



Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

Final Report from the
**Commonwealth Transfer
Advisory Group**

June 2008

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*This report is also available on the Massachusetts Department of Higher
Education's website (www.mass.edu).*

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Executive Summary

Transfer—the process whereby a student transfers earned credit from one higher education institution to another—represents a critical pathway toward associate and baccalaureate degree completion. Due to the increasing mobility and diversity of the student population, student transfer is becoming more common and important across the U.S. Nevertheless, there are a host of obstacles in the transfer process which may actually deter students from pursuing degrees or force them to take additional or comparable courses more than once, thereby extending time to degree completion and increasing costs. Consequently, higher education institutions and state and federal policy makers are proactively researching and adopting new approaches to raise the number of students who transfer successfully and to increase the efficiency with which transfer students complete degrees.

Here in Massachusetts, there is a pressing need for a more educated workforce, in particular college graduates with associate and baccalaureate degrees. Without a smooth and efficient transfer system, however, students will drop out of the educational and workforce pipeline. This is particularly important in the Commonwealth as we face demographic changes that are altering the makeup of our future workforce. Moreover, efficient degree completion will result in students graduating with less debt and entering the workforce sooner, therefore contributing to the economic and social prosperity of their families, their communities, and the Commonwealth.

The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE) has statutory authority around the development and implementation of programs to facilitate and foster the transfer of students without loss of academic credit from one public institution to another. The BHE and the public higher education system together have a more than 30-year history of developing and implementing statewide and institutional transfer policies and agreements to facilitate student transfer and degree completion.

The current arrangement includes a collection of different transfer programs which meet specific needs but, taken together in today's increasingly complex environment, contain too many obstacles to ensure smooth transfer. These barriers affect all stakeholders—faculty members, student advisors, higher education administrators, statewide policy makers and, most importantly, students, who are often confronted with confusing or inadequate transfer policies and agreements, vague knowledge on how transfer courses will be accepted and applied to the degree, and inconsistent access to transfer information. For example, some transfer programs guarantee partial or full transfer of credit but not admission, while others guarantee admission but not transfer of credit. Also, all current programs support only community college graduates, despite the fact that a much broader population of students seek to transfer. While increasing numbers of students have taken advantage of these programs, there is a need for a simpler, more transparent system.

As part of its efforts to improve graduation and retention rates in Massachusetts, the BHE found that transfer plays an increasingly large role in student success as measured by degree completion. In April 2007, the BHE created the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group (CTAG) to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues that affect transfer and to make recommendations to the BHE on steps that can be implemented to improve transfer. Specific objectives of the group included evaluating the Commonwealth's current policies and

practices, diagnosing barriers associated with transfer, comparing and assessing policies and practices enacted in other states, recommending policies and practices to remedy transfer barriers, and identifying costs associated with proposed solutions.

The resulting report addresses these objectives and also provides an analysis of current transfer student mobility in Massachusetts, as well as the academic performance of transfer students. There are a number of important trends evident in Massachusetts, some of which underscore the need for a more smooth and efficient student transfer system. No longer limited to simply “vertical” movement from a community college to a state college or to the University of Massachusetts, student transfer today is multidirectional across institutions. In addition, students coming from the community colleges tend to transfer out before earning an associate degree. Also of significance is that transfer students who have demonstrated academic success generally perform as well academically as their non-transfer peers.

The Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group created the following set of guiding principles to guide and frame the recommendations.

- The primary goal of removing obstacles to transfer and creating a coherent transfer process is to **help students succeed** in meeting their educational goals.
- Transfer is a **shared responsibility** amongst higher education institution leaders, faculty, and administrators; by state agencies and legislators, and by students.
- A statewide transfer policy compatible with **academic quality and institutional integrity** can be instrumental in improving student success.
- The student learning outcomes associated with the **general education programs** at the Massachusetts public institutions of higher education as a whole are comparable and are more important than individual courses.
- Any transfer student within the system of Massachusetts public higher education who **earns a degree** should be deemed successful and the respective institutions should be counted as contributors to the student’s educational achievement.
- The development and assessment of program-to-program and course-to-course transfer across institutions is best accomplished by regular and sustainable **faculty collaboration** focused on the establishment of common student learning outcomes.

CTAG developed four overarching goals and subsequent recommendations:

Goal 1: Implement the MassTransfer policy effective Academic Year 2009-10.

MassTransfer is a single, streamlined policy to simplify the transfer process clearing the way for greater student access and success. *MassTransfer* will provide community college graduates who complete designated associate degrees with the benefits of the full transfer and applicability of credit, guaranteed admission, and a tuition discount (with each benefit based on the student’s final grade point average) to linked baccalaureate programs. *MassTransfer* will also provide any student in the Massachusetts public higher education system the intermediate goal of completing a portable general education transfer block which will satisfy the general education requirements across institutions. CTAG recommends that the Department of Higher

Education devote a full-time position to oversee the initiative and that CTAG develop *MassTransfer* implementation guidelines.

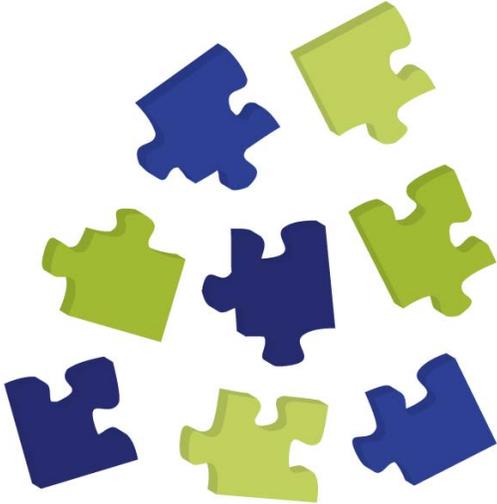
The following graphics represent current transfer policy problems and proposed solutions through the adoption of *MassTransfer*.

Transfer Policy Problems and Proposed Solutions

BEFORE **Statewide Transfer Policies & Institutional Transfer Agreements**

Problems

- Multiple, inconsistent programs**
Some programs only guarantee transfer of partial or all credit; some only guarantee admission
- Exclusive**
Programs are only for community college graduates



AFTER **MassTransfer**

Solutions

- Single, streamlined policy**
Full transfer and applicability of credit, guaranteed admission, and tuition discount
- Inclusive**
Portable general education transfer block across public higher education institutions



Goal 2: Provide easy access to clear, accurate, and cohesive transfer information.

CTAG recommends the creation of a comprehensive centralized transfer website targeted for various audiences which includes a statewide electronic transcript delivery system and an online degree audit system. It is also necessary to carry out an on-going public relations campaign to highlight the state's commitment to higher education access and success through transfer.

Goal 3: Ensure sustained effectiveness and accountability of transfer.

To promote the evaluation of transfer, CTAG supports the community college student success measure which includes transfer currently under development by the Board of Higher Education as well as the development of common statewide definitions of a transfer student, transfer rate, transfer retention rate, and transfer graduation rate. CTAG recommends an annual transfer report be submitted to the Joint Committee on Higher Education.

To ensure ongoing adherence, CTAG recommends that all public higher education institutions review their transfer policies and practices and retract those that impose barriers; establish clear institutional structures which address transfer issues; establish and publish a transfer student appeals process; and designate a transfer ombudsperson who ensures institutional compliance with transfer policies and procedures.

Goal 4: Expand alignment of statewide program-to-program and course-to-course transfer.

To further streamline and simplify transfer processes, CTAG recommends the development of statewide transfer guides by major which guarantee admission and full transfer and applicability of credit to the baccalaureate degree. Statewide transfer guides by major should be developed by faculty based upon comparable course content and common student learning outcomes. A directory of statewide course-to-course equivalencies should be developed similarly through the convening of statewide faculty meetings.

I. Introduction

Transfer—the process whereby a student transfers earned credit from one higher education institution to another—is a growing and increasingly complex trend across the United States. A report recently released by the U.S. Department of Education found that nearly 60 percent of students from the high school class of 1992 attended more than one college by 2000.¹ Transfer has gained a new prominence over the past several years because it represents a critical but ultimately underused pathway toward associate and baccalaureate degree completion. The national literature suggests that approximately half of community college students aspire to transfer to earn a baccalaureate degree, yet only about 25% eventually do go on to transfer.² Consequently, higher education institutions and state and federal policy makers across the country are proactively researching and adopting new approaches to raise the number of students who transfer successfully and to increase the efficiency with which transfer students complete degrees such that students are not taking duplicative courses.

