

# Transfer to Selective Universities from American Community Colleges

Presented By: University of California, Berkeley  
San Mateo Colleges of Silicon Valley



Surabaya | Medan | Taipei | Shenzhen | Johannesburg  
Yangon | Guangzhou | Shanghai | Beijing | Amman | Hanoi |  
Jakarta | Hong Kong | Mumbai | Vientiane | Phnom Penh

# EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

## American Community College Transfer to Selective Universities Seminar

Leilt Habte, University of California, Berkeley  
 Jing Luan, San Mateo Colleges of Silicon Valley

**About 40%  
 Bachelor's  
 degree students  
 in America start  
 at a community  
 college!**

American Community Colleges perform an important role unique to developed Western countries, which is to give their citizens open access to higher education free and without barriers. Instead of testing into a college, students are placed into different levels of college courses. The completion of these courses allows them access to as high a university degree as they desire. This approach reflects the underpinning

educational philosophy and economic strategy of these countries. It intentionally challenges the traditional method of “testing” into college, which is never considered a perfect gauge of college readiness and a poor predictor of learning outcomes. Transfer from community colleges vs. applying directly to a university is a very practical way to enter universities, especially among middle class Americans. The level of education of its largest citizen group, the middle class, is fundamental to America’s political, economic, scientific and cultural advancement, therefore, any efforts to limit education to the privileged few significantly conflicts with such a belief.

**America's  
 community  
 colleges came  
 from highly  
 selective  
 universities!**

American community colleges started by some of the oldest and highly selective American universities, such as the University of Chicago and Baylor University. In order to solidly prepare their students in the lower division classes (AKA general education and in some countries, Year 1 and Year 2 of University Studies), the universities employed full-time professors whose job was to teach, not to conduct research. Initially called junior colleges, with

time, they have evolved to include purposes of career and technical education, lifelong learning, among other functions. They are called community colleges because they reflect the community in which they serve.

As the number of community colleges grew and more students graduated with all of the lower division credits, legislations were passed to allow students to take the credits with them to any universities they desired and universities were encouraged to recognize their credits. Meanwhile, all community colleges are subject to the same rigorous accreditation standards, which is fundamental for universities to accept the credits from community colleges.

The action taken by community college students to apply to a university with all of their credits is called “transfer”. In order for their transfer applications to be reviewed, prospective transfer students must meet “Eligibility Transfer Requirements” by the university. While most universities in America accept transfers, some provide guaranteed transfers. Students simply need to maintain their GPA (grade point

FROM:	High School (UFA*)	 (CCFA*)
TOEFL Score	90+	56**
SAT Score	1300+	Not Required
Annual Cost: Years 1 & 2	\$55,000- \$65,000	\$24,000- \$25,000
Annual Cost: Years 3 & 4	\$55,000- \$65,000	\$55,000- \$65,000
Admission Rate to UC	5% - 30%	75% - 95%
 <b>SAME DEGREE in 4 YEARS</b>		

**Articulation:**  
 community college courses that are deemed to be equivalent in content and quality to those offered by the universities and are used to meet subject matter or university requirements.

\* UFA = University Freshman Application; CCFA = Community College Freshman Application

\*\*Not required if you attend SVIEP or obtain IELTS of 5.5 or if you attended a high school where English is the primary language of instruction.

**To Transfer to All UC and UC Berkeley:** minimum eligibility requirements. (to be competitive: higher GPA, complete general education and major preparation requirements)

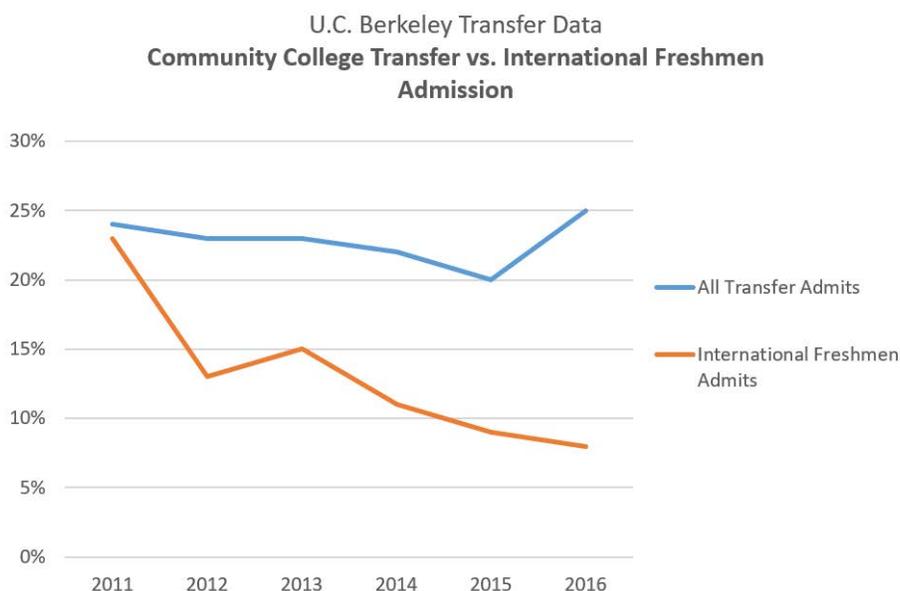
- 60 semester/90 quarter units
- Minimum 2.4 GPA (UC Berkeley: 3.0)
- 2 transferable courses in English composition
- 1 transferable course in mathematical concepts and quantitative reasoning
- 4 transferable courses chosen from at least two of these subject areas;
  - social and behavioral sciences
  - arts and humanities
  - biological and physical sciences

