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Community College Transfer Outcomes: A Measure of Accountability

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Public Administration

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Division of Online and Professional Studies

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Community College Transfer Outcomes: A Measure of Accountability

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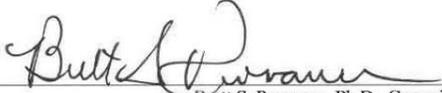
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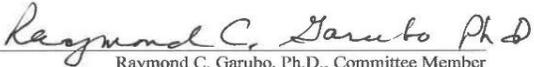
Division of Online and Professional Studies at California Baptist University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree Doctor of Public Administration

  
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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose.** Most community college students do not graduate let alone transfer to university. Hence, the purpose of this qualitative study was to (a) examine the learned experiences of California community colleges and California State University (CSU) administrators and staff in implementing the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act, 2010 as it relates to transfer to a university and (b) conduct an analysis of institutional (community colleges and universities) strategic plans, community college completion data, and the CSU undergraduate enrollment report.

**Theoretical Framework:** This study was based on the accountability theoretical framework specifically of professional, political, and legal principles coupled with the learning, democratic, and constitutional accountability perspectives.

**Methodology.** Nineteen semistructured interviews were conducted with participants from 3 community colleges and 3 CSU campuses in the Central Valley region of California. The participants were administrators and staff with firsthand experience and knowledge pertaining to transfer. Institutional strategic plans, community college completion data, and the CSU undergraduate enrollment report were analyzed to gain an in-depth understanding of transfer.

**Findings.** Review of the qualitative data suggests that the community colleges and CSUs are addressing the requirements of the STAR Act, 2010. The different articulation, transfer, and admission requirements at the CSUs create confusion for students. The data indicate an increase in both associate degrees for transfer (ADTs) awarded at the community colleges and undergraduate enrollment at the CSUs. However, the data also demonstrate a percentage decrease in undergraduate transfer enrollment at the CSUs

including 2 of the CSUs that were part of the study. Notably, the percentage of community college transfer students who earn a bachelor's degree in 2 years is significantly higher than freshman students who do so in 4 years.

**Conclusions and Recommendations.** From the data, the percentage of ADTs awarded by the community colleges in California has increased in the last 5 years (2012–2017).

However, current data indicate that the percentage of transfer community college students enrolled at the CSUs is still low. Public universities should review and make changes to their articulation, transfer, and admissions processes to better increase the number of community college students who transfer to a university. Future laws and processes should keep in mind the complex lives students live and need to better support transfer students at the university.

*Keywords:* transfer, articulation, completion, accountability

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I am eternally grateful to my wife, Kristi, and my children Lindsi, Isaac, and Julia, for their support and love. I am thankful for the liberties and opportunities the United States of America has afforded me. Most of all I am thankful to my Father in Heaven for answering my prayers.

## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my wife and children. This is also dedicated to my late mother, Tuiese, whose influence continues to guide me today.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Community colleges play a significant role in education and training in America. In fact, for many people, community colleges serve as their gateway to higher education. Dougherty, Lahr, and Morest (2017) argued that community colleges play a crucial role in public higher education, specifically in college access, baccalaureate degree preparation, and career readiness. Whether it is to freshen up on basic writing skills, train for a career in nursing, or prepare for transfer to a university, community colleges serve a multitude of residential, business, and community needs in America.

Despite its pivotal role in higher education, most community college students do not graduate let alone transfer to a university. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), two thirds of community college students do not earn a community college degree or credential after 6 years of initial enrollment (Baker, 2016). Only 13% of community college freshmen graduate with an associate degree in 2 years according to the Public Policy Institute of California (2017). Moreover, merely a quarter of community college students end up transferring to university with an estimated 17% who complete a bachelor's degree program (Jenkins & Fink, 2015). For California, this is a significant challenge as the state will need over 1.1 million workers with bachelor's degrees by 2030 in order to keep up with the state's economic and workforce demand (Public Policy Institute of California [PPIC], 2017). To help address the challenge, California enacted the Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act in 2010 to increase the number of community college students who graduate with an associate degree and transfer to a university.

Therefore, this research is about community college student transfer rates to a university. It is about understanding and identifying what community colleges are undertaking to assist students who attend these institutions of higher learning to transfer to a university. As such, it is imperative to understand how the STAR Act of 2010 is being implemented and identify the actions taken by colleges to increase community college student transfer rates.

### **Background of the Problem**

The aim of the STAR Act of 2010 is to increase student transfer from community colleges to bachelor's degree granting public institutions and "to increase the number of transfer-oriented students who earn associate degrees along the way" (Baker, 2016, p. 627). The legislation was designed with the intent to address the gap of community college completion and transfer rates to a university. This focus is significant as Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins (2015) noted that most students who enroll in community colleges never graduate and fewer than four of every 10 complete any degree or certificate within 6 years. Baker (2016) noted that completion and transfer at the community colleges has long been a public policy focus especially since many students who set out to earn degrees never do so.

A policy brief by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2011) argued that students who intend to complete a bachelor's degree but enroll in a community college as their first institution are about "15 percent less likely to complete their degree" (p. 2). The same report noted that only 8% of California community college graduates enroll at 4-year colleges and universities compared to states like Kansas where it was 28% and North Dakota with 24%. For California, the rate of community

college students who graduate and transfer to a university is significantly lower in comparison to other states. The reality, based on these studies, is that most community college students do not graduate let alone transfer to a university. This presents a significant challenge in the economic and workforce well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

The empirical study by Baker (2016) on the STAR Act of 2010 was one of the first studies on the legislation. Based on this early study by Baker, there is suggestive evidence that the number of degrees granted by community colleges has increased as a result of the legislation. However, in a separate report, Gordon (2017) argued that California has not seen any substantial increases in community college completion rates despite new legislative acts and allocating “nearly \$890 million in subsequent state appropriations, all aimed at bolstering student progress” (n.p.).

Moreover, a study of the STAR Act by Moore and Shulock (2010) noted that the knowledge of the transfer degree programs at the community college is limited as many students are not aware of them. Furthermore, Moore and Shulock indicated that the California State University (CSU) system may not have the capacity to accept more students into its respective campuses, and therefore, this limits the ability of community college students to transfer. The lack of awareness of the transfer degree programs and questionable capacity of the CSU could be reasons as to why Baker (2016) in her study further noted that it appears that the STAR Act of 2010 has not had a significant effect on the number of students who transferred from California community colleges to the CSU campuses. She theorized that sufficient time has not passed to examine this outcome since the legislation at the time of her study was still new. Hence, Baker concluded that

it was important to further examine the effect of the STAR Act of 2010 in order to identify ways to increase community college student transfers to a university.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Given the gap in community college transfer rates to a university in California, it is important to examine the legislation that was enacted to address this problem. Moreover, it is imperative to understand how institutions are advancing community college student transfer to a university as a matter of public policy and administration and the subsequent economic workforce development impact in California. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify how public institutions of higher learning (community colleges and CSU campuses) are meeting transfer requirements and expectations according to the STAR Act of 2010. Hence, the significance of this research is in identifying practices implemented by colleges and universities to address the 2010 legislative act and how such practices promote accountability requirements for community college transfer to a university.

### **Research Question**

Romzek (2000) argued that legal, professional, and political accountability speaks to performance, particularly in the ability of public agencies to implement laws and meet the mandates based on accountability measures, even that of performance. The notion of performance speaks to the study of administration espoused by Wilson (1887). He argued that public administration is the field of business in government. Wilson felt that the object of public administration “is to rescue executive methods from the confusion and costliness of empirical experiment and set them upon foundations laid deep in stable

principle” (p. 210). This implies that public administration must be effective in the performance of the “business” of government.

Therefore, this researcher endeavored to understand the performance of public institutions of higher learning in the administration of their duties of helping community college students to transfer to a university. Specifically, this study is discussed in the context of the accountability theoretical framework in order to identify and understand performance. Accordingly, the research question is, “How are the public institutions of higher learning meeting the accountability requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2010 for community college student transfer to a university?”

### **Significance of the Problem**

The magnitude of the problem of community college transfer to a university cannot be underestimated. The reality is significant. Most community college students, according to studies, do not graduate let alone transfer to a university. Only approximately 13% of community college freshmen graduate in 2 years. For California, this reality is dire, especially given the fact that the state will need over one million workers with bachelor’s degrees by 2030 in order to meet the state’s economic and workforce needs.

Therefore, this study will be beneficial for public institutions of higher learning, elected representatives, and public administration officials in understanding the phenomenon and in (a) identifying opportunities to support student transfer and (b) designing policies to address higher education attainment in the state. Specifically, it will inform decisions made by local colleges and public administration officials in

designing economic and workforce development programs. Moreover, this research will serve to assist elected officials in promoting and attracting economic growth to local communities through an educated and trained workforce. Gearheart (2016) argued that an educated workforce drives domestic economic growth as it attracts companies to take advantage of the labor force.

Additionally, this study will add to the body of literature given there have been limited studies so far on how the STAR Act of 2010 has elevated the community college student transfer to a university in California.

### **Definitions of Terms**

**Graduate.** Refers to students at the community college who have completed a program of study to earn an associate degree and/or certificate of achievement.

**Transfer.** Refers to students who have graduated with an associate in arts for transfer (AAT) or an associate in science for transfer (AST) who are eligible for junior status at a CSU system campus. Refers to students who meet requirements to transfer to a University of California (UC) system campus.

**Associate degree.** When a student completes the requirements for a major program of study and the necessary general education courses. An associate degree falls under one of the four main categories at the community colleges. Specifically,

1. Associate in Arts (AA)
2. Associate in Science (AS)
3. Associate in Arts for Transfer (AAT)
4. Associate in Science for Transfer (AST)

**Completion.** Students completing the requirements to earn either an associate degree or a certificate of achievement within a program of study or major.

**Articulation.** Process by which college curriculum at one postsecondary institution is considered comparable to a course at another college or university.

**Accountability.** Responsiveness to public need (Kearns, 1998).

**Institutional accountability.** The “obligation of educational institutions to acknowledge a higher authority, the public trust, which ultimately is the source of the mandate, the authority, and credibility” (Kearns, 1998, p. 145).

**Legal accountability.** “External oversight of performance for compliance with established performance mandates such as legislative and constitutional” requirements (Romzek, 2000, pp. 24-25).

**Professional accountability.** “Performance standards are established by professional norms, accepted protocols, and prevailing practices of one’s peer or work group” (Romzek, 2000, p. 26).

**Political accountability.** Refers to “being responsive to the concerns of key stakeholders” including “the general public” (Romzek, 2000, p. 27).

**Democratic accountability perspective.** The concept of holding public officials accountable. It’s the linkage on every step in the democratic process and the people. Ultimately, the people can decide the pleasure or displeasure at the ballot box (Bovens, Schillemans, & Hart, 2008).

**Constitutional accountability perspective.** The principle is checks and balances and keep public officials honest. The goal is to prevent or avoid overconcentration of power in the government (Bovens et al., 2008).

**Learning accountability perspective.** To promote learning in order to make and keep government agencies and “officials effective in delivering their promises” in order to ensure societal outcomes (Bovens et al., 2008, p. 231).

**Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act of 2010.** California law enacted to increase the number of community college students who (a) earn an associate degree for transfer and (b) transfer to a university, specifically the CSU system. Also commonly referred to as SB 1440.

**Student Support Service Programs (SSSP).** The California Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012 established the SSSP to increase “California community college student access and success by providing effective core matriculation services including orientation, assessment and placement, counseling, and other educational planning services, and academic interventions,” or follow-up services for at-risk students. (California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, 2016b, p. 4).

**California Assembly Bill 705, 2017.** Requires community colleges to maximize the probability that the student will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics within a 1-year timeframe.

**C-ID.** It is the course identification numbering system in California that was developed to assign identifying designations (C-ID numbers) for transfer courses. This is a faculty process. C-ID numbers identify lower-division transferable courses that are articulated with the California Community Colleges and universities (CSU, UC campuses, and independent colleges and universities).

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The community college student graduation and transfer rates to a university are dismal. California over the past few years has allotted significant funding to the community colleges and enacted new laws with the hope of accelerating completion and transfer to a university. While there has been some progress, California is yet to see any significant increases in completion and transfer. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to identify efforts being implemented by colleges to address the transfer rates. Furthermore, this research focused on how public institutions of higher learning are meeting the requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act of 2010 to accelerate transfer.

This chapter contains a discussion of the literature regarding transfer including prior and current research. Additionally, to fully understand the issue and opportunities for transfer to a university, the literature pertaining to completion/graduation is also discussed. Moreover, this chapter examines the accountability theoretical framework, particularly in the context of political, professional, and legal accountability and how colleges are meeting and upholding performance standards with transfer to a university. For this research, a review of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office's (n.d.-a) Datamart database was used to provide background on the outcomes to date. This provided a contextual background and argument as to why the issue of community college transfer to a university poses a significant challenge.

### **Community Colleges Background**

The community colleges in California have evolved over the years from an extension of the high schools to junior colleges and community institutions to its present-

day status as the largest system of higher education in the United States. Two-year colleges in California began when local residents recognized that many high school graduates were unable to attend a university, yet they understood that students would benefit from college-level studies (Brossman & Roberts, 1973). The California state legislature in 1907 authorized high school districts to offer college work. The Fresno Board of Education established the first 2-year college program with an enrollment of between 15 and 30 students in 1910 (Simpson, 1984).

By 1917, 16 high schools in California had started offering college-level courses in a number of subjects, which included history, economics, English, modern languages, mathematics, and technical subjects. In 1921, the California legislature authorized the formation of junior college districts, and by 1927, there were 31 public junior colleges in California (Simpson, 1984). Over the next 20 years, the junior colleges in California experienced tremendous growth, and by 1947, enrollment was over 104,000. Furthermore, the objective for junior colleges evolved not only from providing college courses to high school graduates but also to encompassing a number of new objectives. These objectives included the provision of occupational education, general education, transfer courses to a university, adult education, remedial education, and college and career guidance.

According to Simpson (1984), the new objectives stressed the importance of higher education access for all students, especially those who “were less successful in previous schooling . . . [and] offered a second chance through the progressive junior college system” (p. 4). The number of 2-year colleges continued to increase, and by 1964, there were 66 junior college districts in California. Enrollment also increased, and by 1967, there were 610,000 students with two thirds attending college part time

(Simpson, 1984). In addition to enrollment growth, changes to the structure and governance of the junior colleges also occurred with the Stiern Act of 1967 (Simpson, 1984). This legislative act created a state governing structure with the formation of the California Junior Colleges Board of Governors and the establishment of the Office of the State Chancellor. Moreover, the same legislative act also created the formal separation of the junior colleges from high school districts. Additionally, the term junior colleges was later replaced with community colleges (Simpson, 1984). Today, there are 114 California community colleges and 72 separate community college districts with a collective enrollment of over 2.1 million students (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2016a).

### **The Community College Completion and Transfer Challenge**

The growth of higher education opportunities specifically at the community colleges is an indication of a societal commitment to educational opportunity (Bailey et al., 2015). Moreover, this indication reflects a general understanding that postsecondary education is the foundation for economic growth and success. A 2016 report by the College Board, authored by Ma, Pender, and Welch, concluded the following:

Individuals with higher levels of education earn more . . . and are more likely than others to be employed. College education increases the chance that adults will move up the socioeconomic ladder and reduces the chance that adults will rely on public assistance. College education is associated with healthier lifestyles, reducing health care costs. Adults with higher levels of education are more active citizens than others and are more involved in their children's activities. (pp. 3–4)

However, as Bailey et al. (2015) noted, most students who enroll in community colleges never graduate and fewer than four of every 10 complete any degree or certificate within 6 years. A part of the issue with the low completion rate is due to unpreparedness, work commitments, and personal and family reasons. According to Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Leinback, and Kienzl (2006), “Many community college students face serious barriers to success in college, such as family and work responsibilities and deficient academic preparation” (p. 494). Additionally, a part of the challenge is the fact that the vast majority of the students enrolled in English and math courses each year are placed in basic skills or remedial education courses. Yet, according to Rodriguez, Meja, and Johnson (2018), “Relatively few emerge and go on to achieve their educational goals . . . most never complete a transfer-level course in English or math” (p. 3).

To add to the challenge of completion, community colleges typically offer an array of courses and programs that are often disconnected where students are left to navigate the maze of options on their own. As a result, students are confused by the cafeteria of options without a clear organized pathway toward graduation, transfer, and career options (Bailey et al., 2015). Consequently, this leads to low retention, completion, and transfer rates.

The realization that many students do not graduate from college was affirmed by a 2017 publication by the Institute of Public Policy of California (PPIC), which indicated that California is not meeting the need for economic workforce development in the state given the limited number of individuals with the necessary college education and training. According to PPIC, only 13% of community college freshmen receive an

associate degree after 2 years, and 31% do so within 3 years. Moreover, less than 50% of community college students receive an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a 4-year college, or complete at least 60 transferrable units within 6 years. Furthermore, PPIC also reported that most low-income students who enroll in remedial education courses at the community college never earn a degree, certificate, or transfer to a 4-year college. Interestingly, a study conducted by Grubb (1991) that reviewed transfer rates from community colleges to 4-year institutions in the 1970s and 1980s found the following:

In the Class of 1972, 68.7 percent of students completing academic A.A. degrees transferred to four-year colleges; and of these students who transferred, 60.7 percent completed a B.A. within four years of graduation from high school. Therefore, completion of an academic A.A. degree gave a student a realistic expectation of completing a B.A., because 41.6 percent ( $= 0.687 \times 0.607$ ) of these completers earned B.A.'s within four years of leaving high school. For the Class of 1980, however, many fewer students completing academic Associate degrees transferred (48.9 percent) and very few of these (12.1 percent) earned a B.A. within four years, so only 5.9 percent of students completing an academic A.A. could expect a B.A. degree within four years. (p. 203)

Moreover, the same study found that the percentage of students who entered community colleges but left with 12 credits or less increased from 10.5% with the high school graduation class of 1972 to 18.3% in the class of 1980. From this study, it was found that community college completion and transfer rates had been declining for decades.

A report by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2011) contended that students who enroll in community colleges are less likely to complete their educational objectives, especially if that objective is to transfer and attain a bachelor's degree. Moreover, the same report noted that students who intend to complete a bachelor's degree but enroll in a community college as their first institution are about "15 percent less likely to complete their degree, even after background characteristics are taken into account" (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2011, p. 2). Furthermore, a study by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Columbia University noted that

over 80 percent of community college students intend to earn at least a bachelor's degree. However, only about a quarter end up transferring and 20 percent of these students earn an associate degree or certificate with only 17 percent complete a bachelor's degree. (Jenkins & Fink, 2015, p. 1)

In California, only 8% of community college graduates enroll at a 4-year institution (university) in 3 years compared to states like Kansas where it is 28%, North Dakota with 24%, Vermont with 21%, and Georgia with 20% (see Table 1).

As noted earlier, some of the reasons students do not complete a degree/credential and transfer include work commitments, personal responsibilities, and lack of academic preparation (Bailey et al., 2006, p. 494). Additionally, some students face the challenge of separation from home and assimilation into college life. Vincent Tinto (1988) identified this as the stages of student departure regarding why individuals often leave college during the first year. Tinto refers to the work by Van Gennep who described the several stages of life. One must pass through one stage and leave another in order to

Table 1

*Transfer and Completion Rates by State*

State	Percentage of community college graduates	Percentage of community college students enrolled at a 4-year institution or university in 3 years	Percentage of community college students who graduated from a 4-year institution or university
California	14%	8%	11%
Georgia	24%	20%	22%
Kansas	25%	28%	21%
North Dakota	55%	24%	19%
Vermont	45%	21%	20%

*Note.* National Student Clearinghouse Data, 2009. From “Affordability and Transfer: Critical to Increasing Baccalaureate Degree Completion,” by National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Policy Alert*, 2011 ([http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa\\_at/](http://www.highereducation.org/reports/pa_at/)).

make it to the next stage (Tinto, 1988). Using this context, Tinto explained that college students must likewise leave one stage of their life in order to pass through the phase of adulthood. These stages can be difficult to handle, let alone comprehend, especially for college students (Tinto, 1988). Tinto explained that there are several stages of student departure. These include the following:

- I. The Stage of Separation. Students will disassociate themselves from their previous life such as friends, high school, and from membership in other activities in order to navigate the new world of college. This can be difficult for some especially when missing the old support system and life.
- II. Transition to College. After separating themselves, students must begin to acquire new patterns and behaviors appropriate to being members of the college community. This can be difficult as students learn to cope and adjust to new environments while attempting to learn patterns of education commitment.

III. Incorporation in College. In this phase, students must learn to incorporate themselves with the adoption of new norms and behaviors fitting to being in college. Students will start to find social interactions and avenues to adapt and fit into this new environment. If individuals do not venture into interacting and fully incorporating themselves in the college life, it can be lonely and challenging. (Tinto, 1988, pp. 443–447)

For these reasons, students will often withdraw and drop out of college. For California, the percentage of community college students who graduate and transfer to a university is dismal in comparison to other states (Table 1). Therefore, the reality of noncompletion further deepens the gap of higher education attainment in the state, especially given that the majority of all higher education enrollment in California is at the community college level. The national percentage of community college enrollment is 40% according to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2011). Community college enrollment is higher in California at 63%, 70% in Wyoming, and 60% in Arizona. Community college enrollment will continue to increase as states like California, Arizona, and Texas will experience rapid growth in high school graduation.