In Massachusetts, there is a pressing need for a more highly educated workforce holding associate and baccalaureate degrees. The Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development projects that approximately 56% of the new jobs in the state within the next ten years will necessitate an associate degree or higher versus the 33% of jobs that currently have this requirement.³ While the need for degrees is on the rise, the chief prediction of a recent report commissioned by the Nellie Mae Foundation forecasting educational attainment rates in New England is that, by the year 2020, all six New England states (with the possible exception of New Hampshire) will have a drop in the percentage of their young population holding a bachelor's degree or higher.⁴ The report goes on to project that Massachusetts' minority population growth among the working-age population will continue to increase from 12.5% in 1990 to 27.7% in 2020, thus emphasizing the necessity to focus on the degree completion rates of this important population. Given these workforce needs and demographic trends, increasing the number of transfer students who earn postsecondary degrees will have a positive impact on the economic growth and vitality of the Commonwealth. Moreover, efficient degree completion will result in students graduating with less debt and entering the workforce sooner, therefore contributing to the economic and social prosperity of their families, their communities, and the Commonwealth.

Several factors, including the more mobile and diverse college student population, the growing popularity of online courses, and escalating demands on curriculum requirements from national professional, accreditation, and licensure associations, have converged to demand that Massachusetts take a fresh look at its approaches to student transfer. These trends have resulted in a host of obstacles for those involved in the transfer process, which may have the consequence of deterring students from pursuing degrees or of obliging students to take

1 Adelman, A. (2006). *The toolbox revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

2 Cohen, A.M. (2003). Analyzing community college transfer rates. In Cohen, A.M. (Ed). *Relating curriculum and transfer*. (pp. 71-79). New Directions for Community College series, Number 86. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.; U.S. Department of Education. (2003). *The condition of education, 2003*. (NECS 2003-067). Washington, DC: Author.

3 Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development. (2006). *Massachusetts Employment Projections through 2014*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development.

4 Coelen, S. & Berger, J. (2006). *New England 2020: A forecast of educational attainment and its implications for the workforce of New England states*. Quincy, MA: Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

comparable and/or additional courses more than once, thereby extending time to degree completion and increasing costs. Examples of potential transfer barriers in Massachusetts include the following:

For students

- Confusing transfer policies and agreements (e.g. some guarantee transfer of credit but not admission while others guarantee admission but not transfer of credit)
- Inadequate transfer policies and agreements (e.g. approximately only one-quarter of community college transfer students met joint admissions requirements)
- Vague knowledge on how transfer courses will be accepted and applied to the degree
- Inconsistent access to transfer information and to an appeals process

For faculty

- Lack of knowledge about comparable courses taught at other public higher education institutions
- Few or no opportunities to communicate across campuses
- Lack of support and/or incentives resolving transfer issues

For advisors (faculty and full-time professionals)

- Confusing and inconsistent transfer information
- Inadequate training
- Heavy advising loads

For administrators

- Labor-intensive development and upkeep of various transfer agreements
- Labor-intensive maintenance and upkeep of institution-to-institution course equivalencies
- Delays in the sending and receiving of student transcripts

For policy makers

- Inconsistent implementation of transfer policies and agreements
- Uneven enforcement of transfer policies and agreements
- Limited measurement of the effectiveness of transfer policies and agreements

The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education and the system of public higher education institutions have over a 30-year long history of developing and implementing statewide and institutional transfer policies and agreements to facilitate student transfer and degree

completion. The Board of Higher Education's authority in relation to transfer is provided in Chapter 15A, Section 9 (v), which states that the Board of Higher Education shall "develop and implement a transfer compact for the purpose of facilitating and fostering the transfer of students without the loss of academic credit or standing from one public institution to another." Given the new realities of today's students and higher education institutions, the Board of Higher Education formed the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group (CTAG) in April 2007 to evaluate the Commonwealth's current policies and practices, diagnose barriers associated with transfer, compare and assess policies and practices enacted in other states, recommend policies and practices to remedy transfer barriers, and identify costs associated with proposed solutions (See Appendix A).

CTAG included state legislators from the Joint Committee on Higher Education; chief academic officers, faculty, and transfer directors from the community colleges, the state colleges, and the University of Massachusetts; members of the Joint Admissions Executive Committee; Board of Higher Education members and Department of Higher Education staff; and representatives from independent and regional groups with expertise in transfer issues.

To address the objectives outlined in the charge, CTAG reviewed the national transfer research literature and transfer policies in other states, generated and studied state transfer data, and surveyed the Massachusetts public higher education institutions on several transfer-related issues. CTAG heard presentations on transfer policies and practices from representatives in other states, as well as presentations from local experts. Finally, CTAG investigated potential technology solutions and their associated costs.

The resulting report is a synthesis of the information and research that CTAG assimilated during the course of its meetings which inform the guiding principles and recommendations that emerged. The report provides an overview of current transfer student mobility in Massachusetts, as well as the academic performance of transfer students. This is followed by a description of Massachusetts' transfer policies and agreements and a comparison to other states. Finally, the set of guiding principles frames the section on recommendations.

II. Current Transfer Trends in Massachusetts Public Higher Education⁵

The Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group sought to gain an understanding of the current transfer landscape by investigating the level of transfer activity across the Massachusetts public higher education institutions and academic performance related to transfer. The first section investigates how many students transfer credit across institutions, when they transfer, and where they transfer. The second section explores and compares the academic performance of transfer students and “native” students (e.g. a student who remained at his or her original institution of enrollment).

Scope and Direction of Transfer

1. A significant percentage of new students in the Massachusetts system of public higher education previously earned credits at another public or private higher education institution.

In fall 2006, almost one-quarter of new students attending a Massachusetts public higher education institution had previously earned credits at another college or university. Approximately one-third of new students at the University of Massachusetts campuses and at the state colleges transferred in college-level credit while almost one-fifth of new students at the community colleges did so.

Table 1: Fall 2006 New Transfer Students as a Percent of All New Undergraduate Degree-Seeking Students

	New Students	New Transfer Students	Percent of New that are Transfer
University of Massachusetts	12,570	4,066	32.4%
State Colleges	10,078	3,349	33.2%
Community Colleges	26,322	4,467	16.9%
<i>System</i>	<i>48,970</i>	<i>11,882</i>	<i>24.3%</i>

Source: *Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education*

⁵ The findings in this section are from the Department of Higher Education's Higher Education Information Research System (HEIRS) and the National Student Clearinghouse. The data in HEIRS is submitted from individual campuses. “Transfer” applies to students who attended a previous higher education institution during the current or in a prior term and were categorized as a transfer student by the receiving institution. “Transferable credits” are credits earned at the previously attended higher education institution(s) prior to transfer. The receiving institution may or may not accept and apply all eligible transferable credits to a specific degree program. Remedial coursework is not transferable. “Transfer grade point average” is the transfer student’s cumulative college grade point average upon which the admissions decision was based.

2. Within the population of students who attend more than one institution of higher education, most attend two institutions.

Table 2: Number of Institutions Attended by Fall 2002 First-Time Students Between Fall 2002 and Fall 2006

	Cohort	Number of Institutions Attended			
		1	2	3	4
University of Massachusetts	6,547	63.3%	28.0%	7.2%	1.4%
State Colleges	5,539	65.0%	27.2%	6.7%	1.1%
Community Colleges	17,134	70.6%	24.5%	4.4%	0.6%
<i>System</i>	<i>29,220</i>	<i>67.9%</i>	<i>25.8%</i>	<i>5.4%</i>	<i>0.9%</i>

Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; National Student Clearinghouse

3. Student transfer within the public higher education system is multidirectional.

Student transfer is not limited to the traditional “vertical” movement from a community college to a state college or University of Massachusetts campus. Transfer is also “lateral” (e.g. community college to community college); “reverse” (e.g. state college to community college); and “swirling” (movement among multiple institutions). In fall 2006, just over one-half (51.3%) of new undergraduate degree-seeking transfer students at the University of Massachusetts had previously attended a two-year institution (Massachusetts or out-of-state public or private), while almost one third (31.9%) had previously attended another four-year institution (Massachusetts or out-of-state public or private). At the state colleges, 58.3% of new transfer students had formerly attended a two-year institution, and 36.1% had attended another four-year institution. At the community colleges, just over 30% of new transfer students had previously attended another two-year institution, and just over 40% of new transfer students had previously attended a four-year institution.

