ASSOCIATE DEGREE FOR TRANSFER STATUS REPORT

ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT CALIFORNIA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



1121 L Street, Suite 802
Sacramento, CA 95814

916.446.7626
aiccu@aiccu.edu

Last updated: April 19, 2022

ABOUT AICCU

The Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) is comprised of over 80 independent, nonprofit colleges and universities, which make up the Independent California Colleges and Universities (ICCU) sector. The ICCU sector plays a pivotal role in the development of the state's model higher education offerings and in making California a symbol of innovation across the globe. Within California, ICCU institutions award 20 percent of all undergraduate degrees and 53 percent of graduate degrees, making them the largest preparers of California's advanced workforce.

Independent California Colleges and Universities are recognized in the state's Master Plan for Higher Education as a provider of affordable college access and a partner with other sectors and the state in the preparation of future leaders and the state's workforce. Independent colleges and universities are defined in California Education Code 66010 (b): As used, "independent institutions of higher education" are those nonpublic higher education institutions that grant undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, or both, and that are formed as nonprofit corporations in this state and are accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

INTRODUCTION

This report to the Legislature and Department of Finance, submitted by the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) on behalf of California independent, nonprofit higher education institutions, provides an annual update on the status of Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) applications to participating independent, nonprofit colleges and universities.

- Currently, 61 of AICCU's 76 undergraduate serving institutions have at least one articulation agreement with a California Community College (CCC).
- In 2019-2020, AICCU institutions enrolled over 4,500 new California Community College transfer students.[1]
- As of Fall 2021, 38 AICCU institutions accept at least one ADT pathway.
    - Three of these institutions—National University, Palo Alto University, and University of Massachusetts Global (formerly Brandman University)—accept all ADT majors.[2]
    - In total, the participating institutions have articulated 483 ADT pathways for transfer students.

With 38 participating institututions, the majority of ADT accepting colleges and universities in the state are independent nonprofits

2021-2022 UPDATE

A total of 2,898 unduplicated ADT students were admitted to 37 AICCU participating institutions for the 2021-2022 academic year. There were three institutions that reported zero ADT applications and one institution that was unable to meet the required submission date.

[1] California Community College Chancellor's Office Datamart, 2019-20
[2] AICCU ADT Participating Institutions Majors Matrix (https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KeCD7ObkPwqkHDXeazhcb4OmPlizW6GAGnDPIcZT5ZU/edit#gid=1283451677)

Table 1 presents the number of ADT students admitted to participating AICCU institutions since ADT collection began. It also contains the number of institutions reporting during a given time period.

Table 1: ADT Students Admitted Since Collection Began

Collection Year	Academic Year	Institutions Reporting	De-duplicated ADT Students Admitted	Percentage Change over Prior Year
1	2018-19	*34*	*869*	*N/A*
2	2019-20	*36*	*2,372*	*173.8%*
3	2020-21	*29*	*2,175*	*-8.3%*
4	2021-22	*37*	*2,898*	*33.2%*

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Each institution was provided a generic Excel workbook containing basic fields for each student record. Institutional representatives were instructed to work across departments to collect relevant student admit records, sign an MOU for data sharing between AICCU and the institution, encrypt the student record workbook and upload to an assigned OneDrive folder. Once records were submitted, AICCU decrypted workbooks and conducted analysis in Microsoft Excel. This included de-duplicating records and aggregating total ADT students admitted within the sector.

In order to capture a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of the ADT pathway, AICCU incorporated a few additional metrics pertaining to the enrollment and outcome measures of current and previously admitted ADT students into this year's data collection. These metrics were submitted through a separate Google form.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The initial data submission included a total of 3,022 ADT applicants who were offered admission to a participating AICCU institution during the Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022 terms.

Because the statute measures the sector's progress based on unduplicated transfer students—meaning that an ADT transfer student can only be counted