According to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (2011), there will be significant anticipated growth in high school graduation in the next decade. Therefore, high school graduates will depend more heavily on community colleges to serve them. Consequently, from a public policy and public administration perspective, failure to improve the current rates of transfer and bachelor's degree completion in states like California, Arizona, and Texas will mean that “many of these students will not reach

their educational goals, and the states and the nation will risk a shortage of baccalaureate degree holders” (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2011, p. 2).

**California Completion and Transfer Outcomes**

According to Gordon (2017), California has not seen any substantial increase in community college completion rates despite passing laws such as the STAR Act of 2010 and allotting “nearly \$890 million in subsequent state appropriations, all aimed at bolstering student progress” (para. 1). Based on historical data, the number of associate degrees awarded in the 114 community colleges in California is slowly increasing (see Table 2).

Table 2

*California Community Colleges Associate Degree Awarded by Year*

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Associate degree awards	85,409	85,621	90,315	95,060	102,433	106,087	115,949	121,819

*Note.* From Management Information Systems Data Mart: Program Awards Summary Report 2009-2017, by California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, n.d.-b ([https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program\\_Awards.aspx](https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program_Awards.aspx)).

A similar moderate increase in the number of associate degrees awarded to students at three community colleges in Kern County, California (Bakersfield, Cerro Coso, Taft) are evident as noted in Table 3.

The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (2017c) *Student Success Scorecard* reported that 48% of students graduated with an associate degree, attained a certificate of achievement, or completed coursework for transfer to a university after 6 years.

Table 3

*Kern County Community Colleges Associate Degree Awards by Year*

	2009– 2010	2010– 2011	2011– 2012	2012– 2013	2013– 2014	2014– 2015	2015– 2016	2016– 2017
Bakersfield College	962	915	843	804	1,024	1,011	1,091	1,293
Cerro Coso Community College	210	270	201	261	249	297	266	338
Taft College	258	268	271	332	337	340	364	465
Kern County Total	1,430	1,453	1,315	1,397	1,610	1,648	1,721	2,096

*Note.* From Management Information Systems Data Mart: Program Awards Summary Report 2009-2017, by California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, n.d.-b ([https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program\\_Awards.aspx](https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program_Awards.aspx)).

At Bakersfield College, for the same 6-year cohort time period (2010–2011 tracked through 2015–2016), 37.7% of students graduated with an associate degree, earned a certificate of achievement, or attained transfer-related outcomes to a university. For the Cerro Coso Community College, this percentage was 38.9%, and it was 42.8% at Taft College.

Moreover, the transfer rates to university at both Bakersfield College and Cerro Coso Community College have fluctuated and appear to be decreasing (see Table 4 and Table 6). The percentage of students who transferred to a university at both Bakersfield College and Cerro Coso decreased in 2015–2016 compared to the 2014–2015 academic year. The trend does not appear to be moving in a positive direction based on historical data of over the past 7 years. Furthermore, the 6-year transfer rate at both Bakersfield College (Table 5) and Cerro Coso Community College (Table 7) showed a decrease in transfer.

Table 4

*Bakersfield College Transfer by Year*

	Student transfers	Total % change from previous year
2015–2016	1,055	-7.1%
2014–2015	1,136	19.3%
2013–2014	952	-3.8%
2012–2013	990	-14.7%
2011–2012	1,161	-0.6%
2010–2011	1,168	5.6%
2009–2010	1,106	1.4%

*Note.* From Bakersfield College Student Transfers to UC, CSU, ISP, and OOS, 2009-2020 through 2015-2016, by Kern Community College District Institutional Research and Reporting, 2018 ([https://www.kccd.edu/sites/kccd.edu/files/ir\\_reports/BC%20Summary%20College%20Transfer%20All%202007-08%20to%202016-17%20Final.pdf](https://www.kccd.edu/sites/kccd.edu/files/ir_reports/BC%20Summary%20College%20Transfer%20All%202007-08%20to%202016-17%20Final.pdf)).

Table 5

*Bakersfield College 6-Year Transfer Rate*

	2007–2008 to 2012–2013	2008-2009 to 2013–2014	2009-2010 to 2014–2015
<b>6 year transfer rate</b>	37.4%	37.4%	35.1%

*Note.* From Bakersfield College Student Transfers to UC, CSU, ISP, and OOS, 2007 to 2015, by Kern Community College District Institutional Research and Reporting, 2018 ([https://www.kccd.edu/sites/kccd.edu/files/ir\\_reports/BC%20Summary%20College%20Transfer%20All%202007-08%20to%202016-17%20Final.pdf](https://www.kccd.edu/sites/kccd.edu/files/ir_reports/BC%20Summary%20College%20Transfer%20All%202007-08%20to%202016-17%20Final.pdf)).

Table 6

*Cerro Coso Community College College Transfer by Year*

	Student transfers	Total % change from previous year
2015–2016	158	-14.6%
2014–2015	185	0.0%
2013–2014	185	4.5%
2012–2013	177	-18.8%
2011–2012	218	-6.4%
2010–2011	233	14.8%
2009–2010	203	-4.7%

*Note.* From Cerro Coso College Student Transfers to UC, CSU, ISP, and OOS, 2009-2020 through 2015-2016, by Kern Community College District Institutional Research and Reporting, 2018 ([https://www.kccd.edu/sites/kccd.edu/files/ir\\_reports/CC%20Summary%20College%20Transfer%20All%202007-08%20to%202016-17%20Final.pdf](https://www.kccd.edu/sites/kccd.edu/files/ir_reports/CC%20Summary%20College%20Transfer%20All%202007-08%20to%202016-17%20Final.pdf)).

Table 7

*Cerro Coso Community College 6-Year Transfer Rate*

	2007–2008 to 2012–2013	2008–2009 to 2013–2014	2009–2010 to 2014–2015
6-year transfer rate	48.1%	47.1%	29.4%

*Note.* From Cerro Coso College Student Transfers to UC, CSU, ISP, and OOS, 2007 to 2015, by Kern Community College District Institutional Research and Reporting, 2018 ([https://www.kccd.edu/sites/kccd.edu/files/ir\\_reports/CC%20Summary%20College%20Transfer%20All%202007-08%20to%202016-17%20Final.pdf](https://www.kccd.edu/sites/kccd.edu/files/ir_reports/CC%20Summary%20College%20Transfer%20All%202007-08%20to%202016-17%20Final.pdf)).

The completion rate and transfer rate in California and in particular in two local community colleges in the Central Valley affirm prior research of the dismal reality of the lack of completion and transfer to a university of community college students. Moreover, it also confirms the veracity of the problem with graduation and transfer to a university. These realities support an earlier argument by Gordon (2017) who contended that there has not been much increase in student completion in California despite significant funding allocations and new state laws aimed at addressing this challenge. Given these dynamics, the need to understand the transfer phenomenon is even more significant, especially from the context of the STAR Act of 2010.

**SB 1440 Legislative Act**

Recognizing the need to increase the number of individuals who graduate and transfer to a university, the California State Senate Bill 1440 established the STAR Act of 2010. The purpose of this legislation is to increase the rate of transfer of community college students to the CSU system (California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, 2017a). Part of the challenge was that community college associate degrees “often did not align with transfer requirements” at the universities (Baker, 2016, p. 630). Adding to this challenge was that each community college set “its own requirements for graduation

and each CSU determined its own prerequisites for accepting CCC transfer students” (Baker, 2016, p. 630). Therefore, there is no consistency in graduation and transfer requirements. Prior study by Moore and Shulock (2010) found that only approximately 15% of community college students completed a transfer curriculum. Moreover, many community college graduates transferred with an average of 80 semester units but only 60 units were required. According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, transfer community college students often graduated from 4-year institutions with 162 semester credits but only 120 units were required (Baker, 2016).

The state law not only creates a pathway for students by establishing associate degrees for transfer (ADT) but also to eliminate the duplication of college credits. The legislation specified that California State Universities (CSUs) cannot require students to repeat classes that they have already taken as part of their ADTs. The stipulation meant that students will be more than likely to earn a bachelor’s degree without accumulating extra time and additional college units (Baker, 2016). Furthermore, the ADT ensures that California community college students will do the following:

- Have a clear transfer pathway to the CSU system by eliminating the repetition of similar courses at the upper-division level;
- Graduate from the community college system with an associate degree having to earn no more than 60 semester/90 quarter units;
- Start at CSU with junior status. (California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, 2017a, p. 7)

Moreover, the act provided community college students with priority consideration when applying to impacted majors. The legislation meant that students

who earned an ADT would be guaranteed a transfer to the CSU system baccalaureate program. Again, the goal of the ADTs is to ensure persistence, graduation, and transfer to a university. Hence, this study intends to identify how and whether these objectives are being met.

### **Community College Baccalaureate Program**

Given the need to meet economic workforce development demands in the state, the California legislative branch passed another bill (California Senate Bill [SB] 850, 2014) aimed at addressing higher education attainment. California Senate Bill [SB] 850 authorized community colleges to award baccalaureate degrees. The bill signed into law by the governor in September 2014 required community colleges to award baccalaureate degree programs not offered by the CSU or the University of California (UC) in subject areas that have unmet workforce needs. The new law stipulated that new baccalaureate degree programs would only be offered by no more than 15 community colleges in the state (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2014; see Table 8).

### **Guided Pathways**

Aside from the legislative acts such as the STAR Act of 2010 and SB 850, other efforts have been designed and implemented to address college completion and transfer. For the purpose of this research, a discussion of the background and designs of a current movement on student completion is presented as it is more relevant to addressing the challenge and question at hand and even transfer rates. At a joint session of Congress on February 24, 2009, President Barack Obama set forth a goal that by the year 2020, the United States would have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world (Russell, 2011). President Obama called on community colleges to increase their

graduation rates by 50%. Moreover, the Obama Administration provided \$50 million funding for the College Completion Grant initiative in an attempt to set a new standard for college completion (Russell, 2011).

Table 8

*Community Colleges Offering Baccalaureate Degree Programs in California*

Community college	Baccalaureate degree program
Antelope Valley	Airframe Manufacturing Technology
Bakersfield	Industrial Automation
Cypress	Mortuary Science
Feather River	Equine and Ranch Management
Foothill	Dental Hygiene
Mira Costa	Biomanufacturing
Modesto	Respiratory Care
Rio Hondo	Automotive Technology
San Diego Mesa	Health Information Management
Santa Ana	Occupational Studies
Santa Monica	Interaction Design
Shasta	Health Information Management
Skyline	Respiratory Care
Solano	Biomanufacturing
West Los Angeles	Dental Hygiene

*Note.* Bachelor's Degree Program, by California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office , 2014 (<http://extranet.cccco.edu/Divisions/AcademicAffairs/CurriculumandInstructionUnit/Curriculum/BaccalaureateDegreePilotProgram.aspx>).

Along with the goal to increase the number of college graduates and funding, the Obama Administration joined foundations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation, that called for an increase in the number of students who earned a degree and/or certificate. The college completion agenda, as advocated by the former Obama Administration and championed by private foundations resulted in the design, implementation, and revitalization of efforts, practices, and policies aimed at addressing graduation challenges. One of the efforts that has been championed is the guided pathways model. The guided pathways approach was

previously championed by 4-year colleges and universities. According to Jenkins and Cho (2013), the faculty at Florida State University in the late 1990s started developing program maps that outlined every program default course sequence and milestones that students must attain over the structure of the entire program. Students who were undecided were required to choose an exploratory major. The exploratory option gave students a structured path for choosing a major (Jenkins & Cho, 2013).

The concept behind a guided pathway is based on the notion that students are more likely to graduate in a timely manner if (a) they choose a program and develop an academic plan early, (b) have a clear road map of the courses they need to take to complete a degree, and (c) receive guidance and support to help them stay on track (Jenkins & Fink, 2015). This assertion affirms the conclusion derived by Jenkins (2011) who argued that students who entered a program of study in the first year were more likely to graduate or transfer to a university within 5 years than students who did not enter a program until the second year or later. Having a clear road map of the courses to be taken is part of the guided pathway model to college completion and transfer. Based on the completion by design framework, the guided pathway model follows six integrated elements that include the following:

- 1) Proactive and intrusive advising and counseling to guide students to make the most applicable decision at every stage of their college education
- 2) Academic maps that detail the scope and sequence of courses to be taken by students
- 3) Career and other assessments to support a program of study or choice

- 4) Supplemental support that may include internships, career activities, labs, and tutors
- 5) Early alert intervention to help students stay on the path
- 6) Clear information relevant to each stage of their progress. (Completion by Design, 2016, pp. 5-6)

The purpose of the guided pathway model is to transfer to a university, accelerate completion, and attain employment. As Jenkins, Lahr, and Fink (2017) noted, central to the guided pathways approach are efforts to clarify pathways to program completion and graduation, career advancement, and continued education at the university level. This is essential as Bailey et al. (2015) observed that college “course enrollment[s] are not well designed to maximize completion of high-quality programs of study” (p. 2). They observed that most colleges offer an array of courses, programs, and services that are often disconnected. As a result, students are often confused by the lack of clarity, consistency, and fluidity of programs, university transfer requirements, and career options.

Given that the crux of the guided pathways approach is to accelerate student outcomes in completion, employment, and transfer to a university, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (2017b) has also adopted this model. The California guided pathways model is based on four key pillars, specifically (a) creating clear curricular pathways for further education and careers, (b) helping students to choose and enter their pathways, (c) assisting students stay on the path, and (d) ensuring that learning occurs. The California guided pathways model follows that of the completion by design framework in graduation and transfer (California Community Colleges

Chancellor's Office, 2017b). The guided pathway model is discussed in this chapter as part of the background in order to clarify the issue at hand, even transfer to universities. Moreover, it is presented in this chapter as it is a new initiative in addition to the 2010 legislative act (STAR) championed in California to accelerate student outcomes including transfer to a university.

In addition to the STAR Act of 2010, the California legislature, through California Senate Bill 85 (SB 85, Chapter 23, 2017), amended the state education code to include language about guided preparation. Essentially, SB 85 formalized and legislated the guided pathways model in California, specifically stating that “students are more likely to graduate on time if they identify a major early on, have a clear outline of the courses required for completion, and are provided consistent ongoing guidance and support throughout their program of study” (p. 27). By doing so, the legislature established guided pathways to provide students with the following:

- a) Simplification of students' choices with default program maps developed by faculty and advisors for all academic and vocational programs that show students a clear pathway to completion, further education, and employment in the fields of importance to the region.
- b) Advice and support services that help students transition from high school, explore academic and vocational fields, choose a major, and develop a comprehensive academic plan leading to an associate degree for transfer, a career technical education certificate, an associate degree, other community college certificates, or the satisfaction of university transfer requirements.

- c) Establishment of transfer pathways through alignment of pathway courses and expected learning outcomes with transfer institutions to optimize applicability of community college credits to university majors. (SB 85, Chapter 23, Section 88921, pp. 27-28).

The 2017–2018 California Governor’s Budget allocated \$150 million to implement the guided pathways model at the community colleges.

### **Precollegiate Enrollment**

Each year, thousands of students in community colleges are enrolled in precollegiate courses or development education (also known as basic skills) in California. A report by PPIC noted that developmental education may be the biggest obstacle to success in California community colleges as hundreds of thousands of students who are deemed underprepared are placed in developmental courses. Most of these students, according to the report, never earn a degree and/or transfer to a university (Mejia, Rodriquez, & Johnson, 2016). The report outlines some of the key fundamental undesirable results of students placed in developmental education:

- Only 44 percent of developmental math students successfully complete the sequence, while 60 percent of developmental English students do so. Students who start lower in the sequence are much more likely to drop out—only 17 percent of students who start four levels below college level in math complete the developmental sequence (31% for English).
- Only about one-quarter of students (27%) who take a developmental math course eventually complete a college math course with a grade of C or better, and less than half (44%) of developmental English students do so.

- Students placed in developmental math take an average of 2.5 terms to complete the sequence while developmental English students take an average of 1.9 terms. These developmental courses cannot be applied toward a degree. (Mejia et al., 2016, p. 3)

Most of all, the long-term impact, according to the report, is that “only 16 percent of developmental education students earn a certificate or associate degree within six years. Twenty-four percent successfully transfer to four-year colleges” (Mejia et al., 2016, pp. 3–4). A similar report by MDRC (2013) also revealed that “too many students arrive on campus unprepared, get placed into developmental (or remedial) courses where they fail to progress, and never complete a credential, graduate, or transfer to a four-year institution” (p. 1). One of challenges is that many students are assessed incorrectly when placed in developmental education. The same report by MDRC argued that “traditional college placement tests have limited value in assessing college readiness. Cut-off points vary dramatically across colleges, and many students who don’t make the cut score are capable of tackling college-level courses” (p. 2).

The argument is that many students are placed incorrectly and therefore are placed in precollegiate or basic skills courses even though they are capable of transferring to college-level coursework. Yet, most of the students placed in developmental or basic skills math courses according to the PPIC report take an average of 2.5 terms or a year and a half to complete the sequence (MDRC, 2013, p. 3). Given the challenges with development education, the California legislature passed Assembly Bill 705 (AB 705) in 2017, which required community colleges to

(a) maximize the probability that students will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics within a one-year timeframe; (b) use high school coursework, high school grades, and high school grade point average; (c) prohibit requiring students to enroll in remedial English or mathematics coursework that lengthens their time to complete a degree unless placement research shows that such students are highly unlikely to succeed in transfer-level coursework; (d) can require students to enroll in additional concurrent support, including additional language support for ESL students, during the same semester they take the transfer-level English or mathematics course but only if it is determined that the support will increase their likelihood of passing the transfer-level English or mathematics course. (AB 705, Chapter 745, Section 78213)

Practically, the California legislative mandate through AB 705 requires community colleges to change their existing practices in order to ensure that students are not spending more time than necessary in developmental courses and to accelerate their transition from precollegiate courses to transfer-level coursework. The goal is to increase the number of community college students who not only earn an associate degree but transfer to universities to pursue a baccalaureate degree. The AB 705 legislation is in alignment with the STAR Act of 2010 in that the intentions are similar: to move more community college students to complete their associate degrees quicker and to transfer to a university. In one respect, the legislative mandate on the community colleges is a call to action. It is a call for increased performance and results, even that of accountability.

## **Student-Centered Funding Formula AB 1809**

In alignment with the spirit of accountability, the California legislature recently enacted legislation, AB 1809 (2018), which outlined how community colleges are to be funded based on certain elements and criteria. The new funding formula stipulates that starting in the 2018–2019 fiscal year, community colleges are to be funded 70% on base allocation (general enrollment), 20% on supplemental allocation (based on students who receive Pell Grant, California Promise or both), and 10% on student success metrics. The student success metrics include the attainment of certificates/degrees, completion of transfer-level English/math courses in the first year, and/or completion of nine or more units in career technical education (CTE) courses, transferring to universities and/or attaining regional living wage upon 1 year of leaving college (California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, n.d.-c).

In the subsequent years, the funding formula will change. In the 2019–2020 fiscal year, the formula will be 65% base allocation (or general enrollment), 20% supplemental allocation, and 15% student success metrics. The funding formula percentages will change to 60% base allocation, 20% supplemental allocation, and 20% student success metrics in the 2020–2021 fiscal year. The new funding formula is a shift from how community colleges have been funded in prior years. Previously, all 114 California community colleges were funded based on general enrollment or access. Funding had not been previously tied to student economic factors and/or student success metrics. In reality, the new funding formula ties performance to public funds. As Bovens et al. (2008) noted, there is an intuitive agreement that “public authorities should render account publicly of the way they use their mandates and spend public money” (p. 225).

## **Accountability**

Community colleges are open access institutions of higher learning. Open access allows any individual regardless of prior education attainment to register for classes at any community college. California community colleges are open to high school students, high school graduates, high school dropouts, unemployed individuals, underemployed adults, displaced homemakers, and English language learners. Given the open access nature of community colleges, performance and outcomes are different in comparison to universities and 4-year institutions of higher learning. However, community colleges are consistently thrust into the ongoing debate about performance and outcomes, even that of accountability measures. Bragg (2001) noted the irony between access and outcomes:

Higher education institutions with an elitist perspective favor quality over access and demonstrate their superiority by focusing on a small set of highly prized student outcomes linked to educational and economic attainment. Community colleges, sitting on a much lower rung on the ladder of American higher education, are thrust into an increasingly high-stakes accountability environment that demands they address these elitist outcomes, knowing it is impossible (or nearly so) to measure up while retaining their commitment to open access. (p. 110)

Bragg's (2001) observation is uniquely relevant in trying to make sense of performance and accountability measures. Nevertheless, there is still a need to look at the performance of community colleges from different lenses. Even Bragg alluded that while open access is part of the mission of community colleges, they must rethink their performance in the context of student outcomes. It is within the context of rethinking

community college performance outcomes, even that of accountability, that warrants further investigation and exploration.

