

COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO UNIVERSITY TRANSFER

FACT SHEET

National Transfer Figures

- While 81% of entering community college students stated a degree goal of a bachelor's or higher (Horn & Skomsvold, 2011), only 32% transfer out within six years (Shapiro et al., 2017). This statement of degree goals may vary, however, depending on the transfer/career program focus of a state's public community college system. Still, a sizable gap exists between aspirations and successful transfer.
- Forty-two percent of community college students who transferred to a university received a 4-year degree within six years of initial community college enrollment (just 13% of the starting cohort). Additionally, lower income students are less likely to transfer to a university and less likely to earn a 4-year degree (Shapiro et al., 2017).
- Based on 2015-2016 completions, 49% of baccalaureate degree recipients had attended a public community college in the 10 years prior (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2017).
- Community colleges, while accounting for 42% of all undergraduate enrollment in the United States, have greater representation of students of color, with 44% of Black and 56% of Hispanic/Latina/o college students enrolling in the sector (Ma & Baum, 2016).

Conclusion: If we want more baccalaureate degrees, and greater diversity among degree recipients, successful community college transfer is critical.



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North Carolina by the Numbers: Educational Attainment

TABLE 1: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, AGES 25+

Education Level	N.C.	U.S.
Less than 9th Grade*	5.2%	5.6%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma*	8.5%	7.4%
HS Graduate or Equivalent*	26.4%	27.5%
Some College, No Degree*	21.8%	21.0%
Associate's Degree*	9.1%	8.2%
Bachelor's Degree	18.8%	18.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree*	10.2%	11.5%

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (2016); *NC and US are statistically different, $p < .01$; analysis conducted with ACS Statistical Testing Tool.



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TABLE 2: BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Race/Ethnicity	N.C.	U.S.
White	31.7%	31.6%
White, not Hispanic or Latina/o*	32.6%	33.8%
Black*	19.4%	20.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	13.2%	14.0%
Asian*	53.9%	52.1%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander*	9.8%	16.2%
Some Other Race Alone*	9.0%	10.8%

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (2016); *NC and US are statistically different, p < .01; analysis conducted with ACS Statistical Testing Tool.

Conclusion: While North Carolina matches national figures on baccalaureate attainment, there is lower attainment for racial/ethnic subgroups, notably Black and Hispanic/Latina/o individuals. With community colleges as institutions that enroll a significant number of Black and Hispanic/Latina/o students (Ma & Baum, 2016), clear transfer pathways are critical.

North Carolina by the Numbers: Meeting Workforce Needs

In *Figure 1*, Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl (2013) project that, by 2020 in North Carolina, 67% of jobs will require some level of postsecondary education, which is higher than the national figure of 65%.

Conclusion: North Carolina has a shortfall in the some college/2-yr/certificate and baccalaureate degree categories. Thus, it will be important for community college students to earn credentials and have baccalaureate opportunities.

Transfer Patterns & Attainment

Figure 2 shows that from 2004 to 2014, there has been sizable growth in the number of successful transfers within the state, with a 53% increase from community colleges to UNC institutions, and North Carolina community colleges saw a 44% increase in lateral transfers. More than 4 out of 5 North Carolina community college students transferring to an in-state nonprofit institution are transferring “vertically” (from community college to a university), while

FIG 1: PROJECTED WORKFORCE NEEDS 2020 BY EDUCATION LEVEL; CORRESPONDING NORTH CAROLINA ATTAINMENT LEVELS (2016)

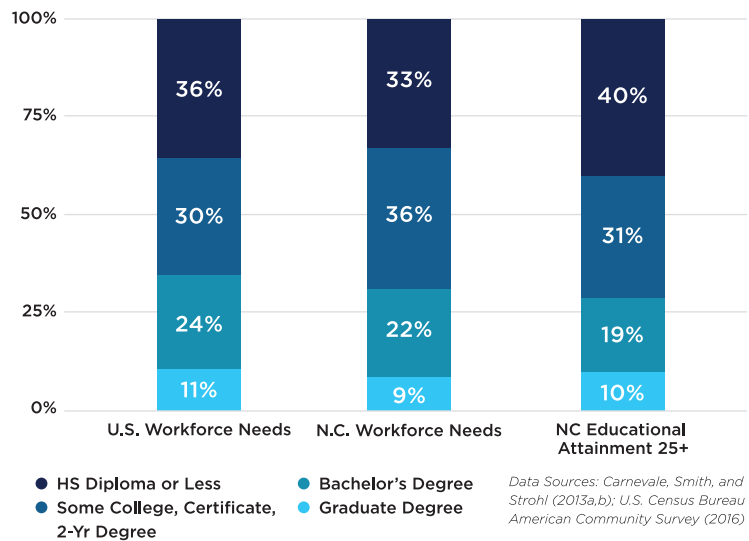
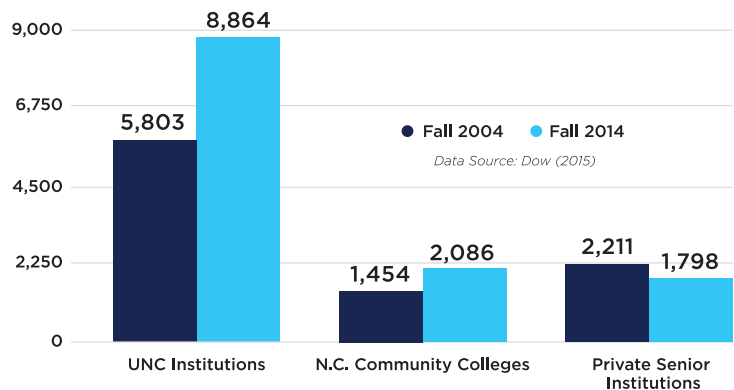


FIG 2: NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENT DESTINATIONS (2004/2014)



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just 16% are transferring “laterally” to another community college (Figure 3).