Table 3: Sources of Fall 2006 New Undergraduate Degree-Seeking Transfer Students

	2-Year	4-Year	Internal	Other
University of Massachusetts	51.3%	31.9%	3.9%	0.6%
State Colleges	58.3%	36.1%	3.1%	1.6%
Community Colleges	30.6%	41.4%	0.1%	2.7%

Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Note: Data only available for thirteen of fifteen community colleges.

2-year institutions include Massachusetts and out-of-state public and private institutions.

4-year institutions include Massachusetts and out-of-state public and private institutions.

4. Students tend to transfer to the state colleges and University of Massachusetts campuses prior to earning an associate degree (or equivalent number of credits).

In fall 2006, out of the 3,105 students transferring from a community college to a state college or University of Massachusetts campus, only 43.4% had earned an associate degree. In looking at students transferring from other private and out-of-state two-year institutions, approximately 31% of non-Massachusetts public two-year transfer students transferred to a state college or University of Massachusetts campus with the equivalent number of credits (60) necessary for an associate degree. Finally, out of the population of students who transferred to a state college or University of Massachusetts campus from another four-year institution, only 22.2% had earned enough credits (60 or more) equaling or surpassing the number needed for an associate degree.

Table 4: Prior Degrees and Transferable Credits of New Transfers Enrolling in the State Colleges and University of Massachusetts in Fall 2006

	MA Community Colleges	Other Two-Year	Four-Year
AA or AS Degree	43.4%	NA	NA
No Credits	1.4%	4.4%	3.7%
0.1 - 15 Credits	8.2%	12.1%	14.9%
15.1 - 30 Credits	12.2%	20.4%	27.7%
30.1 - 59 Credits	32.6%	32.2%	31.5%
60.0 - 70 Credits	27.6%	16.4%	7.8%
More than 70 Credits	17.9%	14.5%	14.4%
<i>Total Transfers</i>	<i>3,105</i>	<i>932</i>	<i>2,772</i>

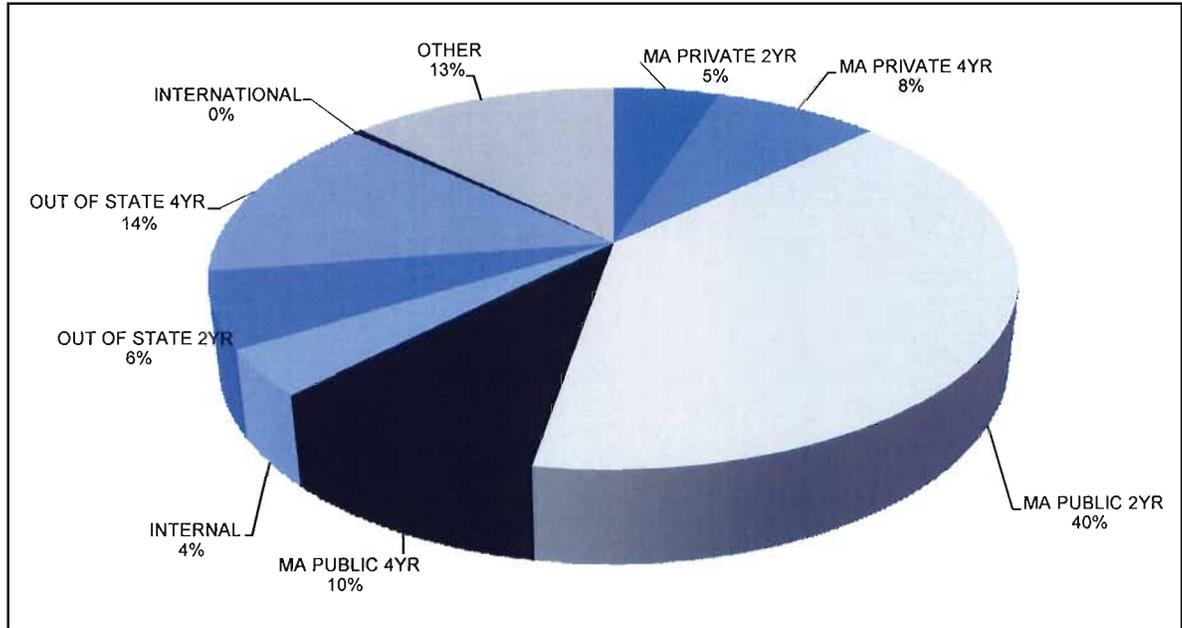
Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Note: Only includes students from an institution with a known type based on CEEB.

5. Approximately half of students transferring to public higher education institutions in Massachusetts are from other public higher education institutions in Massachusetts.

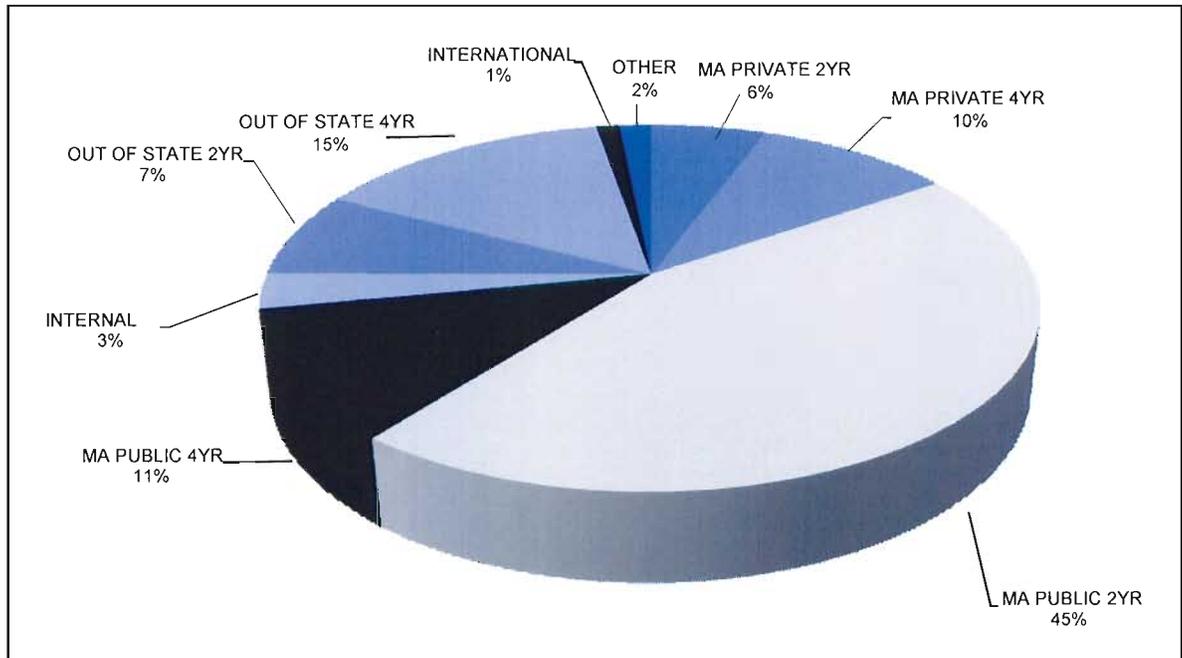
In fall 2006, 50% of new undergraduate degree-seeking transfer students at the University of Massachusetts were from Massachusetts public two-year or public four-year institutions (40% and 10%, respectively). The rest were from a mix of private Massachusetts institutions and out-of-state institutions. At the state colleges, 56% of new undergraduate degree-seeking transfer students were from Massachusetts public two-year or four-year institutions. At the community colleges, 35% were from Massachusetts two-year and four-year institutions.

