

2017 Transfer Report

A Review of Improvements in Transfer

January 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

College students across the country are highly mobile. More than 37 percent of students at U.S. colleges and universities transfer at least once during their postsecondary career. Almost half who transfer do so two or more times. The vast majority of transfers stay in the same state.¹

Washington's students follow nationwide trends in transfer and mobility. Thirty-four percent of Washington students transfer at least once, and 39 percent of those who transfer do so more than once. Seventy-three percent of transfer students stay in the state.²

The Washington Legislature has charged the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) with:

1. Establishing transfer policies to improve student transitions between Washington's institutions of higher education.
2. Reporting progress to the Legislature on a biennial basis.

Effective transfer policy requires continued engagement of the state's higher education institutions and its higher education agencies. The following organizations work cooperatively to implement and maintain transfer policy in Washington State:

- State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)
- Public and private non-profit institutions of higher education
- WSAC

Washington designed its first transfer degree, the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) associate degree, 45 years ago. Since then, Washington's transfer policy partners have continued to develop transfer degrees and policies that support the state's attainment goals.

This report highlights the following:

- Students who transfer from a Washington public community or technical college (CTC) are more likely to finish a bachelor's degree than students from other states.
- Approximately one-third of undergraduate students enrolled at Washington baccalaureate institutions are transfer students.
- The percentage of Washington CTC students who intend to transfer to a baccalaureate institution remains steady at 35 percent.
- The number of total transfer degrees awarded in Washington increased by 11 percent since the 2013-14 academic year; the degree with the largest percent increase was the Associate of Science – Transfer (AS-T) degree.
- The state developed three new transfer pathways for students majoring in nursing, computer science, and music.

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INTRODUCTION

Transfer is the movement of students and their earned credits from one institution to another. This process includes how students' work from the sending institution is applied toward degree requirements at the receiving institution.

The Washington Legislature has tasked the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) with "improving student transitions from secondary to postsecondary education and training and between and among postsecondary institutions."^a Strong transfer policy plays a critical role in improving transitions because it supports student access and completion.

WSAC also has a statutory responsibility to establish and adopt transfer policies to improve educational transitions. WSAC sends a biennial report to the Legislature on improvements in transfer efficiency.^b The report covers progress on transfer indicators, and outlines development of additional transfer associate degrees.

Many statewide groups and offices work on different aspects of transfer. In addition to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), public and private non-profit institutions of higher education, and WSAC, there are two primary groups that guide and assess the effectiveness of transfer agreements across the system. The first group is the Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC), which is made up of representatives from all colleges and universities in Washington who are members of the Washington Council for High School-College Relations (WCHSCR). The second group is the Joint Transfer Council (JTC), which includes academic affairs leaders from public and private non-profit baccalaureate institutions and community and technical colleges.

In addition, the 2015 Roadmap report provides an update on progress toward the state's two attainment goals:

1. All Washington adults ages 25-44 will have a high school diploma or equivalent.
2. At least 70 percent of Washington adults, ages 25-44, will have a postsecondary credential.

To achieve these goals, the 2015 Roadmap highlights two areas that need particular attention:

1. High school completion and postsecondary access and completion for historically underserved and underrepresented populations.
2. Postsecondary recruitment, retention, and completion for working-age adults.

^a RCW 28B.77.001

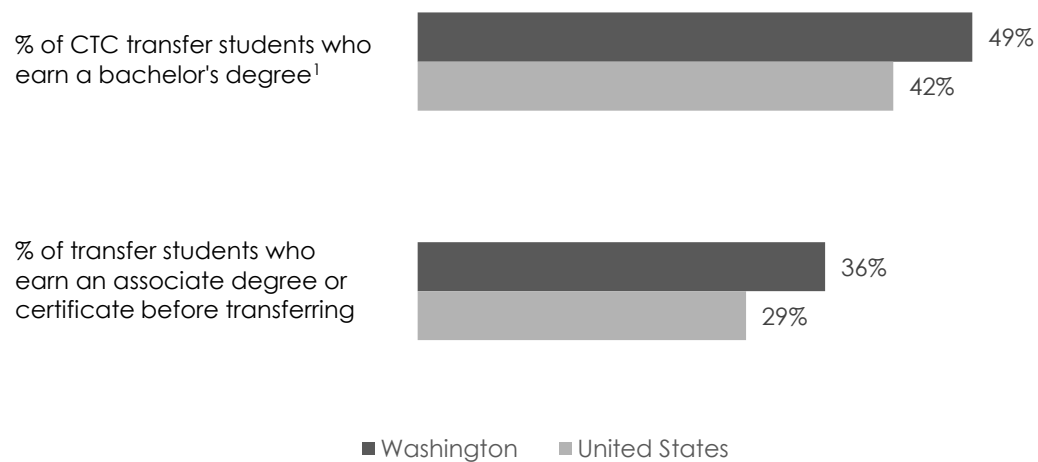
^b 28B.77.210, 28B.77.215, and 28B.77.220

This report outlines improvements in transfer that will support underserved and underrepresented students as well as working-age adults. These improvements will contribute to the number of Washington adults who have a postsecondary credential.

Washington Transfer Policy Successes

Washington is a national leader in transfer policy. Students who transfer from a Washington community or technical college (CTC) are more likely to finish a bachelor's degree than students from other states who transfer from a CTC. Washington also has the fifth highest percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate from a public CTC before transferring to a baccalaureate institution (Figure 1).³ Evidence suggests that students have a higher probability of earning a bachelor's degree if they transfer after earning an associate degree or other credential.⁴

Figure 1. Transfer Student Degree Attainment, Washington and U.S. averages.