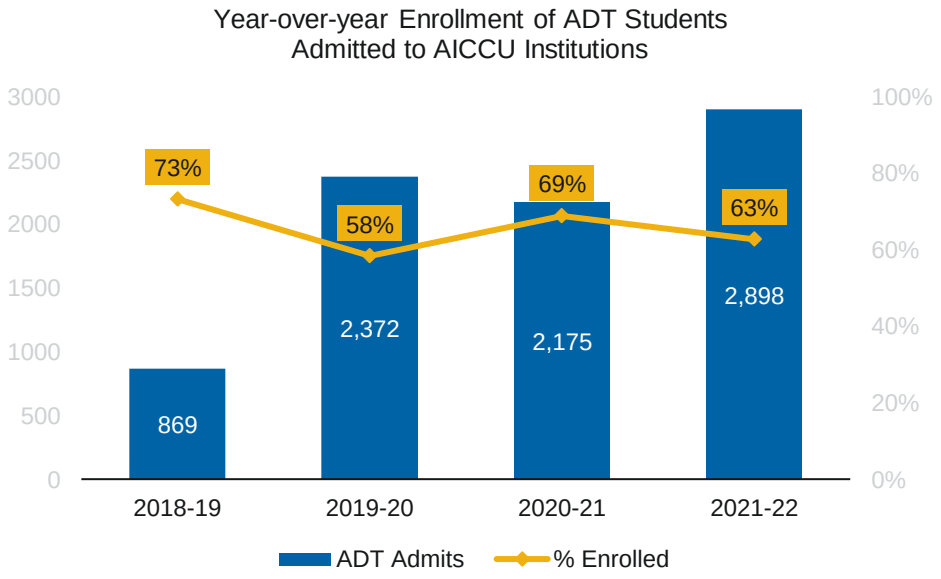
once regardless of applying to multiple AICCU institutions—further analysis was necessary to de-duplicate the data.

In addition, each AICCU institution operates on their own policies for determining what constitutes an admit. Therefore, additional outreach was conducted in order to understand each individual institutional policy and to standardize the ADT admit definition.

After de-duplicating students who applied and were accepted by multiple institutions and confirming the methodology used by each institution, AICCU's raw number of 3,022 accepted ADT applicants was adjusted to 2,898.

ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND OUTCOMES

This year marked the fourth ADT data collection. As year-over-year trends begin to emerge, it can be said that the percentage of ADT admitted students who chose to enroll within the sector has remained relatively stable, with an average enrollment rate of 65% over the course of the four years.[3]



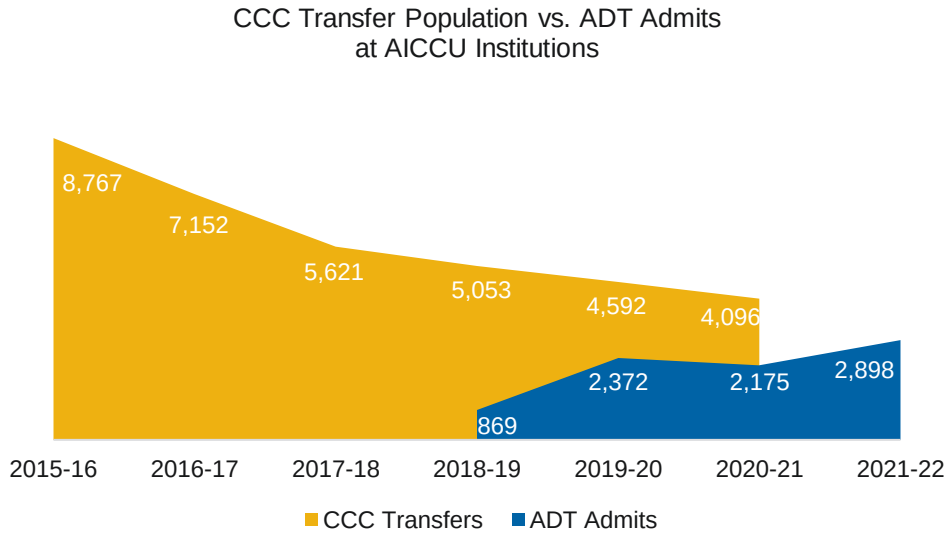
In addition, findings revealed one-year retention rates of 79% and 74% for those in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 ADT enrolled cohorts, respectively. AICCU will continue to observe the outcomes of its ADT students to determine whether these positive trends continue.

[3] Source: AICCU ADT Data Collection, 2018-2022

SUCCESSES

REPORTED ADMITS RESUMES POSITIVE TRAJECTORY DESPITE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Since beginning collection in the Fall 2018 period, the number of reported ADT admits has increased from 869 unduplicated admitted ADT students in 2018-19 to 2,898 unduplicated admitted ADT students in 2021-22—an overall increase of over 233%. The growth in the number of ADT applicants this year was particularly encouraging given the numerous reports of multiyear enrollment disruption and decline at California Community Colleges,[4] discussed in greater detail later in this report.



