**THE ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

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**Editor: Don Hossler Associate Editor: Chad Christensen**

**Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and Planning**

**Editor’s Reflection:**

The evidence continues to mount that enrollment management is emerging as a major administrative function at colleges and universities around the country. Indeed many of the concepts and strategies associated with enrollment management are increasingly being employed around the globe. With rising costs and more focus on rankings, many U.S. based enrollment consulting firms are gaining traction in the United Kingdom. Central European University in Budapest, Hungary has a senior enrollment manager who will be sharing her efforts at the next annual AACRAO sponsored SEM Conference. A recent news article from China indicated that Chinese universities are starting to use campus-based financial aid to attract top scoring students on the national entrance examination test.

### Another indicator, though a nascent one at the moment, is that there is now a new journal that focuses exclusively on enrollment management: Enrollment Management Journal: Student Access, Finance, and Success in Higher Education. It is very hard to start a new journal and garner strong submissions from researchers and scholarly practitioners and thus it is too soon to know whether or not this new outlet will emerge as a strong journal for professionals. To date College and University remains the most consistent source of thoughtful pieces related to enrollment management though even this journal seldom includes a high quality empirical study. Nevertheless, who knows how this new entry for our field will mature over time. Readers can take a look by going to this url: <http://www.tgslc.org/emj/>.

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### Evidence of the growing presence of the enrollment management function can also be found at the conference, *Defining Enrollment in the 21st Century: Understanding Our Students and Our Commitments,* hosted by Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice at the University of Southern California. This event merits attention for two reasons. First, as far as we know, USC is the first university housed center devoted to inquiry into institutionally-based enrollment practices as well as to exploring the impact of public policy on students and postsecondary institutions. In addition, this conference demonstrated the growing complexity of thinking about enrollment management. Conference sessions ranged from discussions of the limits of traditional admissions testing, to the relationship between high school curriculum and student access and success, to more focused presentations on institutionally-based strategies in areas such as financial aid and student retention. In many respects, this conference “got it right.” It attempted to simultaneously examine how public policy affects institutions, the role institutions and enrollment managers should aspire to in order to advance the public good that has long been associated with the mission of postsecondary education, while also acknowledging the important role that large and small institutional policies and practices play in influencing institutional policies and practices.

We posit that there will be increasing focus on these intersections. During the most recent re-authorization of the Higher Education Act there were several efforts to bring about changes in financial aid policies and accountability measures that would have a large impact upon the enrollment management practices of institutions. The report of the Rethinking Student Aid Study Group, [***Fulfilling the Commitment: Recommendations for Reforming Federal Student Aid***](http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/rethinking-stu-aid-fulfilling-commitment-recommendations.pdf)***,*** has been released recently. This report recommends many significant changes in federal financial aid policy that will alter campus financial aid and other enrollment policies and programs. Additionally there is growing public pressure on two- and four-year institutions to more successfully graduate students and to improve the transfer and articulation function between these two sectors. Most of these pressures are coming from state policy makers, indeed several states have mandated transfer and articulation agreements among their public institutions and an increasing number of states are changing their state funding formulas for the public sector and giving more funding to institutions with higher persistence and graduation rates. The enrollment management function sits at the nexus of many of these public policy changes. It is important for enrollment managers to both stay abreast of these trends, as well as to be prepared to play advocacy roles, as many of these questions are considered by policy makers.

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In this issue of the *Enrollment Management Review* we focus primarily on community colleges and the transfer function. Community college enrollment concerns have become a pressing issue for both campus-based enrollment managers and for public policy makers at the state and federal level.

**Anderson, G. M., Sun, J. C., & Alfonso, M. (2006).Effectiveness of Statewide Articulation Agreements on the Probability of Transfer: A Preliminary Policy Analysis. *The Review of Higher Education*, 29(3), 261-291*.***

In this article the authors examine the efficacy of articulation agreements and also look to other policies that may aid in increasing student transfers between two-year and four-year institutions.