Chart 5.1: Sources of Fall 2006 New Undergraduate Degree-Seeking Transfer Students at the University of Massachusetts



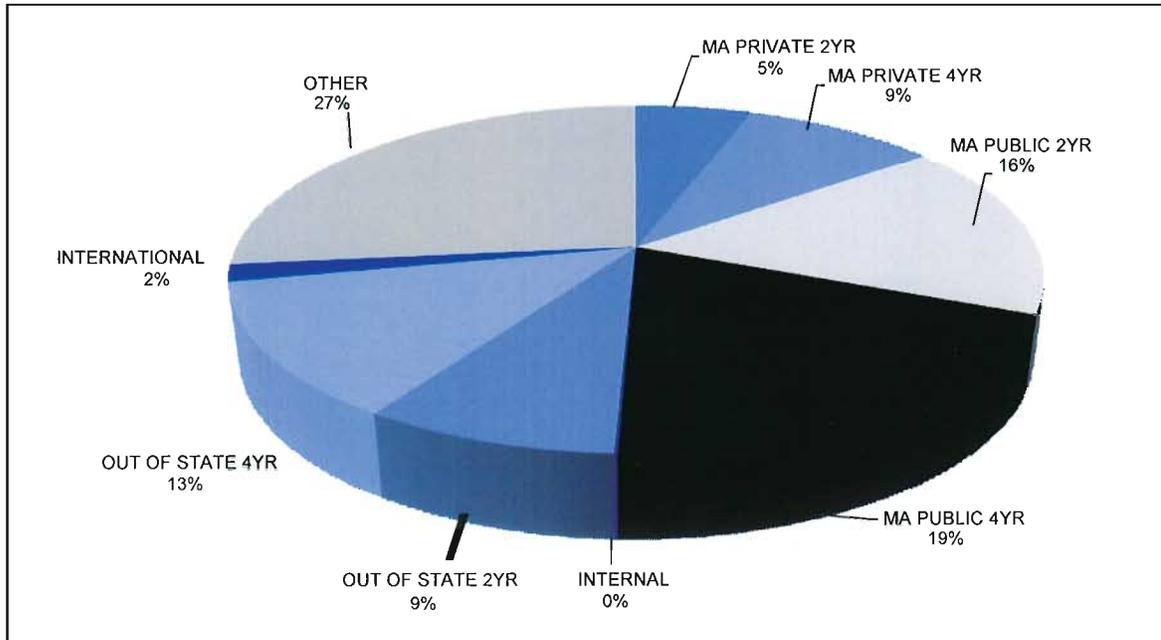
Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; National Student Clearinghouse

Chart 5.2: Sources of Fall 2006 New Undergraduate Degree-Seeking Transfer Students at the State Colleges



Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; National Student Clearinghouse

Chart 5.3: Sources of Fall 2006 New Undergraduate Degree-Seeking Transfer Students at the Community Colleges



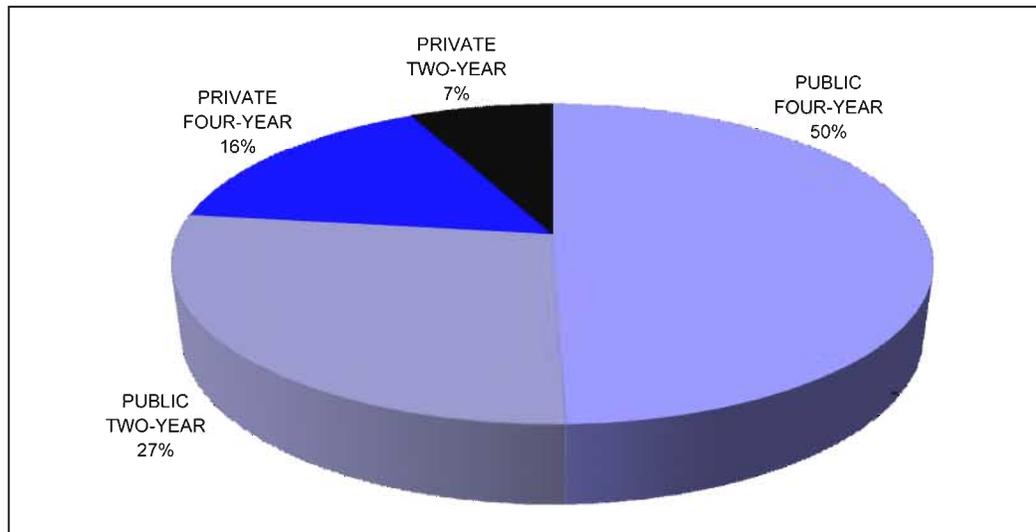
Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; National Student Clearinghouse

Note: Data only available for thirteen of fifteen community colleges.

6. Massachusetts community college students mostly transfer to other Massachusetts public higher education institutions.

Of the 4,629 students who started for the first time at a community college in fall 2002 but had attended at least one other institution by the fall of 2006, 77% had gone on to attend another public higher education institution, while only 23% had attended a private institution.

Chart 6: Types of Institutions Other Than the Original Attended by 2002 First-Time Community College Students Who Had Attended At Least One Other Institution as of Fall 2006 (Total=4,629)



Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education; National Student Clearinghouse

7. Students mostly transfer within their geographical region, although this varies greatly by region.

The table below tracks student transfer movement in public higher education within the five major regions in Massachusetts. The region with the highest percentage of students transferring to other public higher education institutions within the same region is Cape Cod/Southeast (72.5%) followed by Berkshire/Pioneer Valley (68.1%). The region with the greatest amount of transfer variability—that is, students transferring into this region from other regions—is Greater Boston, with 43.7% of transfer students coming from within and 56.3% coming from outside of this region.

Table 7: Fall 2006 New Undergraduate Degree-Seeking Transfer Students—Transferring From Another MA Public Institution By Region

		Transferring From					System Total
		Berkshire/ Pioneer Valley	Cape and Islands/ Southeast	Central	Greater Boston	Northeast	
Transferring To	Berkshire/ Pioneer Valley	68.1%	9.4%	8.7%	6.8%	7.0%	1,297
	Cape Cod/ Southeast	8.6%	72.5%	3.3%	10.9%	4.7%	910
	Central	15.1%	8.1%	52.9%	11.9%	12.0%	724
	Greater Boston	10.2%	20.6%	7.3%	43.7%	18.3%	1,034
	Northeast	9.1%	8.2%	4.2%	16.5%	62.0%	1,421

Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Note: Data only available for 13 of the 15 community colleges.

Academic Performance

- 8. The more transferable credits a transfer student completes, the more likely he or she will have a slightly higher final grade point average at the time of graduation from a University of Massachusetts campus.**

The table below examines the relationship between the range of transferable credits students had upon enrolling at a state college or University of Massachusetts in fall 1999 and the grade point average of students who graduated within six years. At the University of Massachusetts, there is a positive relationship between transferable credits and final grade point averages with students at the low range (0.1-15 credits) earning a 2.64 grade point average and with students at the high range (60 or more credits) earning a 3.17 grade point average. At the state colleges, final grade point averages vary slightly and inconsistently in relation to the range of transferable credits.

Table 8: GPA at Time of Graduation of New Transfer Students Entering in Fall 1999

	Range of Transferable Credits	Fall `99 New Transfer Students	Total Graduated in Six Years	GPA at time of Graduation
UMass	0 - 15 Credits	448	162	2.64
	16 - 59 Credits	1,775	1,056	3.10
	60 or More Credits	794	563	3.17
	Total	3,017	1,781	3.08
State Colleges	0 - 15 Credits	226	104	3.14
	16 - 59 Credits	1,153	690	3.08
	60 or More Credits	808	473	3.17
	Total	2,187	1,267	3.12

Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Note: State College summary includes seven of the nine state colleges. UMass summary included three of the four undergraduate campuses. Graduation means graduated from a Massachusetts public college or university.

- 9. The more transferable credits a transfer student completes, the more likely he or she will graduate from a state college or University of Massachusetts campus.**

The table below examines the four-, five-, and six-year graduation rates of students who transferred to a University of Massachusetts campus or state college in fall 1999. Students who have a higher number of transferable credits upon enrollment tend to have higher graduation rates than students with a lower number of transferable credits. At the University of Massachusetts, students who transferred in 0.1-15 credits have a 34.2% six-year graduation rate as compared to a 67.8% six-year graduation rate for students who transferred in 60 or more credits.