### **Accountability Outlook**

This research was based on the theoretical outlook of accountability. For higher education in the United States, accountability emerged to ensure that public institutions were abiding by regulations and that funds were spent according to their intended purposes (Ewell & Jones, 2006). In this instance, accountability postulates the perspective of performance. As Romzek (2000) argued, public sector, political, legal, and professional accountability speaks to performance, specifically in the ability of public agencies to implement laws and meet the mandates based on accountability measures. The notion of performance speaks to the study of administration espoused by Wilson (1887). He argued that public administration is the field of business in government (Wilson, 1887). Wilson felt that the object of public administration “is to rescue executive methods from the confusion and costliness of empirical experiment and set them upon foundations laid deep in stable principle” (p. 210). This means that public administration must be effective in the performance of the “business” of government.

For this research, accountability is discussed from the perspective of the STAR Act of 2010 and how public institutions of higher learning are meeting the requirements of the law. Understanding how this legislative act is being implemented by the public sector, specifically California community colleges and the CSU campuses, is an element of accountability. According to Shkabatur (2013), a component of public accountability is that of explanation and justification of agency activities to the public. Therefore, for this research, the accountability theoretical framework argument is presented from this

context, specifically the activities that public institutions of higher learning in California have explored to address transfer and how these activities have been implemented. Additionally, how are community colleges upholding professional accountability requirements as required by accreditation standards for graduation and transfer to a university? These are discussed from the framework of accountability particularly in the disposition of the duties and obligations of community colleges and their officials to address not only the legislative and accreditation requirements but also the justification of such actions to the public.

Given such, discussions of government agency performance are referred to in the context of accountability. As Gromley and Balla (2013) pointed out, performance is uniquely connected to accountability. Therefore, accountability and performance are synonymous as the measure of one is the outlook on the other. For this research, effectiveness in the business of the government is viewed in context of accountability from the political, legal, and professional accountability perspectives specifically in the administration of the STAR Act of 2010. Given that professional accountability refers to standards and practices espoused by peers in the same field, institutional accreditation speaks to standards and requirements expected by peers for peers in the community colleges.

Institutional accreditation through the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) is a peer review process based on standards of practice and expectations in the field of community college education. Therefore, in the context of professional accountability, it would be most appropriate for this study to review it from the ACCJC perspective as this reflects performance standards based on professional

norms, accepted protocols, and practices based on one's peers (Romzek, 2000). The ACCJC (2010) policy on transfer has been outlined as follows:

Accredited institutions have a responsibility to provide for effective transfer of credit that minimizes student difficulties in moving between institutions while assuring the high quality of their education. Each institution is responsible for determining its own policies and practices with regard to the transfer and award of credit including transfer of credits from non-accredited institutions. Institutions shall establish policies on the transfer of credit that are clearly stated and that function in a manner that is fair and equitable to students. At the same time, institutions shall be responsible for careful evaluation of credits that students wish to transfer. Institutions must balance responsiveness to students' preferences about transfer of credit and institutional commitment to the value and quality of degrees, certificates, or other credentials that the receiving institution awards. (p. 1)

### **Professional, Political, and Legal Accountability**

The accreditation standards are designed to ensure public trust and integrity, which speaks to the broadest understanding of accountability. As Romzek (2000) further indicated, the purpose of professional accountability is to ensure that professional standards are maintained. Therefore, as the research question posed in this study speaks to the ability of colleges to meet accountability standards even that of transfer to a university, particularly, "How are the public institutions of higher learning meeting the accountability requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act (2010) for community college students' transfer to a university?" legal accountability

refers to adherence to rules, regulations, and legal requirements or processes (Romzek, 2000), specifically, What practices are public institutions of higher learning employing to meet the legal requirements of the STAR Act of 2010?

The accountability framework detailed by Romzek (2000) gives latitude to the argument by Wilson (1887) on how public servants must function in the administration of the business of government. Wilson contended that “it shall always be to the interest of the public officer to serve, not his superior alone but the community also, with the best efforts of his talents and the soberest service of his conscience” (p. 221). This means that public servants must not only be accountable to the law (legal accountability) but to the public (political accountability) with the best efforts (professional accountability). In this respect, it speaks in part to how accountability might be measured from the legal, political, and professional context. For example, pursuant to the California guided pathways funding, community colleges must provide annual reporting on how it is meeting the legislative requirements of SB 85 (2017). Colleges must account for their guided pathway activities, practices, and course offering alignment. Additionally, community colleges must report on their respective progress on both qualitative and quantitative indicators and outcomes. These indicators include completion and transfer outcomes to universities. The reporting requirements and progress toward outcomes speak to accountability.

Therefore, understanding how colleges are meeting their political, legal, and professional accountability was pivotal in this research in helping to clarify the transfer phenomenon. Moreover, identifying strategies and how such strategies are implemented at the colleges was crucial in this research in helping to make sense of the problem.

Understanding the problem and how it is being addressed was significant in order to adopt policies and to implement strategies that will accelerate transfer. The issue of transfer cannot be brushed under the rug as the consequences are severe, especially from a public administration and economic perspective. After all, the community college student transfer rate, based on the reports, is depressing.

For California, despite increased funding and new state laws, the completion and transfer statistics are not any brighter. The veracity of the problem based on prior and current literature affirms the significance of the challenge. In California, this challenge is immense as the state will need over one million workers with bachelor's degrees by the year 2020 to meet the state's economic demand. Given these dynamics, the need to understand the transfer phenomenon is even more significant, especially from the context of the STAR Act of 2010, thus this research.

### **Accountability Challenge**

Accountability is a broad term that reflects a multitude of understanding and applications. As Bovens et al. (2008) argued, there is ambiguity regarding the definition of accountability due to the differences in meaning from both the European and American contextual understanding. Some define accountability as a concept indicative of political discourse to convey transparency and trustworthiness while others view accountability as an umbrella term that encompasses a myriad of related concepts. The ambiguity, according to Dubnick (2002), is because of the lack of common definition that "permits easy translation of the word across contexts and cultures" and it has no equivalency to other European languages, such as French, Spanish, Italian, or Portuguese, and therefore, it is difficult to differentiate it from responsibility (p. 4).

According to Bovens et al. (2008), accountability in British, European, and Australian discourse is used more narrowly and in a descriptive sense. The emphasis is the way in which institutional arrangements operate. The focus is “not whether the agents have acted in an accountable way, but whether they are or can be held accountable” (Bovens et al., 2008, p. 227). In contrast, in the American political and public discourse, accountability is primarily referred to as a normative concept used as a “standard for the evaluation of the behaviors of public actors . . . [and] is seen as a virtue, as a positive quality of organizations or officials” (Bovens et al., 2008, p. 227). In fact, it is meant to quantify “a state of affairs or performance of an actor . . . comes close to responsiveness . . . a willingness to act in a transparent, fair, equitable way” (Bovens et al., 2008, p. 227).

Given the broad sense in which the American political and public discourses define accountability, it is essentially a contestable concept. As Bovens et al. (2008) argued, the concept of accountability here becomes highly contestable because there is no standard for accountable behavior and it differs depending upon roles, circumstances, places, times, and individuals. With the broad and ever-expanding definition of accountability in the American political discourse, there is an ever-increasing frustration in public administration sectors because of the constant flow of change in rules, criteria, and arrangements. Some public sector administrators become frustrated because of the ambiguous, unclear, and unrealistic expectations that stem from a constant change in rules and standards (Bovens et al., 2008). Others have argued that accountability overkill can discourage creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial behavior in the public sector. As Jos and Tompkins (2004) argued that while accountability sounds “promising in some

respects, poses serious challenges to the preservation of sound character and responsible judgment” (p. 256).

Moreover, Busuioc and Lodge (2016) argued that this attitude about accountability leads to gaming of the system “cheating and slacking, and a decline in moral responsibility and/or intrinsic motivation” (p. 248). Therefore, this further adds to the ambiguity in defining, understanding, and applying accountability in the public sector. As Busuioc and Lodge summarized,

One world sees accountability as essential, because it has a rather negative view of political and bureaucratic life. Accountability is there to reduce the possibilities of “shirking” and “drifting.” The other world, often without using the word accountability, has a benevolent view of political and bureaucratic life but suggests that accountability-related measures have their own distorting effects. In sum, those believing that accountability is a “good thing” are therefore faced with the following problem: Those supposedly holding to account are not particularly interested in this task, whereas those supposed to give account do so through distorted information, and/or with motivation-depleting results. (p. 248)

The discussion about the ambiguity and challenges with accountability does not negate the need to have mechanisms in place for responsible actions, processes, and behaviors in the government. Bovens et al. (2008) referred to this as accountability deficit. The argument is that there should not be an accountability deficit in government. Accountability deficit is a condition where those “who govern us are not sufficiently hemmed by requirements to explain their conduct publicly—to legal, administrative,

social, and political forums who have some sort of power to sanction them” (Bovens et al., 2008, p. 229).

### **Accountability Criterion**

In the absence of concrete universal standards for accountability, Bovens et al. (2008) proposed certain criteria for accountability. These criteria are focused on three main perspectives, specifically, (a) democratic perspective, (b) constitutional perspective, and (c) learning perspective.

The democratic perspective is focused on the central idea that “accountability controls and legitimizes government actions by linking them effectively to the democratic chain of delegation” (Bovens et al., 2008, p. 231). This means that the chain of accountability includes various agents from policy makers and public sector leaders to public servants, and each is answerable to the other. At the end of the chain are the people who can pass judgement on the conduct of the government by indicating their pleasure or displeasure at the ballot box (Bovens et al., 2008).

The constitutional perspective is such that “accountability is essential in order to withstand the ever-present tendency toward power concentration and abuse of powers in the executive branch” (Bovens et al., 2008, p. 231). The main drive is to prevent tyranny by absolute rulers or overzealous elected leaders and public administrators. Therefore, the design to ensure power is not concentrated in one body or individual and checks and balances are in place in governmental bodies, structures, and systems (Bovens et al., 2008).

The learning perspective is based on the notion that “accountability provides public office-holders and agencies with feedback-based on inducements to increase their

effectiveness and efficiency” (Bovens et al., 2008, p. 232). The focus is to induce the government to learn, make changes, and to improve. In this instance, accountability is not so much an “adversarial mechanism . . . but rather an ‘exhortative’ one . . . not about ‘keeping the bastard honest’ but about keeping the bastard smart” (Bovens et al., 2008, p. 232). The three-prong accountability criteria, as espoused by Bovens et al., is further detailed in Table 9.

Table 9

*Accountability Criterion*

	Democratic perspective	Constitutional perspective	Learning perspective
Evaluation criteria	The degree to which accountability arrangement or regime enables democratically legitimized bodies to monitor and evaluate behavior and to induce executive actors to modify that behavior in accordance with their preferences.	The extent to which an accountability arrangement curtails the abuse of executive power and privilege.	The degree to which an accountability arrangement stimulates public executives and bodies to focus consistently on achieving desirable societal outcomes.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The literature has revealed that most community college students do not graduate let alone transfer to a university. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to identify practices implemented by institutions of higher learning to address transfer to a university. Specifically, this research identifies how colleges are upholding the requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act of 2010 on community college student transfer to a university. In this chapter, the research methodology is described and the research question is discussed. Moreover, the sampling procedure, population, instrumentation, and procedures for data collection and analysis are presented.

### **Research Question**

How are the public institutions of higher learning meeting the accountability requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act of 2010 for community college student transfer to a university?

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative case study research design. Qualitative research is aimed at producing knowledge about the nature of an experience or an action (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, & Morrow, 2017). As such, qualitative research focuses on people's experiences and seeks a holistic approach in order to understand the action or phenomenon (Roberts, 2010). Aside from people's experiences, qualitative research also allows studies to focus on organizational processes in an effort to understand the nature of something, an action, or an experience. Therefore, qualitative research acknowledges the blending of people's experiences and understanding of organizational processes in

order to find the meaning of events or actions (Roberts, 2010). Practically, qualitative research focuses on “understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). Given that the nature of the research question is to understand the actions taken to accelerate transfer, this research was qualitative in nature, specifically using the case study approach.

According to Rudestam and Newton (2007), the case study approach is an “intensive effort to understand a single unit of study within a complex context” (p. 50). Moreover, Starman (2013) argued that case studies provide a “connectedness to everyday life . . . abundance of individual elements and details are important for researchers from two viewpoints” (p. 38). This element would be vital in trying to understand the impact of laws and policies on the public. Additionally, the case study approach investigates a “contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Tetnowski, 2015, p. 40). This is a critical aspect of the case study approach especially when the phenomenon and the context are intricately linked. For this research, the community college transfer to a university phenomenon and environment, and even the colleges’ actions are intricately linked. The linkage and connection are uniquely fundamental to the case study approach and thus are a foundational advantage. Moreover, according to Tetnowski, another beneficial aspect of the case study approach is the flexibility it lends to data sets and that it is not constrained by any prescribed data collection or analysis. Therefore, qualitative case study research “allows us to enter a research field in which we discover the unknown within well-known borders while . . . monitoring . . . performance; scalability; and . . . existing knowledge” (Starman, 2013, p.

42). The transfer phenomenon is an unknown phenomenon within known borders of higher education operations and therefore fitting for a case study research study.

The case study design in this research speaks to the need to explore and understand the gap in community college transfer to a university from multiple perspectives and complexities, specifically, from the perspectives of the various personnel (student services and academic departments) at the institutions. Furthermore, the case study approach allows for the investigation and understanding of the policy, specifically, the STAR Act of 2010 at the institutions. For this research, rather than simply employing a phenomenological approach through interviews or primarily a document analysis, the case study approach employed both these qualitative approaches as methods of gathering the data for this research. Moreover, as Starman (2013) noted, case studies have been largely used in the social sciences but they have also been found to be valuable in practice-oriented fields such as education, management, public administration, and social work.

### **Population and Sample**

Education and public administration are practice-oriented fields. Therefore, activities and processes are always in motion. To fully understand the practices employed by public institutions of higher learning to meet accountability requirements for community college student transfer to a university, the case study was employed in this research. The case study approach allowed for a more in-depth review of the actions taken by public institutions of higher learning to meet the requirements of the STAR Act of 2010 for community college transfer to a university. As such, this study employed a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. This study focused on communities in

the Central Valley region of California, given its unique rural and suburban environment that is primarily based on agriculture and energy production. The communities in the region have some of the highest rates of poverty and lowest levels of higher education attainment in California. Three community colleges in the region were part of the case study research.

Moreover, to understand the university perspective as it pertains to the STAR Act of 2010, the case study also included three CSU campuses. Most community college students in California transfer to CSU campuses to pursue baccalaureate degrees. As such, the inclusion of CSU campuses provides deeper insight into the complex issue of transfer from both the community college and the university perspective and even that of a holistic outlook. Collectively, the institutions included as part of this research altogether serve the California Central Valley region, which includes the San Joaquin County in the north, Fresno County in the center, and Kern County in the south.

As reports have found, despite the increase in funding to community colleges and the passing of new laws aimed at bolstering student success, California has not seen any substantial increase in community college completion rates (Gordon, 2017). Thus, the need to understand the gaps in transfer from the field, specifically at the three community colleges and three CSU campuses, was vastly significant for this study. For this reason, full-time personnel who are employed as administrators and staff at the community colleges and universities were interviewed. The staff and administrators interviewed had varied experiences pertaining to community college student transfer to a university. Moreover, the employees had knowledge regarding the various programs and practices employed by their respective institutions to address the subject of transfer. Doing so

provided “in-depth analysis of [the] case . . . program . . . activity” (Creswell, 2014, p. 14), which ultimately speaks to the intent of this study. Given that the focus of this study was on accountability, and specifically in identifying how public institutions of higher learning were addressing the STAR Act of 2010, it was uniquely critical to interview participants (administrators and staff) with the responsibility, knowledge, and experience with implementing the law (and thus faculty were not included). Doing so, provided depth into understanding how the law has been addressed by the three community colleges and three CSUs.

### **Instrumentation**

The methodology employed in this research included semistructured interviews with the personnel at the identified institutions and document analysis of each institutional strategic plan, community college completion (awards) data, and the CSU undergraduate enrollment report. Nineteen interviews were conducted in a semistructured format with administrators and staff at the community colleges and universities. Some interviews were conducted face to face at each participant’s office while others were conducted via telephone due to distance. For interviews conducted face to face, the consent to participate form was discussed prior to the interview and signed by each participant. For participants interviewed over the phone, the consent to participate form was e-mailed and explained to each participant prior to the start of the interview. Verbal agreement was received from each participant interviewed over the phone. All of the interviews were recorded with permission from the participants. The researcher also maintained notes during the interview. To ensure confidentiality, each

participant's name, position title, or institution for which he or she was employed was not recorded. Each interview was referred to by number only.

For the semistructured interviews, the goal was to gather insights into how the institutions were meeting the requirements for transfer based on STAR Act of 2010. From the literature review and accountability theoretical framework, questions were formulated with the aim of generating insights into the practices or policies at each institution. Part of the objective for the semistructured interviews was to generate responses that spoke to the questions at hand but also allowed clarification if needed. Moreover, the interviews provided meaning to the information in conjunction with the strategic plans, completion data, and enrollment report analysis.

As explained in this section, the two primary methods of data collection for this research were document analysis and participant interviews. The intent was to assure internal validity of the data and the findings that would be arrived at. Yin (2013) noted that when two or more methods of data collection (triangulation) are purposefully designed in a qualitative case study research, the methods provide overlapping data, and if the results are convergent, it can ensure a greater confidence in the study's overall findings. In addition to internal validity, the notion of external validity is also in play. As such, Shenton (2004) noted that providing the context in which the study was conducted is essential. Contextual information regarding the number of organizations participating, the number of participants involved, the data collection methods used, the number of and length of data collection sessions, the time period in which the data were collected, and any restrictions on the type of participants who contributed to the data added internal validity. As noted earlier, three community colleges and three CSU

campuses in the Central Valley region of California were part of the study. The interviews were conducted over a span of 3 months (May through July 2018), and there were no restrictions on the type of participants for the study. Given this context, this study could be replicated elsewhere. For reliability, the careful and purposive selection of three community colleges and three CSU campuses in central California provides dependability to the findings as the study could be replicated in other communities and colleges with similar circumstances.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Responses were coded and categorized. Data were analyzed to identify key themes and messages including practices employed by each institution. Furthermore, the identification of themes or practices between the community colleges and CSUs was part of the analysis process.

A similar approach was employed with the document analysis as with the strategic plans, completion data, and enrollment report. Institutional strategic plans provided objectives, priorities, and goals related to transfer to a university. Community college completion (awards) data provided a backdrop to a key element of the STAR Act of 2010, which is the completion of associate degrees for transfer (ADT). To gain a greater understanding of transfer, it was important to understand the status of ADTs completed at the community college level. Likewise, the CSU undergraduate enrollment report afforded a sense of cognizance about transfer to universities and the work till date. Therefore, the identification of themes based on the document's analysis and interviews added contextual understanding to the topic of transfer and in bringing the issue to the forefront of public discourse.

## **Limitations**

The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. The study was limited to the Central Valley region in California. Additionally, it only included three community colleges in the region. This study could be replicated to other regions or parts of the state. There are 111 other community colleges and 20 other CSU campuses in California.
2. The study gathered input primarily from administrators and staff. However, input from teaching faculty (community colleges and universities) specific to transfer would be applicable and be a case for future research.
3. The study focused on California community colleges and the CSU system. The study does not include the University of California (UC). However, practices, programs, and public policies pertaining to transfer are not exclusively limited to the CSU system or to California alone. There could be implications for other parts of the state and the nation.
4. Aside from the STAR Act of 2010, there are various other legislative mandates and initiatives that also speak to transfer outcomes. However, this study did not take into full consideration the various legislative mandates, initiatives, and programs that might have an impact on transfer to a university.
5. The student voice was missing from this study. While the participants provided feedback pertaining to the issues they believed impacted students, nevertheless, student input was not a part of this study.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, the analysis of the data and research findings are reviewed and presented. The findings of this qualitative case study are based on the lived experiences of the study participants and the document analysis. This chapter includes the responses to seven interview questions that were asked of the study participants. The interview questions presented were developed based on the body of literature related to the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act of 2010 and the accountability theoretical framework.

### **Purpose of Research**

Given the gap in community college transfer rates to a university in California, it is important to examine the legislation that was enacted to address this problem. Moreover, it is imperative to understand how institutions are advancing community college student transfer to a university as a matter of public policy and administration and the subsequent economic workforce development impact in California. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify how public institutions of higher learning (community colleges and CSU campuses) are meeting the standards for transfer requirements and expectations according to the STAR Act of 2010. Hence, the significance of this research is in identifying practices implemented by colleges and universities to address the 2010 legislative act and how such practices promote accountability requirements for community college transfer to a university.

### **Research Question**

How are the public institutions of higher learning meeting the accountability requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act of 2010 for community college student transfer to a university?

### **Research Profile**

Three community colleges in the Central Valley region of California and three CSU campuses were part of this qualitative case study research. The region has a high concentration of poverty, unemployment, and non-higher-education attainment. Therefore, the topic related to higher education is of great importance to the region, and thus, to the significance of this study. Nineteen interviews were conducted with 12 via telephone and seven face to face. The interviewees served in a variety of roles including management and staff positions. To ensure confidentiality, the exact position titles, names, and demographic information of the interview participants were not included as part of the data gathering.

