How Students who Initially Enroll at a Four-Year Institution Utilize the Community College System

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Sources of Data

• **ACT**-Prairie State Achievement Examination and the Student Interest Profiler

• **National Student Clearinghouse**-covers 92% of all postsecondary enrollment

• **Illinois High School Report Card**-characteristics of the high schools

• **IPEDS**- characteristics of the postsecondary schools

• **Barron’s**-selectivity of the four-year institutions
The study starts with the portion of the Illinois High School Class of 2003 (N=115,677) that enrolled at a four-year institution during the fall semester of 2003.
In total there were 37,165 four-year starters
Enrollment at 4yr and 2yr Institutions

- Cumulative Rate of Enrollment at Two-Year Institutions

Legend:
- 4yr Only
- 2yr & 4yr
- 2yr Only
- Not Enrolled

Timeline:
- Fall 2003
- Spring 2004
- Summer 2004
- Fall 2004
- Spring 2005
- Summer 2005
- Fall 2005
- Spring 2006
- Summer 2006
- Fall 2006
- Spring 2007
- Summer 2007
- Fall 2007
- Spring 2008
- Summer 2008
- Fall 2008
- Spring 2009
- Summer 2009
- Fall 2009
- Spring 2010
There are different ways the four-year starters utilize the community college system.

- During summer session (24%)
- By sake of reverse transferring (21%)
- After earning a bachelor’s degree (6%)
- Concurrently with a four-year institution (12%)
- To finish a graduation requirement at a four year institution (<1%)

These are not mutually exclusive
The Overlap of Types of Utilization

37,165

- Summer Session: 24%
- Reverse Transfer: 21%
- Post-Bachelors: 6%
Different Types of 2-Year Enrollment

- Concurrent
- Summer
- Reverse Transfer

- Post-Bachelors
- To Complete
Research Questions: Conditional Upon Initially Enrolling at a Four-Year Institution:

1. Which factors are related to utilizing the community college system during summers?
2. Which factors are related to reverse transferring; returning to a four-year; and graduating?
3. Which factors are related to post-bachelor’s enrollment at a community college?
## Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Gender &amp; Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Academic Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>High school class rank, IERC college readiness, highest expected degree degree, core curriculum, ACT composite, level of surety regarding major and occupation, sector/readiness alignment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ability to Pay/Financial Aid</strong></td>
<td>Parental income, number of siblings, expecting to receive financial aid, expecting to work while enrolled</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High School Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Teacher academic capital, adjusted per pupil school funding, region, locale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Four-Year Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Sector, selectivity, state, distance from the student’s home</td>
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Summer Sessioners

• Nearly one quarter—24.4%—of the four-year starters met this distinction (n=9,085).
  - Does not include post-bachelor’s enrollment
  - Does not include summer enrollment after reverse transferring

• “to make up a course, improve grades, lighten their fall schedule” (Reverse Transfer Project, 1999, p.1)
Most of the summer enrollment falling within this definition occurs early in the study.
Factors associated with summer enrollment at two-year institutions among four-year starters.

- Gender: Female
- Race: Asian rather than white and white rather than African-American
- Socioeconomic status: ability to pay
- College Readiness: moderately prepared overall, but not college ready in science and reading
- Alignment: overmatched in terms their readiness and the selectivity of their four-year institution
- Locale: rural rather than urban areas or towns
- Four-year Sector: public and in-state institutions
- Distance: enrolled at a four-year closer to home
Summer Enrollment was Related to Bachelor’s Completion*

• 84% of the summer sessioners earned bachelor’s degrees, compared with 68% of all other four-year starters.

• Timing of the summer enrollment appeared to factor into the likelihood of bachelor’s completion.

• The number of summer sessions enrolled appeared to factor into the likelihood of bachelor’s completion.

*based on descriptive statistics
Reverse Transfers

• More than one out of every five four-year starters met this distinction (21%)
  - Does not include summer enrollment
  - Does not include concurrent enrollment
  - Does not include post-bachelor’s enrollment
Current Reverse Transfer Studies

Goldrick-Rab and Pfeffer (2009)-

• 15% transferred in reverse and 41% returned.
• 22% bachelor’s completion rate overall, 49% among those who return
• Common among students from less-educated families
• Partly due to lower levels of academic performance during their freshman year
Current Reverse Transfer Studies

Kalogrides and Grodsky (2011)-

• 10% transferred in reverse and 26% earned a degree from a 2-yr and 18% earned a bachelor’s.
• Family education played a significant role
• Family income did not
• Reverse transfers had more navigational capital (transfer sooner than drop-outs)
• Less prepared for college than those persisting
Cumulative Reverse Transfer Rate

Among Reverse Transfers

Among all 4yr Starters
Factors associated with an increased likelihood of reverse transferring

- Gender: Male
- Race: Hispanic rather than white
- Socioeconomic status: from families with limited economic resources
- College readiness: less prepared
- Sector and Selectivity: less selective; public; and in-state four-year institutions
- Major: unsure about their choice of major
- Region: from the Southeast region rather than Chicago
- Teacher academic capital: from high schools with lower degrees of teacher academic capital
Nearly three-quarters of reverse transfers who return to a four-year do so at a different institution.
A logistical account of factors associated with returning to a Four-Year Institution*

• Race: Asian rather than White and White rather than Hispanic
• SES: From a smaller family
• Not expecting to work during school
• Not expecting to receive financial aid
• College readiness: more academically prepared
• Initially enrolled at a more selective institution and out-of-state
• Expecting to earn a graduate degree
• To have earned an associate’s degree while at the community college

*conditional upon reverse transferring
Slightly more than half of those returning to a four-year complete a bachelor’s degree.
A logistical account of factors associated with bachelor’s completion*

- Race: white rather than African-American
- College readiness: initially more ready for college
- Gender: female
- Occupation: very sure regarding their occupation
- Selectivity: initially enrolled at a more selective institution
  - Earning an associate’s degree did not factor into bachelor’s completion for reverse transfer students

*conditional upon returning for reverse transfers
6% of the four-year starters met this distinction (n=2,330)

Roughly 10% of the bachelor’s degree earners

- Students with liberal arts degrees enrolling for the purpose of learning a trade? … Only 5% earned a certificate or degree.

- Students preparing for graduate school in a discipline unrelated to their bachelor’s degree?
Factors associated with an increased likelihood of post-bachelor’s enrollment at a 2yr institution

- Gender: Female
- Race: Asian rather than white
- Selectivity: graduating from very competitive and competitive institutions rather than highly competitive institutions
- Region: from the Southeast region rather than all other parts of the state
- Locale: from rural rather than urban areas

- Nearly half have enrolled in graduate school
Summary

• First-time four-year starters use the community college system at a surprisingly high rate and in a variety of different ways

• Factors varied in terms of their predictive importance across the different ways the community colleges are utilized

• Four-year starters who utilize the community college system should not be treated as a homogeneous group