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10 Tips for Transferring From Community College

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Community colleges are hot, even among those students who expect to go on to get a bachelor's at a four-year college. The regents of the University of California report that 30 percent of UC graduates attended a community college before transferring to the UC. And among all those earning a bachelor's degree in Virginia, a third began at, or supplemented their education with classes from, a Virginia community college.

We were eager to find out a little more about how to make the transition from a community college to a four-year college, so we invited guest blogger **Glenn DuBois**, chancellor of Virginia's community colleges and himself a graduate of a community college, to offer a 10-step plan for making the leap. Here's what he had to say:

High-quality and affordably priced classes are persuading more students to begin their quest for a bachelor's degree at a community college. In Virginia, our community colleges have guaranteed transfer agreements with dozens of public and private universities. But even if such guarantees don't exist where you live, here are 10 steps you can take to ease your transfer from a community college to a university and increase the odds that your credits will count when you get there:

1. Complete your associate's degree. National research shows that community college students who finish their degree program complete the baccalaureate at a much higher rate than those students who transfer with simply a grab bag of credits.

2. Shop around. Examine all of the options available to you as a transfer student. Examine both public and private four-year institutions to decide what will be the best fit for you. The four-year institution that you had your heart set on in high school might not ultimately be the best choice for the subject you want to pursue.

3. Plan ahead. The earlier you begin to prepare for transfer, the better. Visit your top choices, collect transfer materials, and find out if there are any transfer agreements between where you are and where you want to go. The more information that you have, the easier it will be to make a decision.

4. Know what actually transfers. Make sure you are picking courses that are transferable to colleges and universities. There are Web sites, tools, and advisers at both community colleges and universities to help you choose wisely.

4-Star Tip. Many states have "articulation agreements"—negotiated documents that make clear what's needed to transfer from one higher education institution to another. The benefit to you as a student is that the agreement takes the guesswork out of the process by telling you, in black and white, what classes you need to take and what grades you need to make to avoid losing hard-earned credits when you transfer. Many states have Web sites with detailed information about articulation agreements and the process of transferring. Some of the best are:

- Virginia: www.VaWizard.org
- Arizona: www.aztransfer.com/CCStudent
- Texas: www.tccns.org/default.asp
- Illinois: www.itransfer.org/
- California: www.cpec.ca.gov/OnLineData/TransferPathway.asp

5. Don't be shy. Meet regularly with advisers at the community college. Keep your adviser informed of your transfer plans, and as transfer

NYU has the highest part-time student enrollment of all business schools. [Check out U.S. News B-School Compass for more!](#)

6. Choose a major. Pick your major early, and seek advice about the best courses to take to meet requirements. By choosing your major early, you can take the prerequisites that you need for that program at the university. Well-planned course taking will help you finish your transfer efficiently, saving you time and money in the long run.

7. Get admitted. Make sure that you apply to both the institution as well as the program that you want to attend at that institution. If you get admitted to the university, it often does not mean that you are admitted to the specific program that you want to study, like engineering or nursing. Make sure you complete those application materials, too. The deadlines for the university admissions materials and the program admissions materials might be different. Do your research!

8. Make them show you the money. Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) if you have not done so already. Call the university admissions office to see if it has scholarships set aside for transfer students—many institutions do. Make sure that you meet all of the deadlines for financial aid. Otherwise, you might miss out on assistance that is available to you.

9. Attend orientation. You might think that you do not need this because you already are a college student. But navigating the university is different. Take advantage of the opportunities that the universities have created for transfer students. These orientations will help ease the transfer process.

10. Stay focused. This one is easy to forget. Whether it's your associate's or bachelor's degree we're talking about, finishing on time is not easy. But it can be done if you are focused and work hard. Keep your goal in mind even when you're working in your hardest class, which you don't much like. It will all pay off.

These tips are just a start. To learn more information, try this interesting [recent article](#) on some of the challenges facing transfer students in California.

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