The article begins with a historical look at transfer and community college growth. Between 1960 and 1970 the number of community colleges increased by two and a half times which, as they note, is at a rate of almost one new college per week. The growth of community colleges has continued, but unfortunately the rates of transfer have not. Literature is highlighted which estimates that transfer from two- to four-year institutions went from 57% in 1970-1 to 28% in 1984-5. In 2003, the transfer rate was estimated to be 28.9%. For enrollment professionals these data paint a bleak picture of the movement of students along the higher education continuum. These trends create a compelling rationale for why both two- and four-year institutions should strive to improve the efficacy of transfer systems.

The authors studied national data sets from 1989, 1992 and 1994. They found that when controlling for student demographics, SES, and enrollment characteristics, students who attend a community college in a state with mandated articulation agreements have the same probability of transferring as those students in states that do not. However, the authors note that their study focused on only a small sample of states, which had articulation agreements in place in 1991, the same time frame of their national data sets. In 1991 only twelve states had mandated articulation agreements. Since that time the number of agreements has increased significantly. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of current articulation agreements has not been examined, but transfer rates continue to be low and there is good reason to question the effectiveness of more recent agreements. The findings from this study suggest that articulation agreements alone are not a solution for transfer success. Other support policies and practices must be put in place to support these articulation agreements.

Although it is not the primary focus of this paper, another important finding from this study is that students who aspire to attain a bachelor’s degree prior to enrolling have a significantly higher probability of transferring. Equally important, the authors found that student aspirations to transfer all but erased any disadvantages of a low socioeconomic status. This suggests that early postsecondary outreach to low income families, along with enhanced academic preparation, helps to ameliorate inequalities associated with growing up in low SES families. In addition to early outreach and strong preparation, the authors also recommend that states and institutions consider creating financial aid packages tied to both two- and four-year colleges. This can help to lessen the financial burden in attending school. This study also reported that students who completed a traditional high school program were shown to have better transfer rates, thus the authors suggest that students should stay in a traditional high school rather than drop-out and obtain a GED.

Overall this article provides sound insights into articulation agreements and their effectiveness. Though more recent research on articulation agreements would strengthen its use it nonetheless provides an important look into student transfer.

**Anderson, G. M., Alfonso, M., Sun, J.C. (2006). Rethinking Cooling Out at**

**Public Community Colleges: An Examination of Fiscal and Demographic**

**Trends in Higher Education and the Rise of Statewide Articulation**

**Agreements. *Teachers College Record*, 108(3), 422 – 451*.***

In this article Anderson, Alfonso and Sun provide a thoughtful examination on the efficacy of articulation agreements in promoting student transfer between two- and four-year colleges. This is an essential topic as most states now have some form of articulation protocols in place to aid in the transfer of students. Such agreements are often described as a panacea for student transfer and for increasing access and equity. However, the authors question the claim that articulation agreements actually promote educational opportunities for underrepresented and disadvantaged students. Rather, they suggest that community colleges and articulation agreements have been used by states to counteract declining state appropriations allotted to higher education and that the current system may actually increase the gap for baccalaureate attainment for students with low socioeconomic status. For enrollment professionals this article is salient as retention and persistence of minority and transfer students is becoming a key component in enrollment management plans at many institutions of higher education.

The article begins with a literature review describing why community colleges and articulation agreements have grown considerably from the 1980s to present. For enrollment professionals this provides important historical context as to why articulation agreements are so prevalent today. Next, the authors consider fiscal trends in higher education and how such trends have affected the growth of articulation agreements. They note that between 1985 and 1995, 23 states adopted articulation agreements. During this same time period state appropriations for higher education in most states leveled off or even declined. The authors posit that growth in the number of community colleges and in articulation agreements were used to maintain access to higher education at a lower cost while state budgets tightened. In essence, state policy makers permitted four-year public colleges to increase tuition because students who lacked the financial or academic ability to attend could gain access through community colleges. While this may sound like an attractive policy shift for community colleges, another important change in public policy has taken place in recent years that now places many community colleges in a difficult situation. The accountability movement and the increased use of performance-based funding schemes have resulted in increased negative press for two-year institutions in many states.

