GUIDE TO PREPARING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR THE TRANSITION TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE & TRANSFER TO A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY

HIGH SCHOOL – 9TH – 11TH GRADE

☐ Students should keep their grades up, take advantage of tutoring and advising services offered at school, continue to take A-G courses, and take concurrent enrollment courses at their local community college to increase their college readiness.

☐ Starting in 9th grade, students should be presented with information on the community college option as one of their many post-secondary options.

☐ Encourage students to meet with a Counselor and/or College Advisor to discuss their pathway to college and have their transcript evaluated each semester to determine college eligibility.

*Following these recommendations will help students be better prepared for community college and a 4-year university.

HIGH SCHOOL – SENIOR YEAR

August – December

☐ Encourage students to meet with a Counselor and/or College Advisor to discuss their college options.

☐ Matriculation and Preparation for Transfer: Students should meet with a Counselor and/or College Advisor to learn about the matriculation process for community college and preparation for transfer. These processes entail a lot of steps that will need to be completed prior to high school graduation in order for students to have a successful transition to college. Students should be provided with multiple opportunities during the fall semester to become well-informed.

☐ Information Gathering: Students should create a college information file. Advise students to begin collecting information on tuition and fees, courses, programs, requirements and deadlines. Students can visit www.cccco.edu for a list of all the California Community Colleges and programs. You can also visit www.cccapply.org to access the directory of colleges. Students may need to be shown how to navigate these websites, so become familiar with them in advance so you can show students where to go for more information.

☐ College Visits: Provide field trip opportunities for students to attend events at community colleges. Many community colleges offer tours, transfer fairs, and events that highlight their programs. These events will help students explore their options and determine which college and pathway is a good fit. Coordinating these trips often takes a lot of planning, so contact your local community college representatives as early as possible to determine dates and logistics. You may want to partner with an outreach program or college preparation program (4-year or community college) to coordinate your school’s field trips.

☐ Promoting the Community College Option: Provide students with workshop opportunities that focus on community college and the transfer process. Invite both community college and 4-year college representatives to conduct these workshops. Actively promote and outreach such workshop opportunities to your senior students.

☐ Transfer Requirements: Advise students to research transfer requirements. Transfer requirements can greatly vary based on the universities students are applying to and their intended major. It is important to remember that the transfer process begins even before students set foot on a community college campus – the choices they make in high school and level of academic preparation will impact their transfer timeline.
Advise students to utilize websites such as www.assist.org (articulation agreements between California community colleges and CSU and UC), http://uctransfer.universityofcalifornia.edu (UC), www.csumentor.edu (CSU), www.aiccu.edu (California private colleges and universities).

Address the various myths of community colleges and discuss the benefits.

Highly encourage career exploration. The sooner students decide on their interests, the sooner they can begin crafting a transfer plan and take the right classes for their chosen major.

Encourage students to start researching and applying for scholarships.

Planning for Community College Assessment Exams: Contact the Assessment Coordinator to schedule field trips for your students to take an assessment exam (math and English) and participate in an orientation. If you wait until the spring semester to reserve space for your students in the assessment lab, you may not be able to accommodate all of your students. Prior to the exam, you may need to send the college’s Assessment Coordinator your students’ names and college Student Identification Numbers.

January - February

Financial Aid: Students should apply for federal financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 2 at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Remind students to list the community college they are applying to on their financial aid applications.

Students should visit www.icanaffordcollege.com for more information on financial aid and to obtain a copy of the Board of Governor’s Fee Waiver.

Remind students to submit GPA verification forms for Cal Grants.

After submitting FAFSA, your student will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) confirmation; students should immediately reply to any requests for additional information.

Mark your calendars for participation in community college high school visit days, which usually take place in March, April, or May. Start working with the different college representatives to coordinate field trips to these various events.

Some community colleges will start accepting applications for admission in February. If this is the case, students should apply to community college as early as possible, so they can get a jump start on the matriculation process. Students are able to apply to more than one college at a time.

Community College Application Day: Coordinate a Community College Application Day at your school to assist your community college bound students with the application process and matriculation steps. Reserve a computer lab with internet and printing access so that students can complete on-line applications and print their confirmation receipts. Recruit volunteers to assist students with their applications (i.e. representatives from local community colleges or 4-year college preparation program staff). It is best that your Community College Application Day take place during the school day to ensure student access. You will need to work with your teachers to get permission to release students from class for this event.

Note: Some community colleges have partnerships with high schools where they do on-site admission and allow students to take assessment exams at their high schools and register for college classes early.

