

2021 NACAC
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New Perspectives on Transfer Student Attitudes & Behavior

Sept. 25 | 10:30 am PT

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Session Overview

- Introductions & Overview
- Transfer Student Behavior
- New Survey Research & COVID Impact
- Best Practices for Designing Effective Transfer Pathways
- Questions & Discussion



Transfer Student Attitudes and Behavior



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The New York Times

Where 4-Year Schools Find a Pool of Applicants: 2-Year Schools

Colleges, including elite schools, are making it easier to transfer from community colleges, seeing a valuable source of motivated students.

The New York Times

Colleges and Universities Woo Once-Overlooked Transfer Students



2020-21 Transfer Enrollment Trends

- 8.4% overall drop, with the most pronounced declines among male and African American students.
- Severe impacts to 2-year public institution enrollment, with disparate impact to lower income and historically underrepresented students.
- But:
 - **Upward transfer** from 2- to 4-year was down only slightly in Fall '20 (-2.3%) and actually up 0.9% in Spring 2021 (though increases occurred primarily at highly selective institutions)



Definitions

- Our observations and recommendations will primarily concern transfer to 4-year institutions, either transfer from 2- to 4-year institutions or lateral transfer between 4-year institutions.
- Our review of best practices and experiences will primarily concern 4-year private not-for-profit institutions, given the survey population and the direct experience sets of our panelists.



Survey Research

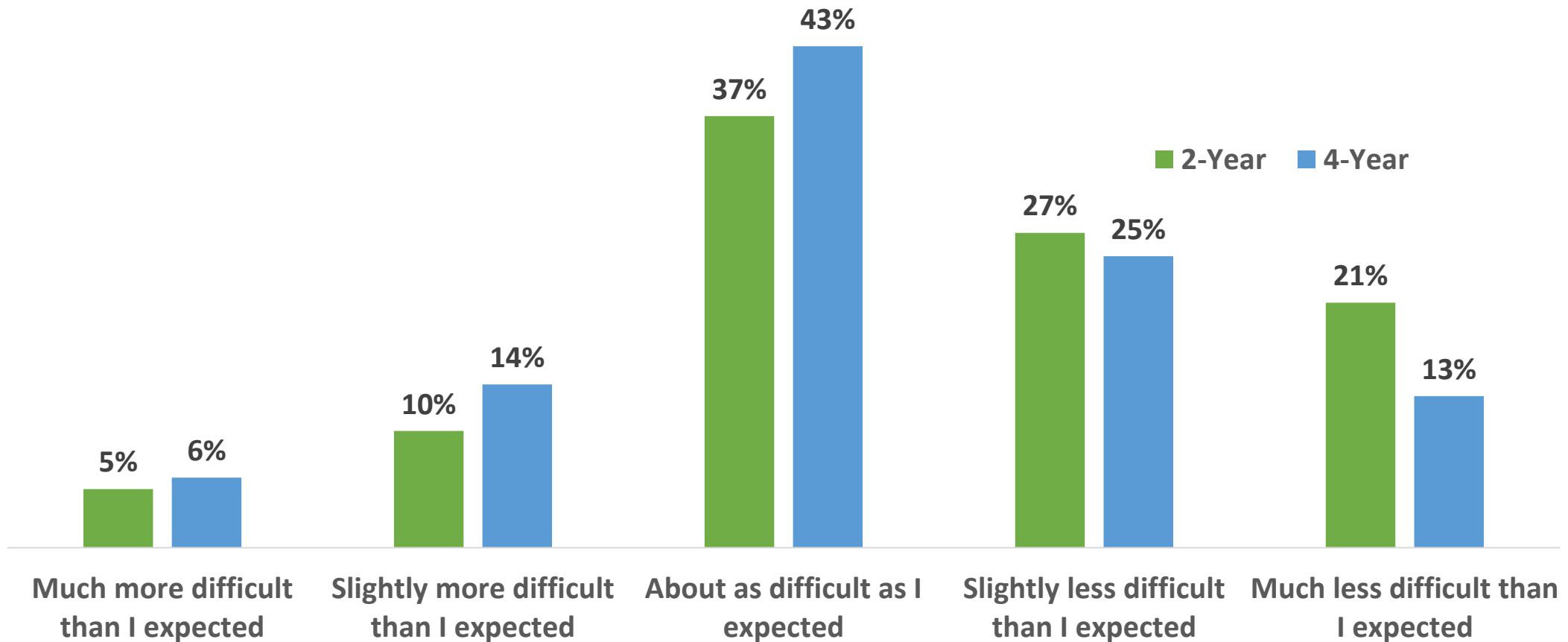
- Brief survey instrument fielded to students admitted for transfer enrollment at a 4-year private institution in the West (total population N = 2,698).
- Assessed experiences with the transfer application, admission, and enrollment process, as well as the extent to which students' process had been disrupted by COVID-19.
- Respondent N = 330.



