows students to input their majors and receive a list of the required courses needed to complete a specific degree in four years.
- Require institutions to provide program course requirements to THECB, including indicators of which courses satisfy the core curriculum and field of study curriculum.
- Study the feasibility of a transfer admissions guarantee and make recommendations to the Legislature about student and institutional criteria for such a system.
- Require all types of dual credit students to file a degree plan at 30 semester credit hours. All other students are already required to file a degree plan. Require institutions document compliance.

## Reference List

Schudde, L., Bradley, D., & Absher, C. (2018). Ease of access and usefulness of transfer information on community college websites in Texas. Community College Research Center (CCRC) Working Paper No. 102. Retrieved from <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/ease-access-usefulness-transfer-information-community-college-websites-texas.pdf>



This document is available on the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board website](#).

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