Table 9: Time to Graduation at Transfer Institution of New Transfer Students entering in Fall 1999

	Range of Transferable Credits	Fall `99 New Transfer Students	Years to Graduation				6-Year Graduation Rate
			3 or Less	4	5	6	
UMass	0 - 15 Credits	448	14.3%	11.8%	5.6%	2.5%	34.2%
	16 - 59 Credits	1,775	32.2%	15.2%	5.4%	2.4%	55.1%
	60 or More Credits	794	53.9%	9.1%	2.4%	2.4%	67.8%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>3,017</i>	<i>35.3%</i>	<i>13.1%</i>	<i>4.6%</i>	<i>2.4%</i>	<i>55.3%</i>
State Colleges	0 - 15 Credits	226	9.7%	16.8%	9.7%	2.2%	38.5%
	16 - 59 Credits	1,153	30.0%	17.6%	5.2%	2.6%	55.4%
	60 or More Credits	808	40.2%	10.3%	3.5%	1.9%	55.8%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>2,187</i>	<i>31.7%</i>	<i>14.8%</i>	<i>5.0%</i>	<i>2.3%</i>	<i>53.8%</i>

Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Note: State College summary includes seven of the nine state colleges. UMass summary included three of the four undergraduate campuses.

10. Once students transfer to a state college or University of Massachusetts campus, they tend to have graduation rates and grade point averages comparable to or better than “native” students.

The tables below compare the graduation rates and grade point averages of full-time and part-time “native” and transfer students enrolling at the state colleges or University of Massachusetts campuses. In the first table, which focuses on the state colleges, full-time transfer students did slightly better than the full-time “native” students whether or not students graduated from the same institution or graduated from another public higher education institution. For example, for those who stayed to graduate from the same institutions, full-time transfer students had a 57.9% six-year graduation rate compared to a 48.4% graduation rate for full-time freshmen. The final grade point average for full-time transfer students was 3.52, compared to a 3.42 grade point average for full-time “native” students. At the University of Massachusetts, full-time transfer students had slightly higher graduation rates than “native” students (58.3% vs. 54%) and slightly lower grade point averages (3.07 vs. 3.15).

Table 10.1: Six-Year Graduation Rate and Cumulative GPA of New Students entering the State Colleges in Fall 1999

New Student Type	Cohort	Graduated at Same Institution	Graduation from MA Public	Cumulative GPA
Full-Time First-Time Freshmen	4432	48.4%	55.0%	3.42
Full-Time New Transfer	1957	57.9%	62.3%	3.52
Part-Time First-Time Freshmen	343	22.4%	29.8%	3.11
Part-Time New Transfer	550	36.4%	38.2%	3.45

Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Table 10.2: Six-Year Graduation Rate and Cumulative GPA of New Students entering the University of Massachusetts in Fall 1999

New Student Type	Cohort	Graduated at Same Institution	Graduation from MA Public	Cumulative GPA
Full-Time First-Time Freshmen	6632	54%	58.5%	3.15
Full-Time New Transfer	2786	58.3%	62.1%	3.07
Part-Time First-Time Freshmen	209	18.2%	23.0%	3.40
Part-Time New Transfer	656	36.6%	39.6%	3.23

Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

11. Students who graduate from a Massachusetts community college with a 3.0 final grade point average or higher tend to have higher graduation rates from the state college and University of Massachusetts campus to which they transfer as compared to community college graduates who earned less than a 3.0.

The first table below demonstrates that students who graduate with an associate degree from a Massachusetts community college with a 3.0 or higher grade point average and transfer to a University of Massachusetts campus have significantly higher six-year graduation rates (72.2%) than students who earn less than a 3.0 grade point average (57.6%) . There is a similar trend at the state colleges with community college graduates with a 3.0 or higher grade point average having a higher graduation rate (65.3%) than those who have below a 3.0 grade point average (46.6%).

Table 11.1: Graduation Rate for the Fall 1999 Cohort of Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Transfer Students that Previously Earned an Associate Degree from a Massachusetts Community College

	Range of Transferable Credits	Fall '99 New Transfer Students	Years to Graduation				6-Year Graduation Rate
			3 or Less	4	5	6	
UMass	CC GPA less than 3.00	170	41.8%	12.4%	2.4%	1.2%	57.6%
	CC GPA 3.00 or higher	306	57.5%	9.5%	2.9%	2.3%	72.2%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>476</i>	<i>51.9%</i>	<i>10.5%</i>	<i>2.7%</i>	<i>1.9%</i>	<i>67.0%</i>
State Colleges	CC GPA less than 3.00	174	36.8%	8.0%	1.7%	0.0%	46.6%
	CC GPA 3.00 or higher	262	48.1%	11.5%	5.0%	0.8%	65.3%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>436</i>	<i>43.6%</i>	<i>10.1%</i>	<i>3.7%</i>	<i>0.5%</i>	<i>57.8%</i>

Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Note: State College summary includes seven of the nine state colleges. U Mass summary included three of the four undergraduate campuses.

Similarly, the table below demonstrates that students who graduate with an associate degree from a Massachusetts community college with a 3.0 or higher grade point average have higher final grade point averages (than those students with less than a 3.0 GPA) at the state college or University of Massachusetts campus from which they graduate.

Table 11.2: GPA at Time of Graduation of the Fall 1999 Cohort of Degree-Seeking Undergraduate Transfer Students that Previously Earned an Associate Degree from a Massachusetts Community College

	Range of Transferable Credits	Fall '99 New Transfer Students	Total Earned Degrees in MA Public System in Six Years	Average GPA at Time of Graduation
UMass	CC GPA less than 3.00	170	110	2.76
	CC GPA 3.00 or higher	306	231	3.13
	<i>Total</i>	<i>476</i>	<i>341</i>	<i>3.01</i>
State Colleges	CC GPA less than 3.00	174	86	2.85
	CC GPA 3.00 or higher	262	179	3.26
	<i>Total</i>	<i>436</i>	<i>265</i>	<i>3.13</i>

Source: Higher Education Information Resource System, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

Note: State College summary includes seven of the nine state colleges.

III. Massachusetts and National Transfer Policies and Agreements

Massachusetts Transfer Policies and Agreements

Over the past three decades, various transfer policies and agreements have emerged in Massachusetts to help improve student transfer from the community college to a state college or University of Massachusetts campus.

The ***Commonwealth Transfer Compact (CTC)*** was established by the Commonwealth in 1974 and last revised in 1990. The CTC is for students who complete an associate degree at a community college with a 2.0 grade point average and who complete a minimum 35-credit general education core. The CTC guarantees the transfer of community college credits and gives eligible students full junior standing at the receiving institution.

Originating in the early 1990s between the community colleges and the University of Massachusetts, and later extending to the state colleges, ***Joint Admissions*** agreements are individual program-to-program agreements for students who complete an associate degree at a community college. Students who are enrolled in an approved joint admissions program and have earned at least a 2.5 grade point average will automatically be admitted into the state college or University campus with which there is an agreement. There are more than 2,300 joint admissions agreements between the community colleges and the University of Massachusetts campuses and the state colleges.

Through the ***Tuition Advantage Program***, established in 1997 and last revised in 2002, Joint Admissions students who earn a 3.0 grade point average are entitled to a tuition waiver equal to 33% of the resident tuition rate at the University campus or state college for two years.

The ***Early Childhood Education Transfer Compact*** and the ***Elementary Education Transfer Compact*** took effect in 2004 and are the Commonwealth's first efforts at establishing statewide transfer agreements for specific majors. Students who complete the associate degree with the required coursework, earn a 2.75 grade point average, and achieve a passing score on the Communication and Literacy Skills Test of the Massachusetts Test for Education Licensure are guaranteed admission with all credits applied to the baccalaureate degree.

Articulation Agreements are program-to-program agreements between a community college and a state college or University of Massachusetts campus that specify the courses needed to be completed at the community college and a required grade point average. Students who successfully complete the requirements are typically guaranteed admission with full transfer of credit. For example, certain majors such as nursing, education, and engineering have been forced to create separate agreements outside of the CTC and Joint Admissions due to professional association curriculum requirements.