SECURED PLANNING GRANT TO AID REGIONAL TRANSFER WORK

In July 2021, AICCU was awarded a $50,000 planning grant from The Teagle Foundation and Arthur Vining Davis Foundations as part of their *Transfer Pathways to the Liberal Arts* grant program. This one-year grant allowed AICCU to convene transfer counselors from community colleges and AICCU institutions at regional levels and discuss partnerships between two-year colleges and four-year nonprofit institutions to improve transfer for students. The grant focused on three regions: the Inland Empire, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

[4] Sources: California Community College Chancellor's Office Datamart, 2015-21; AICCU ADT Data Collection, 2018-2022

Over a series of meetings and other discussions, AICCU identified several barriers to improving transfer options for students, including:

- The need for a singular resource, statewide or regional, that provides easily accessible information for students and transfer counselors regarding transfer to AICCU institutions, such as financial aid resources; average cost and time to completion; acceptance of A-G requirements or California State University (CSU) Breadth; etc.

- The challenges of not being part of ASSIST, a platform that currently allows community college transfer counselors and students to review established transfer pathways to the University of California and the California State University systems.

- A lack of communication that independent colleges and universities are options for transfer students because 1) transfer counselors do not have enough time with students, partly related to the points above, and 2) a misunderstanding that nonprofit higher education institutions are inaccessible.

AICCU is considering submitting an application for an implementation grant from the same funders later this year. This grant, if secured, would allow AICCU to work over the next two to three years on, prospectively, a statewide strategy that includes a transfer information website and document, and working on regional levels to establish partnerships like dual admissions programs.

CHALLENGES

THE MULTIYEAR IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ENROLLMENT

While this year's ADT admit data demonstrates positive momentum, the fact remains that CCC enrollment is down significantly.

Systemwide, more than 260,000 fewer students enrolled at California Community Colleges in Fall 2020 than Fall 2019.[5] A recent memorandum to the California Community College Board of Governors noted that the Fall 2021 headcount was

[5] https://edsource.org/2021/californias-community-colleges-at-critical-crossroads-as-more-students-opt-not-to-attend/652637

down approximately 7% from Fall 2020 and down 20% overall compared to Fall 2019.[6] The author of the memo, Dr. John Hetts, Visiting Executive for Research and Data at the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, stated that enrollment is unlikely to return to Fall 2019 levels for another two or three years.[7]

While the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic may have passed, the impacts to the educational pipeline to higher education may continue to be felt for several years.

CONTINUED LACK OF VISIBILITY IN CCC TRANSFER TOOL

There continues to be a lack of visibility for AICCU institutions that have adopted the ADT on icangotocollege.com (the redesigned CCC transfer website maintained by the CCC Chancellor's Ofifce that was formerly adegreewithaguarantee.com). In 2021, AICCU and the CCCCO discussed the website's redesign and the need for better integration of AICCU institutions into the website.

The Transfer Tool on the website only lists the 23 CSUs among its transfer destinations, even if students attempt to use it with the "I Know Where I Want to Transfer" function, meaning transfer pathways to AICCU institutions are completely omitted for those using the tool. This complete lack of inclusion in the website renders it useless for students seeking information on transfer to an ICCU.[8]

Furthermore, only the 12 AICCU participating institutions that have signed the individual MOU with the Chancellor's Office are listed on the list of participating four-year universities website, and the list is difficult to find, excluding the remaining 26 that are accepting ADT students but have not signed the MOU.[9]

It is critical that the new website elevate the visibility of transfer pathways to AICCU institutions for more students to know about these programs.

[6] https://calmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Fall-2021-Enrollment-Memo-1.pdf
[7] https://calmatters.org/education/higher-education/2022/03/community-college-enrollment/
[8] https://icangotocollege.com/transfer-tool
[9]https://cccco-media.imgix.net/CCC-Transfer-Flat-File-3.17.22.pdf

DATA TRACKING VARIABILITY

The tracking of ADT transfer students remains time consuming and challenging, as there is much variability in the ways both California Community Colleges and AICCU institutions track their ADT students.

AICCU institutions have indicated that whereas some CCCs notate the completion of an ADT-specific degree on student transcripts, others do not. This forces the receiving institutions to rely on applicants to self-attest to having completed an ADT degree.