### **Data Analysis and Description of Findings**

The data analysis and description of findings are presented in this section, containing two primary areas of analysis, specifically the semistructured interviews and the document analysis. The interview analysis, based on the responses from the community college and university personnel, is presented first and is followed by document analysis of the strategic plans, completion (awards) data, and enrollment report.

## **Semistructured Interviews**

The interview questions were designed to provide context, reference, and applicability to the research question for this study, specifically, “How are the public institutions of higher learning meeting the accountability requirements of the California STAR Act of 2010 for community college student transfer to a university?” In this section, the analysis and findings related to each interview question asked are presented. This section is divided into responses from community college participants and university participants respectively.

### **Community College Participant Interview Responses**

The following section is an analysis of the key themes generated based on the responses to the interview questions by community college participants. Nine participants were interviewed from the three different community colleges in the Central Valley region of California. Participants worked in various capacities in general management, academic affairs, and student support services departments. The participants had firsthand knowledge and experience of the programs and services provided by their respective institutions related to community college student transfer to a university.

**Interview Question 1 findings and themes.** How do you feel the institution is meeting its mission? Will you share some examples of how the institution is meeting its mission?

The responses were varied but related specifically to the missions of their respective community colleges. Collectively, the community college respondents viewed their institutional missions as providing education to the community to support program

completion in certificate and associate degree attainment, transfer to a university, and employment preparation. Table 10 provides an overview of the key points based on the participant responses to Interview Question 1.

Table 10

*Question 1 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
101	Help students to obtain certificate, degrees, transfer, gainful employment. Putting resources to increase transfer. Hired transfer counselor.
102	Provide quality teaching, learning, transitioning students into jobs to meet labor market outcomes. Working on guided pathways, year-long registration/enrollment.
103	Serve higher education, transfer, career technical education. Degree completion, transfer. Coordinated programs through equity, basic skills, student support services.
104	Completion and transfer. Provide learning support services. Work on Achieving the Dream, Associate Degree for Transfer.
109	Offer career technical education to prepare for employment, transfer studies. Partnership with community including transfer institutions.
110	Focus on completion, transfer to CSU or UC, employment. Issues with remediation.
111	Help students to achieve their goals—career enhancement, job opportunity, transfer.
113	Help diverse student population—transfer to a university, occupation, economic growth. Articulation with other institutions, focus on equity, growth, and sustainability.
114	Provide quality education. Attainment of degrees, certificates, completion, transfer, workforce.

Community colleges provide remedial education, career technical education, and transfer preparation work for university studies. Hence, the primary theme was the multiple missions and purposes of the community colleges to meet the needs of the students and the community. Therefore, the community college objectives are to ensure program completion, employment preparation, and transfer readiness to a university. With the different missions and objectives, community colleges embark on a variety of

programs and services to address program completion and transfer to a university. Some of the programs are national initiatives while others are mandated by the California legislature. These programs include, in part, Guided Pathways, Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), Basic Skills Initiative, Student Success and Support Program (SSSP), Student Equity, and Achieving the Dream (ATD). The following are the representative responses:

We do an excellent job with meeting their [student] higher education needs whether it's a degree completion or certificate completion or transfer or a combination of the three [but] less than a third of our students come in prepared. (Participant 103)

We're doing everything we can to make sure our students are successful, that we get them through the finish line . . . whether it be going to work or simply transfer into another UC or CSU. . . . We do have the same issues with many of the community colleges have with remediation. (Participant 110)

Our mission is to help diverse population[s]. Help with transfer to [a] university, with occupation or job, with economic growth and local community needs. (Participant 113)

Provide quality education. Attainment of degrees and certificates, completion, and transfer. (Participant 114)

**Interview Question 2 findings and themes.** What do you think are the barriers to transferring to university?

The primary key points, according to the interview respondents, were inconsistencies and complexities of articulation and transfer requirements to a university,

personal and family responsibilities, and financial costs. Table 11 outlines the key points based on the participant responses to the interview question.

Table 11

*Question 2 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
101	Complexities of transfer to a university. CSU ability to accept transfer students. Community colleges, CSUs, UCs have individualized articulation agreements between institutions.
102	Cultural/first-generation students. Distance/geography, limited technology access for online courses for transfer.
103	Personal/family responsibilities, financial. Student readiness. Student readiness. Institutional barriers, math & English placement.
104	Personal/work commitment. Knowledge of UC/CSU financing plans and other university choices. Courses not articulated with universities or not offered. Costs.
109	Financial costs, pathways from community college to university not clear. Lack of institutional readiness for students. CSUs have different requirements for admission/transfer.
110	Misalignment in public higher education system. K-12 Common Core not aligned with college.
111	Inconsistent policies for articulation with CSUs. Some CSUs do not accept CID approved courses.
113	Students take math and English out of sequence. Not ask students deeper questions as to why they are taking this course or major?
114	College culture, 1st generation college student. Financial costs.

Responses to this question generated four primary themes. These include noninstructional factors such as personal commitments and costs, different rules for articulation/transfer and admission requirements to the university, institutional barriers, and knowledge of university options and financial planning.

1. Noninstructional and community factors are barriers to transfer according to the interview participants. These factors include costs/finances, personal and family responsibilities, employment commitments, and emotional or psychological

limitations. Additionally, there are cultural and community factors. Some families do not want their children to leave home. Furthermore, the geographic distance is a challenge as some areas are remote and rural where the closest CSU campus is 100 miles away. Many students are also first-generation college students. Therefore, they do not necessarily have the perspective or the family support structure in place for motivation and encouragement. Another reason is college culture. For some students, navigating the college culture can be challenging. Some of the representative responses include the following comments:

Many of our students are first-generation Latino students. So, their parents like keeping them close to home. To stay home to help support the family . . . [and] our closest university is 2 hours away. (Participant 102)

Some of them are cultural . . . social, economic . . . families want to stay close together. They don't want to send their students away to college. (Participant 103)

Financial reasons always come to mind. A lot of our students work either part time or full time and they use that money not only to help themselves and pay their own bills but in many cases also to help their family. (Participant 104)

I think a lot of our first-generation students just coming to college is challenging in general because . . . you have to learn the college culture [and] expectations and start to follow a schedule, time management (Participant 114)

2. Participants noted the complex system for transfer and articulation to the university system in California. Specifically, articulation policies and transfer requirements are not the same between the CSUs. Additionally, course acceptance is not standard and

is not consistent among the CSUs. Moreover, admission and enrollment requirements at the CSUs vary depending upon the campus. The different policies, processes, and requirements make it difficult for students trying to apply to a CSU. This challenge is exasperating when students apply to multiple universities. Therefore, the different requirements serve as barriers for transfer to a university. The following are representative responses:

I think . . . one of the largest barriers is just trying to understand the complexities of the articulation agreements. To think that about 114 community colleges, 23 CSUs, and 10 UCs all with individualized articulation agreements between them is absolutely mind blowing and ludicrous in my mind. And we expect the students to understand that. (Participant 101)

Different CSUs . . . play by different rules and have different requirements depending on the major in the program. And so I think at times it can be confusing for a student. (Participant 109).

Well, I don't think there are consistent policies amongst all of the CSUs. . . . Inconsistent with application of articulation agreements. Some departments/areas in the CSUs do not accept CID courses even with the state-approved ADTs. (Participant 111)

3. Institutional limitations or barriers was another key theme based on the interviews.

Particularly, the limitations include the lack of capacity at the CSU to accept all students with associate degrees for transfer. One CSU is not able to accept all eligible students. Another institutional barrier is the misplacement of students in English and mathematics courses. Most often, students are placed into remedial or basic skills

courses based on the placement assessment test, yet many are capable of tackling transfer-level college work. Additionally, the pathway to completion and program requirements are not necessarily clear to students. Moreover, community colleges are not necessarily prepared for students. Institutions do not always have the ability to address the variety of student needs pedagogically. Another factor is the lack of adequate career guidance for students. One participant believed that community colleges do not automatically ask the hard questions of the students. This participant argued that community colleges need to be asking students questions to find out why they want to pursue a particular major. The following are representative responses:

The barriers that institutions put up for the students. . . . I think it revolves around those gatekeeper English and math courses and the way we place students.

(Participant 103)

We don't ask questions? Ask . . . why are doing this? Why this major? Why do you want to transfer? Why are you here? It needs to be connected to the real world. (Participant 113)

Sometimes at the college level, we're not ready to take students as they come. I think that's one of the barriers and we're working on that through giving faculty time to work on teaching pedagogy and how to teach differently. (Participant 109)

4. Lack of student readiness and awareness was another key barrier to transfer to a university. Many community college students are placed in remedial or basic skills English and mathematics courses and, therefore, spend a considerable time in these courses before reaching transfer-level college courses. This can be discouraging. For English learners, the path to transfer-level college courses can even be longer.

Additionally, most community college students in the region do not apply to transfer institutions outside the area. Many students only consider the 4-year college or university institution in their area. Therefore, community college students in the region lack the understanding and awareness of the university options available to them. Furthermore, many students have limited knowledge of finance or the understanding of how to manage their time and resources. The following are representative responses:

Completing general education in a timely manner, students get discouraged. At universities, students typically take English and math in the first semester. At community college, students take other classes and leave English and math until the last semester, and then they don't pass, they cannot finish. (Participant 113)

I do believe that it can be psychologically deflating and defeating for students that graduate from high school and come to the college and are told, well, you took one placement exam and unfortunately you didn't do so well as you wanted to. So, we're going to put you in remedial English classes, which is a couple of levels below transfer. (Participant 103)

And I think the best thing that we can do . . . is making our students really understand financial literacy and understand how to utilize their resources. If they're able to do that, I think that students will feel more safe and confident that they can transfer. (Participant 104)

**Interview Question 3 findings and themes.** How familiar are you with the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act, 2010 (SB 1140)? The primary key point according to the interview respondents was the development of ADTs.

Table 12 outlines the key points based on the participant responses to the interview question.

Table 12

*Question 3 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
101	Articulate a streamlined path. Forced faculty to have conversations about curriculum.
102	It requires community colleges to have ADTs. Theoretically guarantees students a spot at a university (CSU).
103	Generated ADTs. Increased number of transfer students.
104	Allows for flexibility in helping students complete transfer degrees.
109	Very familiar with law.
110	About transfer and making sure students are not repeating a course.
111	It created ADTs.
113	Required to have ADTs.
114	Implementation of transfer degrees.

The main theme generated from this question was that the community college participants understood the law and what it was intended for, particularly regarding the development and implementation of ADT at their respective institutions. They recognized that curriculum must meet the requirements for transfer and the CSUs cannot require students with ADTs to repeat courses already completed at the community college. The curriculum and programmatic requirements based on the legislation have forced faculty and staff to have conversations about curriculum. Participants understood that students with an ADT degree are guaranteed acceptance to the CSUs. As a result of the law, ADTs awarded have increased over the years. Some excerpts are as follows:

I know that it requires us to have a certain number of ADTs . . . there are discipline interest groups that meet to decide on the core curriculum for those

degrees and use the CIDs to guide the development of that curriculum locally. . . .theoretically guarantees students a spot at a university . . . [but] it doesn't guarantee necessarily a spot in a program. (Participant 102)

All of the ADTs that we generated, developed . . . over the last 6 or 7 years . . . now up to 28 . . . and we like to think that's why our number of transfer students . . . continue to rise. It's up to 35% to 40% from 2012. (Participant 103)

The transfer model curriculum [for ADTs] allows for flexibility in terms of . . . helping the students complete transfer degrees. (Participant 104)

It's about transfer and making sure that our students are not repeating a course. (Participant 110)

**Interview Question 4 findings and themes.** What new programs has the institution implemented to meet the requirements of the law (STAR Act, 2010) for student completion?

The primary key point according to the interview respondents was curriculum alignment and development in relation to transfer degrees and enhancing support services for students in transfer counseling. Table 13 outlines the key points based on the participant responses to the interview question.

Three primary themes were generated based on the responses to this question. Specifically, curriculum alignment and development, expanded student support services, and enhanced conversations and messaging.

Table 13

*Question 4 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
101	Convert degree programs to ADTs.
102	Operational enhancement around transfer of curriculum. Training for faculty and understanding of ADTs.
103	Increased counseling staff, space for career and transfer counseling services. Expanded student support services.
104	Workshops on transfer, application to UC/CSUs, financial aid. Accurate math & English placement, using multiple measures placement, new strong initiative.
109	Curriculum and program tweaks. Curriculum conversations. Transfer and career center services. Map your success campaign.
110	Curriculum changes, elimination of non-ADTs. Make sure programs have ADTs.
111	Guided pathways, scalable programs, enhance support. Messaging to students, early warning, student engagement.
113	Degree Works program where students to check progress to completion.
114	Transfer counselor. Shifting to transfer degrees. Guided pathways. Curriculum sequencing.

1. Transfer curriculum alignment and development was a major key point based on the interviews. All the community colleges have developed ADTs to meet the requirements of the STAR Act of 2010. Community colleges continue to develop more ADT degree programs. Colleges are also assessing existing local non-ADT degrees to determine if they could be converted into ADTs. Therefore, some colleges are considering eliminating many of their existing local non-ADT degrees in favor of the ADT option. However, colleges also recognize that in some fields of study they will need to continue to offer the local non-ADT option including certificate programs to meet workforce and industry needs. Given the push for transfer and development of ADTs, existing curricula have been revised to meet the transfer and articulation requirements.

Given the constant need to revise review and develop curriculum, a significant component of getting the work done was providing faculty with training on subjects related to pedagogy, curriculum alignment, and student success. Furthermore, to support ADT, colleges have started to implement the guided pathways initiative at their respective campuses. Guided pathways are a state-funded initiative aimed at helping colleges provide academic and instructional support to help students accelerate completion and transfer. Hence, a key activity is providing clear road maps to completion including sequencing course offerings in a way that will allow students to complete their program of study in a reasonable time. Some of the excerpts include the following representative comments.

Operational enhancement around transfer curriculum. Planning curriculum review . . . and resources we allocate to articulation. So, they're not necessarily new programs but . . . operational adjustments . . . of programs. (Participant 102)

I think we're at 30 associate degrees for transfer at this point. And we keep trying to figure out what's in the best interest of the students based on the major labor force demand, if we keep certain degrees or switch to ADTs. We're having those really good conversations through our curriculum [on] our general education, really trying to weed out the coursework. (Participant 109)

Eliminated a lot of programs. Try do to away with programs that are not ADT.

Of course, we do have some students [who] could be employable with just a terminal degree. . . . But from what we find, the majority of them (students) would like to transfer. . . . So, we want to make sure that all our programs are ADT.

(Participant 110)

We are shifting to transfer degrees. The guided pathways movement . . . getting [students] in and out in 2 years. Obviously they have to work and we really push for 15 in 4, meaning taking 15 units [each] semester to finish. We are pushing for sequencing of pathways to transfer. (Participant 114)

2. Interview participants reported that their institutions have expanded support programs and services for students. Some participants noted that while the expanded services are not necessarily a direct result of the STAR Act of 2010, the development and implementation of ADTs have given rise to the need to provide students with expanded counseling services including transfer services. Institutions have hired additional counselors, specifically transfer counselors, as well as started providing specific workshops for students in topics about transfer, finance, graduation, and university applications. Expansion of services also included the reconfiguration of dedicated spaces for transfer counseling services. The expansion and enhancement of student support services were also partly a result of multiple other state initiatives championed by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. The initiatives include guided pathways, student equity, and SSSP. Other enhanced support services include providing workshops related to transfer, financial aid options, and information about UC and CSU. Some excerpts include, in part, the following representative notations:

To help us focus on transfer, many of the students are channeled into ADTs. The focus of counseling . . . has increased. (Participant 102)

We now have a transfer counselor, which we did not have. We are shifting to transfer degrees. (Participant 114)

We have invested SSSP dollars to increase the number of our full-time counselors . . . in the last 5 years we've gone from . . . 11 to 22 full-time counselors. And we've also developed and secured space for a new student career and transfer center that is also staffed with two full-time counselors. There's also space for various recruiters from universities and colleges to come and meet with our students. (Participant 103)

On our workshops . . . they [students] can learn about special programs like transfer to the CSU or UC. (Participant 104)

3. As part of the push to ensure that community college students transfer, institutions are working on ensuring that the message and communication about the programs and services is clear. Additionally, curriculum development related to ADTs has also resulted in conversations with faculty and staff about what should be revised and/or changed. Some of the excerpts from the interviews include in part the following representative comments.

We're having those really good conversations. . . . One of the things we did to our instructional council is have deans and chairs get together twice a month. All academic teams pretended . . . to be a student and to map yourself through to completion or transfer in four semesters . . . so through that exercise a lot of tweaks were made by departments . . . [including] a map your success campaign and very visual graphics of the ADTs. (Participant 109)

We are shifting to transfer degrees. The guided pathways movement to get in and out in 2 years. . . . We are pushing for sequencing of pathways in transfer. (Participant 114)

So, we are trying to enhance student support services and contacts with students so that it's more friendly . . . more positive sounding. So even if they might be on academic trouble . . . on probation. But you know what, we can help you get out of probation and finish up your educational goals. So, we're trying things like that so that there's an . . . increase[d] engagement. (Participant 111)

**Interview Question 5 findings and themes.** In what ways do you think the STAR Act of 2010 increases public accountability for the college?

The primary key points according to the interview respondents were development of ADTs and increased completion. Table 14 outlines the key points based on the participant responses to the interview question.

Table 14

*Question 5 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
101	More accountability on the CSUs. Community college held accountable on completion.
102	Agreed-upon articulated curriculum and guaranteed for transfer. Accountable to taxpayer. Students complete in a timely manner.
103	New funding formula—held accountable on outputs/completion. Strategic planning tied to objectives & missions. Annual report to community.
104	Students graduate on time. Better communication.
109	Open lines of communication between community college and CSUs. Legislation provides teeth.
110	Accountable to students. Have transfer model curriculum.
111	Accountability on CSU to ensure admission of students. Increase ADT awards.
113	Created ADTs and to inform students. Not all CSUs were brought in with transfer degrees.
114	Focus on completion, course sequencing, focused efforts. Increase ADTs awarded.

The interview participants focused exclusively on the accountability as it pertains to CSU and the community colleges themselves.

1. Accountability in the CSU campuses was a notable point shared by the participants.

Interview participants recognized that the STAR Act of 2010 resulted in the development of the ADTs. It meant that students with ADTs were assured admission to one of the CSU campuses. However, there was a sense that not all CSU campuses have bought into the idea of ADTs. Some still had their own requirements for admission regardless of the ADTs. Additionally, in some instances, a CSU campus will not always have the capacity to accept all transfer students into the university. One of the concerns was the ability of a CSU to guarantee admission for transfer students with ADTs. In one example, students from a local community college with ADTs could not be admitted into the CSU campus in their area as the university was already impacted and did not have space. As a result, the students had to be redirected to another CSU campus. The concern was that if not all community college graduates with ADTs could get into a CSU campus, there was no use of the law if students could not transfer. Some of the representative responses are as follows:

I am not sure the CSUs were brought in. Faculty were not getting to review courses, programs; they just sat around for a long time . . . [a different CSU has] not bought into ADTs. They have not bought into transfer degrees. Some institutions are in, some are not. . . . They still want students to meet their own requirements. (Participant 113)

I think it's probably more accountability for the CSUs than it is for the community colleges. (Participant 102)

Too often our regional CSU is impacted and so there's some gamesmanship going on. . . . We had 20 students that had to go to [local CSU] but there was no room for them. Luckily our . . . counselor . . . got them redirected to [another CSU] or else students would have been sitting around twiddling their thumbs. (Participant 103)

2. A glaring theme from the interview was a recognition that there were accountability requirements on the community colleges in many areas. The STAR Act of 2010 mandated community colleges to develop ADTs. As a result, all the community colleges have met this requirement of the law through the development and implementation of ADTs. The community college participants interviewed noted that they still planned to review and revise existing curriculum including the development of more ADTs. Colleges have seen an increase in the number of students earning ADTs and therefore addressed a key objective of the law, which is program completion. One college designed and developed course sequencing for its programs to ensure that classes are offered accordingly such that students are able to complete their studies at the community college in order for them to transfer to a university in a timely manner.

The implementation of ADTs also meant that the faculty teach according to the approved curriculum based on the state template for ADTs and thereby ensure course transferability and articulation to the CSUs. Community colleges are also implementing mathematics and English placement processes through the use of high school grade point average (GPA) as another measurement for placing students into college courses. As part of accountability, a community college provides an annual

report to the community on how it is meeting key strategic objectives. In doing so, it informs the public of its activities and progress with completion and transfer to a university. ADTs and the focus on transfer have increased conversations and communication with the CSUs. Some of the representative responses are as follows:

Well, I think it makes us sharpen our pencil right. So, it makes us really look at our course offerings. . . . As far as the SB 1440, we're being held accountable for completion now more than ever. (Participant 101)

I think we are more accountable for our students because we're making sure that programs . . . have the transfer model curriculum and they are actually transferable and [students] are prepared for the university. (Participant 110)

I think it just allows us to have communication about how to help students. (Participant 104)

Opened lines of communication between the community colleges and CSUs. (Participant 109)

**Interview Question 6 findings and themes.** What other practices does the college plan to implement in the future to continue to meet the requirements of the law (STAR Act of 2010) to further increase the number of students who earn associate degrees for transfer (ADT) and subsequently transfer to a university?