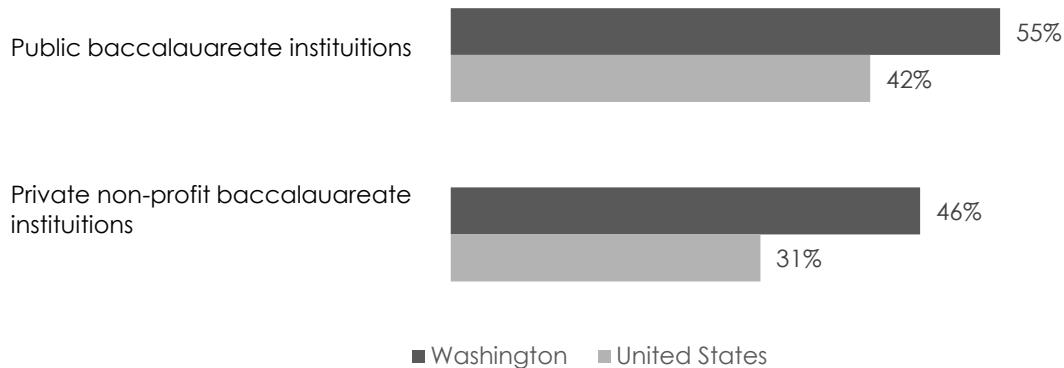


Source: Jenkins, D., & Fink, J. (2016). *Tracking Transfer: New Measures of Institutional and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students Attain Bachelor's Degrees*. New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.

¹Refers to a bachelor's degree from any baccalaureate institution in the United States.

Furthermore, students who transfer to Washington's baccalaureate institutions are more likely to earn their bachelor's degree compared to institutions in the rest of the United States. Washington's public baccalaureate institutions lead the country in the percentage of students who earn a bachelor's degree after transferring from any community college nationwide, and the state's private non-profit colleges are second in the country (Figure 2).⁵

Figure 2. Percentage of Transfer Students Who Graduate from Baccalaureate Institutions after Transferring from a Public CTC,¹ by Institution Type.



Source: Jenkins, D., & Fink, J. (2016). Tracking Transfer: New Measures of Institutional and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students Attain Bachelor's Degrees. New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.

¹Refers to CTCs in any state.

Transfer Pathways

Students transfer for many reasons, and there is a great deal of diversity in the types of institutions students attend. The process can be complicated by the fact that many students who transfer attend two or more institutions before receiving a degree or certificate.

This makes clear transfer policies necessary because they ensure that students:

- Receive fair treatment when they transition.
- Understand in advance the process and implications of transferring from one institution to another.

Additionally, the institution that ultimately awards the degree must validate that students have met the learning outcomes associated with the degree. For that reason, agreement about expectations and outcomes across the system is an important part of transfer policy.

Like most other states, transfer policy in Washington has been focused primarily on *vertical transfer*. This generally refers to a student who is transferring from a Washington CTC to a Washington institution that awards a bachelor's degree. While vertical transfer is the most common transfer pathway, and is supported by state policy, it is important to note other paths students take.

Horizontal Transfer

This is when a student transfers between two institutions that award degrees at the same level. For example:

- Transfer between two CTCs.
- Transfer between two baccalaureate institutions.

Reverse Transfer

This refers to a student who transfers credits from a baccalaureate institution to a CTC for associate degree completion. Reverse transfer students typically already have CTC credit, but they never finished an associate degree prior to enrolling at a baccalaureate institution.

Swirling

This refers to movement back and forth among institutions, as well as concurrent enrollment at more than one institution. It is common for swirling to happen during summer term. In Washington, nine percent of students enrolled at public and private non-profit baccalaureate institutions are *summer swirlers*, or students who transfer to a CTC for at least one summer term and then return to their baccalaureate institution in the following fall term. There is evidence that swirling may lead to higher bachelor's degree completion rates for these students.⁶

National Transfer Trends

College students across the country are highly mobile. More than 37 percent of students at U.S. colleges and universities transfer at least once during their postsecondary career. Almost half who transfer do so two or more times. The vast majority of transfers stay in the same state.⁷

Public CTCs in the U.S. play a major role in transfer and degree completion. For example, 46 percent of bachelor's degree earners from the 2013-14 academic year were enrolled at a community college at some point within the prior 10 years.⁸ More first-time postsecondary students enroll at public two-year institutions than at any other type of institution, and almost 40 percent will transfer to another institution.⁹ Seventy-seven percent of first-time community college students expect to earn a bachelor's degree, yet past data have shown that only 10 percent actually earn a bachelor's degree.¹⁰ Although students who transfer to a baccalaureate institution are much more likely to earn a bachelor's degree after earning a credential,¹¹ a majority transfer without earning a degree or certificate.¹² Finally, although many studies focus on vertical transfer, it is very common for students to transfer from baccalaureate institutions to community colleges. Up to 51 percent of bachelor's degree students transfer to two-year institutions. Some of these students are summer swirlers who use community college courses to complete their bachelor's degree.¹³

Of students who enrolled in postsecondary studies for the first time in fall 2008:¹

- 48.2% enrolled at public two-year institutions.
- 32.2% enrolled at four-year public institutions.
- 14.2% enrolled at private non-profit institutions.
- 5.4% enrolled at other institutions.

Of students who started in fall 2008 and transferred within 6 years:¹

- 39.5% who began at a two-year public transferred to another two- or four-year institution.
- 36.5% who began at a public four-year transferred to a two- or four-year institution.
- 34.3% who began at a private non-profit four-year transferred to a two- or four-year institution.

Washington Transfer Trends

Washington's students follow nationwide trends in transfer and mobility. Thirty-four percent of Washington undergraduate students enrolled at public and private non-profit colleges and universities transfer at least once, and 39 percent of those who transfer do so more than once. Approximately one-third of Washington students who start their postsecondary career at a public college or university will transfer, and about one quarter of students who start at a private non-profit baccalaureate institution will transfer.¹⁴

Almost three-quarters of Washington transfer students stay in the state. Seventy-five percent of students who transfer from a Washington public college or university will transfer to another Washington institution, while only 50 percent of students who transfer from private non-profit baccalaureates will stay in Washington.¹⁵

In 2011, three out of four bachelor's degree graduates from Washington public institutions transferred in credits from another institution. Forty percent of those graduates transferred from a Washington CTC. Notably, approximately half of graduating education majors, business majors, and health field majors transferred from Washington CTCs.¹⁶ Additionally in academic year 2015-16, thirty-three percent of all students attending one of the ten institutions that are Independent Colleges of Washington members were transfer students.¹⁷

Washington's public CTCs play a major role in students transferring and completing credentials. Public CTCs award nearly twice as many college-level credentials as four-year public baccalaureates. These credentials include certificates, apprenticeships, and applied baccalaureate degrees.¹⁸ Sixty-seven percent of students who transferred from a Washington CTC to a Washington public baccalaureate institution earned their associate degree first.¹⁹ Washington students who stay in Washington and earn their bachelor's degree within six years of starting community college earn the same yearly wages, on average, as those who earned a bachelor's degree and started at a four-year institution.²⁰

Washington State Transfer Degrees

Washington relies on two statewide transfer agreements to support vertical transfer:

- Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA)
- Associate of Science–Transfer (AS–T)

The state also has 15 Major Related Programs (MRP).^c These are course plans that fit within either the DTA or the AS-T. Washington has been offering formalized transfer degrees since 1971.