In addition, AICCU institutions use varying methods and indicators built into their student information system to identify ADT students. Even if students are identified as receiving an ADT through their transcript or application, the data extraction process involves a lot of manual work as the information cannot necessarily be extracted through a simple report.

AICCU will continue to explore ways to support participating institutions and streamline the data tracking and collection process in order to reduce institutional burden.

ONE-SIZE FITS ALL NATURE OF ADT LIMITS EXPANSION

In its inception, the ADT program was designed as a transfer pathway from a CCC to a CSU. Given the diversity of independent, nonprofit colleges and universities in the state, the ADT transfer pathway does not work for all institutions. For example, the core pillar of guaranteed admission with a minimum of a 2.0 grade point average is not feasible at some institutions where the average GPA of a transfer applicant is well above a 3.0. Other institutions may have strong existing relationships with regional community colleges that offer a different transfer pathway, such as 1+3 models where students are able to transfer to the four-year university after one year instead of two, as the ADT dictates.

POLICY AND BUDGETARY SOLUTIONS

AICCU continues to engage with its institutions and other stakeholders on ways to better support transfer counselors, students, and their families as they navigate transfer options to independent, nonprofit colleges and universities. The planning grant from The Teagle Foundation and Arthur Vining Davis Foundations allowed AICCU to convene important regional discussions to identify challenges and opportunities for improving the visibility and awareness of transfer to ICCUs.

While AICCU can work to address some of those challenges on its own, several of the issues identified would either require or be greatly assisted by legislation and/or budgetary investments, including:

1. **Provide state General Funds to incorporate the state's independent nonprofit colleges and universities into the ASSIST platform.**
   While some ICCUs contract with third-party vendors for standalone systems such as Transferology, during the planning grant convenings CCC transfer counselors constistently shared a strong preference for integration into the existing ASSIST platform, rather than having to navigate various standalone tools. To integrate AICCU transfer receiving institutions into ASSIST, the Legislature and Newsom Administration should provide funding to the UC Office of the President, which maintains the system.

2. **Expand categorical eligibility for state Cal Grant supports to students who attend an ICCU**.
   In last year's enacted budget, the state significantly expanded Cal Grant entitlement eligibility for CCC students by eliminating age and time-out-of-high-school restrictions. Those students made newly eligible are able to use any remaining eligibility upon transfer to a UC or CSU, but not to an ICCU. For the nearly 100,000 CCC students now eligible for a Cal Grant award under that change, this creates a financial disincentive for them to consider transferring to an ICCU. This portability of remaining eligibility should be extended to students who wish to transfer to an ICCU.

3. Shift to dynamic target-setting methodology for ADT transfer targets and adjust the tie to the Cal Grant.

   Under existing law, the Cal Grant award amount for students attending an ICCU is determined by the number of ADT applicants admitted to the sector. The target number of admits for the 2022-23 collection cycle is 3,500. Considering declining enrollment at CCCs, which as noted will likely not return to pre-pandemic levels for several years, AICCU believes the state should accelerate the shift to the target-setting methodology in Education Code Section 69432(h), which reads:

   …the target number of new unduplicated recipients accepted by independent institutions of higher education who have been given associate degree for transfer commitments shall be equal to the number of new transfer students attending independent institutions of higher education who were given associate degree for transfer commitments in the prior award year, adjusted by the percentage change in the total number of new transfer students from the year two years prior, compared to the prior year.

   Additionally, the state should replace the trigger cut for years where targets are not met with a policy that holds the award stable in such instances, and instead provides some sort of Cal Grant award increase for years where targets are achieved. This shift would maintain incentives for the sector to continue to achieve targets without the threat of significant cuts to need-based aid for low-income California students.

CONCLUSION

The 233% growth in the number of unduplicated admitted ADT students accepted from 869 in 2018-19 to 2,898 in 2021-22 indicates positive momentum on ADT within the independent, nonprofit university sector. The return to an upward trajectory in ADT admits to the ICCU sector is encouraging, especially considering significant enrollment declines at California Community Colleges over the past two years.

The Cal Grant program represents a significant public-private partnership with the state that has endured for 65 years to help California students from all backgrounds achieve their academic and college goals. AICCU remains firm in its commitment to California Community College students and strengthening our partnership with the CCCCO, the Department of Finance, and the Legislature.

For more information on this report, please contact:

Alex Graves
Vice President for Government Relations
alex.graves@aiccu.edu

Pamela Ong
Research Manager
pamela.ong@aiccu.edu