The primary key point according to the respondents was to develop more ADTs and increase completion and transfer to a university. Table 15 outlines the key points based on the participant responses to the interview question.

Table 15

*Question 6 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
101	Develop more ADTs. Increase transfer. Encourage students to apply to university early.
102	Guided pathways. Focus on community, industry, and student need. Pipeline with K-12 partners. Campus visits to university. Expand vision beyond local CSUs.
103	Guided pathways. Increase coordination with high schools. Increase completion, gainful employment, transfer pathway from community college to university.
104	Articulation services on the campus. More time to work on transfer.
109	Transfer center institutionalized as part of campus operations.
110	Implement a transfer center.
111	Tweak programs. Develop new curriculum. Up-to-date technology. More options for transfer.
113	Greater completion and transfer. Case management approach.
114	Scheduling of classes. Academic support, case management.

Three primary themes were generated based on the responses to this question. Specifically, attainment of institutional outcomes, achievement of student outcomes (completion and transfer), and increased pathway to transfer starts in high school.

1. While not exclusively attributed to the STAR Act of 2010, the development and implementation of ADTs based on the law is one of many initiatives community colleges are engaged in as part of the efforts to ensure timely completion and transfer to a university. The participants interviewed noted that their respective institutions were working on several initiatives, some of which were legislatively mandated to bolster institutional outcomes specifically in relation to adding more ADTs, developing and implementing guided pathways, AB 705 mandate, properly tracking student progress, and increasing the pathway from community college to university.

For some institutions, there was nothing new per se, except for a redirected focus on curriculum review, purposeful course sequencing, enhanced academic and student support services, and increased institutional capacity. Some of the participants also discussed the need for outcomes to ensure future funding stability. Currently, community colleges are funded primarily based on access, specifically, enrollment. However, funding for community colleges (starting in 2018-2019) will reflect a combination of access (enrollment) and performance (outcomes) measures. Community colleges recognized that they have to change their focus to not only provide students access to learning but also to ensure that students are successful. Some of the excerpts include the following responses:

Structuring our guided pathways in our curriculum to align with teachers . . . helping students to focus on that curriculum that will get them transferred as quickly as possible. (Participant 102)

Nothing new but refining things. Scheduling of courses and work to have college ready students, work on AB 705. . . . Providing academic support. You know there are a lot of students that come in with pretty significant deficits in terms of their reading, writing, and math ability. We've provided over 20,000 hours in tutoring. We have doubled that in last 4 years. It's been very intentional . . . we [will be doing] case management for students in the next year. Plus the work with guided pathways. (Participant 114)

We do constant reviews of our curriculum and management. . . . You know if we're finding that our community isn't interested in some of the degrees we have to tweak them somewhat or . . . maybe replace it with another one. So, we're

always looking for what our consumers want. . . . So, I think in relation to SB 1440 and all other initiatives coming out from the state which are all related and they all tie back to performance-based funding. I think that we will be constantly in a cycle of review and evaluation. We cannot afford to be offering the same old and expecting our customers to just flock to us. (Participant 111)

2. Institutions are refocusing activities to ensure that students are transferring to a university. Institutions are implementing the guided pathways framework activities that include providing transfer counseling services, instituting case management, helping students to apply for graduation early, submitting applications to universities, and exposing them to other universities aside from the regional CSU campuses that are close to them. While doing nothing particularly new, per se, the community colleges are redirecting and enhancing programs to ensure that students are able to attain their education goals including transfer. The following are representative responses to the question:

We are implementing guided pathways . . . pathways model that will look at pre-outreach from K-12 . . . all the way through an ADT then transfer. (Participant 102)

In student services, we have more coordinators and [we] are providing more of a case management approach . . . case management [on a] really deeper level.

(Participant 113)

We have transfer days here having our counselors have those conversations with students early and opening up graduation applications earlier . . . getting students to start to apply in the beginning of their second year so that they don't forget. . . .

But there's discussion about creating more robust simple systems that allow us to identify where students are within striking distance of a degree. And then . . . giving them some intrusive counseling to help them where they might be close to just finish or transfer. (Participant 101)

Our students don't get out to college campuses and we're finding that the more that we take them out . . . exposed to USC (University of Southern California) or UCLA (University of California Los Angeles), they bring back a different vision for themselves as well as for their peers. And that's also helping us in developing a pipeline. But also for our current students in expanding their vision beyond CSU because (one local CSU) is impacted so it's helping them look at different options and increase our applications to other institutions that are beyond our local feeder. (Participant 102)

3. A desire to increase partnership and collaboration with the high schools was another key element expressed by some of the community colleges as well as a focus on providing targeted services related to transfer. For some institutions, this means developing and implementing plans for a transfer center. The desire to focus on transfer and increased coordination with the high schools stems from the belief that transfer to a university starts early in the K-12 system. Some of the interview participants saw the pathway from high school as part of the guided pathways initiative to increase the transition of students from high school to postsecondary learning. Some of the excerpts include the following comments:

Again, we are implementing guided pathways . . . a pathways model that will look at pre-outreach establishing a pipeline . . . from our K-12 partners all the way

through to an ADT and then transfer with concurrent enrollment built into our high schools. . . . I believe that our students were going from their freshman year (high school) on a degree track that was an ADT and they were able to complete the degree and high school diploma in 4 years. We're looking at implementing more of those types of programs. (Participant 102)

We don't have a transfer center. . . . We will try and implement a transfer center to focus on transfer next year. (Participant 110)

[With] guided pathways we show that it intersects with inner segmental alignment which is key. . . . So, . . . we're scaling [our] progress because the coordination between high school districts, institutions, and industry partners is occurring across college with some partnerships stronger than others. And so for . . . us to really increase the number of ADTs we really need to go to full scale and the coordination needs to be stronger. (Participant 103)

**Interview Question 7 findings and themes.** Do you have any questions for me?

Mostly, there were no questions from the participants. Some expressed an interest in learning more about the research and when it will become available.

**Summary of key themes.** Based on the interviews of the community college participants, the following key themes summarize the crux of the responses:

1. Transfer preparation to the universities is just one of the several purposes of the community colleges. With the multiple purposes, community colleges are involved with many different institutional, state, and national initiatives as well as legislative mandates in which community colleges are engaged to address a variety of needs including transfer. These include Guided Pathways, Achieving the Dream, AB 705,

and Multiple Measures Placement (MMP). ADTs are just one of the many initiatives and legislative mandates that community colleges must address.

2. The variety of articulation, admission, and transfer requirements between the public higher education institutions in California make it challenging for students to navigate the admission and transfer process from the community colleges to the CSUs. Another significant challenge for transfer to a university is due to personal and professional commitments and cultural expectations. Many students, according to the interview participants, indicated having family and work commitments. Additionally, in some cultures, families prefer to have their children at home. Therefore, these challenges become barriers to transferring to a university.
3. Community colleges understand the requirements of the STAR Act of 2010 in the development and implementation of the ADTs. All of the community colleges included as part of this study have ADTs and they continue to review the need to develop additional transfer degrees at their respective institutions.
4. Community colleges have focused a lot of the work on curriculum alignment, programmatic development, and expanding support services. As noted, the colleges included as part of this study have all developed ADTs and continue to revise curriculum to meet transfer requirements to the university. Additionally, colleges have enhanced their counseling services to include transfer counseling to help students understand the requirements for transferring to a university.
5. Community colleges understand that they are accountable for the development and implementation of ADTs as well as ensuring the curriculum meets CSU transfer requirements. CSUs, on the other hand, must accept students with ADTs. However,

some of the community college participants noted that not all of the CSUs have the same capacity. For example, one of the CSUs in the region was impacted and not able to accept all eligible students. Additionally, some community college participants felt that some CSUs may not all be fully on board with ADTs.

6. Future programs and efforts with the community colleges include enhancing partnerships with community partners such as K-12, universities, and businesses to improve educational outcomes.

### **University Participants' Interview Responses**

The following section is an analysis of the key themes generated based on the responses to the interview questions by university participants. Ten interviews were conducted with participants from three different CSU campuses in the Central Valley region of California. Participants work in various capacities at their respective institutions, including academic and student support services departments. Therefore, the participants have firsthand knowledge and experience of the programs and services provided by their respective areas related to community college student transfer into the universities.

**Interview Question 1 findings and themes.** How do you feel the institution is meeting its mission? Will you share some examples of how the institution is meeting its mission?

The primary key points, according to the interview respondents, were to serve and partner with the community, honor transfer agreements, and accept students who meet CSU admission requirements. Table 16 outlines the key points based on the participant respondents to the interview question.

Table 16

*Question 1 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
105	Educate and empower students. Serve student needs—basic needs.
106	Educate people in service area. Accept students who meet CSU eligibility requirements.
112	Serve residents, first-generation college students.
115	Honor transfer degrees and courses.
116	Educate children in the area, large number of Hispanic and first-generation college students. Partner with community colleges in the area.
117	Honor transfer agreements.
118	Empower the community, region. Partner with community colleges, high schools.
119	Serve Central Valley, first-generation college students, English learners, millennials. Address impediments to student success.
120	Serve counties in region. Accept students from freshmen to transfer.
708	Accept students who meet CSU eligibility criteria. Partner with community colleges in area . . . bring the university to community college.

The key points based on the interview responses suggest that the mission of the CSUs is to educate and serve residents, honor the transfer process, and partner with high schools and community colleges. Herein lie the key themes to this question.

1. The universities regard their mission as educating and empowering students and the community. They provide undergraduate research opportunities and graduate studies. Their mission is to educate the residents in the communities which they serve, from serving the counties (including rural towns) within their service area and first-generation college students to transfer students, freshman students, Hispanic, and English language learners. In serving the variety of student populations, part of the CSUs' charge, according to some respondents, is to address the challenges students

face at the university. For example, one institution provides basic needs assistance, which includes tuition, housing, food, and clothing assistance. The representative responses include the following notations:

Mission is for the university [to] educate students and empower students. And so I think we've done a really good job in that in terms of creating some momentum. Thinking outside of the box and I think that's where we start thinking about how bold we educate students is that we're starting to think about . . . existing practices [and what] new practices that we really need. (Participant 105)

We have a peculiar profile with over 50% Hispanic and over 75% are first-generation college students. We keep that in mind with the design of our programs. A large percentage of our students today come from the community colleges. We have a large number of transfer students from community colleges in the area. (Participant 116)

Research has proven that there are things out of the classroom. . . . We have a lot students that were dropping for not paying [balance of their tuition]. So, we made affordable plans for students. . . . We would give them a grant. (Participant 105)

We offer various programs for basic needs. Offer food and clothing closet and supplemental instruction to support our students who are first-generation college students. (Participant 118)

2. Based on the interviews, the participants believed part of what they do at their respective CSU campuses is to honor transfer and articulation agreements with the community colleges. The participants also deemed part of the CSU mission as being to admit students who meet eligibility requirements for admission, accept transfer and

articulated courses, and provide information about transfer and articulation to community college students. Some of the excerpts include the following references:

We're doing a good job honoring the transfer degrees. We honor courses with transfer degrees even if we don't have those courses here. We honor them.

(Participant 115)

We're honoring transfer agreements . . . we make accommodations based on the feedback of the faculty. (Participant 117)

Transfer is a big part of our student population . . . we are not an impacted campus. We are one of five institutions that will take students who meet the CSU eligibility criteria. (Participant 106)

So, we serve six counties based on our location. In many of these counties and towns, there is not a public university within 100 miles. We're able to accept students from freshmen to transfer. (Participant 120)

3. Another key theme based on the interviews was the acknowledgement of the need to partner with the community, especially with the elementary and secondary school districts and community colleges. Therefore, the CSUs have partnerships with community colleges and the high schools in outreach. In some cases, the community colleges provide space for CSU partners to provide university outreach and advising services to community college students. Some of the excerpts follow:

We have various relationships with 12 community colleges in the Central Valley.

We partner with 65 high schools and help them with the enrollment process. We provide outreach to high schools and community colleges. (Participant 118)

We try to coordinate with them [community colleges] better. We're in the process of getting more streamlined in terms of connection [with the] curriculum and advising. (Participant 116)

[We] partner with community colleges. . . . They provide office space for our transfer specialist who meets one on one with students. We are there 4 to 5 days a week to actually meet one on one with these students. Bring the university to them. Some community college students don't know about ADTs. We provide information about ADT program. So, by having our staff there, they're able to explain to them the courses they need to take and actually give them a little bit more information about how to prepare and not waste time taking courses that are not necessary. (Participant 708)

**Interview Question 2 findings and themes.** What do you think are the barriers to community college students transferring into the university?

The primary key points to this question included students not taking the right classes to transfer, lack of understanding of the transfer requirements, university processes and culture, and personal commitments. Table 17 outlines the key points based on the participant responses to the interview question.

Based on the key points to this question, four key themes came to light as barriers to community college students transferring into the university: university culture, personal commitments and obstacles, institutional hurdles, and lack of direction and knowledge of transfer programs and process.

Table 17

*Question 2 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
105	Not taking the right courses. Transition to university, inability to accept all students to university.
106	Personal and family responsibilities, finance/cost. Lack of student readiness for university studies.
112	Lack of direction and adequate counseling, taking wrong classes. Student not prepared for university.
115	Navigating through the university system.
116	Student uncertain of goals. Not taking the right courses, finance/cost.
117	Family and work responsibilities.
118	Knowledge of the transfer process.
119	University system processes and culture. Lacking a sense of belonging.
120	Misinformation about transfer requirements.
708	Student readiness for university/academic preparation. Finance/cost.

1. There is a certain culture in universities that many students are not familiar with, let alone understand. For first-generation college students, this experience is foreign to them. Navigating the university system and processes can be challenging for students. Some students are intimidated by the atmosphere, the process, and even by university professors. Therefore, students at times will not seek assistance or look for where to find support. Students sometimes are lost and may not feel they belong at the university. There are also institutional barriers for students transferring into universities. These include institutional processes and procedures at the university at different levels. Additionally, the admission criteria may change from time to time dependent upon the capacity of the university to accept new students. As such, the university will not always have the space or capacity to accept new students.

Therefore, students intending to transfer to a university are frustrated with higher education. Some of the excerpts include the following representative responses:

Navigating through the system. Who to talk to? Where to send transcripts. Every area has their own processes. I think it's the biggest fear I've seen is navigating the system from one system to another. (Participant 115)

There are things like the culture of the university which might be different than the community college they came from. . . . It can be more intimidating, the classes might be larger. A lot of the times, they [universities] have big . . . lecture style [classes]. (Participant 119)

[The other barrier] is probably students who apply and [become] admitted. We don't know what our criteria [are for admission each semester]. . . . We have no space to accept all students. We redirect them to other CSUs. (Participant 105)

Universities have all these different offices where students have to go . . . we just kind of shuffle them. We tell them you know you need to go talk to so and so. . . . So it is very frustrating . . . for students of color and for first-generation students . . . [they may feel they] don't belong . . . and they just give up. (Participant 119)

2. The interview participants noted that there are several personal factors that are barriers to transferring into the university. Many individuals are first-generation college students and do not necessarily have the family experience or support for university studies. Additionally, tuition costs and personal finances are also barriers for transferring to a university. Students also have personal commitments that include family and employment responsibilities that become obstacles for transferring to

universities. Excerpts from the participants include some of the following representative responses:

One of the main barriers is that students often show up unprepared. Others have financial issues. They are typically members of a population that are supporting families. (Participant 106)

Academic preparation of students . . . to be ready for the rigor of a 4-year institution. Some community college students are frustrated they are placed in remedial classes. Other could be financial costs. (Participant 708)

Students have family responsibilities including work. . . . People have complex lives. (Participant 117)

3. Another barrier according to the interview participants was direction and guidance. Students often do not know what they want or have specific goals. Therefore, they will not know what to take. Given the lack of direction and understanding of the transfer process, community college students at times take the wrong classes or those they do not need at the university level. Some of the responses are reflected in the following representative responses:

There is a lack of directive and counseling. Students don't know what classes to take. . . . Majority of issues are before they apply. Students take classes they don't need and they are not sure of their major. Students change their minds. . . . Students take the wrong classes. (Participant 112)

Community college students don't have a clear idea as to what they want or what to do. Sometimes they take classes without any clear directions. Other times, they take classes that do not count for transfer. (Participant 116)

From the recruitment aspect, there is a lack of knowledge of the transfer process . . . students lack the knowledge in the transfer process and transfer requirements.

(Participant 118)

One of the barriers is misinformation . . . [as] there are constant changes, different changes and requirements. It's hard to track all the different changes. (Participant 120)

**Interview Question 3 findings and themes.** How familiar are you with the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act, 2010 (SB1440)?

The primary key point to the question was that several university respondents were not extremely familiar with the law. Table 18 outlines the key points based on the participant responses to the interview question.

Table 18

*Question 3 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
105	Not extremely familiar. Prioritizing our admission requirements. Focus on ADTs.
106	New to California. SB 1440 guarantees having a place to transfer to in the CSUs.
112	Know the history. Two ways to transfer: ADTs or traditional method without ADTs.
115	Not very familiar but I know the purpose. ADT is validated and can transfer as a junior at the CSU.
116	Not familiar. New to California.
117	Vaguely familiar. Attended some earlier meeting with community college.
118	Enough knowledge. I have dealt with SB 1440.
119	I used to serve on committees.
120	Very familiar.
708	Extremely familiar.

Based on the key points for the responses, the primary theme was that several university participants had limited knowledge and understanding of the law. Some of the participants were familiar with the law and were involved in the initial discussions and implementation of the STAR Act of 2010. Other participants were vaguely familiar or not uniquely familiar with the law, as a few were new to California. However, from the context of understanding ADTs and acceptance of students with ADTs, the participants were able to speak of these elements of the law. Representative responses include the following comments:

I'm not extremely familiar with it . . . for me, recognizing our admission requirements [means] we prioritize. (Participant 105)

I would say vaguely familiar. I attended some meetings [at community college]. (Participant 117)

Relatively new to California. So, I know that SB 1440 guarantees having a space to transfer to the CSUs. Some CSUs are not impacted and some are. (Participant 106)

I'm not very familiar with it but I know its purpose. So pretty much to ensure that if you get a degree (ADT) it's validated to have a junior standing [at the CSU]. (Participant 115)

**Interview Question 4 findings and themes.** What new programs has the institution implemented to meet the requirements of the law STAR Act, 2010, to increase the number of community college students who transfer into the university?

Based on the responses, the primary key point to the question was that there were not many new programs targeted specifically at transfer, but there was an emphasis on

partnership with community colleges and increasing enrollment. Table 19 outlines the key points based on the participant responses to the interview question.

Table 19

*Question 4 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
105	Transfer scholars program—pathway to university. Programmatic changes.
106	Increase enrollment. Agreement with community colleges.
112	Transfer scholars program . . . focus on counseling.
115	No new programs.
116	Close coordination with community colleges. Special orientation for transfer students.
117	CSU Chancellor’s Graduation Target. Created block scheduling.
118	University scholars program.
119	Transfer-articulation agreements with community colleges. Regular communication with K-12 and community colleges.
120	California Promise. Agreements for services with community college.
708	Implementation of a transfer focus.

There were no new programs specific to transfer, but rather there was a focus on community college collaboration and partnership with an emphasis on enrollment. The participants recognized the need to develop and hone the relationships with community colleges and to provide services to support the transfer of students to the universities. Two of the CSUs have agreements with the community colleges in their areas. One of the CSUs has a specifically designed program that is intended to provide community college students with counseling support from the community college and the university, orientations and activities on the CSU campus, and guaranteed admission if students meet eligibility requirements for CSU. Representative responses are noted below:

Redirected programmatic changes to make sure transfer students with ADTs finish in 2 years. (Participant 105)

Not a direct result of the law (STAR Act, 2010) but the CSU Chancellor's Office has targets to improve 4-year, 6-year graduation rates. (Participant 117)

We have a University Scholars Program. The university provides . . . orientation, counseling services. Bypass impaction. Guaranteed admission to university if students have a 2.75 GPA. (Participant 112)

Close coordination with the community colleges such as articulation agreements. Special orientations for transfer students, some program specific orientations. (Participant 116)

**Interview Question 5 findings and themes.** In what ways do you think the STAR Act of 2010 increases public accountability for the university?

Responses to this question varied in detail. The responses did not necessarily demonstrate a sense of increased accountability among the universities. However, there was a recognition that as part of the CSU system, there are components of the STAR Act of 2010 for which they have responsibility. Table 20 details the key responses to the interview question.

The responses centered around three key elements. These elements were clarity, enrollment management, and responsibility.

