

Starting at a Community College Can Help Students Earn a Bachelor's Degree

By Catherine Groux

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A new survey shows what factors are important for transfer students. Today, about one-third of all college students decide to transfer schools at least once before earning a bachelor's degree, the National Student Clearinghouse® Research Center™ reports. With this practice becoming more common than ever, many students go through the college admissions process a second or third time. While the process is similar to what they experienced as first-time college students, individuals should be aware that many schools judge transfer applicants slightly differently than they would incoming freshmen.

To give transfer students a better idea of what prospective schools will look at, the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) recently conducted a survey of college officials. Based on their responses, here are the top factors that come into play during the admissions process for transfer students:

College GPA

According to the NACAC survey, more than 90% of college officials said transfer students' overall postsecondary GPA was "considerably important" during the admissions process, making it the single most significant factor for admission. Individuals should keep in mind, however, that while their college grades are of the utmost importance, their high school GPA will matter less as transfer students. While 51% of admissions officers said high school GPA was very significant during the first-time admissions process, only 12% said the same for the transfer process.

Grades in Transferable Courses

Before deciding if students would be a good fit at their school, many admissions officials look at how well they did at their previous college, not just overall, but in the specific courses their institution will accept. The NACAC survey shows that 60% of college admissions officers feel grades in transferable courses are very important.

Admissions Essay

As first-time students, most individuals have to write one or more admissions essays as part of their applications. Typically, the transfer process is no different. Today, about 47% of admissions officials believe transfer students' admissions essay or writing sample is "moderately or considerably important."

Letters of Recommendation

Transfer students should also expect to submit letters of recommendation to their new schools, just as they did when they were new freshmen. As these letters can help institutions get a better sense of

students' achievements and personalities, about 48% of admissions officials said they were of moderate or significant importance for transfer students.

Student Interest

While student interest can often be challenging to measure, colleges want to enroll transfer students who have a strong desire to attend their school. This can be proven in many ways, but more than one-third of colleges said they like to see transfer students who visit their campus, have a particular major in mind and plan to enroll full time. Additionally, the NACAC survey found that schools try to gauge student interest through various elements of their applications, including their essays and letters of recommendation.

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