Students who complete any of these transfer degrees at a Washington CTC will generally have junior class standing and 90 transferrable quarter credits (or 60 semester credits)

^c This number includes the elementary education MRP, which is no longer being offered to new students, but still has continuing students. It also includes two new MRPs in computer science and music, which started in fall 2016.

upon transfer to a baccalaureate institution—even if they change majors. Transfer credits may include up to 15 quarter credits for technical courses that may not transfer outside the degree. Transfer agreements stipulate that students are not required to retake courses or course sequences they have already completed. Some agreements are statewide while others are only between specific institutions. Transfer and articulation agreements are intended to serve students entering a variety of majors and fit within the following categories.

1. Statewide agreements
 - a. Direct Transfer Agreement Associate Degree (DTA)
 - b. Associate of Science – Transfer Degree (AS-T)
 - c. Major Related Program (MRP)
2. Institutional agreements
 - a. Associate in Applied Science – Transfer Degree (AAS-T)
 - b. Upside Down Degree

Not all schools offer or accept all types of transfer degrees. All public baccalaureate institutions and many private non-profit baccalaureate institutions accept the DTA and AS-T. Each MRP has a different set of participating baccalaureate institutions. Please see wsac.wa.gov/transfers for official DTA, AS-T, and MRP agreements.

Direct Transfer Agreement Associate Degree (DTA)

This is the most flexible and popular transfer degree. The degree includes 60 quarter credits of general education courses, plus courses that prepare students for classes in their major and electives (for a total of 90 quarter credits). Established in 1971, it is Washington’s first transfer degree.

Associate of Science–Transfer Degree (AS–T)

This degree includes math and science courses needed to prepare students for science and engineering majors at the baccalaureate level. Fewer general education courses are taken at the community college to allow space for additional math and science. No more than 20 quarter credits of general education remain to be completed at the receiving institution. The AS-T offers two tracks. Track 1 focuses on biological, chemical and earth sciences and Track 2 focuses on engineering, computer science, and physics. It was established in 2000.

Major Related Program (MRP)

MRPs are course plans under the DTA or AS-T that prepare students for specific majors. Course plans include general education courses and a limited number of electives. MRPs are developed for majors that are offered at multiple baccalaureate institutions, have significant prerequisites in the freshman and/or sophomore year, and serve a large number of students. The first MRP, established in 2003, was in business.

Associate in Applied Science – Transfer Degree (AAS-T)

This is a workforce degree offered at CTCs and is designed to meet industry standards for immediate employment. It includes at least 20 general education credits that can transfer. Students completing these degrees at CTCs may apply up to 90 credits toward specific applied baccalaureate degrees that have an articulation agreement with a particular CTC.

Upside Down Degrees

Some baccalaureate institutions in Washington offer a bachelor's degree called an Upside Down Degree, which allows students with certain technical degrees from specific CTCs to transfer in as a junior and earn their general education requirements at the baccalaureate institution offering this degree.

PROGRESS ON TRANSFER INDICATORS

This section covers transfer measures, including:

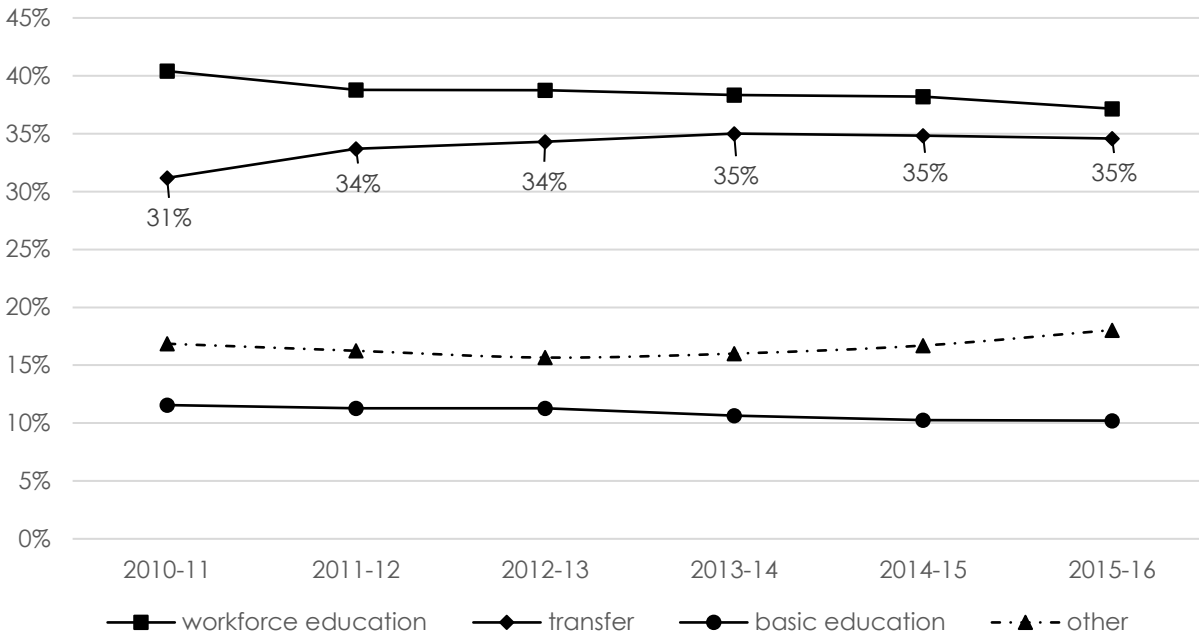
1. Intent to transfer.
2. Transfer degree completion.
3. Successful vertical transfer.
4. Completion data for the public four-year institutions.