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Overall, how would you describe the transfer application, admission, and enrollment process?

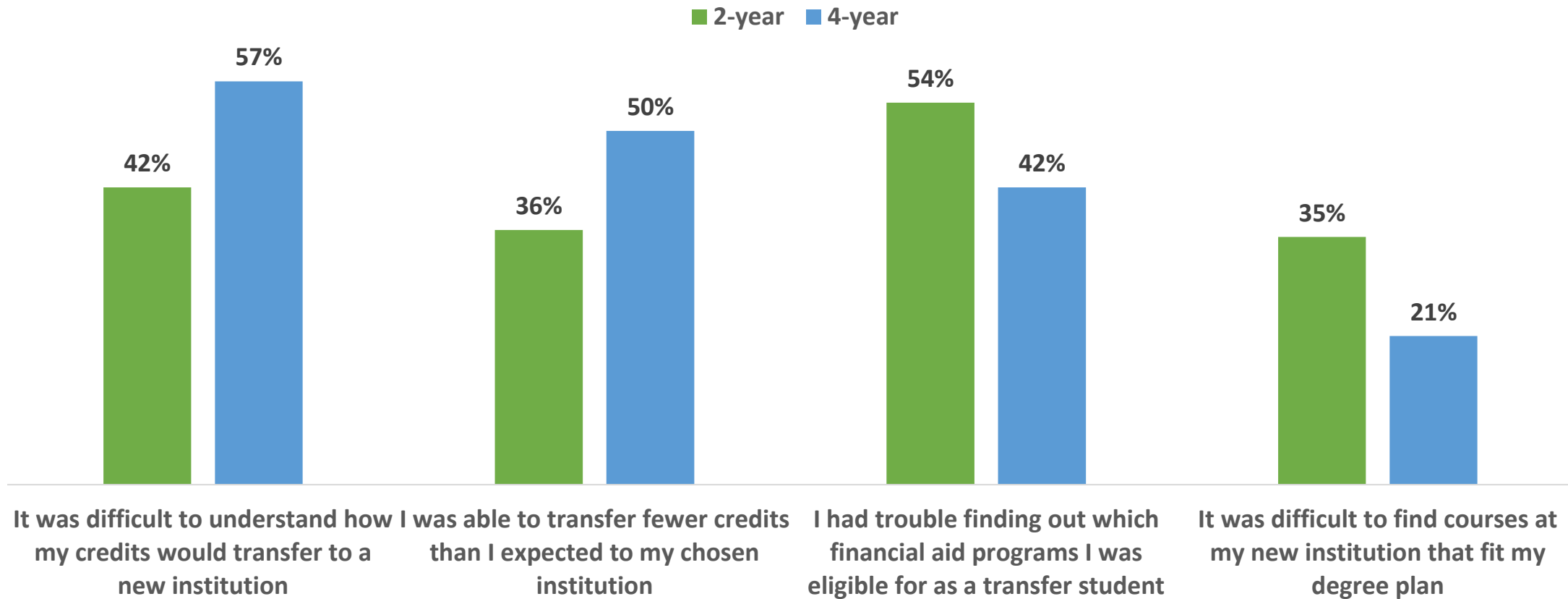


N = 286

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Based on your transfer experience, please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements. (% indicating “Somewhat Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)



N = 277

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During your college search and application process, were you aware of any of the following programs intended to make the transfer process easier and more transparent?

Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) programs at private 4-year universities

28%

Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) programs at public 4-year universities

