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Perspectives -- sent out to more than 4,000 higher ed professionals every other month -- covers new developments and features practical resources in the areas of research, planning, assessment, and community college leadership.

For more information, or to inquire about submitting work to the publication, please contact Director of Communications **Olivia Loy** and read "Share Your Findings and Ideas with Our 4,000 Readers," below.

Truly,  
Olivia Loy  
Director of Communications  
The RP Group

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[How Mature is Your Data Utilization? New Instrument Helps Assess Strength of How Data is Informing Change](#)

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## Articles

[How Mature is Your Data Utilization? New Instrument Helps Assess Strength of How Data is Informing Change](#)

**Aeron Zentner, Dean of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, Planning, and Grant Development  
Coastline Community College**

The intent of creating a culture that utilizes data to inform decisions is on the forefront of many institutional goals that seek to foster positive change. However, in many instances, data utilization and information literacy are siloed within specific segments of institutions, which limits the ability to integrate and support cultural shifts.

In response to this challenge, many institutions provide ample access to data reports, data dashboards, datasets, and research results, in an effort to alleviate the barrier to access. The current trends show that while we are drowning in data, we are still thirsting for knowledge and dreaming about change.

The crux of the issue, therefore, is the transcription of the data to information, the transition of information to knowledge, and the utilization of that knowledge to drive actionable change.

To respond to these challenges related to data utilization, institutions should recognize that cultural shifts first begin with cultural assessments that are aimed at understanding institutional climate and readiness for embarkation of institutional movements.

By looking within, colleges can recognize opportunities to reshape their mindset, structures, and operations to create a more data-rich environment that utilizes data to create knowledge and inform change, and ultimately leading to positive outcomes.

Facing these challenges over the past few years while working with colleagues at various institutions, prompted the development of an instrument that assesses the maturity of data utilization at institutions.

The focus is to define areas of expertise and strength, as well as to identify opportunities for improvement for utilizing data to inform change. ***The survey instrument collects individual-level information related to data utilization in four areas: awareness, availability, access, and application.***

While the instrument is recommended to be distributed to all college employees, one may also consider surveying specific departments or divisions. The output of the assessment will place a college on one of six rankings on the data utilization maturity index to describe institutional maturity. Below are the levels of the maturity scale:

1. Formative: The institution is at the entry level or introductory phase of data utilization.
2. Interested: The institution has a growing interest in utilizing data.
3. Pilot: The institution utilizes data sporadically when available.
4. Advocate: The institution supports and promotes the utilization of data.
5. Tactical: The institution fosters data utilization throughout many facets of the college.
6. Rooted: There is an applied culture of evidence-informed practices embedded throughout the in college.

It is anticipated that the results of this assessment will support college-wide discussions and initiatives which will begin to shift behavior towards a higher level of data utilization maturity. Additionally, it is recommended that the results are segmented to define opportunities for growth in different areas of the campus (e.g., Student Services, Instruction, Administrative Services) as there may be gaps that do not surface at the institutional-level.

In support of positive institutional change, we are making this instrument free for any college interested in participating. We are also looking to conduct a large scale study on data maturity at the regional and statewide levels.

***Please email [azentner@coastline.edu](mailto:azentner@coastline.edu) if you are interested in measuring your campus' data utilization maturity, and playing in the sandbox of innovation and change.***

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## Post-Transfer Outcomes: Tracking Baccalaureate Degree Completion among First-Time Students With or Without Two-Year Credentials

**Dustin J. Tamashiro, Senior Research and Planning Analyst; Peter A. Dwight, Business Analyst  
Pasadena City College**

According to *Tracking Transfer*, a 2016 report by the Aspen Institute for College Excellence and the Community College Research Center, less than one in five first-time community college students transfer and complete baccalaureate degrees within six years. Among just those that successfully transferred, slightly less than half earned a baccalaureate degree within six years' time.