Advise students to take the following into consideration when selecting a community college: size, location, type of population, programs offered, and campus environment. It is important that students pick a college that is a good fit.
March - April

☐ Students should submit their FAFSA by the March 2\textsuperscript{nd} deadline.

☐ Take students on tours of both community colleges and 4-year universities. Participate in community college high school visit days or other related events.

☐ Your students should choose a community college and apply for admission, if they haven’t done so already. If students wait until the summer to apply, they may not be able to get into the classes they need to fulfill general education and transfer requirements.

☐ Your students will receive information via e-mail regarding their community college registration information and student identification numbers. Remind students to check their e-mail and read e-mail messages thoroughly. Many students overlook important details. If they have any questions, refer them to the admissions office at their community college.

☐ Assessment Exam: Your students should take the assessment in English and math following their admission to community college. These assessments will allow the college to determine student skill levels and help with course selection. These exam scores count, so students should take the tests seriously! With higher math and English scores, students can skip levels of English and math at community college, saving time and money.
  o Students must bring a picture ID and social security number/or student ID number (usually issued by their community college via e-mail, after submitting an application).
  o Students must arrive 15 minutes prior to when their assessment exam is scheduled.
  o Assessment practice tests are often available at community college’s websites; encourage students to review these study guides.
  o Students can check with their specific college to see if they are exempt from taking the assessment exam.

☐ Post-Assessment Exam: After completing the assessment exams, your students will have a lot of questions about what their scores mean. For some students, assessment scores may provide a shocking reality check about their level of academic preparation for college. Let students know that they can meet with a counselor to discuss their placement. Counselors often use multiple measures to determine placement, so students should bring a copy of their high school transcripts to their appointment. Some colleges will allow students to re-take a placement exam if students can get a referral from their community college counselor.

☐ College Orientation: Students will need to attend an orientation session at their community college. Some students can attend an orientation the same day that they take their assessment exam, while other colleges may require separate appointments or will allow you to complete an on-line orientation. Orientation provides students with important information on academic requirements, registration procedures and campus support services to help facilitate the transition to college and is designed to address new students’ questions and concerns. Many colleges require that all students complete an orientation in order to register for classes, so make sure that your students know they need to complete this important step as soon as possible.

☐ Community College Counselor Appointment: Your students will need to meet with a community college counselor and develop a first semester Student Education Plan (SEP) to select appropriate courses based on their objectives and assessment evaluation.
  o Remind your students to tell their community college counselors that they plan to transfer to a 4-year university and to ask for a counselor that specializes in transfer.
  o Students should inquire about the university’s general education requirements and the lower-division courses required for their major.
 Students should review options for completing a general education pattern: Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC), campus specific UC General Education pattern or CSU Breadth Requirements, or campus specific GE for private colleges/universities. Note: Certain majors put more emphasis on major preparation.

**Support Services:** Students should sign up to participate in student support services during their senior year. These programs provide academic support, counseling, and assistance with the transfer preparation and application process. Students should contact these programs directly to determine how to apply and eligibility requirements.

**Summer Classes:** Encourage students to sign up for summer classes at their community college. Summer classes fill up quickly, so remind them not to delay. Registering for a math and English course over the summer will give students a head start on their classes and ease their transition to college. Students may also want to consider taking a student success course in the summer to help better prepare for success in college.

**Processing Financial Aid:** Students will need to visit the financial aid office in order to get their paperwork processed. Unlike the 4-year universities, students will not receive a formal financial aid offer letter in the mail. Students will need to take the initiative to get their aid processed.

- At some colleges, in order to initiate the process to receive your financial aid, students will need to bring a copy of their Student Aid Reports (SAR) from [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to their college’s financial aid office.
- Students should turn in a completed Board of Governors Fee Waiver Form.
- Students must sign and return any financial verification forms or documents provided by the financial aid office which require a student and/or parent signature. Students should not delay in returning these documents if they want to receive their financial aid check in time for the fall semester!
- The financial aid office will need time to process your students’ paperwork. Advise them to ask when their financial aid award will be available and how the award will be distributed.
- Advise students to always ask the financial aid office if their file is complete once all paperwork has been submitted.

**May – July**

- Advise students to enroll in classes at their community college for the fall semester. Make sure to refer students to their community college catalog and [www.assist.org](http://www.assist.org) to determine which courses are transferable to a UC.

- **Course Registration:** Students may require help registering for their classes on-line for the first time. In order to assist your students with this task, you can:
  - Partner with or refer students to community college representatives or college preparation programs at their high schools to help them sign up for their classes.
  - Send students to the Admissions Office at their community college or to their college’s Welcome Center.