55%



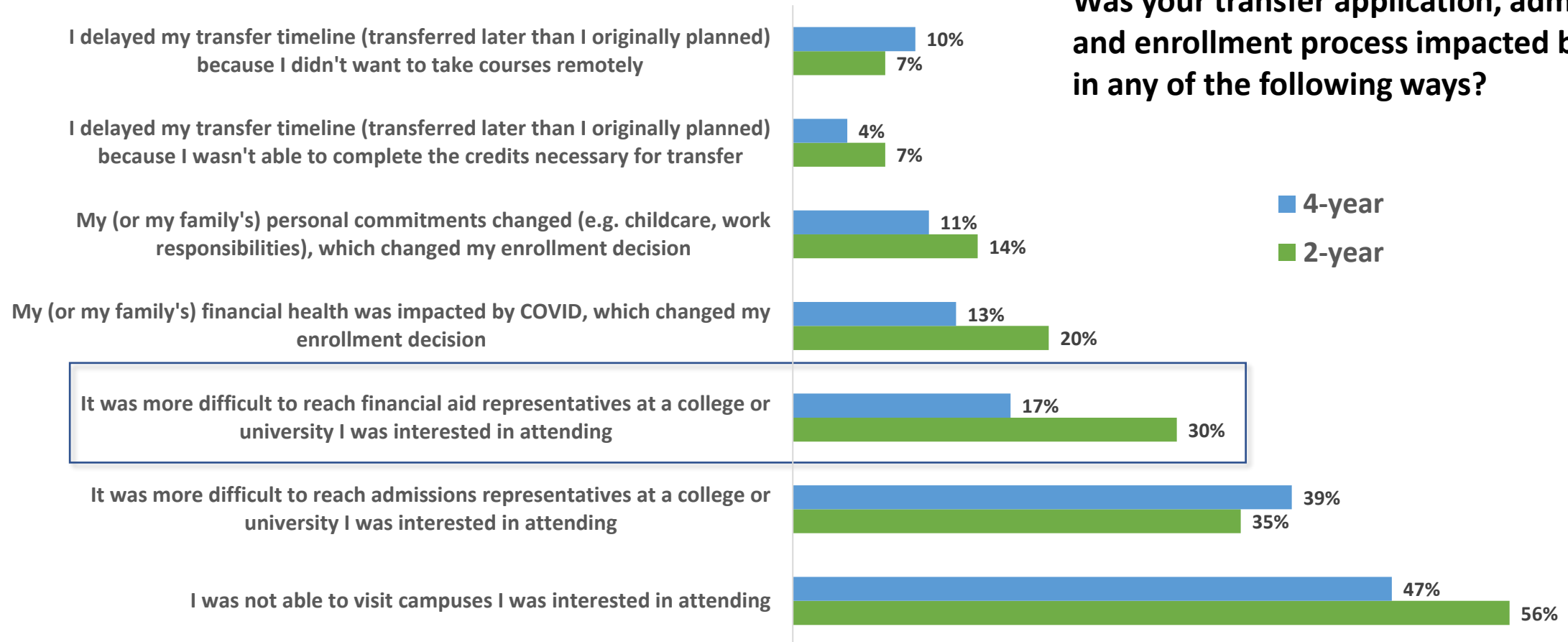
*Among respondents transferring from a 2-year institution. N = 183.

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Was your transfer application, admission, and enrollment process impacted by COVID in any of the following ways?



N = 279

Takeaways

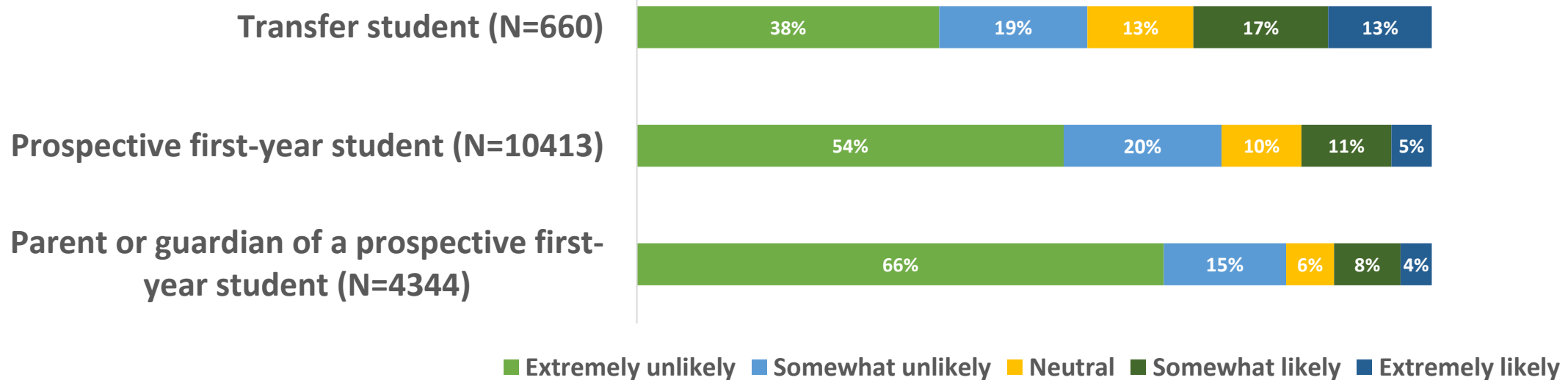
- While students transferring from 2- to 4-year institutions are more confident in their credit articulation, significant gaps remain in the awareness of pathway and pipeline programs at 4-year private institutions.
- Vertical transfers from 2-year institutions continue to face challenges navigating the financial aid process at 4-year institutions.