All of the transfer policies and agreements outlined above contain stipulations. In some cases, because of space or fiscal limitations, baccalaureate institutions may not admit all qualified applicants to a given major or program. Generally, the institution uses the same criteria for applicants who are transfer students as it does for its "native students," i.e., those who began their baccalaureate programs at the four-year institution. In some cases, individual institutions may have grade point average requirements higher than the 2.0 required by the CTC or the 2.5 required by Joint Admissions.

Although there is no statewide common general education core, four state colleges and University of Massachusetts campuses waive their general education requirements for students who have completed the CTC.

Comparisons to Other States

Each state in the U.S. maintains its own distinct approach to addressing transfer issues using a combination of strategies. In 1971, Florida became the first state to mandate legislatively a statewide articulation policy, and since that time, many states have adopted statewide transfer policies with or without legislation. The Education Commission of the States published a study in 2001 comparing state transfer and articulation policies across the country and is summarized in the table below. The study notes that successful transfer from a community college to a four-year institution is often the only opportunity these individuals have to achieve a bachelor's degree, particularly in the case of low-income students.

Comparison of All States' Transfer and Articulation Policies: 2001

Type of Policy	National	Massachusetts
Legislation	30 states	Yes (Chapter 15A, Section 9 (v))
Cooperative agreements between institutions	40 states	Yes (Commonwealth Transfer Compact, Joint Admissions, Education Compacts, Articulation Agreements)
Transfer data reporting	33 states	Yes (The Annual Performance Measurement Report for the State and Community Colleges includes the number of community college students who transfer into the state colleges and the number of these students who transfer through joint admissions.)
Incentives and rewards	18 states	Yes (33% tuition waiver)
Statewide articulation guides	26 states	No
Common (general education) core	23 states	No
Common course numbering	8 states	No

Source: Education Commission of the States (February 2001). Transfer and articulation policies. Denver: CO.

Since this study, other states have changed and updated their approaches to transfer. For example, the Pennsylvania Department of Education began implementation in July 2006 of legislation to create a seamless statewide transfer and articulation system. This system required Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges and the 14 universities to adopt mandatory equivalency standards for the purpose of creating at least 30 hours of foundation courses that can be easily transferred and to establish an electronic portal for providing public access to transfer information. In New Jersey, the governor signed a law in September 2007 requiring that, upon

acceptance, an associate degree awarded by a community college must be fully transferable and count as the first two years toward a baccalaureate degree at any of the state's public institutions. Also beginning in 2007, students from Connecticut's 12 community colleges who earn at least a B average and an associate degree were guaranteed admission to the University of Connecticut's six campuses. In early 2008, New Hampshire agreed to allow students who were not originally accepted to the University of New Hampshire to be accepted automatically to the University without having to reapply or pay a fee if they take at least 12 credits for two consecutive semesters at a community college and earn at least a 'C' in every course.

The national research evaluating the effectiveness of approaches to transfer is new and limited but does indicate the potential impact states can have on improving transfer. A 2002 study analyzed the role of state policy in influencing the effectiveness of students transferring from community colleges to baccalaureate institutions.⁶ Three high-performing transfer states were compared to three low-performing transfer states. The study found that the high-performing transfer states had stronger statewide governance capacities whereas the low-performing transfer states had institutional governing structures. The study also found that the three high-performing states used data as a tool to improve transfer performance. A 2004 national study on transfer examined the barriers associated with transfer and noted that in the area of policy decisions, "problems such as weak or nonexistent coordination between public and postsecondary institutions, too few incentives to encourage cooperation between sectors, a lack of communication and alignment between high school standards and college entrance requirements, and cumbersome and deleterious financial aid policies significantly limit both access and success for students."⁷

6 Wellman, J.V. (2002). State policy and community college-baccalaureate transfer. National Center Report #02-6. San Jose, CA: The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

7 *Improving access to the baccalaureate*. (2004). American Association of Community Colleges and American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Washington, DC: Community College Press.

IV. Guiding Principles

The members of the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group developed the following set of guiding principles to guide discussion about the recommendations. These guiding principles were established based upon the extensive review of the literature and data as well as through discussions that took place over the course of the meetings:

- The primary goal of removing obstacles to transfer and creating a coherent transfer process is to **help students succeed** in meeting their educational goals.
- Transfer is a **shared responsibility** amongst higher education institution leaders, faculty, and administrators; by state agencies and legislators, and by students.
- A statewide transfer policy compatible with **academic quality and institutional integrity** can be instrumental in improving student success.
- The student learning outcomes associated with the **general education programs** at the Massachusetts public institutions of higher education as a whole are comparable and are more important than individual courses.
- Any transfer student within the system of Massachusetts public higher education who **earns a degree** should be deemed successful and the respective institutions should be counted as contributors to the student's educational achievement.
- The development and assessment of program-to-program and course-to-course transfer across institutions is best accomplished by regular and sustainable **faculty collaboration** focused on the establishment of common student learning outcomes.

V. Goals and Recommendations

The recommendations below include the implementation of a new streamlined transfer policy, *MassTransfer*, which will replace the Commonwealth Transfer Compact, Joint Admissions, and the Tuition Advantage Program with a single transfer policy to simplify the transfer process and transfer advising. In addition, the recommendations address the following goals:

- provide easy access to clear, accurate, and cohesive transfer information;
- ensure sustained effectiveness and accountability of transfer policies and practices; and
- expand statewide program and course transfer alignment.

Goal 1: Implement the MassTransfer policy effective Academic Year 2009–10. (See Appendix C for description of MassTransfer.)

Recommendations:

- 1A.** Develop *MassTransfer* implementation guidelines under the leadership of the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group.
- 1B.** Devote a full-time position at the Department of Higher Education to coordinate and oversee statewide transfer policy initiatives.
- 1C.** Convene transfer officers from Massachusetts public institutions of higher education to identify and solve transfer-related issues.
- 1D.** Develop internal communications (e.g. professional development for campus personnel) and external communications (e.g. identifying academic programs qualifying for *MassTransfer*) to promote and explain *MassTransfer* to all relevant parties.
- 1E.** Confer the same tuition discount identified in *MassTransfer* to associate degree programs that do not qualify for *MassTransfer* but have articulation agreements with programs at state colleges and University of Massachusetts campuses that guarantee admission and full transfer and applicability of credits to the baccalaureate degree.
- 1F.** After implementation of *MassTransfer* for three years and in consideration of the Commonwealth's fiscal capacity, examine the feasibility of increasing the tuition discount from 33% to 100% and including students enrolled in evening, weekend, accelerated, and online programs.

Goal 2: Provide easy access to clear, accurate, and cohesive transfer information.

Recommendations:

- 2A.** Create a statewide transfer website as part of the Massachusetts College and Career Readiness web portal targeted for various audiences including students, parents, faculty and academic advisors, transfer coordinators, and guidance counselors. (See Appendix D for detailed information and associated costs.)
- 2B.** Adopt a statewide electronic transcript delivery system with the eventual addition of online degree audits able to interface with various student information systems and PreK-16 systems.

- 2C. Develop and carry out an on-going public relations campaign to highlight the state's commitment to higher education access and success through transfer.

Goal 3: Ensure sustained effectiveness and accountability of transfer policies and practices.

Recommendations:

- 3A. Support the community college student success measure which includes transfer currently under development by the Board of Higher Education.
- 3B. Develop common statewide definitions of a transfer student, transfer rate, transfer retention rate, and transfer graduation rate.
- 3C. Submit an annual transfer report developed by the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group to the Joint Committee on Higher Education.
- 3D. Support the recommendation in the Board of Higher Education's 2005 *Final Report from the Task Force on Graduation Rates at the State Colleges*: Increase degree completion rates of transfer students by 5 percentage points, resulting in 58% of transfer students graduating within four years of arrival at the institution to which they transfer.
- 3E. Review transfer policies and practices at each Massachusetts public higher education institution and retract those that impose barriers to transfer.
- 3F. Establish clear structures which include faculty, administrators, and students at each Massachusetts public higher education institution to address transfer issues.
- 3G. Establish and publish a transfer student appeals process at each Massachusetts public higher education institution.
- 3H. Designate a transfer ombudsperson at each Massachusetts public higher education institution who ensures institutional compliance with transfer policies and procedures.