Note: North Carolina figures only account for transfer within the state. Private university category includes only private senior institutions and Bible colleges tracked by UNC. When using national figures reported from the National Student Clearinghouse, the authors calculated percentages excluding transfer to for-profit two- and four-year colleges to draw more reasonable comparisons.

Conclusion: North Carolina’s status as a vertical transfer state — 84% compared with 61% nationally — is evidence of already strong transfer traditions.

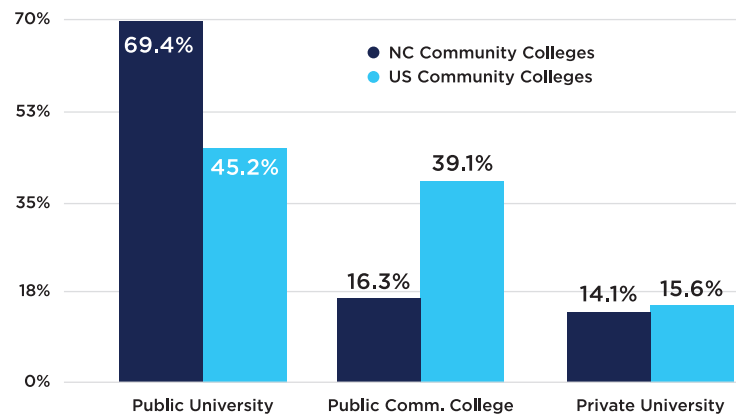
Figure 4 shows that the largest group of transfers into UNC System institutions enter without a degree and more than 30 credit hours (38%) followed by those with the Associate in Arts or Associate in Science (A.A./A.S.) (31%).

Conclusion: The greatest percent growth in UNC transfers is among those with degrees, including the “other associate degree” category. Associate in Applied Science articulation is an opportunity to build on that momentum.

Credit Loss

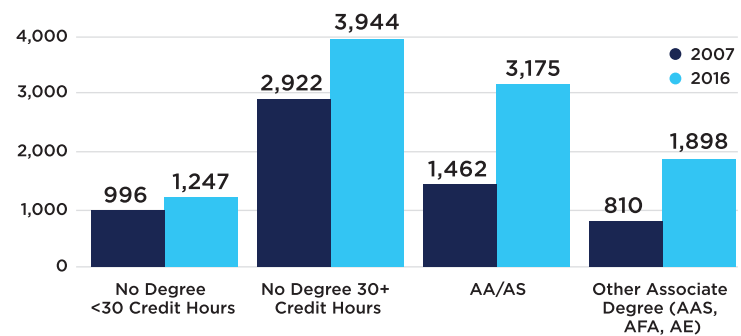
- Community college transfer students are losing 43% of their credit, equivalent to 13 credit hours on average (GAO, 2017). That is approximately equivalent to one semester of expense, debt, and/or Pell eligibility.
- Through an analysis of credit loss (credits that did not transfer) in North Carolina using data from institutions participating in the Credit When It’s Due project, Giani (2017) found that credit loss figures were lower than GAO’s national figure. The average in North Carolina was 4.9 credits, or 7.2% of completed credits. However, White students had less credit loss than Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latina/o, and other racial/ethnic subgroups. It is important to note, however, that 72.6% of students did not experience any credit loss at all.

FIG 3: COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER DESTINATION U.S./NORTH CAROLINA COMPARISON (2015)



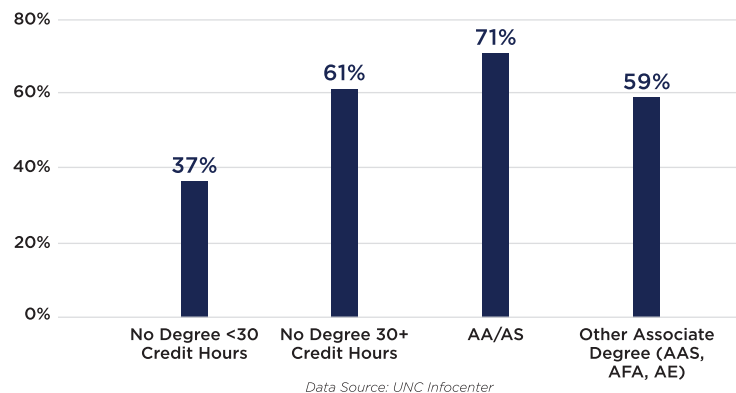
Data Sources: Dow (2015); Shapiro et al. (2015)

FIG 4: NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO UNC INSTITUTION TRANSFER STUDENTS BY CATEGORY



Data Source: UNC Infocenter

FIG 5: 4-YR BACCALAUREATE COMPLETION RATES FOLLOWING TRANSFER TO UNC INSTITUTION BY CATEGORY (2012 Cohort)



Data Source: UNC Infocenter



- Those who lost the greatest number of credits were individuals earning certificates (11 credit hours or 12.4%) and those with the Associate in Applied Science (13 credit hours or 14%), as compared to 7% (or 6 credit hours) for those with the A.A. or A.S.

Conclusion: Credit loss is a key measure of inefficiency and an important consideration when serving the groups of students who experience the greatest loss upon transfer.

Baccalaureate Completion

Figure 5 displays the four-year baccalaureate completion rates following transfer to a UNC System institution from a North Carolina Community College. Not surprising, those who transferred with more than 30 hours and those with an A.A./A.S. had the highest graduation rates while those with other degrees, such as the workforce development-focused A.A.S., have lower baccalaureate degree attainment in the four-year period.

Conclusion: Although the data presented are limited to a four-year completion timeline, the earning of associate degrees appears to offer a potential leverage point for North Carolina.

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