1. Transfer of degrees through the STAR Act of 2010 provides clarity for students as it has streamlined the process. Transfer degree and the intention of transferring to a university has helped to facilitate the college journey for students. With transfer, there is also a focus on helping students to stay on track to complete their degree at the

Table 20

*Question 5 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
105	Provided clarity for students. Streamlined the process for transfer.
106	CSUs don't all have the capacity to accept all students.
112	Law is good but not complete as some majors cannot have ADTs. ADT work for common majors.
115	Facilitate the college journey. Work is validated at CSU if student has done the work at community college.
116	Community colleges develop ADTs without much input from CSU—a gap.
117	Harder for students to get classes if transferred into CSU with an ADT.
118	Accountability on university to provide courses so transfer students can complete program.
119	Different CSU and community college missions. Prioritize enrollment. Cannot admit all students.
120	Not an increased accountability on the university.
708	Accountability of the community colleges. Make sure students are on track.

university. It also guarantees students that the CSUs will accept and validate the work they have completed at the community college. For the CSUs, it has also helped them to prioritize enrollment. One CSU noted that it has had more transfer students in the most recent semester in comparison to freshman enrollment. However, there was fear that the CSUs may not always have the capacity to accept all eligible students. One CSU in the region was considered impacted, and therefore was not able to accept all eligible students who applied. The following comments indicate representative responses to the question:

I think it helps provide some clarity for students. Because most of the time, what I hear from students is that they're just not really sure. Systems in place but it's clunky as criteria for admission will change dependent upon enrollment target. But we make it work. (Participant 105)

It's a promise to the student that they will be a college junior. It's to facilitate the college journey. If the student has done the work at a 2-year college, the work is validated when they transfer here. It does not limit their options based on the institution of their choice. (Participant 115)

I wish we could be funded to take all of the students. CSUs don't [all] have the capacity to take all students. We want to be able to take all transfer students and manage our enrollment. (Participant 106)

2. Participants believed there was responsibility and accountability on the part of the CSUs. Some observed the law as a welcome element and a positive force for collaboration between the CSUs and the community colleges as it required conversations between the two systems. Others perceived the law as placing more accountability on the community colleges and not necessarily with the CSUs. The law, according to one participant, means the CSUs need to identify and outline what they really want with general education requirements as they vary with multiple unrelated courses. Some of the excerpts include the following representative responses:

I don't think that the law has forced the university to do anything. I think what it has done for the community college is making them more accountable. To make sure students are on the path to a bachelor's degree. (Participant 708)

Provide accountability to the university for transfer students, to provide courses. So, it does put some accountability on the university to provide transfer students with the . . . classes and the number of courses available to them so they could complete the program. (Participant 118)

I think the transfer agreement is the biggest upside . . . it forced universities and community colleges to talk to each other and that was a good thing. (Participant 119)

**Interview Question 6 findings and themes.** What other practices does the university plan to implement in the future to continue to meet the requirements of the law (STAR Act of 2010) to further increase the number of community college students who transfer into the university to obtain a baccalaureate degree?

There were no new programs specifically planned or designed for the future for community college transfer to the university at the CSUs was the key point to this question. Table 21 details the key responses to the interview question.

Table 21

*Question 6 Key Points*

Participant	Key points
105	Graduation Initiative 2025 including transfer students to finish in 2 years.
106	Nothing specifically but CSUs need to be funded properly. Not all CSUs have the capacity to accept all students.
112	Department-level involvement to ensure classes are articulated.
115	Nothing specific but a focus on advising.
116	Continue with the same—articulation, personal contact, coordination with community colleges.
117	CSUs need to be more flexible with math requirement in some majors.
118	Nothing new.
119	No concrete plans. Proper planning for scheduling of courses . . . explore different scheduling software programs.
120	Nothing new. Have an existing agreement with a community college.
708	Nothing new. Programs are in place—15 to finish, matriculation services, California Promise.

Based on the key points, CSUs were not looking into any new programs for transfer, but a focus on existing practices, programs, and services was the primary theme.

Several of the participants indicated they were not aware of any new programs planned in the future. Some respondents indicated that their institutions will be focusing on the Graduation 2025 Initiative, which promotes graduation in 2 years for transfer students. Additionally, one university was looking at software programs to assist with scheduling in order to plan classes accordingly to ensure timely graduation/completion. Some of the respondents recognized that there is a need for more programmatic development. One respondent noted that his/her CSU campus needed to be more flexible with some of the curriculum requirements. For example, if a student has taken a higher math class than the one required, then perhaps the student should be able to challenge that class requirement. Additionally, university participants acknowledged the need to partner with community colleges and to continue the conversations about curriculum, program requirements, articulation, and counseling. The representative responses are noted below:

Nothing new. We have programs in place already. 15 to finish. California Promise. (Participant 708)

Graduation Initiative 2025 including transfer students to finish in 2 years. More graduates mean more space to accept more students. So, our major push right now is graduation. The goal is to get freshmen out in 4 years and to get transfer students out in 2 years. (Participant 105)

There is more work at the department level, making sure classes are articulated.

The president wants to work on articulated classes to help with graduation at the university. (Participant 112)

We need to be more flexible with the math requirement in our area. Students should be able to challenge a class and receive credit for it and not have to take the class. (Participant 117)

Continue to do what we are doing with articulation, personal contacts, more coordination with the community colleges. We are exploring offering some of our classes at the community college campus. (Participant 116)

**Interview Question 7 findings and themes.** Do you have any questions for me?

Mostly, there were no questions from the participants. Some expressed an interest in learning more about the research and when it will become available.

**Summary of key themes.** The interviews with university personnel resulted in the following key themes.

1. The CSUs recognize that their mission is to educate residents within the communities they serve, specifically in providing undergraduate and graduate education. They serve a population consisting of mostly first-generation college students, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged. CSU participants understand that part of their mission is to honor transfer and articulation agreements with the community colleges, and therefore recognize the significance of community college partnerships.
2. There are a number of barriers to transferring to university. These barriers include institutional barriers, university culture, personal responsibilities, and professional or work commitments. Several of the university participants also noted that students

often lack direction as to what they want. Moreover, many community college students do not understand the transfer process to the CSUs.

3. CSU participant knowledge of the STAR Act of 2010 varied from vaguely familiar and to general understanding. Some of the statements were general and did not necessarily provide specific depth or detail to their responses.
4. Institutions provide general support programs and services to all students, including counseling and basic needs assistance. CSU Chancellor's Office Graduation Initiative 2025 is not exclusively specific to transfer students but rather for the overall institution. There are limited programs specific to community college student transfer to a university.
5. Sense of accountability varied based on the responses, from no increased accountability on the university and the responsibility to offer courses needed by transfer students to accountability is primarily on the community colleges. Additionally, some of the general responses to this question reflected a recognition that (a) the CSUs and the community colleges have different missions and purposes and (b) ADTs provide clarity for transfer students with guaranteed admission as a college junior to the CSUs. Additionally, the issue of capacity was also raised, since one of the CSUs in the region was impacted and was not able to accept all eligible students including those with ADTs.
6. With future programs at the CSU to increase the number of transfer students into the system, the responses varied from no new plans to focusing on the CSU Chancellor's Office Graduation 2025 initiative to programmatic development and a focus on enhancing partnerships with the community colleges.

There is a distinct difference in the purposes of between the community colleges and the CSUs in California. The STAR Act of 2010 did not address the differences in missions and purposes in the systems, yet the law mandated specific deliverables and requirements to be met by both systems. Therefore, there is a lack of clarity and practical direction. For example, as noted from the interviews, the community colleges based on the law are meant to develop ADT degrees and such ADT degrees must be accepted by the CSUs. However, the CSUs are not involved in the development of ADTs (except in the review for transferability and articulation of courses). This current practice had some CSU academic administrators suggesting that they should be involved in the development of ADTs. Additionally, as noted by community college participants, articulation and transfer requirements are different among the CSUs. Similarly, admission requirements also vary between the CSUs. Therefore, it adds to the confusion and complex nature of transfer from the community college to a university.

Additionally, CSUs are required to accept students with ADTs who meet eligibility requirements for admission. However, admission became a capacity issue when one of the CSUs in the region was impacted and therefore did not have the ability to accept new transfer students with ADTs. The law does not address the capacity of the CSUs to accept eligible students with ADTs. As Bovens et al. (2008) contended, this lack of clarity adds to ambiguity in accountability. The ambiguity in understanding accountability was evident based on the participant responses. While some recognized the work their respective institutions must do, others pointed to the accountability of the other systems rather than their own. Furthermore, the law focuses on transfer to a university. However, the law does not account for the complexity of needs and personal

barriers students face. As noted in the responses from both the community college and CSU participants, students often have family and work commitments that sometimes make it difficult for students to transfer to a university.

Moreover, the varied missions and purposes at community colleges and the CSUs—aside from the countless number of local, state, national initiatives, and legislative mandates—add not only to the ambiguity in accountability but to its challenges. In higher education, some have complained about the

never ending wave of assessment exercises [as it] entails different, partly overlapping, reporting requirements . . . and “circus” of preparatory meetings, dialogues with accountors, responses to . . . reports . . . follow up rituals. All that eats away at the time available . . . for their primary duties of teaching and research. (p. 228)

Regardless of the ambiguity and challenges in defining accountability, there is an acknowledgement of the need for it. As one leader noted, the new funding formula for the community college is a step to increase student outcomes as institutions cannot keep doing the same thing and expect different results. This speaks about the evaluation criterion of the learning perspective for accountability defined by Bovens et al. (2008), inasmuch as it is the “degree to which accountability arrangement stimulates public executives and bodies to focus consistently on achieving desirable societal outcomes” (p. 232).

Furthermore, the analysis of the interviews highlights the need to improve community partnerships and collaboration. Both the community colleges and the CSUs value their relationships with each other and with the communities they serve. This key

element of community partnership speaks to the democratic perspective of accountability as Bovens et al. (2008) described, according to which the public is at the end of the accountability chain. Citizens ultimately can pass judgement on how governmental bodies have performed their duties and services. Partnerships and collaboration with communities enhance the democratic accountability espoused by Bovens et al. (2008) and the political accountability principle advocated by Romzek (2000). Both accountability principles promote citizen involvement.

Moreover, the responses from the participants speak of the professional, political, and legal accountability that Romzek (2000) defined, specifically as to the ability of the public sector to implement laws and meet performance measures. Romzek explained that professional accountability speaks to the deference to specialized knowledge and expertise as expected of the professional standards and norms within a given field. Political accountability refers to responsiveness to customers, even the public. Legal accountability places an emphasis on the principal-agent concept, where compliance with laws and mandates is part of the relationship. The presentation of how the community college and university participants responded to the interview questions and how the responses reflected the professional, political, and legal accountability, as detailed by Romzek, is outlined in Table 22, in conjunction with the learning, democratic, and constitutional accountability perspectives developed by Bovens et al. (2008). In this display, there is a correspondence between the principles espoused by Romzek (2000) and those of Bovens et al. (2008).

Table 22

*Accountability Convergence*

Accountability framework by Romzek (2000)	Participants' responses	Accountability framework by Bovens et al. (2008)
Professional accountability	Faculty develop and revise curriculum for transferability and articulation purposes between the community colleges and universities. Faculty expertise to teach lower division undergraduate transfer-level courses at the community college. Faculty collaboration on curriculum. Different initiatives (Guided Pathways, Achieving the Dream, Multiple Measures Placement, etc.) to increase outcomes, e.g., transfer to a university. Faculty expertise in determining what is acceptable to meet articulation and transfer curriculum. Expertise to teach transfer students at the university level.	Learning accountability perspective
Political accountability	Serving multiple constituents and student needs, e.g., basic skills education, job training and career readiness, and transfer preparation to university. Providing various services and assistance including basic needs support, transfer counseling, transfer orientations, to address the needs of students. Serving the communities, counties, and service areas within the university's service area, including outreach to high schools and community colleges.	Democratic accountability perspective
Legal accountability	Legislative mandate to develop associate degrees for transfer (ADTs). Development of the associate degrees for transfer (ADTs) by community colleges. All community colleges have ADTs and continue to develop more. Tie funding to outcomes and success metrics for community colleges. Accepting ADTs and transfer courses at the CSUs.	Constitutional accountability

### Document Analysis

In order to fully understand the topic of community college student transfer to a university, it is necessary to not only grasp it from firsthand experiences of community college and university personnel but through a review of documents and reports.

Specifically, in this section, a review and analysis of community colleges and universities' institutional planning documents, community college completion (awards) data report, and university enrollment data report are presented.

## Strategic Plans: Community College

For the purposes of this research, the three community colleges studied remain anonymous to ensure confidentiality. For this study, the community colleges are referred to as CC1, CC2, and CC3. An overview analysis of the institutional planning documents is presented in Table 23.

Table 23

### *Community College Strategic Planning Document Analysis*

Community college	Strategic plan goals/objectives/priorities related to transfer	Themes
CC1	<p>District goal: Improve the rate at which its students complete degrees, certificates, and transfer objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific transfer objective: Increase the number of students who transfer to 4-year institutions by 10% over 3 years.</li> <li>• Specific transfer objective: By 2021, increase the percentage of students who complete transfer-level English by 15 percentage points and transfer-level math by 10 percentage points within their first year.</li> </ul> <p>District goal: Tailor and implement academic programs and student services that match the unique needs of its student population and the demands of ongoing changes in workforce development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific transfer objective: By 2021, increase the placement rates into transfer-level English by 10 percentage points and transfer-level math by 15 percentage points for targeted groups that fall below the district average.</li> <li>• Specific transfer objective: By 2021, increase the percentage of students in targeted groups who complete transfer-level English (by 10 percentage points) and transfer-level math (by 5 percentage points) within their first year.</li> </ul>	<p>A) Placement into math &amp; English transfer-level courses</p> <p>B) Completion of transfer-level courses</p> <p>C) Transfer to 4-year institutions/universities</p>
CC2	<p>District goal: Promote and increase student success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific transfer goal: Transfer to universities/4-year institutions (increase)</li> </ul>	
CC3	<p>District goal: Promote and increase student success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific transfer goal: Transfer to universities/4-year institutions (increase)</li> </ul>	

CC1 has four primary goals identified in its institutional strategic plan. These goals range from increasing enrollment, program completion, and transfer to engagement and staff development. Two of the goals have objectives related to transfer, specifically the placement into transfer-level English and math courses, the successful completion of such transfer-level courses, and the transfer to a university.

CC2 has five primary goals as noted in its institutional strategic plan. These goals include promoting a culture of learning, increasing student success, especially for underrepresented individuals, supporting employee development, strengthening communication, and community partnerships. Moreover, the institution has an annual goal of increasing transfer to universities and 4-year colleges.

CC3 has five primary goals identified in its institutional strategic plan. These goals include providing access to college programs and addressing student barriers to increasing completion in career technical education programs, implementing effective enrollment to ensure communication, and resource allocation. Additionally, the institution has an annual goal of increasing transfer to universities and 4-year colleges.

The primary themes derived based on the institutional strategic plans include (a) placement into transfer-level English and math courses, (b) completion of transfer-level English and math courses, and (c) transfer to universities/4-year institutions. The goals outlined by the community college demonstrate the necessity to improve student success not only in course and program completion but also in transferring to universities.

### **Strategic Plans: Universities**

The names of the three CSU campuses will remain anonymous to ensure confidentiality. For this study, the CSU campuses are referred to as CSU1, CSU2, and

CSU3. An overview analysis of the institutional strategic planning documents is presented in Table 24.

Table 24

*Universities Strategic Plans Analysis*

California State University campus	Strategic plan goals/objectives/priorities related to transfer	Key themes
CSU1	Objective: Collaborate with partners in K-12 education, community colleges, community-based organizations, and other entities to advance educational attainment within the region, including (transfer specific): Increasing transfer readiness and success for community college students.	A) Transfer ready students B) Increase transfer student graduation rate C) Community partnerships
CSU2	No specific goals or objectives directly related to transfer were ascertained	
CSU3	Objective: Plan, implement, refine and institutionalize five or more specialized high-quality programs and services that collectively offer wide accessibility and provide support to all of our students, though some may focus on a specific set of needs (e.g., freshman, transfer, graduate students, first-generation, underserved and underrepresented minorities, Pell-eligible). Objective: By 2025, we will meet and exceed our CSU graduation rate goals (transfer specific): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer 2-yr grad rate, 45% (2025)</li> <li>• Transfer 4-yr grad rate, 78% (2025)</li> </ul>	

CSU1 and CSU3 had specific objectives related to transfer (i.e., increasing readiness of community college transfer students and improving the graduation rate of transfer students). For CSU3, the institution has specified targets for transfer students at 45% to graduate in 2 years and 78% in 4 years by the year 2025. CSU2 has overall general priorities related to enrollment and retention. However, no specific priorities or objectives were noted related to transfer. The institutions also noted the need for community partnerships and development as a mechanism to support education attainment.

Three key themes were identified based on the strategic plans: (a) ensure readiness of transfer students for the university studies, (b) increase the graduation rate of transfer students, and (c) develop and enhance community partnerships to support enrollment and transfer. However, the absence of transfer-specific priorities or objectives with CSU2 limits the argument for transfer commitment among CSUs as it pertains to the STAR Act of 2010.

### **Strategic Plans Primary Themes**

The overall primary themes based on the university strategic plans are (a) have transfer ready students, (b) increase the percentage of transfer student graduates, and (c) develop and grow community partnerships. The primary themes based on the community college strategic plans are (a) placement into math and English transfer-level courses, (b) completion of transfer-level courses, and (c) transfer to 4-year institutions/universities. Based on the overall themes derived from the strategic plans, the community colleges work to advance transfer opportunities for their students based on their identified goals and objectives. As regards the CSUs, two of the institutions are promoting program completion for transfer students at the universities.

The objectives and goals exemplified by the community colleges advance the objectives and priorities outlined by the universities. For example, universities want to have transfer-ready community college students. The accurate placement of community college students in transfer-level college courses and the successful completion of such courses advance the transfer readiness of students for university studies. Additionally, universities want to build community partnerships to enhance education attainment. The

work to support course articulation and transfer in partnership with the community colleges advances this objective of the universities.

Therefore, there is a mutual relationship between the CSU campuses and the California community colleges, even a codependent one. Community colleges depend upon CSU campuses to accept the articulated/transfer courses and degrees. Community colleges also depend upon the CSUs to accept students from the community colleges who have met the requirements for transfer. The CSUs depend upon the community colleges to provide lower division preparation for baccalaureate degrees and to ensure that students come to their respective campuses ready and prepared for upper division university studies. Both CSUs and community colleges depend on each other as partners in education (Table 25).

Table 25

*CSU and California Community College Codependent Relationship*

Community colleges depend on CSUs to		CSUs depend on community colleges to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept articulated/transfer-level courses &amp; programs</li> <li>• Accept eligible community college transfer students</li> <li>• Community Partnership</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide lower division preparation for bachelor's degree</li> <li>• Ensure transfer community colleges students are ready for upper division bachelor's degree work</li> <li>• Community Partnership</li> </ul>

In relationship to the accountability framework, there is a distinct correspondence to the main themes based on the analysis of the community and university strategic plans. Specifically, the themes related to placement into transfer-level college English and math courses and the success in these courses along with the goal to increase the rate of transfer to a university supports the professional accountability principle espoused by Romzek (2000) in maintaining and upholding practices within the profession.

Community colleges must follow and abide by transfer practices as outlined by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). The ACCJC (2010) policy on transfer states that institutions have a responsibility to provide effective transfer of credit, which “minimizes student difficulties in moving between institutions while assuring the high quality of their education” (p. 1). The policy stipulates the need for institutions to have effective practices in place to ensure that students can transfer seamlessly from one institution to another. Additionally, the same policy stipulates that institutions must maintain the quality of their education offerings to ensure acceptability and transferability of courses, degrees, and certificates. Specifically, “institutions must balance responsiveness to students’ preferences about transfer of credit and institutional commitment to the value and quality of degrees, certificates, or other credentials that the receiving institution awards” (ACCJC, 2010, p. 1).

The policy postulates the professional responsibility with the institution to ensure high-quality education and the effective transfer of credit to other institutions. Furthermore, the theme of transfer is also in alignment with the learning accountability perspective as promoted by Bovens et al. (2008). The learning accountability perspective centers on effectiveness and efficiency with a desire to attain societal outcomes. The ability to transfer credit to universities is a societal student outcome.

### **Community College Completion Report**

The STAR Act of 2010 mandated the development and implementation of ADTs. The ADTs fall into two categories, associate in science for transfer (AST) degree and associate in arts for transfer (AAT) degree. Students who receive an AST or AAT from any of the 114 community colleges in California are guaranteed admission into any CSU

campus as a college junior. Community colleges have been developing and implementing AST/AAT degrees since the passage of the law, with the goal of providing a pathway to transfer to universities. In this section, an analysis of the degrees and certificates is discussed.

The number of AST/AAT degrees or ADTs has noticeably increased from 5,288 awards in 2012-2013 to 39,250 in 2016-2017 in California. Seven years after the STAR Act of 2010 (SB1440) was signed into law, which mandated the development of ADTs, the total percentage of AST/AAT awards stood at 16.02% in 2016-2017, statewide. This is a significant increase from 3.07% in 2012-2013. The increase from year to year in the percentage of AST/AAT awards is approximately between 2.27 and 4 percentage points annually (see Table 26).

The number of associate in arts (AA) and associate in science (AS) degrees continues to be higher in comparison to other awards. AA and AS degrees represent the largest percentage of awards issued annually. With AA and AS degrees, several factors are apparent. In some areas, transferring to a university is not necessary as some fields are considered terminal degrees and do not require anything beyond an AA or AS, for example, fire technology, cosmetology, automotive, diesel technology, and dental hygiene. Additionally, fields such as nursing and child development have bachelor's degree options at the CSUs. However, it is not necessary as individuals can be licensed registered nurses or child development teachers with only an AA/AS degree.