“...all students are experiencing a fundamental change in how they engage with learning. By upending common practice, the pandemic has invited an entire cohort of students to rethink what forms of education work best for them.”

- Nathan Grawe (2021)

Would you consider fully online or hybrid learning for your/your child's current school under normal circumstances not affected by COVID-19?



Transfer to LMU

A Tale of Evolution



Context Is Everything - External

California Master Plan - 1960

- University of California (UC)
 - 10 Campuses - 280,320 students
- California State University (CSU)
 - 23 Campuses – 485,550 students
- California Community Colleges – Largest System in the Country
 - 116 colleges – 2.1 million students (80,000 transfer to UC or CSU annually)



Context Is Everything - Internal

Institutional Buy-In

- Administration
 - Mission-centric and enrollment alignment
- Faculty
 - Academic qualification and articulation of courses
- Campus Partners
 - Student experience and resources



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2007

Transfer Students?

2009

Evolving and growing articulation agreements

2016

Pathway program established

2019

WLAC Business Scholars Program launched

2008

Relationship Building (ongoing)

2015

1st Transfer Admission Guarantee

2017

First out of state transfer admission guarantee (AZ)

Fall 2008:

- 1,342 transfer applicants.
- 316 enrollees

Fall 2021:

- 3,300 transfer applicants.
- 500 enrollees (60%+ from community colleges)



Outcomes

- Brand recognition
 - Transfer serving institution
- Consistent and increasing applicant pool
- Qualified and aligned students = FIT
- 30 guaranteed transfer partner institutions (and growing)
- More complex, targeted and generous financial aid
- Graduation and retention rates outpace FTIC students
- Partnership with public leaders in aligning with Higher Education goals
 - e.g., LA College Promise



Developing Unified Transfer Systems

New England Board of Higher Education's
New England College Transfer Guarantee



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**MORE
OPTIONS,
MADE EASY**



State-specific systematic transfer for guaranteed admission between community colleges and four-year independent institutions in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Eligibility

- Associate degree from an in-state
- community college
- Eligible GPA (standardized by state)

Features & Benefits

- Application fee waiver
- Financial & scholarship incentives
- Guaranteed transfer of credit
- Mapped pathways

Partners

- Independent College Associations
- Community College Associates
- State Public Higher Education Systems

Methodology

- State-wide policy unification
- Master agreement (MOA)
- Guiding Principles
- Transparency and one-stop sites
- Gen Ed core waiver



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FIND YOUR PATH

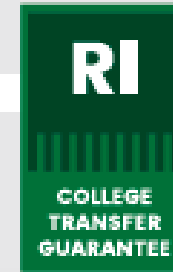
Visit your state's Guarantee website to plan your path to a 4-year degree.



CONNECTICUT
ct.edu/transfer/
guarantee



MASSACHUSETTS
mass.edu/
masstransfer/
maguarantee



RHODE ISLAND
ceri.edu

Connecticut

- Implemented in January 2021
- 12 community colleges (100%)
- 9 independents (75% of LOI)

Massachusetts

- Implemented in January 2021
- 15 community colleges (100%)
- 20 independents (65% of LOI)

Rhode Island

- Implementing in Fall 2021
- 1 community college (100%)
- 2 independents (50% of LOI)

Data Collection

- CT & MA will be collected in Fall of 2021
- RI will be collected in Fall of 2022

Scaling the Guarantee

- Planning grant for scaling to NH, ME, and VT is underway!
- Incorporating public 4-year institutions



Challenge #1

**Fostering collaboration and buy-in across
public and independent sectors**



Solutions: Fostering collaboration and buy-in across sectors

- Begin with an **exploratory phase** prior to implementation
- Utilize a **top-down and bottom-up** approach
- Encourage **discussion, feedback and an open dialogue** during development
- Develop organizational structures that **promote collaboration** and vehicles for getting input and advice
- Place **students at the front and center**
- Communicate **institutional benefits** to department heads and faculty



Challenge #2

**Unifying state-wide transfer and
promoting standardization**

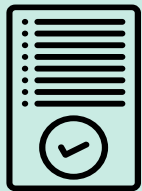


Solutions: Unifying state-wide transfer and promoting standardization



Unification

- Align with state policies when possible
- Benefit of meeting state credential attainment goals and economic impact