Recent studies suggest that earning a community college credential (i.e., certificate or

associate's degree) before transfer might be associated with a higher probability of completing a baccalaureate degree; therefore, in addition to testing whether these results could be replicated locally, we also sought to investigate whether certificates and associate's degree awards were positively associated with baccalaureate degree completion among our college's first time students:

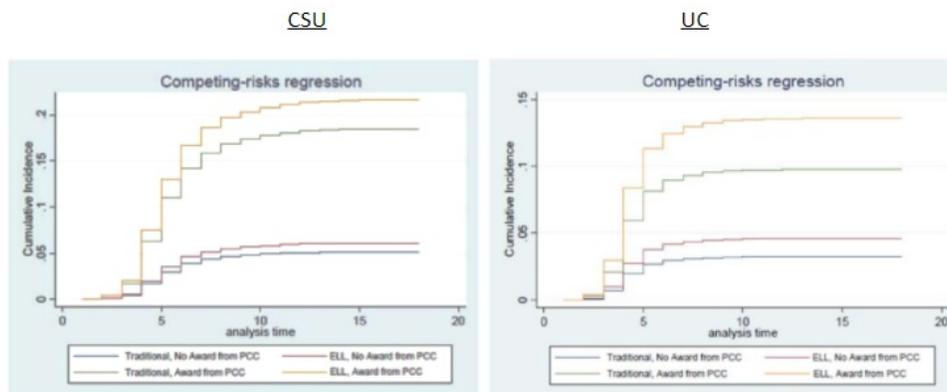
1. First, we sought to establish a baseline baccalaureate degree completion rate for first-time students at our institution, Pasadena City College (PCC).
2. Second, we sought to determine whether earning a PCC credential is associated with transfer and baccalaureate degree completion rates at the UCs and CSUs.

We first constructed a comprehensive educational profile for every enrolled student at PCC over the past 15 years by combining data from our local system (Banner), data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), college start dates from the CCCCO First File, self-reported data from CCCApply, and postsecondary transcripts received by our A&R office.

Our final sample consisted of 89,203 first time freshmen at PCC, 84.4% of whom neither transferred nor completed a baccalaureate degree.

Because receipt of a baccalaureate degree is conditional upon first successfully transferring to a four-year institution, we utilized competing-risks regression to estimate the cumulative probability of receiving a bachelor's degree from a specific set of schools, in this case the UCs and CSUs. The competing risk for students in either model is transferring and earning their first bachelor's degree from any other four-year college or university.

15.5% of all first-time students at PCC, from spring 2001 through spring 2016, transferred to private and public four-year colleges within California and out of state. We estimate that 10.5% (68%) of all first-time students at PCC will graduate with BAs/BSs within six years.



The baccalaureate degree completion rates above were disaggregated to emphasize the effect of completion vis-à-vis another plausible factor influencing transfer and/or four-year degree completion among our college's students: status as a non-resident, English language learner.

***We found that, controlling for differences attributable to cohort start year, the group with the greatest probability of completing a bachelor's degree from a CSU and UC within six years were non-resident, English Language Learners receiving credentials from PCC -- roughly 12% and 13%, respectively.***

As expected, the second highest group consisted of more traditional credential recipients. In sum, PCC credentials are positively associated with students' likelihood of completing a baccalaureate degree from public and private in-state schools within six years. PCC awardees were 3.1 times more likely to receive a bachelor's degree from a UC (overall) and 3.9 times more likely to receive a bachelor's degree from a CSU (overall). For an extended discussion, please refer to the link provided in the resource list below.

## Resources

[Research Brief: Tracking Post-Transfer Undergraduate Degree Completion among First-Time Students](#)

[Tracking Transfer: New Measures of Institutional and State Effectiveness in Helping Community College Students Attain Bachelor's Degrees](#)

[Should Community College Students Earn an Associate Degree Before Transferring to a Four-Year Institution?](#)

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We are now accepting proposal submissions from people just like you in order to elevate the quality and breadth of reading for our community, and to give voice to those who have a fresh perspective to share. [Submit your proposal here](#) and our editing team will respond to you shortly.

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