Intent to Transfer

In the 2015-16 academic year, 131,779 CTC students indicated an intent to transfer to a baccalaureate institution. In 2014-15, that number was 134,455. Despite the decrease in the overall number of students who intend to transfer, the percentage of these students stayed the same at 35 percent, which has slowly been increasing since 2010-11 (Figure 3).²¹

Students attend Washington's CTCs for different reasons. Many students attend to receive workforce training and do not plan on completing a transfer degree. Thirty-seven percent attended CTCs for workforce education purposes in 2015-16.²² Some of these students may ultimately transfer, but many do not indicate an intent to transfer at time of attendance.

Figure 3. Percentage of CTC Students by Purpose of Attending, 2010-2016



Source: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Academic Year Reports 2010-11 – 2015-16

Total CTC enrollments, including the number of students who intend to transfer to a baccalaureate institution, have continued to decline after peak enrollments in 2010-11. Influencing factors include:

- An improving economy resulting in more students returning to the workforce.
- Unexpected low enrollment for younger students.
- Reduced state financial aid availability.

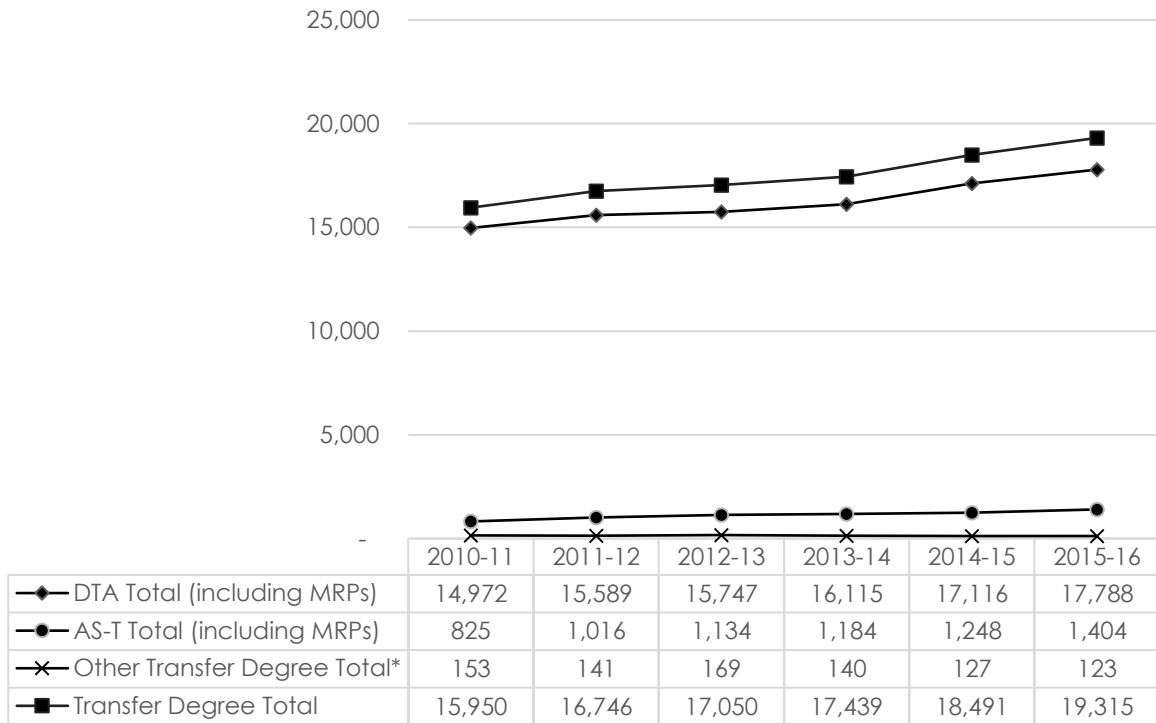
Although overall enrollments are down, the CTCs have seen increases in dual credit enrollment such as Running Start and College in the High School.²³

Transfer Degree Completion

Direct Transfer Agreement and Associate of Science–Transfer

Since the 2013-14 academic year, the total number of transfer degrees awarded has increased by 11 percent (Figure 4). Although more than 90 percent of all transfer degrees are DTA degrees (Figure 5), the AS-T had the highest increase in awards from the 2013-14 academic year, at 19 percent. This reflects Washington’s growing emphasis on science and technology degrees.²⁴

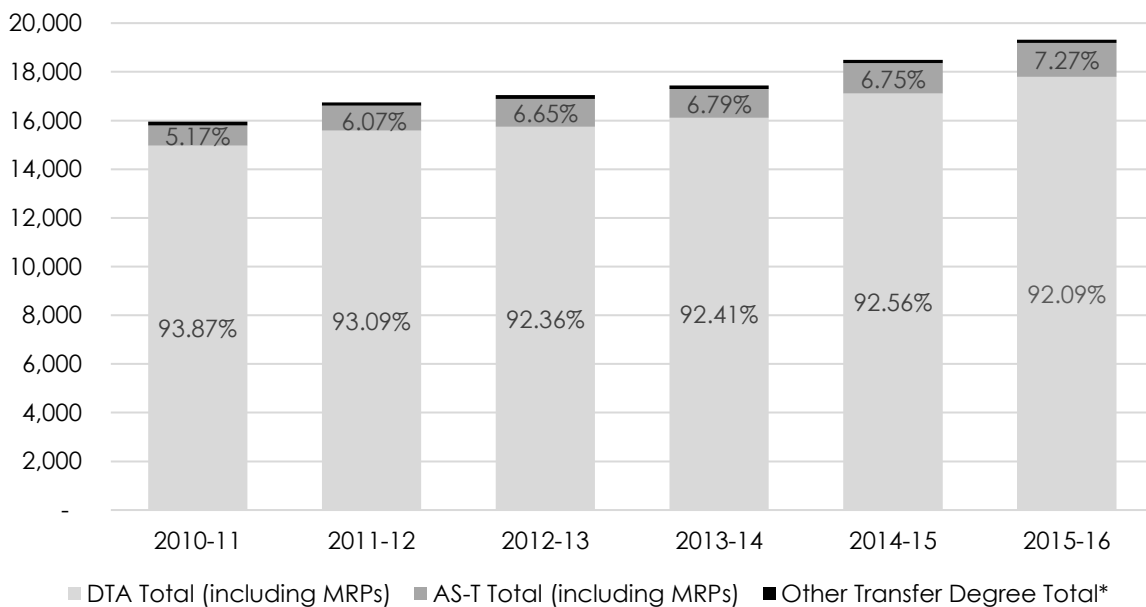
Figure 4. Total Transfer Degrees Awarded, 2010-2016



Source: Darby Kaikkonen, Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, email message to author, November 17, 2016

*Refers to local transfer agreements between specific CTCs and baccalaureate institutions.