Standardization

- Master agreement rather than separate transfer agreements
- Guaranteed admission to institution and gen ed core transfer



Re-evaluate institutional transfer policies

- Encourage institutions to re-examine outdated transfer practices



Flexibility

- Encourage mapped transfer pathways, but see value in flexible credit applicability
- Promote the flexibility of degree requirement substitutions in the transfer process



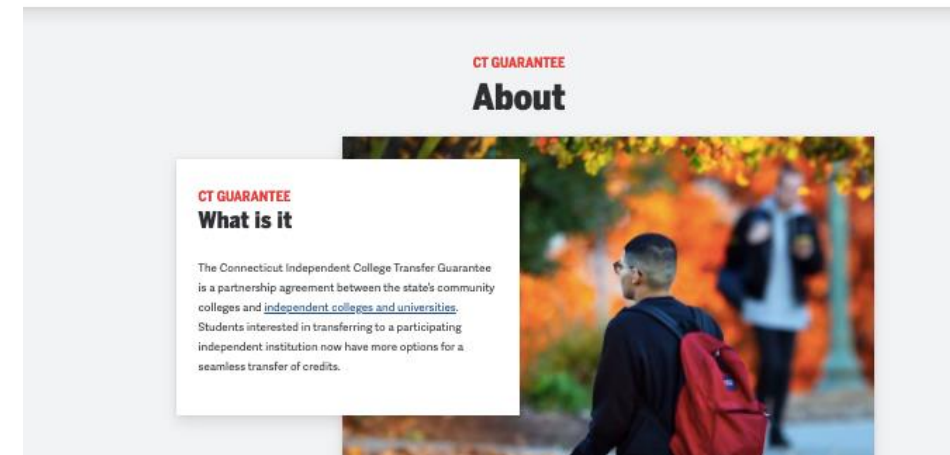
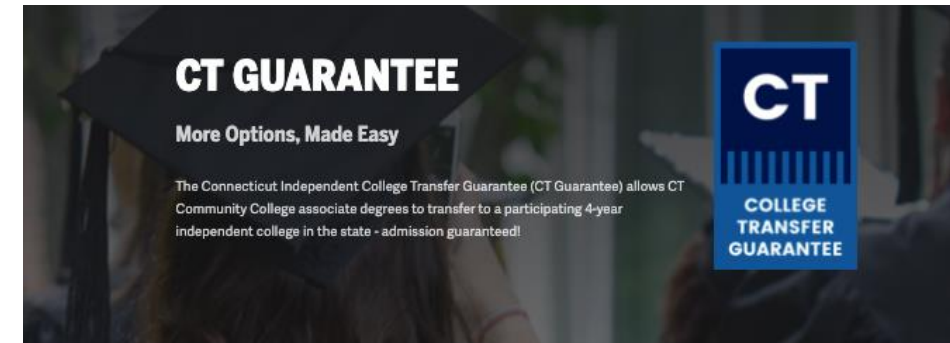
Challenge #3

**Enhancing transparency and
improving transfer websites**



Solutions: Enhancing transparency and improving transfer websites

- Simplify!
 - Cohesive and clear messaging
 - Keep the transfer audience in mind
- Build a cohesive and user-friendly one-stop transfer website
 - Collaborate with public systems website
 - Focus on clarity and user-friendly pages
- Improve institutional transfer web pages
 - Provide guidance and templates



Challenge #4

Increasing visibility and effective promotion



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Solutions: Increasing visibility and effective promotion

- Develop an overarching, simplified message which promotes transfer program
 - Simple and effective messaging
 - Brand strategy guidebook
 - Materials for virtual channels
- Survey focus groups
- Utilize established institutional recruitment and outreach channels

STATE



**MORE
OPTIONS,
MADE EASY**



**MORE
OPTIONS,
MADE EASY**



**MORE
OPTIONS,
MADE EASY**

COLLEGE



**MORE
OPTIONS,
MADE EASY**



**MORE
OPTIONS,
MADE EASY**



**MORE
OPTIONS,
MADE EASY**

Advice

- No quick fix – building a pipeline takes time and patience (if you do it right)
- Focus on incremental change – today matters
- Nothing is more important than your reputation with 2-year institutions
- Start geographically close and work your way out
- Small wins – YOY increases in apps/enrolls – to solidify institutional buy in
- Create opportunities to introduce senior leadership to transfer students
- Take every opportunity to push/pressure the transfer experience at your institution
- Know that the work is never done