Goal 4: Expand alignment of statewide program-to-program and course-to-course transfer.

Recommendations:

- 4A. Develop statewide transfer guides by major similar to the recently-enacted statewide Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education Transfer Compacts which guarantee admission and full transfer and applicability of credit to the baccalaureate degree. Statewide transfer guides by major should be developed by faculty based upon comparable course content and common student learning outcomes.
- 4B. Build a directory of statewide course-to-course equivalencies among all community colleges, state colleges, and University of Massachusetts campuses based on comparable course content and common student learning outcomes.
- 4C. Convene statewide meetings for faculty to develop statewide major guides and course-to-course equivalencies. Regional and discipline-specific breakout groups—similar to CONNECT in southeastern Massachusetts and to Central Links in central Massachusetts—should also collaborate on opportunities, trends, and grants.

- 4D.** Implement an online system to support faculty review of course syllabi and development of common student learning outcomes.
- 4E.** Ensure that all Commonwealth Honors courses are accepted as honors courses into receiving institutions by clearly designating these courses on student transcripts.
- 4F.** Standardize the transfer of nationally-recognized exams (e.g. CLEP, DANTES, Advanced Placement Examinations), dual enrollment credits, articulated credits with high schools (e.g. tech-prep credits), international credits, and credits earned through prior learning assessments.
- 4G.** Encourage independent institutions to participate voluntarily in statewide transfer initiatives.

APPENDIX A: Charge to the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group

Background

The Board of Higher Education has long played a role in facilitating student transfer within the Commonwealth's system of higher education since the establishment of the Commonwealth Transfer Compact¹ in 1974, last revised in 1990. The Board of Higher Education and the campuses later worked together to create additional initiatives to enable students to move from the associate degree to the baccalaureate degree, including the Joint Admissions Agreements,² the Tuition Advantage Program,³ and the Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education Transfer Compacts.⁴

These initiatives are aimed at easing the transition and providing incentives for students who first complete an associate degree at a community college. While this is and continues to be an important pathway, transfer is a growing and increasingly complex trend at both the national and state level. A report released last year by the U.S. Department of Education found that nearly 60 percent of students from the high school class of 1992 attended more than one college. Additionally, students are likely to transfer from their community college prior to graduation, which means that the traditional transition from associate's degree to baccalaureate degree is becoming less typical. For example, in fall 2005, a total of 2,394 Massachusetts community college students transferred to one of the public state colleges or University of Massachusetts campuses (1,715 and 679 respectively). Of this total, nearly half transferred before earning an associate degree. The Board of Higher Education recognizes that transfer represents a vital path to earning degrees in the Commonwealth, and this process must be supported for all students.

A recently filed bill (H 1175), calls for the establishment of course-to-course equivalencies for 30 credits of general education courses; the creation of a user-friendly Web site listing course-to-course equivalencies, articulation agreements, and transfer reports; and the formation of an oversight committee to develop and implement these measures and evaluate effectiveness of transfer. The BHE supports the general objectives of the bill and believes that smooth transfer depends upon the ability of our public institutions to work together because transfer raises core issues of course quality and comparability, student support and success, and common administrative and technological processes. Ongoing and joint efforts will be needed in the development of an improved transfer system.

1 The Commonwealth Transfer Compact (CTC) is intended to guarantee the transfer of all credits taken at the community college and to give eligible students full junior standing at the receiving institution. Eligibility for the CTC is reserved for students who complete an associate degree with a minimum of 60 credits and a minimum grade point average of 2.0 and who complete a minimum 35 credit general education core.

2 Students who enroll at a Massachusetts Community College in an approved joint admissions associate's degree program are conditionally accepted by the University campus or state college with which there is an agreement. Eligibility is reserved for students who earn a minimum 2.5 cumulative grade point average (based on a 4.0 scale) and an associate's degree in an approved joint admissions associate degree program.

3 Students eligible for the Tuition Advantage Program are entitled to a tuition waiver equal to 33% of the resident tuition rate at the University campus or state college for the two (2) years which immediately follow their community college enrollment. Eligibility is reserved for students who completed an associate degree at a public community college within the prior calendar year as a participant in a Joint Admissions Program with a minimum of a 3.0 cumulative grade point average.

4 The education compacts combine features from the Commonwealth Transfer Compact and Joint Admissions to ensure the transfer of credit and guaranteed admissions of eligible students.

The Charge to the Group

To develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues that affect transfer and to make recommendations on steps that can be implemented to improve transfer, the Board of Higher Education will establish the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group to complete the following objectives:

- Evaluate the Commonwealth's current policies and practices
- Diagnose barriers associated with transfer
- Compare and assess policies and practices enacted in other states
- Recommend policies and practices to remedy transfer barriers
- Identify costs associated with proposed solutions.

Timetable

The Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group will meet on a regular basis from June 2007 through March 2008 and shall report its findings and recommendations to the Chancellor who shall present the findings and recommendations to the Board of Higher Education no later than the June 2008 meeting.

APPENDIX B: Members of the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group

Members

Francesca Purcell, Ph.D., CTAG Chair
*Director for Academic Policy,
Massachusetts Department of Higher
Education*

Deborah Boisvert
*Director, Boston Area Advanced
Technology Education Connections for IT,
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*Associate Professor, Physical Therapy,
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Daniel de la Torre
*Coordinator of Transfer and Articulation,
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Representative Christopher Donelan
Joint Committee on Higher Education

Senator Benjamin Downing
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Education*

Mary E. Dunn, Ed.D.
*Director of Transfer and Articulation, Salem
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Mary Jayne Fay, Ph.D.
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Licensing and Office of Proprietary Schools,
Massachusetts Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education*

Kate Finnegan
*Chair, Education, Greenfield Community
College*

Mary Folan
*Professor/Co-Chairperson, Nurse Education
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Community College*

Paul J. Fonteyn, Ph.D.
*Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor of
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Kenneth Lemanski
*Executive Director, State Colleges Council
of Presidents*

Paul McGee
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Robert Martin, Ph.D.
*Vice President for Academic Affairs,
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Philip Sisson, Ph.D.
*Vice President, Academic and Student
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Executive Director, CONNECT

Jean Stonehouse, Ph.D.
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William Messner, Ph.D.
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APPENDIX C: Description of the MassTransfer policy

Background

The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education and the system of public higher education institutions have a long history working to improve student transfer. Presently, a mobile and diverse college student population along with developments including the growing popularity of online courses and escalating curriculum requirements, have resulted in more students transferring in more complicated patterns across Massachusetts higher education institutions. Given these complexities, the *MassTransfer* policy seeks to provide a broad population of students with straightforward and understandable options toward the completion of associate and baccalaureate degrees, clearing the way for student access and student success in Massachusetts' public higher education system.

MassTransfer has two main purposes:

- to provide community college students who complete designated associate degrees with the benefits of the full transfer and applicability of credit, guaranteed admission, and a tuition discount (each benefit based on the student's final grade point average) to linked baccalaureate programs; and
- to provide any student in the Massachusetts public higher education system the intermediate goal of completing a portable general education transfer block which satisfies general education requirements across institutions.

MassTransfer integrates and replaces the Commonwealth Transfer Compact, Joint Admissions, and the Tuition Advantage Program into a single transfer policy to simplify the transfer process and transfer advising.

Section I: For students completing an associate degree under MassTransfer at a Massachusetts community college.

A student completing an associate degree program under *MassTransfer* will have graduated with a minimum of 60 credit hours and will have completed the following 34-credit *general education transfer block*, exclusive of developmental coursework.

English Composition/Writing	6 credit hours
Behavioral and Social Sciences	9 credit hours
Humanities and Fine Arts	9 credit hours
Natural or Physical Science	7 credit hours
Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning	3 credit hours

Each associate degree program under *MassTransfer* is linked to baccalaureate degrees and schools at the Massachusetts state colleges and University of Massachusetts campuses across the Commonwealth. The list of associate degree programs and linked baccalaureate programs

under *MassTransfer* will be available at www.mass.edu, as well as on the transfer websites at the individual public higher education institutions.