Figure 5. Percentage of DTA and AS-T Degrees out of Total Transfer Degrees Awarded, 2010-2016



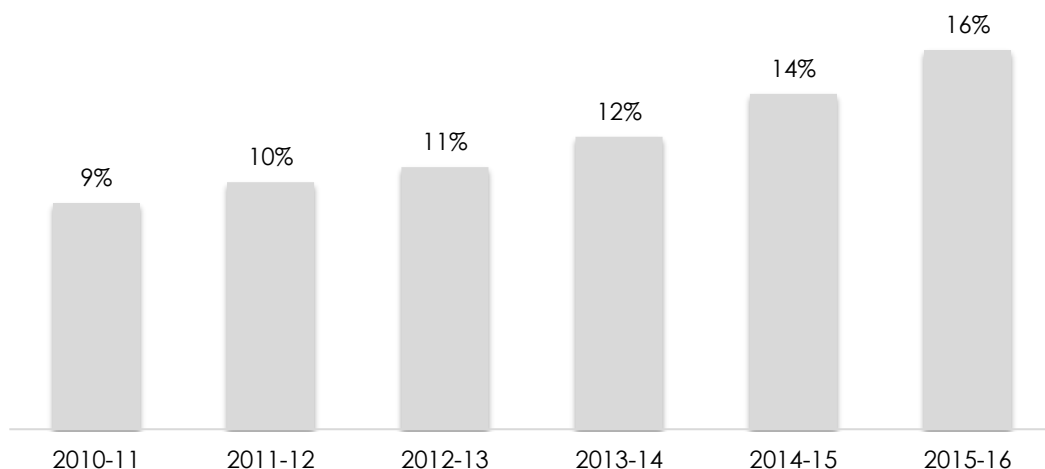
Source: Darby Kaikkonen, Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, email message to author, November 17, 2016

*Refers to local transfer agreements between specific CTCs and baccalaureate institutions.

Interestingly, an increasing number of DTA degrees are being awarded to Running Start students, with almost 2,400 Running Start students receiving a DTA degree in 2015-16.

These students make up 16 percent of the total DTA degrees awarded in Washington, and this rate has nearly doubled since 2010-11 (Figure 6). Furthermore, the number of Running Start DTA degrees has increased 84 percent since 2010-11.²⁵

Figure 6. Percentage of DTA Degrees Awarded to Running Start Students, 2010-2016



Source: Darby Kaikkonen, Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, email message to author, November 8, 2016.

Major Related Programs

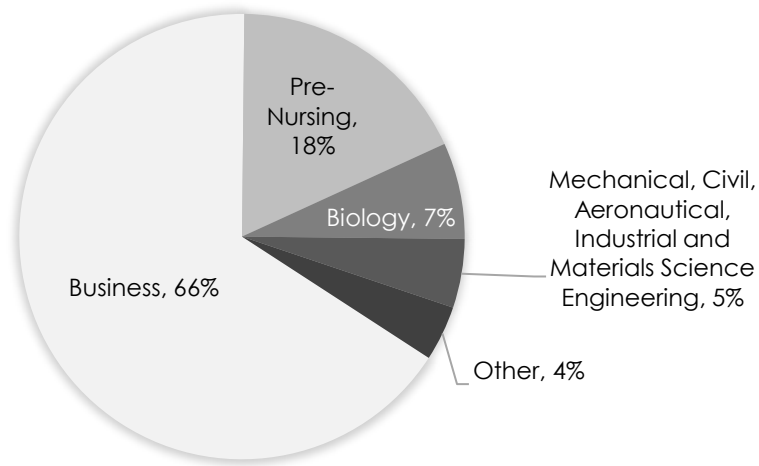
MRP awards continue to rise. Of the students completing a DTA or AS-T degree in 2015-16, 14 percent completed one of 13 specialized MRP pathways.^d Since the 2013-14 academic year, the number of MRPs awarded has increased 23 percent (Figure 8); Biology MRP awards increased the most at 75 percent.²⁶

The most popular MRPs were:

1. Business (based on DTA)
2. Pre-Nursing (based on DTA)
3. Biology (based on DTA)
4. Mechanical, Civil, Aeronautical, Industrial and Materials Science Engineering (based on AS-T)

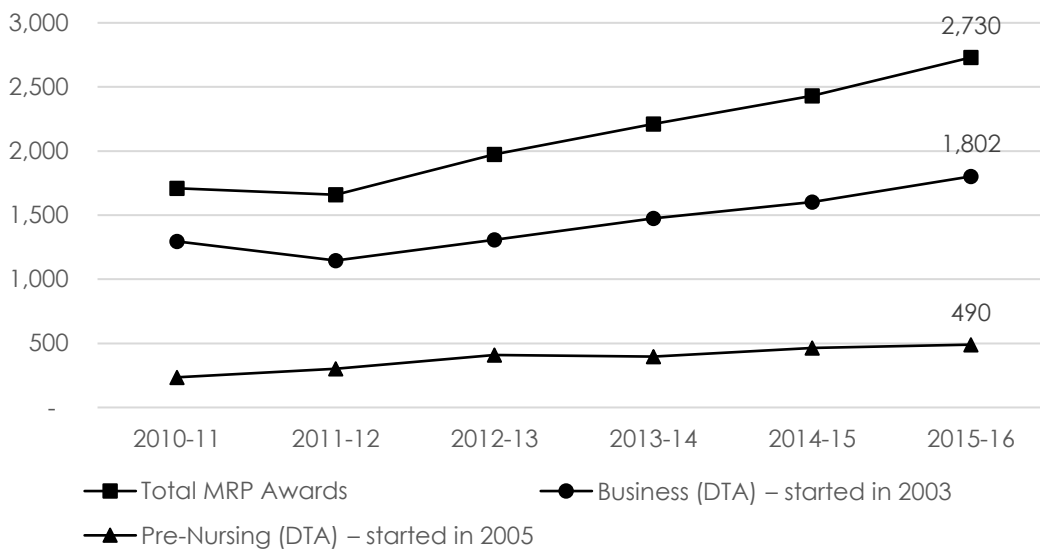
^d Although there are 15 total MRPs currently offered in the state, only 13 had graduates in 2015-16 due to two new MRPs in computer science and music that started in fall 2016.

