“On My Own”

The Challenge and Promise of Building Equitable STEM Transfer Pathways

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A Pressing National Issue

Transfer aspiration-attainment gap

- 80% vs. 25% overall
- 77.9% vs. 10.2% in STEM

STEM policy narratives portraying community colleges as “mid-skills” providers

Equitable Transfer Pathways
Under the leadership of Presidents Huftalin and Watkins, 2019 kicked-off growth and increased collaboration between Salt Lake Community College and the University of Utah in transfer articulation activities. Early in the year, stakeholders from SLCC and the U of U met to candidly and collaboratively discuss the current status of transfer and articulation between institutions. The charge moving forward was to create shared transfer and articulation design principles, common transfer term definitions, and a template for articulation agreements. The culmination of these activities was the first annual Transfer Summit held at the Alumni House at the University of Utah where faculty and academic administrators from SLCC and the U of U met for a day to engage in the challenging and rewarding work surrounding transfer. Moving forward, we strive to listen to students and to support faculty to strengthen, develop, and document transfer pathways.
In your work that supports transfer (students)—

· What is most rewarding?

· What remains challenging?

· Any blind spot??
On My Own, based on a longitudinal mixed methods research project (2014-2019)

Two-year colleges with a transfer mission in a midwestern state

About 1,670 Students beginning in STEM programs or courses

Data sources

- Survey data: Expanding STEM Talent Survey
- Administrative and transcript records
- Student interviews
When they started in Fall 2014

High transfer aspirations

73.3% started in Fall 2014 with the initial goal of transferring into a four-year program.
Four years later—

Four Momentum Trajectories
You do have to search for it yourself.
—Jordan [linear upward]

I've already wasted the last six years trying to figure out what I want to do.
—Seamus [Detoured]

I can’t make this decision on my own.
—Katy [Taking a break]

I have to get a job first.
—Kanda [Deferred]

Same Aspirations, Different Trajectories
Momentum Trajectories and Embedded Inequities

- Linear upward
  - Less than $30,000: 23%
  - $30,000 to $59,999: 28%
  - $60,000 to $89,999: 32%
  - $90,000 to $119,999: 22%
  - $120,000 to $149,999: 28%
  - $150,000 and above: 29%

- Detoured
  - Less than $30,000: 19%
  - $30,000 to $59,999: 23%
  - $60,000 to $89,999: 28%
  - $90,000 to $119,999: 10%
  - $120,000 to $149,999: 5%
  - $150,000 and above: 4%

- Deferred
  - Less than $30,000: 16%
  - $30,000 to $59,999: 13%
  - $60,000 to $89,999: 33%
  - $90,000 to $119,999: 29%
  - $120,000 to $149,999: 16%
  - $150,000 and above: 26%

- Taking a break
  - Less than $30,000: 26%
  - $30,000 to $59,999: 19%
  - $60,000 to $89,999: 10%
  - $90,000 to $119,999: 10%
  - $120,000 to $149,999: 3%
  - $150,000 and above: 2%
Momentum Trajectories and Embedded Inequities

% Students of color in full transfer-intending sample: 29%
% White students in full transfer-intending sample: 71%

% Students of color on taking a break trajectory: 37%
% White students on taking a break trajectory: 63%
Momentum Trajectories and Embedded Inequities

49% 51%
59% 42%
63% 37%
58% 43%

Linear upward  Detoured  Deferred  Taking a break

First-generation student  Non-first-generation student
Underrepresented and Underserved: Gender and Racial Disparities

- Support for transfer
  - Black -
  - Latinx -
  - White +

- Transfer service usage
  - Female -
  - Male +

Momentum toward STEM transfer
Multiple Facets of *On My Own*

**Classroom & Advising Spaces**
- Pedagogical Issues
- Climate Issues
- Relational Issues
- Structural Issues

**Curricular Domain**
- Articulation
- Accessibility of Transferable Options
- Collaboration Between 2- & 4-year

**Societal Structure & Forces**
- Financial Concerns
- Disparities in K-12 Education
- Racial Inequalities
- Social Biases
- Inequitable Funding of Community College
- Stigma of Community College

*Student Motivational Momentum*
What does **supporting** ALL transfer students mean and look like?

- **Not assuming SAMENESS**
- **Disrupting our assumptions**
- **Never-ending, reflective journey**

**TOWARD A CULTURE IN SUPPORT OF EQUITY**
What do Equitable STEM Transfer Pathways mean and look like?
Family

Work

Transfer-sending

Transfer-receiving

Affordable
Flexible
Seamless

Articulation
Alignment & sequence
Credit transfer into majors

Relationship building
Guidance & support
Teaching & advising

Equitable
Accessible
Ready for a (post-)COVID-19 era?

Do our efforts serve all transfer students justly by addressing their unique needs? WHO is still NOT supported by our efforts, and how can we CHANGE that?

(On My Own, p. 170)

Additional Sources:
- Colleges Should Cultivate More Equitable Transfer Pathways (Xueli Wang)
- Author discusses her new book on STEM transfer students (Scott Jaschik)
Supporting STEM transfer students amid crisis

**Going the extra mile**
- Support, flexibility, extended timelines

**Beyond the numbers**
- Transfer-receiving institutions respond to and creatively account for transfers

**STEM transfers as assets**
- They are the future—STEM professionals address community needs
- They are the community—Positioned to serve local societal good
Thank you and Questions?

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