



Supporting First-Generation Students Through the Community College Transition

Dulce Grant, Alumni Success Counselor
Downtown College Prep
San Jose, CA



Our Mission

Downtown College Prep prepares first-generation students for college success. We believe every student has the potential to succeed.

1750

Students in
grades 5-12

4

Middle School &
High School
Campuses

85%

Low-
Income

96%

Matriculate
to college



Community College Enrollment Data

2Y and 4Y College Matriculation in First Year of College *DCP Classes 2014-2018*

2Y Enrolled	4Y Enrolled
47%	49%

-Compared to 48% of first-generation students who enrolled in 2Y nationally
Source: NCES, 2011-2012.



Community College Enrollment Data

Bachelor's Degree Completion Rate Based on First-Year Institution *DCP Classes 2009-2012*

2Y Enrolled	4Y Enrolled
9%	49%

-Compared to 8% of first-generation students nationally who started at a 2Y and earned their Bachelor's degree.

Source: NCES, Beginning Postsecondary Students, 2003/2009.



Discussion

Take 1 minute to answer the following:

When is community college the best option for a first-generation student?



First-Generation Student Profile

- Student was not accepted to a 4-year university as a senior.
 - Did not meet A-G, GPA, or test requirements by end of senior year.
- Student **NEEDS** to stay home.
 - After multiple interventions, family is not ready to let them move out for college.
 - Student has other responsibilities at home that do not allow them to completely move away for college.
- Student wants to use community college as a strategic way to increase their chances of being accepted into competitive programs/colleges they were not accepted to as first-years.
- Financially cannot afford to attend 4-year straight out of high school.
 - Detailed financial evaluation showed community college is best option financially.



How are we preparing first-generation students for community college success?



Reframe Community College

- Challenge offering community college as default for first-gen students.
 - a. Students should be exposed to ALL their higher education options and should be given tools to explore them all.
- Talk about community college as a pathway to a bachelor's degree.
 - a. Empower students to choose a 4-year school they'd like to transfer to and encourage them to socialize it as they share where they will attend college.
- Even when community college is the only option, give students agency to choose which college, program, and pathway is best for them.
- Just as with 4-year college enrollment, celebrate students and families committing to 2-year paths!



Plan for Success

1. Be strategic with exposure.
 - Be strategic about **when** students will be exposed to community college. Students should not make a decision until second semester of senior year. *See College Success Map for reference.
2. Implement community college enrollment process into counseling curriculum.
 - Similar to applying to 4-year universities, the community college system can be daunting and complicated. We cannot assume students will know what information to access on their own.



Downtown College Prep: Alumni Success Services Program Community College to 4-Year College Success Map

11th Grade

- Introduce Community College as one of their post-high school options. Information should expose transfer paths, data, and allow for students to ask questions. Information should be shared such that students don't feel they are already making a decision, but rather just exploring whether it might be an option for them.

12th Grade

Beginning of Term

- Students and families complete FAFSA/CA DREAM Act Application

End of the Year Goals

- Information Sessions (*January/February*) from local Community Colleges.
- College Preview Days (*February/ March*): Ideally school sponsored field trips to local community colleges. For the trip: **Preview Day Worksheet**
- Orientation and Assessments (*April*): With community college outreach team and/or support programs, offer orientation and assessment opportunities on high school campus. Ideally, this will also highlight general education and major requirements.
- Support Program Application/Enrollment (*April*): Students apply and follow enrollment steps to be part of support program. Ideally, these will offer summer bridge programs.
- Family Decision Meetings (*April/May*): Student and family will come together to have detailed conversation of all options and to student and make a decision about best fit college.
- Class Registration (*April/May*): In collaboration with the community college support programs offer students support in class selection and registration.
- **Transition Plan** (*May/June*): Students create individualized plan before graduation that include critical tools for transferring.

Summer

- Student participate in summer bridge program or summer classes



Plan for Success

3. Every student should leave with a **Transition Plan**

- This is a key element to helping the student understand what to expect once they are in community college.

Community College Ideal Timeline

While everyone's college path is unique, you can use this timeline as reference to assure you are meeting major milestones!