Figure 7. Breakdown of most popular MRP awards in 2015-16, by type



Source: Darby Kaikkonen, Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, email message to author, November 17, 2016

Figure 8. Total Business MRP, Total Pre-Nursing MRP, and Total MRP awards, 2010-16



Source Washington State Board for CTCs Academic Year Report 2013-14 & 2014-15; Darby Kaikkonen, Washington State Board of CTCs, email message to author, November 17, 2016.

*Other MRPs include: Bioengineering and Chemical Engineering (AS-T), Computer and Electrical Engineering (AS-T), Technology (DTA), Computer Science (DTA), Construction Management (DTA), Electrical Engineering/Computer Engineering Technology (AS-T), Elementary Education (DTA), Math Education (DTA), Mechanical Engineering Technology (AS-T), Music (DTA), and Nursing (DTA).

Successful Vertical Transfer

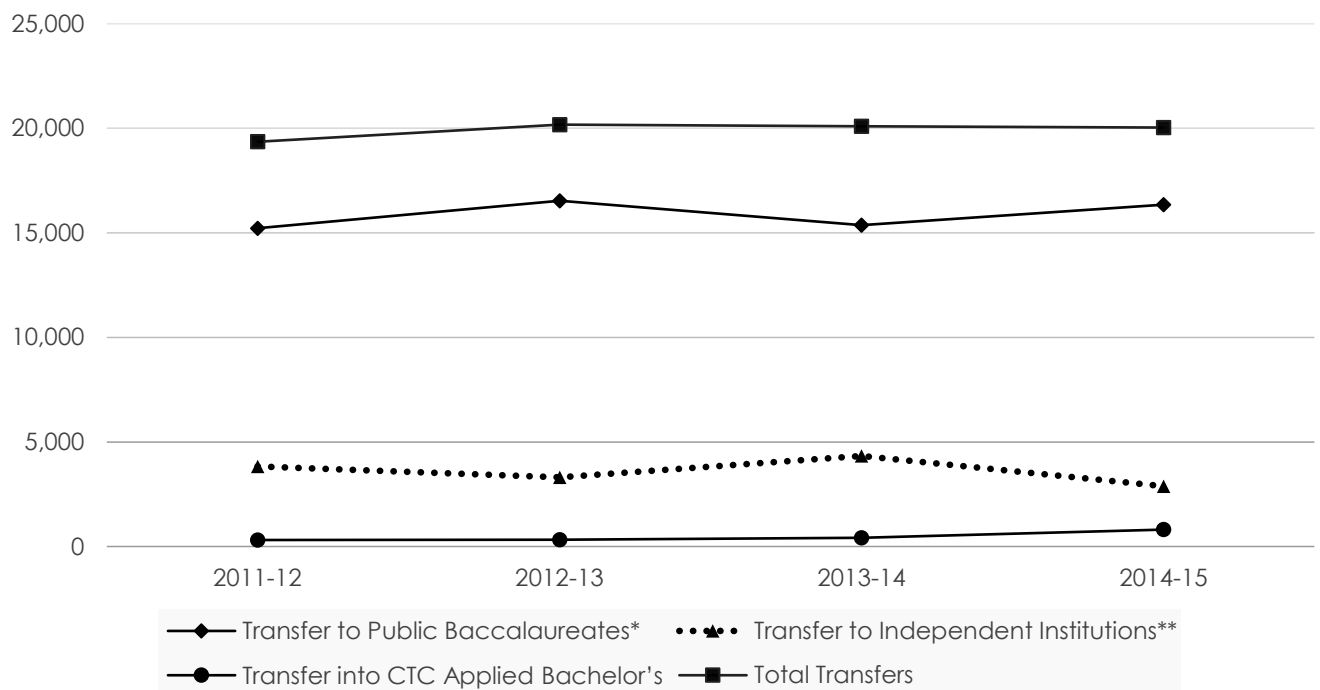
In 2014-15, the total number of students who transferred with or without an associate degree from Washington CTCs to Washington baccalaureate institutions^e was 20,040

^e Baccalaureate institutions included Portland State University, University of Idaho, and Western Governors University – Washington)

(Figure 9). This represents a four percent increase since the 2011-12 academic year. More than 80 percent of CTC students who transfer go to public baccalaureate institutions (Figure 10).²⁷ Although the total number of students who transfer from CTCs to baccalaureate institutions continues to rise in Washington, the percentage of students who ultimately transfer from a CTC is low compared to the rest of the country.²⁸

More students are transferring from CTCs to applied bachelor’s degree programs offered by CTCs. Notably, 808 students transferred in 2014-15, doubling the number from 2013-14.²⁹ CTCs play an increasing role in producing baccalaureate degree graduates in Washington. Close to 500 students earned a bachelor of applied science from a Washington CTC in the 2015-16 academic year, which is almost double the amount in 2014-15.³⁰

Figure 9: Trend in Transfers to Washington Baccalaureate Institutions from Washington CTCs

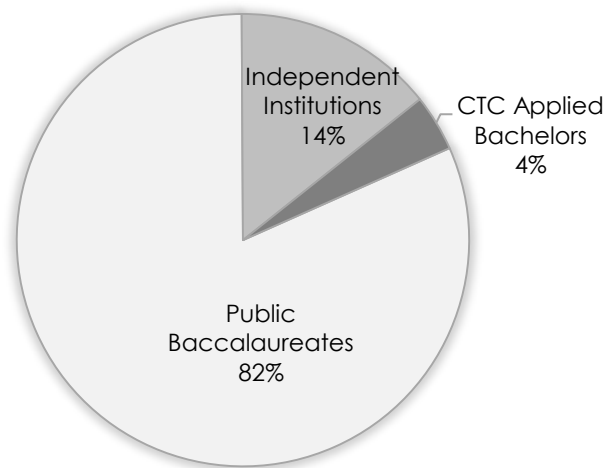


Source: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Academic Year Report 2014-15

* Includes Portland State University, University of Idaho, and Western Governors University-Washington, and includes Running Start students transferring directly to the public baccalaureate institutions.