Table 26

*California Community College Awards Report 2012-2017*

	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
State of California totals	170,174	190,659	202,368	224,887	244,989
Associate in Science for Transfer (AST) degree	1,717	4,879	9,753	14,239	17,950
Associate in Arts for Transfer (AAT) degree	3,511	6,700	11,007	16,698	21,300
Subtotal AST/AAT degrees	5,228	11,579	20,760	30,937	39,250
Associate of Science (AS) degree	29,211	31,239	31,501	32,298	34,320
Associate of Arts (AA) degree	62,338	64,495	63,580	67,074	67,214
Subtotal AS/AA degrees	91,549	95,734	95,081	99,372	101,534
Certificate requiring 60+ semester units	1,040	983	900	978	777
Certificate requiring 30 to < 60 semester units	28,386	30,504	35,319	40,749	43,772
Certificate requiring 18 to < 30 semester units	13,858	13,968	15,617	15,071	15,590
Certificate requiring 12 to < 18 units	3,159	2,953	3,520	3,695	3,798
Certificate requiring 6 to < 18 semester units	12,660	14,352	15,420	14,974	17,728
Subtotal Certificates	59,103	62,760	70,776	75,467	81,665
Other Credit Award, < 6 semester units	6,125	5,450	3,784	4,343	4,481
Noncredit award requiring from 960+ hours	1,316	1,510	1,293	1,636	1,776
Noncredit award requiring from 480 to < 960 hours	1,020	1,515	1,206	1,105	1,021
Noncredit award requiring from 288 to < 480 hours	1,717	5,443	2,765	3,326	3,277
Noncredit award requiring from 192 to < 288 hours	1,223	2,956	2,790	3,509	5,702
Noncredit award requiring from 144 to < 192 hours	67	445	196	311	597
Noncredit award requiring from 96 to < 144 hours	771	946	1,319	1,504	1,577
Noncredit award requiring from 48 to < 96 hours	1,690	2,000	2,131	3,085	3,724
Noncredit award requiring < 48 hours	365	321	267	292	385
Subtotal noncredit awards	8,169	15,136	11,967	14,768	18,059
Percentage of awards—AST/AAT degrees	3.07%	6.07%	10.25%	13.75%	16.02%
Percentage of awards—AS/AA Degrees	53.79%	50.21%	46.98%	44.18%	41.44%
Percentage of awards—Certificates	34.73%	32.91%	34.97%	33.55%	33.33%
Percentage of awards—noncredit	4.80%	7.93%	5.91%	6.56%	7.37%

*Note.* From Management Information Systems Data Mart: Program Awards Summary Report 2009-2017, by California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, n.d.-b ([https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program\\_Awards.aspx](https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program_Awards.aspx)).

Moreover, not every associate degree program has a transfer model curriculum template for it to be developed into an ADT. All ADTs must follow the transfer model curriculum as adopted by the community colleges and CSUs for a degree program to be approved. As noted, not all fields need to be ADTs. Furthermore, in some fields, having an ADT with 60 units as a maximum requirement is not practical since coursework requirements are typically higher, for example, in engineering and information systems. As one of the CSU respondents indicated, ADT works for general, common fields of study but not for all majors. Also, not all community colleges have the programs for the available ADT fields since that depends on student need and community interests. As one community college participant noted, development of new ADT programs is dependent upon community and industry needs. Additionally, given that not all fields have an AAT or AST, students are still able to transfer to a university with an AA/AS degree if they meet admission requirements.

Aside from associate degrees, community colleges issue a significant number of certificate awards. Certificates represent the second largest number of credit awards issued each year, which during the 2016-2017 academic year stood at 33.33%. In comparison to other credit awards (AS/AA degrees and certificates), the AST/AAT awards were less. In fact, AST/AAT degrees are approximately half of what the credit certificate awards are for the 2016-2017 academic year (Table 26). The number of awards issued by California community colleges continues to increase each year in all elements, from AST/AAT and AS/AA degrees to credit certificates and noncredit awards.

The increase in awards issued statewide mirrors the completion outcomes at the CC1, CC2, and CC3. The AAT/AST degrees awarded at the CC1 increased from 3.5%

in 2013 to 19.6% in 2017. In comparison to 2015-2016 awards, AAT/AST degrees doubled in 2016-2017 at 19.6%. While the number of AA/AS degrees awarded was less in 2017 at 65% in comparison to 79% in 2013, the AS/AA degrees still represent the largest number of awards at CC1 (Table 27).

Table 27

*CCI Awards 2012-2017*

	2012- 2013	2013- 2014	2014- 2015	2015- 2016	2016- 2017
CC1 total	1,180	1,396	1,415	1,658	1,438
Associate in Science for Transfer (AST) degree			24	64	140
Associate in Arts for Transfer (AAT) degree	42	63	75	97	142
Subtotal AST/AAT degrees	42	63	99	161	282
Associate of Science (AS) degree	348	343	350	348	290
Associate of Arts (AA) degree	595	683	673	697	659
Subtotal AS/AA degrees	943	1,026	1,023	1,045	949
Certificate requiring 60+ semester units					
Certificate requiring 30 to < 60 semester units	143	215	172	197	138
Certificate requiring 18 to < 30 semester units	38	77	61	83	57
Certificate requiring 12 to < 18 units		3	15	75	12
Subtotal certificates	181	295	248	355	207
Noncredit award requiring from 288 to < 480 hours	14	12	45	97	
Percentage of total awards—AST/AAT degrees	3.5%	4.5%	6.9%	9.7%	19.6%
Percentage of total awards—AS/AA degrees	79%	73.4%	72%	63%	65%
Percentage of total awards—certificates	15.3%	21%	17.5%	21.4%	14.3%
Percentage of total awards—noncredit	1.18%	0.85%	3.18%	5.85%	

*Note.* From Management Information Systems Data Mart: Program Awards Summary Report 2012-2017, by California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, n.d.-b ([https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program\\_Awards.aspx](https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program_Awards.aspx)).

Similarly, the number of AS/AA degrees issued at CC2 represent the largest number of awards at 52.78% in the 2016-2017 academic year. Similar to state percentages, credit certificates represent the second largest number of awards for the college at 39.19% in 2016-2017. CC2 started out with only one AST/AAT degree awarded in 2013, to reach 46 in 2017. While the number of AAT/AST degrees issued

has increased in comparison to prior years, it still represents the lowest percentage of awards for the college (Table 28).

Table 28

*CC2 Awards 2012-2017*

	2012- 2013	2013- 2014	2014- 2015	2015- 2016	2016- 2017
CC2 total	373	395	596	491	574
Associate in Science for Transfer (AST) degree	1	2	4	23	30
Associate in Arts for Transfer (AAT) degree				10	16
Subtotal AST/AAT degrees	1	2	4	33	46
Associate of Science (AS) degree	71	68	84	51	57
Associate of Arts (AA) degree	159	175	176	190	246
Subtotal AS/AA degrees	230	243	260	241	303
Certificate requiring 30 to < 60 semester units	109	121	253	189	197
Certificate requiring 18 to < 30 semester units	33	29	79	28	28
Subtotal certificates	142	150	332	217	225
Percentage of total awards—AST/AAT degrees	0.26%	0.50%	0.67%	6.72%	8.0%
Percentage of total awards—AS/AA degrees	61.6%	61.5%	43.6%	49.08%	52.78%
Percentage of total awards—certificates	38.06%	37.97%	55.7%	44.19%	39.19%

*Note.* From Management Information Systems Data Mart: Program Awards Summary Report 2012-2017, by California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, n.d.-b ([https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program\\_Awards.aspx](https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program_Awards.aspx)).

At CC3, AA/AS degrees represent the largest number of awards issued by the college at 78.46% in 2016-2017. Nevertheless, the percentage of AAT/AST degrees awarded was the second largest number of credit awards issued over the past 2 years. In the 2016-2017 academic year, 12.64% of the awards issued by CC3 were AST/AAT degrees. The first AST/AAT degrees awarded by the college were in 2012-2013 at five, compared to 74 awards in the 2016-2017 academic year. Credit certificates issued by the college increased in the past three academic years and went from 6.13% in 2014-2015 to 8.88% in 2016-2017 (Table 29). While this can be noted as an anomaly, the overall awards issued by the CC3 in 2016-2017 were less than in the prior year in all categories.

With the exception of certificates, AAT/AST and AA/AS degrees awarded were less than in the prior year.

Table 29

*CC3 Awards 2012-2017*

	2012- 2013	2013- 2014	2014- 2015	2015- 2016	2016- 2017
CC3 total	368	493	489	629	585
Associate in Science for Transfer (AST) degree	5	14	20	69	71
Associate in Arts for Transfer (AAT) degree			2	17	3
Subtotal AST/AAT degrees	5	14	22	86	74
Associate of Science (AS) degree	121	149	146	138	143
Associate of Arts (AA) degree	219	310	291	363	316
Subtotal AA/AS degrees	340	459	437	501	459
Certificate requiring 30 to < 60 semester units	7	3	1	1	3
Certificate requiring 18 to < 30 semester units	16	17	29	41	49
Subtotal certificates	23	20	30	42	52
Percentage of total awards—AST/AAT degrees	1.35%	2.83%	4.49%	13.67%	12.64%
Percent of total awards—AS/AA degrees	92.39%	93.10%	89.36%	79.65%	78.46%
Percent of total awards—certificates	6.25%	4.05%	6.13%	6.67%	8.88%

Note. From Management Information Systems Data Mart: Program Awards Summary Report 2012-2017, by California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, n.d.-b ([https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program\\_Awards.aspx](https://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program_Awards.aspx)).

Overall, the number of awards (degrees and certificates) issued by community colleges in California has increased over the last 5 years. There were 244,989 degrees and certificates awarded in 2017 as compared to 170,174 in 2013. The percentage of AST/AAT degrees awarded also increased to 16.02% in 2017 compared to 3.07% in 2013. The continued increase in AST/AAT degrees awarded has also been recorded at CC1, CC2, and CC3. Specifically worth noting is CC1's percentage of AST/AAT degrees awarded in 2017 at 19.6%, which is higher than the state percentage of 16.02.

The number and percentage of AA/AS degrees awarded around the state and at CC1, CC2, and CC3 continue to dominate awards issued. Additionally, in some instances, the number of credit certificates issued by community colleges was higher than the AAT/AST degrees awarded. Nevertheless, the interest in AAT/AST degrees is apparent based on the data. The increase from 5,228 AAT/AST degrees awarded in 2012-2013 to 39,250 awarded in 2016-2017 is a testament to this realization.

### **University Undergraduate Enrollment**

The number of undergraduate enrollments at each of the three CSU campuses (CSU1, CSU2, CSU3) has increased over the last 5 years. In 2013, the undergraduate enrollment at CSU1 was at 7,242, for CSU2 at 20,282, and CSU3 at 7,737 students (Table 30). As of 2017, the number of undergraduate enrollments at CSU1 was 8,627, at CSU2 22,189, and at CSU3 8,888 students. The numbers signify increased enrollment at each of the three campuses.

While the three CSU campuses have seen increased undergraduate enrollment at each of their respective campuses, the percentage of transfer students at two of the CSUs has not increased. In fact, enrollment of transfer students at each of the three CSU campuses has fluctuated over the past 5 years. For CSU2, the percentage of transfer students went from 10.68% in 2013 to 8.91% in 2017, representing a decrease. Similarly, at CSU3, the percentage of transfer students was 10.04 in 2013 and in 2017 it was at 8.15%, also demonstrating a percentage decrease. Neither campus has been able to maintain the same rate they had in 2013. Conversely, at CSU1 the percentage of transfer students enrolled at the university increased from 7.98% in 2013 to 10.26% in 2017. In fact, CSU1 had the highest percentage of transfer students in 2016 at 12.53%.

Table 30

*CSU Undergraduate Enrollment—CSU1, CSU2, CSU3*

CSU	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>CSU1</b>					
Total undergraduate enrollment	7,242	7,544	8,028	8,093	8,627
Total undergraduate—transfer	578	670	825	1,014	885
Percentage undergraduate enrollment—transfer	7.98%	8.88%	10.28%	12.53%	10.26%
<b>CSU2</b>					
Total undergraduate enrollment	20,282	20,490	21,453	21,504	22,189
Total undergraduate—transfer	2,166	1,748	1,584	2,092	1,977
Percentage undergraduate enrollment—transfer	10.68%	8.53%	7.38%	9.73%	8.91%
<b>CSU3</b>					
Total undergraduate enrollment	7,737	7,837	8,091	8,614	8,888
Total undergraduate—transfer	777	703	804	715	724
Percentage undergraduate enrollment—transfer	10.04%	8.97%	9.94%	8.30%	8.15%

*Note.* From State-Support Enrollment, Summary Details 2000-2017, California State University, 2018 (<http://asd.calstate.edu/dashboard/enrollment-live.html>).

Nevertheless, CSU1 too saw a decrease of transfer student enrollment in 2017 at 10.26%, which was a decrease from the prior year. While the 2017 percentage could be considered an anomaly for CSU1, it nevertheless had the highest percentage of transfer student undergraduate enrollments among the three CSUs.

Moreover, the CSU system as a whole has experienced an increase in undergraduate enrollment (Table 31). The total number of undergraduate enrollments went from 391,593 statewide in Fall 2013 to 429,766 in Fall 2017. The number of undergraduate transfer students from the California community colleges went from 48,697 in 2013 to 49,910 in 2017. However, the percentage of undergraduate enrolled students from the community colleges at the CSUs in comparison to the total

undergraduate enrollment population has not significantly increased. In fact, the percentage of undergraduate enrolled students from the California community colleges at the CSUs went from 12.44% in 2013 to 11.61% in 2017, demonstrating a decrease.

Table 31

*CSU Undergraduate Enrollment- Statewide*

	Undergraduate enrollment	Number of undergrad transfer enrollment- community college	Percentage of undergrad transfer enrollment- community college
2017	429,766	49,910	11.61%
2016	423,301	49,737	11.75%
2015	418,243	47,966	11.47%
2014	403,997	47,418	11.74%
2013	391,593	48,697	12.44%

*Note.* From State-Support Enrollment, Summary Details 2000-2017, California State University, 2018 (<http://asd.calstate.edu/dashboard/enrollment-live.html>).

To further illustrate the argument for transfer, the percentage of community college transfer students who earned a bachelor’s degree in 2 years at CSUs is significantly higher than the percentage of freshman students who graduated in 4 years.

For example,

CSU1

- Freshman enrollment: 1,294 (2012) with 18.6% graduating in 4 years, 33.7% graduating in 5 years
- Community college transfer students enrolled in 2012, 30% graduated in 2 years, 56.7% graduated in 3 years

CSU2

- Freshman enrollment: 3,036 (2012) with 15.5% graduating in 4 years, 40.8% graduating in 5 years

- Community college transfer students enrolled in 2012, 18.6% graduated in 2 years, 56.2% graduated in 3 years

### CSU3

- Freshman enrollment: 1,082 (2012) with 14.3% graduating in 4 years, 44.9% graduating in 5 years
- Community college transfer students enrolled in 2012, 30.2% graduated in 2 years, 65.5% graduated in 3 years

### CSU System-statewide

- Freshman enrollment: 55,534 (2012) with 20.7% graduating in 4 years, 49.9% graduating in 5 years
- Community college transfer students enrolled in 2012, 28.4% graduated in 2 years, 62.5% graduated in 3 years

Similar statistics were noticed in subsequent years. In 2013, 16.2% of freshmen at CSU1, 15.5% at CSU2, and 18.5% at CSU3 graduated within 4 years. At the same time, 36.6% at CSU1, 22.2% at CSU2, and 30.2% at CSU3 of community college transfer students in 2013 graduated within 2 years. For community college student transfers, the graduation percentages continue to increase. In 2014, 42.4% (CSU1), 25.2 percent (CSU2), and 35.1% (CSU3) of community college transfers were able to graduate within 2 years of enrollment at the three CSUs. In the CSU system statewide, of university freshmen entering in 2013, 22.6% graduated within 4 years. For community college transfers who were enrolled at the CSUs in 2013, 30.5% graduated in 2 years and 64.5% graduated in 3 years.

The inclusion of the statewide CSU undergraduate enrollment and California community college system data was presented in this section to provide context and an overall analysis into understanding transfer as it relates to the three community colleges and three CSUs that were part of this study. The statewide data from both the CSU and California community college systems provided depth in recognizing that the data from the three community colleges and three CSUs was indicative of the state outlook with regard to completion and undergraduate enrollment.

### **Document Analysis Key Points**

Therefore, based on the community colleges completion data report and the CSU enrollment data report, the following key points can be summarized.

1. There was an increase in the number of awards (degrees and certificates) issued by community colleges in California.
2. AS/AA degrees dominated the number of awards issued by the community colleges.
3. AS/AAT degrees have increased significantly over the past 5 years. The state percentage as of 2017 was at 16.02%. Increases were also noted at CC1, CC2, and CC3. In fact, CC1 had the highest increase at 19.6% in 2017, which was higher than the overall state percentage.
4. Undergraduate enrollment at CSU1, CSU2, and CSU3 has increased over the past 5 years.
5. Percentage of transfer enrollment at the three CSU campuses has fluctuated over the past 5 years.
6. Percentage of transfer student enrollment at the CSUs has decreased, especially at two CSU campuses in comparison to 2013 statistics. In 2013, 10.68% of undergraduate

enrollments were of transfer students at CSU2. However, in 2017, it was 8.91%. For CSU3, the percentage of transfer student undergraduate enrollment stood at 10.04%. In 2017, it was 8.15%. Both represented a decrease in the transfer undergraduate enrollment.

7. Overall, CSU system undergraduate enrollment has increased over the past 5 years.
8. The percentage of community college transfer student enrollments at the CSUs has fluctuated (Fall 2013–Fall 2017) and has experienced a decrease, overall. In Fall 2013, it was 12.44% and in Fall 2017 it was at 11.61%.
9. The percentage of community college transfer students who earned a baccalaureate degree within 2 years of enrollment at the CSUs was significantly higher than the percentage of freshman students who earned similar degrees within 4 years of enrollment.

### **Key Themes**

From the review of the interviews, an assessment of the institutional strategic plans, and analysis of the completion and enrollment reports specific themes were generated (Table 32).

1. The CSUs have different articulation, transfer, and admission requirements. The differences create institutional and process barriers for students when they transition from one system to the other.

Table 32

*Transfer Key Themes*

Community college interview themes	Community college strategic plan themes	Community college awards themes	University interview themes	University strategic plan themes	University undergraduate enrollment themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different articulation, transfer, and admission requirements at CSUs</li> <li>• Students face multiple barriers to transfer</li> <li>• Developed &amp; implemented ADTs</li> <li>• Multiple programs &amp; initiatives to address transfer</li> <li>• Understanding of STAR Act of 2010 &amp; accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement into math &amp; English transfer-level courses</li> <li>• Completion of transfer-level courses</li> <li>• Transfer to 4-year institutions/ universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in completion</li> <li>• Notable increase in ADTs awarded</li> <li>• Percentage of transfer students who earn a bachelor’s degree in 2 years higher than freshman students in 4 years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple student barriers</li> <li>• No specific programs pertaining to transfer</li> <li>• Limited understanding of STAR Act of 2010</li> <li>• Limited sense of accountability</li> <li>• Community partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer ready students</li> <li>• Increase transfer student graduation rate</li> <li>• Community partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in undergraduate enrollment</li> <li>• Transfer undergraduate enrollment fluctuated and decreased at 2 CSUs</li> <li>• Transfer undergraduate enrollment statewide fluctuated and decreased</li> <li>• Percentage of transfer students who earn a bachelor’s degree in 2 years higher than freshman students in 4 years.</li> </ul>
Community College Main Themes			University Main Themes		
Active understanding & implementation of transfer			Less understanding & implementation of transfer		

2. Students have complex lives and varied priorities. Students do not always know what they want. The priorities they place on themselves vary dependent upon circumstances. Personal, family, and work commitments impact the ability of students to transfer and complete their studies. Additionally, their readiness for college and university studies also impacts how well students adjust to the college and university cultures and environments.
3. Community partnerships are important in education, especially between the universities, community colleges, and secondary schools. Both the community

colleges and CSUs acknowledge the need to have contact and regular communication with each other.

4. The community colleges and the CSUs view accountability from different lenses as it pertains to the STAR Act of 2010. While there is an internal acknowledgement of their own responsibilities, some CSU participants believe the accountability is more on the community colleges than on the CSU. Likewise, some community college participants believed accountability was more with the CSUs. Each CSU and community college viewed and interpreted the law independently of each other.
5. The community colleges were more action oriented in their interpretation of the STAR Act of 2010 based on their work in the development and implementation of ADTs. Conversely, CSUs were more passive in their interpretation of the law. The CSUs viewed their role as merely accepting articulated courses and transfer students who meet admission requirements. However, some CSU participants felt that there should be more collaboration with the community colleges in relation to curriculum development/alignment, transfer, and ADTs.
6. Implementation of the STAR Act of 2010 and commitment to transfer was notable with the community colleges based on their understanding of the law, development and execution of ADTs, expansion of student support services, increase in percentage and number of ADTs awarded, and in the objectives and goals as outlined in their strategic plans related to transfer.
7. Commitment to transfer from community colleges to a university was intermittent among the CSUs. The limited understanding of the STAR Act of 2010, passive role with transfer, limited services and programs specific to transfer students, varied

admission process and requirements, and decrease in the percentage of transfer undergraduate enrollment as a system and at two of the CSUs speak of the sporadic commitment to community college transfer to the university.