Year	Beginning of Term	End of the Year Goals	Summer
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolls in support program <input type="checkbox"/> Open UC Transfer Application Planner Account <input type="checkbox"/> 1st meeting with transfer counselor if, major is declared <input type="checkbox"/> Take Intro class to major(s) of interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete your education plan with a counselor <input type="checkbox"/> Declare Major <input type="checkbox"/> If major undeclared, meet with career counselor to help determine major. <input type="checkbox"/> If major declared, second meeting with transfer counselor to begin working on transfer list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete your list of transfer schools! <input type="checkbox"/> Summer Classes/ internship
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Apply to Transfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate and/or transfer! 	
3			



Downtown College Prep: Alumni Success Services Program
Community College Senior Transition Plan

Transfer School List

[Assist](#)

Here are some other things to think about when you're picking the colleges you want to transfer to:

- Majors Offered
- Location
- Support programs/services offered for transfer students
- Transfer GPA requirement
- Impaction/ Level of Competition
- Student Life (clubs, organizations, sports, study abroad opportunities, etc)

Transfer School	Major(s)	GPA Requirement	Class Articulation	Cost of Tuition
1. San Jose State	Political Science, BA	2.3	SICC to SJSU	\$5,742

Notes:



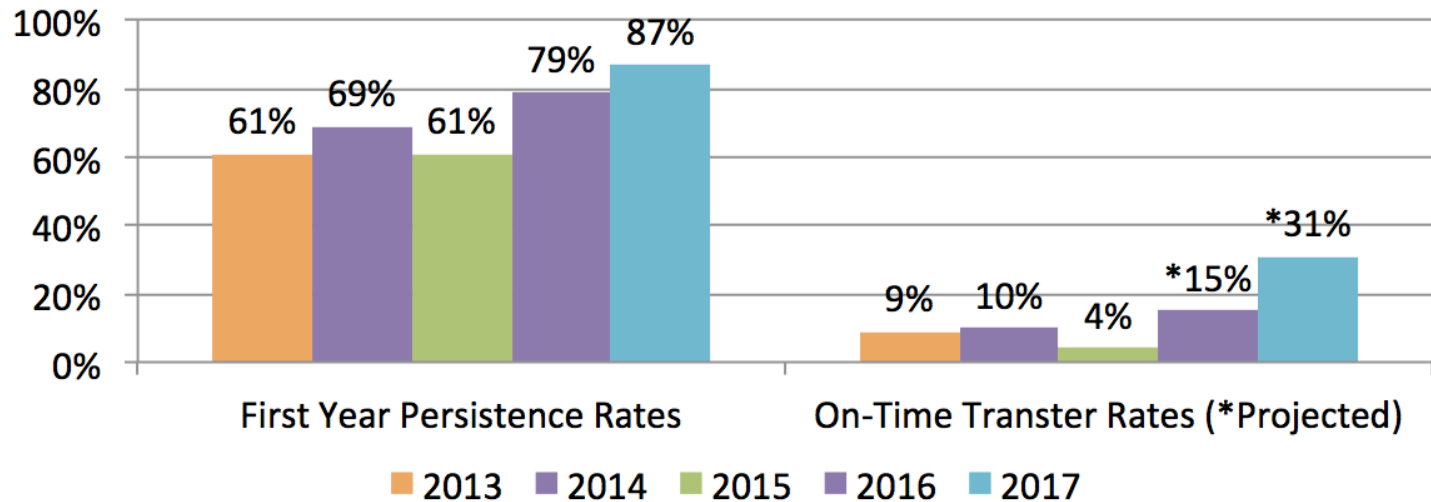
Build Support Systems

- **Connect with support programs at community colleges to host campus visits.**
 - Students can become more familiar with the campus and can learn where they can physically go for support.
- **Bring in the family.**
 - Host meetings where student and family come together to discuss all college options, graduation and transfer commitments, and ideally commit to best fit college.
- **Connect with alumni peers!**
 - When possible, connect graduating seniors with current students going through the process or those have recently gone through it to serve as mentors.



Impact Data

Current Community College Persistence and Transfer Rates for DCP Graduates (2013-2017)





Questions?

Practical tools:
dcp.org/wacac

Dulce Grant, Alumni Success Counselor
Downtown College Prep
dgrant@dcp.org