** Includes City University of Seattle, Cornish College of the Arts, Gonzaga University, Heritage University, Northwest University, Pacific Lutheran University, St. Martin's University, Seattle Pacific University, University of Phoenix, University of Puget Sound, Walla Walla University, Whitman College, and Whitworth University.

Figure 10. Percentage of Transfer Students to Baccalaureate Programs by Sector, 2014-15



Source: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Academic Year Report 2014-15

Completion Data for Public Four-Year Institutions

The Council of Presidents' Statewide Public Four-Year Dashboard^f has detailed reporting on students who transfer to the public baccalaureate institutions. The Office of Financial Management worked closely with the Council of Presidents and the six public baccalaureates to create and maintain this centralized dashboard that displays a number of accountability measures including:

- Transfer.
- Graduation rates.
- Time it takes to complete a bachelor's degree for each institution and statewide.

The Dashboard defines transfer students as those who transfer credits from any postsecondary institution. It does not include dual-credit students from programs like Running Start or Advanced Placement. Following is a transfer snapshot from the dashboard for academic year 2014-15.

Transfer as entering status

Statewide, transfer as an entering status for students increased slightly over previous years. More than 39,600 undergraduate students who were enrolled in 2014-15 entered the public baccalaureates as transfer students, representing 36 percent of all students.

Baccalaureate degree earners

Almost 11,000, or 44 percent, of baccalaureate degree earners in 2014-15 entered the university or college as a transfer student.

Time to baccalaureate degree

^f <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/hied/dashboard/index.html>

The average undergraduate time to degree in years for full-time transfer students after transfer was 2.56 years, which is on par with previous years. Part-time students took 2.79 years, which is also similar to previous years. All types of transfers took an average of 2.6 years to complete their degree.

Credits to baccalaureate degree

A baccalaureate degree requires 180 quarter credits or 120 semester credits. The average number of quarter credits to degree was 195.67 for students entering directly from high school and 199.6 for transfer students. These numbers have stayed fairly consistent since 2007-08.

Graduation rate with a transfer degree

Students with a DTA or AS-T degree who transferred to a public baccalaureate institution had higher graduation rates compared to all transfer students. By fall 2015, a little over 76 percent of students who transferred with a DTA or AS-T degree in the 2011-12 academic year had graduated. The graduation rate for all transfer students during this time was 69.2 percent.

NEW TRANSFER DEGREES AND EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

Following is a brief summary of new degree pathways and other improvements made in transfer over the past two years. These areas of improvement represent the collective efforts of thousands of faculty and staff from all sectors working together to create a dynamic system of transfer in Washington.

Associate in Nursing DTA/MRP

Impending nursing shortages and a national movement toward increasing Bachelor of Nursing (BSN) graduates led Washington to review its nursing pathways for CTC students. In 2012, the JTC established a workgroup to develop a more streamlined pathway for CTC students transferring to BSN degree programs. The workgroup finalized the new Nursing MRP based on the DTA degree in 2014.

The Associate in Nursing DTA/MRP is a pathway where students complete nursing prerequisites, general education requirements, and their pre-licensure nursing coursework at a CTC in at least three years. Graduates of this degree become a Registered Nurse (RN) after passing the NCLEX exam. They then transfer to a college or university that offers a post-licensure RN-to-BSN program, allowing them to earn a BSN in one year.

In fall 2014, South Puget Sound Community College was the first CTC to enroll students in the Associate in Nursing DTA/MRP. Twenty-four students in this program graduated from SPSCC in the 2015-16 academic year.³¹

Nine CTCs currently offer the Nursing MRP, while 22 offer the Pre-Nursing MRP. Eight baccalaureate institutions (including branch campuses) and two community colleges

(Olympic and Bellevue) accept the Nursing DTA/MRP. Twelve baccalaureate institutions (including branch campuses) accept the Pre-Nursing DTA/MRP.

Based on Nursing MRP enrollments as of October 2016, about 300 students statewide should graduate in the 2016-17 academic year. As the number of Nursing MRP enrollments increases, the number of Pre-Nursing MRP students should drop.³²

Associate of Music DTA/MRP

The JTC heard concerns from CTCs that students transferring to baccalaureate institutions in music were taking longer to complete degrees than students admitted directly as freshman to those institutions. To address these concerns, the JTC established a workgroup to explore an Associate of Fine Arts or Music MRP. What resulted was an Associate in Music DTA/MRP. It launched in fall 2016 and will be accepted by all public baccalaureate institutions in Washington. Unlike other DTA degrees, which are typically 90 credits, this degree is 101-104 quarter credits. This is because students must reach performance proficiency to be considered a junior upon transfer. The credits include ensemble requirements, lessons, and ear training, which can be covered by financial aid. Students will begin to graduate with this degree no later than spring 2018.

Computer Science DTA/MRP

A JTC workgroup developed a Computer Science MRP based on the DTA degree, effective fall 2016. There were four primary motivators for this new degree:

- Wide interest across the state in developing a clear transfer pathway for CTC students seeking a degree in computer science.
- Policymaker interest in increased computer science degree production.
- Strong workforce demand in the Puget Sound region for workers with computer science degrees.
- Findings that the AS-T Track 2 degree worked well for computer engineering majors, but not for computer science majors.

The degree will transfer to all public baccalaureates, six private non-profit baccalaureates, and Bellevue College. The JTC will revisit the MRP in 2017 to assess efficacy.