Benefits

A student completing an associate degree who seeks admission to a linked baccalaureate program under *MassTransfer* will be entitled to the following benefits based upon the final cumulative grade point average at the community college awarding the degree:

A. A final cumulative grade point average of a 2.0 or higher

- i. Waives the admissions application fee and essay
- ii. Guarantees the full transfer of college-level credits, including “D” grades, applied to the degree requirements of the linked baccalaureate degree or school at the state college or University of Massachusetts campus such that the *MassTransfer* student will be required to complete no more credits or courses than a native student with the following stipulations:

The student changes his or her major.

If the linked baccalaureate program requires a higher grade point average or specific courses for the major which are required of native students, the *MassTransfer* student must meet these requirements.

- iii. Satisfies the general education requirements at the receiving institution with the receiving institution able to add no more than six additional credits / two courses in compliance with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges’ Standards for Accreditation. This will apply when the receiving institution already places these requirements on its native students and will determine at its discretion which credits, if any, shall be required.

Note: College-level course credits consistent with the standards set forth in the Undergraduate Experience recommendations are included under *MassTransfer*. Credits awarded by the sending institution through CLEP, challenge examinations, and credit for prior learning shall be included when a student qualifies under *MassTransfer*.

B. A final cumulative grade point average of a 2.5 or higher

- i. Grants all of the benefits outlined in section 1A.
- ii. Guarantees admission to the linked baccalaureate degree or school at a Massachusetts state college or University of Massachusetts campus with the following stipulations:

If the linked baccalaureate program requires a higher grade point average which is required of native students, the *MassTransfer* student must meet this requirement.

If because of space or fiscal limitations the receiving institution does not admit all qualified applicants to a given major or program, the receiving institution will use the same criteria for *MassTransfer* applicants as it does for its native students.

Students must be in good academic, fiscal and disciplinary standing with all previous institutions.

C. A final cumulative grade point average of a 3.0 or higher

- i. Grants all of the benefits outlined in sections 1A and 1B.
- ii. Guarantees a tuition waiver equal to 33% of the Massachusetts resident tuition rate at a state college or University campus for two years of undergraduate enrollment with the following requirements:
 - Enrollment is continuous at the state college or University campus.
 - The student earns a cumulative grade point average of a 3.0 or higher for the first year of enrollment at the state college or University of Massachusetts campus.

Note: For students demonstrating compelling hardships, institutions may exercise professional judgment regarding the above conditions.

Section II: For students completing the general education transfer block at any Massachusetts higher education institution with a 2.0 or higher grade point average.

A student completing the *general education transfer block* will have earned the following 34 credit hours outlined below, exclusive of developmental coursework.

English Composition/Writing	6 credit hours
Behavioral and Social Sciences	9 credit hours
Humanities and Fine Arts	9 credit hours
Natural or Physical Science	7 credit hours
Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning	3 credit hours

Benefit

Students completing the 34-credit *general education transfer block* (exclusive of developmental coursework) with a 2.0 or higher grade point average will be entitled to the following benefit:

Satisfies the general education requirements at the receiving institution with the receiving institution able to add no more than six additional credits / two courses in compliance with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges' Standards for Accreditation. This will apply when the receiving institution already places these requirements on its native students and will determine at its discretion which credits, if any, shall be required. Students enrolled in a specific major or degree program may be required to take additional courses if these courses are specifically required for the major or program and are required of native students.

Section III: Information Sharing

The Massachusetts public higher education institutions agree to share information about participating students as set forth in this Section, to the extent permissible under appropriate statutes, regulations and institutional policies regarding confidentiality of student records. This exchange of information allows institutions to provide students with the broadest range of academic choices and support services, thereby creating an environment conducive to academic success.

- A. To the extent permissible under applicable law, the Massachusetts community colleges agree to provide upon request the state colleges and the University of Massachusetts campuses with directory information, as defined by the respective community college, such as names, addresses, and majors for participating students enrolled on their campuses.
- B. To the extent permissible under applicable law, the state colleges and the University of Massachusetts campuses agree to provide non-identifying student information on *MassTransfer* students such as graduation and retention rates, grade point averages, and academic majors and degree programs upon request from the community colleges. Any release of such information shall not, directly or indirectly, transmit personally identifying information about any student who has not granted permission for participating institutions to share such information.
- C. Each state college and University of Massachusetts campus agrees to provide freshman applicants not offered admission with information on *MassTransfer* if the applicant is potentially suitable for participation. The state colleges and University of Massachusetts campuses will provide the appropriate community college(s) with names and addresses of all such applicants who grant permission for the release of this information.
- D. In order to encourage students who are academically suspended, or who otherwise leave the state college or University of Massachusetts campus while not in good academic standing, to consider educational opportunities at the community colleges, the state colleges and University of Massachusetts campuses agree to undertake reasonable efforts to provide community colleges with the names, addresses and other pertinent academic records of such students who grant permission for the release of this information.

Section IV: Implementation and Oversight of MassTransfer

The implementation and oversight of *MassTransfer* will be provided by the Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group convened by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. The Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group will consider implementation and interpretative issues related to *MassTransfer*, assess the impact of transfer policy initiatives, consider appeals, and make recommendations about how to adapt *MassTransfer* to keep pace with best practices. The Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group will be composed of a minimum of six faculty representatives; three chief academic officers; and six transfer professionals (equally distributed across the community colleges, the state colleges, and the University of Massachusetts); one

representative from the Massachusetts Community College Executive Office; one representative from the State College Council of Presidents; one representative from the University of Massachusetts President's office; two representatives from the Legislative Joint Committee on Higher Education; two representatives from the Board of Higher Education; one representative from the Department of Higher Education; and three representatives from regional or independent transfer-related groups.

The Commonwealth Transfer Advisory Group may create subcommittees, as appropriate, with a minimum of two standing subcommittees: A Subcommittee for Appeals and a Subcommittee on Statewide Transfer Alignment. The Subcommittee for Appeals will hear inter-institutional and student disputes relating to *MassTransfer*. The Subcommittee on Statewide Transfer Alignment will address such issues as developing statewide transfer guides by major and statewide course-to-course equivalencies, convening faculty and staff exchanges and collaboration, considering the impact of curriculum changes on student transfer activity, and sharing information about curriculum changes.

Section V: Further Understandings

Notwithstanding any provision of this policy, *MassTransfer* does not:

1. Preclude community colleges or the state colleges or University of Massachusetts campuses from entering into similar agreements with other institutions of higher education.
2. Prevent the state colleges or University of Massachusetts from admitting community college students through existing admission processes.
3. Limit a state college or University of Massachusetts campus from eliminating a school, department or degree program.
4. Ensure eligibility for federal, state, or institutional financial assistance.
5. Provide any guarantees or representations regarding tuition rates or fees at the University of Massachusetts or the Massachusetts Community Colleges.

APPENDIX D: Proposed Elements and Estimated Costs of the Statewide Transfer Website

Elements

Explanation of *MassTransfer* requirements and benefits

Updated list of *MassTransfer* approved transfer programs

Updated list of *MassTransfer* approved transfer programs that have additional or higher admissions requirements

Updated list of articulation agreements not under *MassTransfer*

Advice that students should always check admission requirements at individual institutions

Explanation of factors that might delay graduation

Link to statewide directory of course-to-course equivalencies

Explanation of types of transfer courses (general education, major, free elective)

Online contact information for each institution and program

Online links to application forms electronically sent to institutions

Link to statewide degree audit system

Calendar of statewide or regional transfer events

What's New section to support current information

Profiles of successful transfer students representing a variety of pathways

Definition of terms page

Question and Answer page

A "Help" icon

Links to the Department of Early Education and Care and to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Links to career/workforce development

Student appeals process

Scholarships offered for transfer students graduating from community colleges

Estimated Costs

Item	Start-up Costs	Annual Costs
Website development and maintenance	\$14,400 (\$30/hour X 40 hours/week X 12 weeks)	\$12,480 (\$30/hour X 8 hours/week X 52 weeks)
Directory of statewide course-to-course equivalencies*	\$200,000 to \$500,000	\$100,00 to \$300,000
Statewide degree audit system*	\$1.3 million to \$1.5 million	\$230,000 to \$300,000

* Estimated costs are derived from national vendors who currently offer these services in other states.

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