



Fact Sheet

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BACKGROUND: COLLEGE TRANSFER AND COVID-19

As a result of COVID-19, many thousands of college students are expected to transfer to an institution closer to home, or one that is more affordable during the harsh economic times. This reality, coupled with long-standing barriers to efficient college transfer, which disproportionately impact low-income students and students of color, will often result in higher costs and completion delays for students. To help address these issues, a growing number of colleges, universities, and educational associations nationwide are calling for widespread adoption of the learning outcomes-based articulation model for lower-division general education established by the Interstate Passport Network (IPN). The program is based at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Below are recent articles, data points, and sources that provide additional perspective:

1. 38% of the 2.8 million students entering college in Fall 2011 transferred at least once in six years.
 - [Signature Report 15: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#)
2. Of the college students who transferred in Fall 2011, 27% transferred to an institution in a different state.
 - [Signature Report 15: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#)
3. For a variety of reasons - including differences in general education requirements – students who transferred colleges between 2004-2009 lost an estimated 43% of their credits, on average.
 - [Higher Education: Students Need More Information to Help Reduce Challenges in Transferring College Credits: U.S. Government Accountability Office](#)
 - [The American Council on Education \(ACE\) also has a study under way to learn more about the extent of credit loss and the reasons for it.](#)

4. In Fall 2011, 48.5% of Black and 51.4% of Hispanic students enrolled in a community college to begin their college careers, compared to 34.6% of White and 34.2% of Asian students, which means under-represented students disproportionately need to transfer to complete a bachelor's degree.
 - [Signature Report 15: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#)
5. Community colleges expand the country's postsecondary capacity, serving as the entry point to higher education for over 40% of U.S. undergraduates. Yet only 25% of those students transfer to a four-year college within five years, and only 17% of them complete a BA within six years after transfer.
 - [What we know about Transfer: Community College Research Center](#)
6. Since January 2020, just over one-fifth of students have changed their first-choice school, citing cost and location as their top reasons for doing so.
 - [McKinsey & Company, "COVID-19 and US higher education enrollment: Preparing leaders for fall"](#)
7. 13% of current college students have delayed graduation due to COVID-19.
 - [National Bureau of Economic Research "The Impact of COVID-19 on Student Experiences and Expectations: Evidence from a Survey"](#)
8. 48% of students would be likely to defer their education or look for a different school if the institution they are attending requires remote study in Fall 2020 semester.
 - [McKinsey & Company, "COVID-19 and US higher education enrollment: Preparing leaders for fall"](#)
9. 3.48 is the average post-transfer GPA for college students transferring with a Passport versus 2.93 GPA for those transferring without a Passport.
 - [Interstate Passport Annual Report, 2018-19: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education](#)
10. Visit the Interstate Passport [Transfer Data by State Site](#) for state-by-state transfer statistics and more detailed numbers based on type of institution.

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INTERSTATE PASSPORT®

Interstate Passport is a program based at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) that enables block transfer of complete lower-division general education attainment based on a set of multistate faculty-developed learning outcomes instead of on specific courses and number of credits. After years of research and development, the Interstate Passport Network, whose members are two-year and four-year non-profit colleges and universities, was launched in July 2016. In its first three years of operation, members awarded 38,800 Passports to students. Current membership has grown to 60 institutions in 17 states. For more information please visit interstatepassport.wiche.edu.