Reverse Articulation Agreements

Reverse articulation, or reverse transfer, lets eligible students earn their associate degree after transferring to a baccalaureate institution. Students who transfer to a baccalaureate institution before completing their associate degree can complete any remaining requirements as part of their baccalaureate program and transfer credits back to the CTC to receive their associate degree.

For years, many Washington institutions have offered reverse transfer on an unofficial basis. In 2016, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 6354, which requires all public baccalaureate colleges and universities to develop reverse transfer policies by the end of

2017. In 2015-16, Eastern Washington University (EWU) and Washington State University (WSU) signed agreements with SBCTC to offer official reverse transfer. Western Governors University–Washington also signed an agreement. The remaining four public baccalaureates will have agreements by the end of 2017. Since making the agreements, WSU and EWU have reached out to eligible students to let them know about the program. At WSU, five out of 934 eligible students followed up and earned their associate degrees.³³ Eleven students at EWU have expressed interest in the program.³⁴

Other institutions that offer reverse transfer through their own processes are Saint Martin's University, Seattle Pacific University, and Seattle University.

Updated WSAC Transfer Website

WSAC staff updated its transfer webpage at www.wsac.wa.gov/transfers to ensure that all transfer degree agreements and references to state laws and other policies are posted. The WSAC page is intended for people who reference policy guidelines. Students and advisors should go to ReadySetGrad.org. In the near future, WSAC plans to list which CTCs offer transfer degrees and which baccalaureate institutions accept them.

NEXT STEPS

Revise Student Guide to Transfer in Washington

In fall 2011, the JTC developed the *Student Guide to Transfer in Washington*. It is available in print and digitally on college websites. A JTC workgroup is revising the publication, which will be completed in 2017. The goal is to create a printable handout that students and advisors can use. It will also direct users toward a transfer-specific advising webpage on ReadySetGrad.org.

Update ICRC Handbook and Transfer Policies

WSAC staff is currently collaborating with ICRC members to update the ICRC handbook, which is used extensively by transfer professionals in the state to advise transfer students on degrees and policies. In the near future, WSAC staff will continue to make updates consistent with changes in transfer policy and replace references to the Higher Education Coordinating Board with the Washington Student Achievement Council.

Investigate the Feasibility of a Combined Transfer Report

This WSAC Transfer Report relies heavily on research completed by SBCTC, the Office of Financial Management's Education Research and Data Center, and the Council of Presidents. In addition, the Independent Colleges of Washington and other institutions and state agencies play an important role in transfer and should be considered for inclusion in a combined transfer report workgroup.

Each of these groups completes reports on different aspects of transfer.⁸ In September 2016, representatives from these entities met to explore the feasibility of developing one transfer report that meets the requirements of legislation and the needs of educational stakeholders in Washington. This combined report would clearly articulate how transfer is contributing to the educational attainment goals established for Washington State. The group will meet regularly in 2017 to discuss a combined report.

Assessment and Review of MRPs

WSAC will work with stakeholders to develop additional MRPs in majors with high demand. The JTC will review participation and graduation data for current MRPs to determine if they should be continued, reviewed and updated, or eliminated. The next MRP to review is the Business DTA/MRP. WSAC staff will also create a calendar for reviewing remaining MRPs.

Monitor Transfer Issues via the Transfer Liaison

WSAC developed a Transfer Liaison to alert the JTC, ICRC, colleges, universities, and state agencies if systemic issues arise. Institutions are required to publish a resolution process for students with transfer complaints. If students are not satisfied with the response from an institution, they may complain to WSAC, which has a staff transfer liaison. The number of transfer issues continues to decline with very few complaints in 2016.

Coordinate with Academic Credit for Prior Learning Workgroup

The JTC plans to coordinate with the Academic Credit for Prior Learning workgroup to address issues related to earning credit for prior experience. For example, institutions do not use the same language to refer to this type of credit. Terms include “prior learning assessment,” “nontraditional learning,” and “credit for prior learning.” Legislation refers to this type of credit as “Academic Credit for Prior Learning.” WSAC and its transfer partners are moving to adopt common terminology. In addition, JTC would like to ensure that this type of credit is clearly noted on student transcripts so that receiving institutions can correctly account for students’ transfer credits.

Follow Reverse Transfer Agreements

Reverse transfer is a new national movement without much precedent, so Washington may have the ability to lead the country in this new initiative. Some of the areas to follow for reverse transfer between public baccalaureates and CTCs include:

- Qualifications to be eligible for a reverse transfer degree.
- How to choose which CTC will award an associate degree if a student attended more than one CTC.
- Reverse transfer for students who come from out-of-state.
- How to share student data between institutions under FERPA regulations.

⁸ Reports include the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges Academic Year Report, the Council of Presidents’ Statewide Public Four-Year Dashboard, and the Independent Colleges of Washington

Research the Role of Transfer in Adult Reengagement

The 2015 Roadmap recommends reengaging adults with some credit but no degree. WSAC and its partners will work to identify students who are near completion and connect them to degree programs and resources that will help them succeed. Supporting the transfer of previously earned credits will play a major role in helping these students earn a credential.

Examine Effects of Guided Pathways Initiative on Transfer

Starting in the 2016-17 academic year, five of Washington's CTCs received grant funding to implement Guided Pathways.^h This is a nationwide initiative to make associate degree completion more efficient through increased advising, simpler degree pathways, and improved monitoring of student success—particularly for underrepresented students. Guided Pathways should increase retention and degree completion by helping students reduce the amount of time it takes to earn their degree. It should also help students choose an appropriate major more quickly. Guided Pathways could be a resource to increase the number of Washington adults earning a credential while preparing them for living-wage jobs in high-demand sectors.

^h <http://www.collegespark.org/page/135/Guided+Pathways>

CONCLUSION

Washington leads the country in a number of transfer measures. Strong transfer policies are a key component of meeting the state's postsecondary attainment goal: 70 percent of Washington adults having a postsecondary credential.

Achieving the state's attainment goal will require continued collaboration and new levels of integration and focus within our educational system. We continue to move forward as an educational system with a comprehensive, integrated approach to transfer across all sectors for all students. We have made substantial progress and, as evidenced by this report, all those involved in transfer of students in Washington are committed to continuous improvement.

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ENDNOTES

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