Most of the new accountability schemes and performance-based funding plans use measures such as student transfer and graduation to determine institutional effectiveness. As the authors note, because most community colleges enroll a disproportionate number of economically disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, they are almost always going to have lower rates of transfer and graduation. The authors suggest that if community colleges are to receive funds based upon graduation and transfer rates then this may eventually lead to a tier-based system of community colleges. Two-year colleges that gain funding will likely be those located in more affluent areas where the students are better prepared and less likely to be economically disadvantaged. These colleges are also more likely to enroll students who plan to attend four-year colleges. Thus, these accountability measures may result in institutions that enroll students who need higher levels of support services receiving lower levels of funding.

Unfortunately, the authors do not offer suggestions on how to remedy the current situation. Rather, the article focuses on the ineffectiveness of articulation agreements and how these agreements may eventually widen the gap for access to a bachelor’s degree. Nevertheless, with the growing focus on transfer and articulation, enrollment professionals at two- and four-year institutions need to understand these policy forces and their impact upon the students and institutions at which they work.

**Dougherty, K. J. & Kienzl, G. S. (2006). It's Not Enough to Get Through the Open Door: Inequalities by Social Background in Transfer from Community Colleges to Four-Year Colleges *Teachers College Record,* 108(3), 452-487.**

In this article, Dougherty and Kienzl discuss factors that make it difficult for community college students to transfer to four-year institutions and suggest ways to make transfer more successful. The authors discuss an important topic that affects all enrollment professionals: the retention of minority students. They discuss the complicated barriers that underrepresented and disadvantaged students at community colleges must overcome to successfully transfer and complete a bachelor’s degree.

The authors begin by noting the economic importance of attaining a bachelor’s degree. When compared to high school graduates, baccalaureate degree holders see a 30% - 40% increase in yearly income. Their message is clear: for those who attain a bachelor’s degree more employment opportunities and higher incomes are available. As enrollment professionals this message emphasizes the importance of transfer and retention for all students.

Using large national databases, the authors identified student characteristics that were associated with higher probabilities of transferring from a two-year to a four-year college or university. They looked at precollege academic traits, socioeconomic status, age, race-ethnicity, gender, educational aspirations, enrollment status and external demands such as familial obligations and full-time employment. Their findings suggest that students whose parents come from high socioeconomic status and with advanced degrees are most likely to transfer to a four-year institution. The authors examined the effects of ethnicity on student transfer behaviors and found that Hispanic and African-American students were just as likely to transfer when compared to white students of similar gender, age, and SES. They also found that both men and women had similar transfer rates, however, students over the age of 30 were much less likely to transfer to a four-year institution. The authors posit that this is because of competing responsibilities such as full-time jobs and families.

The outcomes of this study are important to enrollment professionals. Students who are economically disadvantaged face far greater difficulties in transferring than do students with other characteristics. This is disconcerting since community colleges are viewed as institutions that promote access and equity in higher education and create pathways to baccalaureate degree attainment. Yet, if it is predominantly students from high SES that are successfully transferring then community colleges face great difficulty in accomplishing their mission.

Dougherty and Kienzl end the article with some brief recommendations that may help increase student transfer rates. They note that it is not enough for community college students to get through the open doors of two-year colleges; rather, students must be successful in meeting their educational aspirations of transferring to a four-year institution. The authors recommend that high school preparation must be improved and that transfer counseling must be strengthened for occupational majors to aid in the acceptance at and transfer to four-year institutions. Of course it is axiomatic that four-year institutions need to also do a better job of counseling and advising transfer students. Enrollment professionals can look to this study to determine how their own campuses can make changes to help more students transfer.

