

Community college transfer degrees speed graduation at CSU

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Early alumni of California's community college transfer program are showing promising results for the 7-year-old law's efforts to ease the path to a bachelor's degree.

Of a group of nearly 1,100 students who transferred to California State University in fall 2013 with the Associate Degree for Transfer, 48 percent graduated within two years, data provided by CSU shows, compared to 31 percent of all undergraduate transfers. Within three years, 80 percent had completed their studies, 16 percentage points higher than transfer students overall.

The Associate Degree for Transfer was created by legislators to [clear up the confusion of varied requirements](#) that had resulted in poor transfer rates from California community colleges to four-year schools. Students who complete the model two-year curriculum are guaranteed admission to a CSU campus as a junior, putting them on course to finish their bachelor's degrees in just two more years. (The University of California created its own ["transfer pathways" for popular majors](#) in 2015, though those do not include admission guarantees.)

Since formally launching in the 2011-12 academic year, the transfer degrees have become an increasingly popular option. The California Community Colleges system awarded 30,868 in 2015-16, about a quarter of all the associate degrees it conferred. That's an almost-50 percent increase from 2014-15 and up from just 722 in the first year. The chancellor's office continues to ramp up outreach about the program, with plans for new digital and radio ads soon, including some in Spanish.

More and more of those graduates also are transferring to CSU – at least 22,000 so far. Last fall alone, 8,153 students with transfer degrees enrolled at CSU, about 16 percent of the community college transfer group, and the university expects the figure to rise to more than 10,000 for 2016-17 once winter and spring transfers are counted.

FALL 2013 TRANSFER STUDENTS AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Percent of students who graduated

■ All undergraduate transfer ■ Community college transfer ■ Associate Degree for Transfer

