

NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE®

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National Student Clearinghouse: No Straight Path to College Graduation **Two-Year Institutions Contribute to Nearly Half of Four-Year Degrees;** **15 Percent of Degree Recipients Cross State Lines**

Herndon, Virginia, September 6, 2012 – Two recent Snapshot Reports™ by the National Student Clearinghouse® Research Center™ reveal that 15 percent of degree recipients previously attended college in another state, while nearly half of students receiving a four-year degree in 2010-11 previously enrolled in a two-year institution. The Research Center also published state-by-state breakdowns (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) of interstate mobility and the contributions of two-year institutions to four-year degrees.

[Snapshot Reports](#), which are released throughout the year, draw on college enrollment data provided to the [National Student Clearinghouse](#) by its more than 3,300 participating postsecondary institutions. The reports are unique snapshots in time that reveal emerging college enrollment patterns and student mobility pathways.

The Research Center has continued to study student mobility in its Snapshot Report series. In an earlier study, it was revealed that 8 percent of students attended more than one postsecondary institution during a single academic year. The two new reports on [interstate mobility](#) and the [role of two-year institutions in four-year degree attainment](#) have gone deeper into this analysis.

- In 13 states, more than half of degree recipients at four-year institutions had previously enrolled at a two-year institution.
- Geographic mobility varies by the state awarding a degree. At the high end, 40 percent of undergraduate degrees awarded in the District of Columbia were preceded by enrollment outside of the district. At the opposite end of the spectrum, prior enrollment in a different state occurred with only 8 percent of degrees awarded in Michigan.
- The contribution of two-year institutions to four-year degrees also varies by state. 78 percent of four-year degrees awarded in Texas were preceded by enrollment in a two-year institution, compared to only 19 percent of degrees awarded in Alaska.
- Of the four-year degree recipients who attended two-year institutions, 79 percent were enrolled at two-year institutions for multiple terms.

“It is important to note a public policy shift in the states that encourage more students to start at community colleges and go on to earn their degrees at four-year institutions,” said Dr. Doug Shapiro, Executive Director of the Research Center. “This shift, coupled with interstate mobility, leads to the

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growing realization that few students start at one institution and remain there. Too little attention has been paid to postsecondary education pathways that span multiple institutions.”

“The National Student Clearinghouse tracks individual students and their successes across institutions and states, which offers a level of detail surpassing other existing measurement systems,” stated Rick Torres, President and CEO, National Student Clearinghouse. “Student educational pathways continue to evolve, driven by student choice. Our reports can help the higher education community and policymakers gain a better understanding of the growing impact of diverse pathways, including how two-year institutions contribute to students’ eventual attainment of four-year degrees. Our reports also demonstrate that many students who transfer out of state go on to receive a degree. Most conventional reporting systems would label these students as drop-outs. Our data sheds light on enrollment patterns and provides valuable insight on students’ postsecondary access and success.”

The Snapshot Reports, along with the state breakdowns of interstate mobility and two-year contributions to four-year degrees, are available at www.studentclearinghouse.org/snapshot.

About the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center is the research arm of the National Student Clearinghouse. The Research Center collaborates with higher education institutions, states, school districts, high schools, and educational organizations as part of a national effort to better inform education leaders and policymakers. Through accurate longitudinal data outcomes reporting, the Research Center enables better educational policy decisions leading to improved student outcomes. To learn more, visit <http://research.studentclearinghouse.org>.

About the National Student Clearinghouse

The National Student Clearinghouse (a nonprofit formed in 1993) is the unique and trusted source for higher education enrollment and degree verifications. The Clearinghouse serves as a single point of contact for the collection and timely exchange of accurate and comprehensive enrollment, degree, and certificate records on behalf of its more than 3,300 participating higher education institutions, which represent 96 percent of all students in public and private U.S. institutions. The Clearinghouse also provides thousands of high schools and districts with continuing collegiate enrollment, progression, and completion statistics on their alumni. Through its verification and reporting services, the Clearinghouse saves the education community cumulatively nearly four hundred million dollars annually. Most Clearinghouse services are provided to colleges and universities at little or no charge, including enhanced transcript and research services, enabling institutions to redistribute limited staff and budget resources to more important student service efforts. Clearinghouse services are designed to facilitate an institution’s compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, The Higher Education Act, and other applicable laws. In addition, the Clearinghouse provides accurate, timely enrollment and degree verifications to student loan providers, employers, student credit issuers, the U.S. Department of Education, and others who access its registry more than half a billion times annually.

For more information, visit www.studentclearinghouse.org.

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