- Remind students to be aware of registration deadlines; classes fill up quickly! At some colleges, students can register for fall semester classes as early as the first week of May. If students want to enroll in summer classes, registration starts even earlier. If students sign up for classes after their registration date they might not be able to get into the classes they need.

- Remind students to pay their registration fees and check payment deadlines. Some colleges may drop students from classes if they do not pay registration fees by a certain date early in the semester.
GUIDE TO PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS FOR THEIR FIRST YEAR IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE & TRANSFER TO A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY

FIRST YEAR – COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Share the following steps with your students to help them prepare for the transition to college and the transfer process to a four-year college or university.

August – September
☐ Preparation for the first day of classes is very important. Students should plan on completing the following steps prior to their first day of school: 1) Purchase books and materials/supplies 2) Print out class schedule 3) Scout out the location of classes before first day 4) Print a copy of the college’s academic calendar to keep track of important deadlines.
☐ Students will begin taking fall courses at their community colleges. Students should attend classes and come on time or else an instructor may drop them from a class.
☐ Students should be aware of the deadlines for adding/dropping classes and procedures.
☐ Students should connect with student support programs such as tutoring and advising services and get involved in some activities on campus such as student clubs/organizations, student government and other leadership activities, and community service.

September - December
☐ Preparing for transfer to a 4-year university takes careful planning, so students should visit their community college’s Transfer Center to get assistance.
☐ If a student is interested in applying to a UC, they should sign up to participate in UC transfer admission programs that can assist them with planning for transfer to UC campuses. These UC programs provide one-on-one support and summer enrichment programs, which will increase students transfer readiness. Students should visit their transfer center for a list of scheduled visits from 4-year college representatives.
☐ Students should research transfer agreement programs with 4-year colleges and universities.
☐ Before the start of the spring semester, students should meet with a counselor to update their Student Education Plan and register for spring courses.
☐ Students should attend Transfer Day at their community college.
☐ Students should continue to research and apply for scholarships.

January – February
☐ Students can get ahead in their coursework by taking courses during a short term winter session.
☐ Students will begin spring semester classes.
☐ Students will need to reapply for financial aid, for the following academic year, at fafsa.ed.gov.

March – August
☐ Students should meet with a counselor to update/review their Student Education Plan.
☐ Students will need to enroll in summer and fall classes.
☐ During the end of their second semester, students should determine if they will have 30 transferable units by the end of the summer. Students are encouraged to complete English and math requirements during their first 30 units.
☐ Students should meet with 4-year admissions representatives and visit/tour 4-year universities.
GUIDE TO PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS FOR THEIR SECOND YEAR IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE & TRANSFER TO A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY

SECOND YEAR – COMMUNITY COLLEGE

August - October
☐ Students will begin taking their fall semester classes.
☐ Students should attend Transfer Day to research 4-year college and university options.
☐ Students will need to meet with a counselor and/or Transfer Agreement Coordinator to file a contract if they have completed 30 transferable units by the end of the summer and requirements for the Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG).
☐ Students will need to meet with a counselor to review/update their Student Education Plan (SEP).
☐ Students will enroll in spring semester classes.
☐ If students are applying to transfer to UC and private colleges or universities, they should begin to write their personal statement (although it is highly recommended to have a draft completed during the summer prior to second year). Students can sign up for application and personal statement workshops at their college’s transfer center.

October - November
☐ Students who have completed the necessary transfer requirements will apply to the UC, CSU, and select/specific private colleges and universities.
   ○ UC – www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply
   ○ CSU – www.csumentor.edu
   ○ Privates (CA) – www.aiccu.edu
☐ Students will need to send transcripts to 4-year universities (if requested).

January – February
☐ Students will begin spring semester classes.
☐ Students must reapply for financial aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov
☐ Students must submit GPA verification for Cal Grants.
☐ Students should continue to research and apply for scholarships.
☐ Students must update applications as instructed by the 4-year colleges and universities.
☐ Students should begin looking into housing on-campus or near their 4-year college or university.

March - August
☐ Transfer applicants must check their admissions status and:
   ○ Submit intent to register
   ○ Request general education certification (if applicable).
   ○ Send transcripts to 4-year college or university
   ○ If also getting an Associates Degree before transferring, file a petition for the Associates Degree and graduation (if applicable)
   ○ Submit paperwork required for on-campus housing as soon as possible. Spots fill up very quickly!
☐ Students should meet with a counselor to ensure that all their transfer admission steps and requirements are complete.