**Jobs for the Future. (2008, July). Test Drive: Six States Pilot Better Ways to Measure and Compare Community Colleges*.* *Achieving the Dream Policy Brief.* Retrieved August 17, 2008 from** <http://www.achievingthedream.org/PUBLICPOLICY/POLICYBRIEFSPUBS/default.tp>**.**

**In recent years substantive criticisms have been leveled at the use of persistence and graduation rates used for four-year colleges and universities to measure the effectiveness of two-year colleges. Members of The Achieving the Dream Project, a** multiyear national initiative to help more community college students succeed, recently released a policy paper that proposes a new set of metrics to assess the effectiveness of community colleges. This new approach proposes to broaden the number of indicators in order to capture the complexity of the enrollment patterns of students enrolled in community colleges. This policy brief is important to enrollment managers at community colleges as well as to four-year institutions that seek to support and enroll transfers from community colleges.

This policy brief makes the case for seven measures of student success. Some measures are identical to current federal methods for tracking students and others are new. They include the following (existing policies are followed by an asterisk)

1. The number of first-time students enrolled each fall.\*
2. Only include students who plan to earn a degree or certificate. \*
3. Include full- *and part-time* students.
4. Success outcomes can include: earn a degree or certificate, transferred without a degree or certificate, still enrolled in year six with at least 30 credits.
5. Time frame to measure degree completion would be six years.
6. Data are tracked at the state level for community colleges rather than across single institutions because so many students enrolled in community colleges transfer to other community colleges.
7. Disaggregate these results by full- and part-time students.

This report provides a solid rationale for these proposals, as well as examples of the results based on using these measures in the six states that participated in this effort. These results reveal ranges of student success (earning a degree, transferring, or remaining enrolled) from 33 to 51%. These figures are considerably higher than traditional reports of persistence to graduation at community colleges. The report presents a set of interesting and useful approaches to overcome current federal methods for reporting student enrollment, persistence, graduation, and success rates for students enrolled in community colleges.

**Briefly Noted:**

**Epstein, J.P. & Parrott, S. (2008). For Those Without Billions: Navigating the Wave of Dramatic Aid Awarding Changes. *College & University, 83(4)*, 42-46.**

In keeping with the introduction to this issue of the *Enrollment Management Review*, this essay nicely summarizes the recent changes that many of the most selective private institutions, as well as a small number of publics, have enacted to reduce student loan debt. After reviewing these changes, the authors offer a brief set of observations and recommendations which includes the following:

* Because these institutions are very selective, the number of students who will actually benefit is quite small.
* The schools that have enacted these policies can afford to do so.
* Pay attention to what your competitors are doing.
* Pay attention to the extent to which the types of students that you attract are being influenced by programs like these.

## Art and Science Group and the College Board. (2008, May 21). Millennials Appear More Alike than Different from Their Parents' Generation. *Student Poll,* 6(2).Extracted on August 16, 2008: <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/data-reports-research/trends/studentpoll/millennial>.

## At the risk of sounding cynical, we are always suspect of reports that suggest that the underlying values and attitudes of current (or prospective) college students have changed dramatically from the previous generation. This is not to suggest that a traumatic event such as 9/11, or the growth of the internet cannot alter specific ideas about international affairs, or the use of the world wide web, but in general research in disciplines such as sociology and psychology suggest that to a large extent we are the products of our socialization and formal and informal educational experiences. This recent issue of *Student Poll* reports that despite all of the hype about the Millennial generation that these students do not differ that much from their parents’ generation – the generation that raised, socialized, and educated them!

## This issue of *Student Poll* reports remarkable consistency over time in the attitudes of students toward the academic reputation of an institution, the importance of securing good jobs, and affordable tuition. Even in areas where there has been change such as the increase importance of becoming wealthy, of raising a family, or in receiving financial aid, students’ values have not changed much since the 1990s. We are not suggesting that students are not susceptible to new approaches to marketing, or that niche groups of students whose values and attitudes really are distinctive do not emerge over periods of time. We are suggesting, however, that the next time enrollment managers see a new book or monograph with a title that implies that the next generation is profoundly different than the previous one that they read the contents with a healthy dose of skepticism.