average) and meet certain other requirements that are much simpler than high school direct admits. Guaranteed transfer admission offered by some highly selective universities give community college students the *right* to be admitted if they meet the requirements without being subjected to selectivity. This is why transfer students may have a 95% admission rate to a selective university while high school direct admission rate hovers at 30% even though their applications may have completely met the university's admission criteria.

UC Berkeley does not offer a guaranteed transfer, yet, the University admits 2 times more transfer students from community colleges than international students directly from high school (F-1 students). In 2015, UC Berkeley admitted 3,268 transfer students and 1,409 F-1 students. Indeed, *where you choose to begin college is not as important as where you ultimately earn your Bachelor's degree.*

Comparisons of International High School Direct Applicants vs. Transfer Applicants (UC Berkeley)

	International High School Direct Applicants			All Transfer Applicants			International Transfer Applicants		
	Applicants	Admits	Admit Rate	Applicants	Admits	Admit Rate	Applicants	Admits	Admit Rate
2011	6,330	1,454	23%	16,033	3,545	22%	2,221	549	25%
2012	9,434	1,262	13%	15,771	3,361	21%	2,569	542	21%
2013	11,601	1,789	15%	16,013	3,335	21%	2,799	641	23%
2014	13,719	1,509	11%	16,662	3,290	20%	3,106	580	19%
2015	15,027	1,409	9%	17,285	3,268	19%	3,316	557	17%
2016	16,017	1,262	8%	19,141	4,625	25%	3,505	558	18%



	Retention Rate	Graduation Rate
Transfer students at Berkeley	94%	76%
Other Berkeley students	97%	76%

Data source: UC Admissions Offices/UC Office of the President

## Q&A

### 1) Does UC Berkeley consider nationalities of transfer students:

No.

### 2) How does the university review the transcripts from community colleges:

Community college transcripts from California community colleges are easier to evaluate because the courses that are articulated and transferrable are readily identified in the application that is connected to the official articulation website, [www.assist.org](http://www.assist.org). This makes determination of eligibility much more straight forward.

### 3) Please confirm that SAT or TOEFL is not required for transfer students

No examination of any kind is currently required for admission as a transfer student from a California community college. In order to be eligible, students would need to complete courses that meet the admissions requirements.

### 4) Do community colleges in California have a better chance of transfer to UCs

Because the University of California is a public educational system: the system gives priority to California Community College prospective transfer students for admissions considerations.

### 5) If a transfer student who comes through a community college and is over the age of 18, why the university would not require a high school diploma?

Rather than the age, what is relevant is that students complete the required courses for admissions. High School diploma is not necessary because prospective transfer students need to complete relevant courses that ensures their eligibility to gain admission to the university. The general education and major preparation courses students complete overrides the need for a high school diploma.

### 6) How important is GPA? Do you have a GPA threshold below which no matter what a student has done in other areas s/he will not be considered for transfer?

For U.C. Berkeley, a minimum of 3.0 GPA is required in order to be eligible for review. It is a very competitive university thus to be competitive, students would need to earn a much higher GPA and for F-1 students. It is important for students to excel academically and earn very high GPAs in order to be competitive to enter the world's highest selective public university. Students must also meet requirements for leadership, community service, etc.

## References:

CCRC (Columbia University) <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Community-College-FAQs.html> (resource request 2016)

Drury, R. (2003) Community Colleges in America: A Historical Perspective. Inquiry, Vol 8, No. 1

Stanford University, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Carnegie Classifications, 2012 edition

University of California, Berkeley and University of California Office of the President (data extract 2016)

## Authors:

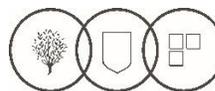
Leilt Habte is Assistant Director, Transfer Center, UC Berkeley. She has a law degree and graduated from UC Berkeley.

Dr. Jing Luan is President of San Mateo Colleges of Silicon Valley and Chairman of Study California. He received his Ph.D. from the Marylou Fulton Teachers College.



### University of California, Berkeley

Established in 1868, one of 10 campuses in the UC system. Known for its research, number of Nobel Laureates, countless famous alums and its significant contribution to science and culture.



SAN MATEO  
COLLEGES  
of Silicon Valley

### San Mateo Colleges of Silicon Valley

First established in 1922, the 3 public community colleges (Cañada College, College of San Mateo and Skyline College) are known for their attractive locations, elite quality teaching, dedication to student services, state of the art facilities, and guaranteed transfers to selective universities.