8. Community college transfer students earn baccalaureate degrees at a higher rate as compared to freshman students at the CSUs (systemwide and at three CSU campuses that were part of the study).

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings and conclusions based on the research conducted. Recommendations for future studies are also discussed in this chapter. The purpose of this study was to identify how public institutions of higher learning (community colleges and California State University [CSU] campuses) were meeting the requirements and expectations of the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2010 (STAR Act of 2010), specifically on community college student transfer to a university. This research was designed to identify practices implemented by colleges and universities to address the 2010 legislation and how such practices promote community college student transfer to a university.

The primary research question for the study was, “How are the public institutions of higher learning meeting the accountability requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act of 2010 for community college student transfer to a university?” To gain a deeper understanding of the actions undertaken by community colleges and the CSUs, the research design for this study was such that it contained 19 semistructured interviews and document analysis of strategic plans, completion data report, and enrollment data report.

### **Major Findings**

The following is based on the findings from responses to the interview questions derived in an effort to answer research questions on how the STAR Act of 2010 was addressed by each institution. In an effort to synthesize the key findings from the respondents, Table 33 and Table 34 provide a snapshot of the conclusions provided through this process. Similarly, Table 35 and Table 36 provide an overview of the key

findings derived from the document analysis of the enrollment and program completion reports.

### **Summary of Responses to Interview Questions**

From the key findings derived from this study, several critical elements are realized. First, community colleges and CSUs have different missions and purposes. CSUs focus on providing baccalaureate and graduate-level education, whereas community colleges are open campuses that will accept any and all students regardless of prior education background. One of the purposes of community colleges is to provide transfer-level preparation for university studies. Second, given the different purposes and missions, constituency services will vary dependent upon need and requirements. Both the CSUs and the community colleges serve students from a variety of backgrounds that include individuals from rural communities, first-generation college students, Hispanics, and working adults.

Third, the community colleges and public universities in California have different articulation, transfer, and admission requirements and processes. Fourth, community colleges are involved in a multitude of local, state, and national initiatives including legislative mandates. All are directed in some manner at student completion including transfer to a university.

Fifth, the community colleges view accountability in terms of output in the number of ADTs developed and implemented and program completion. CSUs view accountability in the enhancement of existing practices including collaboration with community colleges. Sixth, students have complex lives with multiple personal and

Table 33

*Community College Interview Response Summary*

Research Question: How are the public institutions of higher learning meeting the accountability requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act (2010) for community college student transfer to a university?	
Interview question	Findings (community college respondents)
1. How do you feel the institution is meeting its mission? Will you share some examples of how the institution is meeting its mission?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple missions and purposes related to program completion, transfer to a university, workforce/career readiness, basic skills, community needs</li> <li>• Participation in multiple local, state, national initiatives and legislative mandates</li> <li>• Implementation of various educational strategies/programs</li> <li>• Addressing student challenges</li> </ul>
2. What do you think are the barriers to transferring to university?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different articulation &amp; transfer processes and admission requirements</li> <li>• Students have complex lives and priorities including personal and professional responsibilities, and cultural limitations</li> <li>• Institutional barriers and lack of institutional capacity</li> <li>• Lack of student readiness and awareness of requirements, expectations, and processes</li> </ul>
3. How familiar are you with the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act 2010 (SB1440)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of curriculum/programmatic/transfer requirements with ADTs</li> <li>• Understanding of provision pertaining to CSU acceptance of ADTs</li> </ul>
4. What new programs has the institution implemented to meet the requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum development and alignment specifically with ADTs and transfer</li> <li>• Multiple local, state, national initiatives and legislative mandates</li> <li>• Expanded student services and operational enhancements</li> <li>• Focused on messaging and communication</li> </ul>
5. In what ways do you think the STAR Act of 2010 increases public accountability for the college?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability on the CSUs to accept students and ADTs</li> <li>• Accountability on the community colleges to develop ADTs, increase program completion</li> <li>• Better communication and messaging with CSU &amp; UC</li> </ul>
6. What other practices does the college plan to implement in the future to continue to meet the requirements of the law (STAR Act, 2010) to further increase the number of students who earn associate degrees for transfer (ADTs) and subsequently transfer to a university?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on K-12 collaboration and coordination</li> <li>• Increase institutional outcomes in developing more ADTs, more pathways to university</li> <li>• Improve student outcomes, e.g., transfer</li> </ul>

Table 34

*University Interview Response Summary*

Research Question: How are the public institutions of higher learning meeting the accountability requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act (2010) for community college student transfer to a university?	
Interview question	Findings (university respondents)
1. How do you feel the institution is meeting its mission? Will you share some examples of how the institution is meeting its mission?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To educate and empower students</li> <li>• Serve various constituencies within the regional areas including partnerships with community colleges, K12</li> <li>• Address impediments to student success</li> <li>• Support/honor transfer and articulation agreements</li> </ul>
2. What do you think are the barriers to transferring into university?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University culture and processes</li> <li>• Student challenges with personal/professional responsibilities, student readiness, costs/finance</li> <li>• Institutional barriers and capacity</li> <li>• Lack of direction/goals and understanding of transfer requirements and processes</li> </ul>
3. How familiar are you with the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act 2010 (SB1440)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited to general understanding of law</li> </ul>
4. What new programs has the institution implemented to meet the requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new programs specific to transfer but a focus on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improving community college collaboration, coordination, and partnership</li> <li>○ Scheduling and enrollment</li> <li>○ Work on state initiatives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5. In what ways do you think the STAR Act of 2010 increases public accountability for the university?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on completion and enrollment management</li> <li>• Accountability to students with clarity and streamlined process</li> <li>• Accountability on community colleges</li> <li>• CSU and community colleges have different missions and purposes</li> <li>• No increased accountability on CSU</li> </ul>
6. What other practices does the university plan to implement in the future to continue to meet the requirements of the law (STAR Act, 2010) to further increase the number of community college students who transfer into the university to attain a baccalaureate degree?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No new programs planned specific to transfer but a focus on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Graduation and scheduling</li> <li>○ Curriculum and programmatic development/alignment</li> <li>○ Improving community college partnership</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 35

*Community College and University Strategic Plan Findings*

Research Question: How are the public institutions of higher learning meeting the accountability requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act (2010) for community college student transfer to a university?		
	Community college strategic plans	CSU strategic plans
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement into math &amp; English transfer-level courses</li> <li>• Completion of transfer-level courses</li> <li>• Transfer to 4-year institutions/universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer ready students</li> <li>• Increase transfer student graduation rate</li> <li>• Community partnerships</li> </ul>

professional priorities and responsibilities. There are also other factors that impact student success, which lie outside the classroom. Some of these include finance, culture, and student readiness and motivation for college.

Table 36

*Community College Awards and University Undergraduate Enrollment Findings*

Research Question: How are the public institutions of higher learning meeting the accountability requirements of the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act (2010) for community college student transfer to a university?		
	Community college	CSU undergraduate
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in number of awards issued</li> <li>• AS/AA degrees dominate the number of awards issued</li> <li>• Notable increases in AST/AAT awards, 16.02% statewide (2017) compared to 3.07% (2013)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergraduate enrollment at CSU system (including the 3 CSUs in the study) increased over 5 years</li> <li>• Percentage of transfer enrollment fluctuated from increases to decreases</li> <li>• Overall percentage of transfer student enrollment statewide has decreased including at the 2 CSUs in the study</li> </ul>
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of transfer community college students who graduated within 2 years of enrollment (2013) at CSU.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CSU1: 36.6%</li> <li>○ CSU2: 22.2%</li> <li>○ CSU3: 30.2%</li> <li>○ CSU Systemwide: 30.5%</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of freshman students enrolled in 2013 who graduated within 4 years of enrollment at CSU.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CSU1: 16.2%</li> <li>○ CSU2: 15.2%</li> <li>○ CSU3: 18.5%</li> <li>○ CSU Systemwide: 22.6%</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The community colleges are working to increase the number of students who are successful in transfer-level courses and ultimately transfer to universities. The CSUs

want to have transfer-ready students and to increase the baccalaureate graduation rate. Therefore, based on these findings, it is evident that the community colleges depend on the CSUs and the CSUs depend on the community colleges. There is a mutually beneficial relationship between the two systems, with the activities of each addressing the goals of the other.

Based on the findings, the awards issued by community colleges have increased over the past 5 years, including AST/AAT degrees. While the overall undergraduate enrollment in the CSU system statewide has increased, the percentage of undergraduate transfer enrollment has decreased (including at the two CSUs that were part of this study). Moreover, the percentage of community college transfer students who earn a baccalaureate degree in 2 years is significantly higher than freshman students who do so in 4 years.

### **Public Administration and Policy Considerations**

The purpose of this study was to identify how public institutions of higher learning, particularly the California community colleges and the CSU campuses, were addressing and meeting the requirements of the STAR Act of 2010. The purpose of the law was to not only increase completion rates but to increase the number and percentage of community college students who transfer to universities. The focus of this study has been on outcomes specific to transfer to a university. Moreover, the emphasis of this study was on the public administration pillar of accountability, specifically from the professional, political, and legal accountability framework as promoted by Romzek (2000). This framework is further advanced in this study through the learning, democratic, and constitutional accountability perspectives as advocated by Bovens et al.

(2008). The emphasis on the accountability theoretical framework for this study was intended to identify how the STAR Act of 2010 has advanced the performance of public higher education institutions in meeting the requirements of the law, specifically with regard to transfer to university outcomes.

This study has been able to identify and discuss the actions undertaken by both systems to address the law. Both community colleges and CSUs are addressing the law from the forefront. The focus of this study was not on the effectiveness of the STAR Act of 2010, but rather on how institutions are implementing and advancing the law. However, this study contends that the increase in AST/AAT degrees issued by the community colleges in the past 5 years does not correspond with the decrease in the transfer undergraduate enrollment, especially with two of the CSUs. This realization in part affirms an earlier study conducted by Baker (2016), who concluded that the STAR Act of 2010 does not appear to have had a significant impact on the number of students who transferred from the California community colleges to the CSUs. Nevertheless, the study analysis does indicate the active role of community colleges and the passive role CSUs are playing in implementing the STAR Act of 2010. The analysis also points out that community college transfer students graduate with a baccalaureate degree at a higher rate than freshman students at the CSUs. Therefore, the following public policy and administration considerations are presented in connection with the accountability framework.

1. Professional accountability (Romzek, 2000) promotes practices to advance professional standards and norms. The learning accountability perspective (Bovens et al., 2008) supports feedback to ensure increased effectiveness and efficiency to

achieve outcomes. Given the varied system of public higher education in the state, there should be a formal structure that allows all institutions to collectively review and discuss professional standards and student achievement outcomes, especially as they pertain to articulation, transfer, and admission requirements.

2. Political accountability advocated by Romzek (2000) speaks of responsiveness to the public, even the people. The democratic accountability principle developed by Bovens and colleagues (2008) promotes the concept of citizen satisfaction. Therefore, a regular and consistent assessment of the law as it pertains to transfer from a citizen perspective is necessary.
3. The constitutional accountability perspective (Bovens et al., 2008) endorses the principle of checks and balances in government. Legal accountability (Romzek, 2000) supports the principal–agent relationship in compliance with the law. The public universities have different articulation, transfer, and admissions processes and requirements. A checks and balances review of the system’s articulation, transfer, and admission requirements and processes needs to be conducted with a plan to update existing practices.
4. One of the CSUs in this study is impacted and does not have the ability to accept all eligible students each year. Careful consideration of the impact legislative mandates have on educational institutions is warranted, especially as they pertain to the institutions’ capacity to implement such laws. Doing so supports the legal accountability and constitutional perspective accountability principles.
5. If political accountability and democratic accountability perspectives advocate for responsiveness and satisfaction of citizens or clients, then laws and legislative

mandates should take into consideration the complex lives of students, especially as regards their personal and professional commitments. Students have complex lives with personal and professional commitments. As Bailey et al. (2006) argued, many community college students face significant barriers in college due to family responsibilities and work commitments. State initiatives and legislative mandates do not always take into consideration the needs of the local community residents. Legislative mandates must take into account the varied missions and purposes of the community colleges and the communities they serve. Feedback from the field is necessary when developing new laws that impact student success.

### **Recommendations for Community Colleges**

1. Involve the CSUs (especially the faculty) in the development of the associate degrees for transfer at your respective campuses. Doing so promotes the professional accountability and learning accountability perspective principles through the involvement of faculty/staff to advance professional standards in curriculum development/alignment. Additionally, it generates feedback to enhance curriculum standards for transferability and articulation.
2. To further support the principles of professional accountability and the learning accountability perspective, it would be advisable to hold regular (at least annual) learning events and collaboration specifically for counseling/advising with the local CSU counterparts.
3. Client/citizen responsiveness and satisfaction are essential for collaboration and partnership. Consider increasing services to the high schools to include dedicated college counseling staff at the high school sites to help facilitate transition from

secondary to postsecondary. Doing so promotes and advances the principles of democratic accountability and political accountability by expanding the services for the public.

4. Educate policy makers on programs, services, and initiatives undertaken by the college and the challenges faced by students. The goal would be to assist policy makers in understanding the work done by colleges to support student outcomes. Doing so promotes the checks and balances concept of the constitutional accountability principle and advances the principal–agent relationship within the legal accountability principle.
5. One of the challenges expressed by interview participants was finance and costs for attending college. Therefore, it would be advisable for community colleges to promote full-scholarship opportunities for students with ADTs transferring to a university. Such an action would further boost responsiveness to client needs, an element of political accountability, and enhance customer satisfaction, which is a key component in the democratic accountability perspective principle.

### **Recommendations for California State University Campuses**

The core element in political accountability is public and customer responsiveness. Citizen satisfaction is a key concept in the democratic accountability perspective principle. To advance both political accountability and democratic perspective accountability principles, the CSU campuses should (a) be more proactive in seeking partnership with the community colleges; (b) solicit input from the community colleges about services that will benefit transfer students at the university level; (c) host/convene regular and consistent learning events between university faculty and

community college faculty; (d) consider offering upper division undergraduate courses at the community college campuses to alleviate impaction/capacity issues at the CSU; (e) develop and implement more services and programs dedicated to community college transfer, especially given the fact it yields a higher percentage of students who earn a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner; and (f) review articulation, transfer, and admissions processes with the community colleges.

Community colleges have significant experience related to working with students, ADTs, and transfer services to universities. Universities should take advantage of this knowledge and seek assistance from the community colleges to find ways to support transfer students at the university. Being able to tap into the resources provided by the community colleges can further advance student transfer from community colleges to universities.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This research was conducted at three community colleges and three CSU campuses in the Central Valley region of California. Given that the topic of transfer to a university is not exclusive to the California Central Valley region, future studies should replicate this research. The following recommendations are made:

1. Further research could be conducted in other regions of California specific to the impact of the STAR Act of 2010.
2. Given that the teaching faculty play a significant role in curriculum development and transfer education, future research could be conducted from the perspective of the faculty specific to transfer to a university.

3. This study did not focus on completion. However, future studies could concentrate on program completion at both the community colleges and university level.
4. Ultimately, students are impacted by curriculum and plans implemented by colleges and universities. Generating student input about their experiences with transfer from the community colleges to university could be an area of further study.
5. Future studies on transfer from the community college to university will need to include the University of California and private/independent universities.
6. From this study, an understanding of accountability based on the work by Romzek (2000), particularly on professional, political, and legal accountability framework was discussed. Similarly, the accountability framework as advocated by Bovens et al. (2008) specifically with reference to learning accountability, democratic accountability, and constitutional accountability perspectives was also presented. There appears to be a connection, in fact a convergence, between these accountability theoretical frameworks. Therefore, further studies would be necessary to advance this connection and to add to the body of knowledge on accountability.

### **Conclusion**

This dissertation identified the experiences of administrators and staff at three community colleges and three CSU campuses in the Central Valley region of California. Their experiences and knowledge pertaining to the STAR Act of 2010, specifically on transfer from community college to university were recorded and analyzed. The experiences and knowledge were further enhanced through a review of the community colleges completion (awards) data and the CSU undergraduate enrollment report.

The STAR Act of 2010 placed the issue of transfer to a university at the forefront, whereby community colleges have developed and implemented associate degree for transfer (ADT) programs. The law has also ensured that CSUs were admitting community college students with ADTs and that the system was not requiring community college transfer students with ADTs to again take courses they have already taken. The challenge with this law and related initiatives is that students have complex lives with personal and professional priorities and commitments. This complexity is not reflected in the law. Secondly, public universities have their own articulation, transfer, and admission requirements. The multiple requirements and processes are confusing, complex, and complicated.

Third, not all CSUs will have to the ability to accept all new students including transfer students with ADTs. Again, the law does not address the capacity of CSUs to accept all eligible students. Fourth, ADT awards have notably increased over the past 5 years. Fifth, the undergraduate enrollment at the CSUs has increased. However, the percentage of undergraduate transfer enrollment at the CSUs has decreased, including at two of the CSUs that were part of this study. Hence, from an outcomes perspective, the increase in ADTs awarded is at variance with the decrease in undergraduate transfer enrollment at the CSUs.

Therefore, it is important to review the merits and application of law especially as it pertains to transfer. More importantly, it is vital for both the CSUs and the community colleges to review their respective requirements and processes independently and collaboratively and to make necessary adjustments.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### **Institutional Review Board Approval Notification**

**RE:** IRB Review

**IRB No.:** 078-1718-EXM

**Project:** Community College Transfer Outcomes: A Measure of Accountability

**Date Complete Application Received:** 3/26/18

**Date Final Revision Received:** 4/19/18

**Principle Investigator:** Samasoni (Sam) Aunai

**Faculty Advisor:** Brett Provance

**College/Department:** OPS

**IRB Determination:** Exempt Application Approved – Student research using confidential interviews and non-HSR data publically available/data provided upon request; no minor participants; no more than minimal risk/risk appropriately mitigated; no deception utilized; acceptable consent procedures and documentation; acceptable data protection procedures. Data collection may begin, in accordance with the final submitted documents and approved protocol.

**Future Correspondence:** All future correspondence about this project must include all PIs, Co-PIs, and Faculty Advisors (as relevant) and reference the assigned IRB number.

**Approval Information:** In the case of an unforeseen risk/adverse experience, please report this to the IRB immediately using the appropriate forms. Requests for a change to protocol must be submitted for IRB review and approved prior to implementation. At the completion of the project, you are to submit a Research Closure Form.

**Researcher Responsibilities:** The researcher is responsible for ensuring that the research is conducted in the manner outlined in the IRB application and that all reporting requirements are met. Please refer to this approval and to the IRB handbook for more information.

**Date:** April 19, 2018

## Appendix B

### **Agreement to Participate in Research: Consent Form**

#### **Agreement to Participate in Research: Consent Form for Interview**

Samasoni (Sam) Aunai  
California Baptist University  
School of Online and Professional Studies  
661-863-8004 cell  
[samasoni.aunai@calbaptist.edu](mailto:samasoni.aunai@calbaptist.edu) (school email)  
[sam.aunai@gmail.com](mailto:sam.aunai@gmail.com) (personal email)

#### **Title: Community College Transfer Outcomes: A Measure of Accountability**

##### **Study Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to identify how to advance the number of community college students who transfer to universities. Specifically, this study is to understand how community colleges are addressing transfer requirements to the university as a matter of public administration and policy in California. Practically, the research will focus on: i) identifying practices implemented by public sector (colleges) to address the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2010 (SB1440), and ii) determining how such practices advance community college student transfer to university.

##### **Participation:**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may change your mind and leave the study at any time. You may skip any question you do not want to answer.

##### **Time/Location:**

This interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes. Interviews will take place in your office or at a location that is preferable to you.

##### **Expectation:**

In this interview, there will be seven questions. The interview will be audio-recorded for purposes of accuracy. Notes will also be taken. Information will be kept confidential.

##### **Risks/Discomforts:**

There are not any known risks or discomforts with participating in this interview. You may skip a question that you do not want to answer. You may discontinue with the interview at any time. In the event you may experience anxiety or stress, please be reminded that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) afforded through your college can provide support and it is free to you. This service is confidential and protects the personal rights of employees when utilized. The contact phone number for EAP can be obtained through the human resources office and/or through the human resources webpage at your institution.

**Compensation/Benefits:**

There is no payment for participating in this study. While there are not any directed individual benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research, I believe this study will yield information that can assist colleges to increase the number of community college students who transfer to a university.

**Privacy/Confidentiality:**

The consent form will be kept separate from the interview responses. Your name will not be written down or mentioned in the audio recording. You will be assigned a numerical code. Data will be stored in secured computer files after it is entered and will not be released to the college or university.

**Relationship Impact:**

Participation is completely voluntary and will not impact your relationship with your employer, California Baptist University, and the researcher.

**As a participant in this interview:**

1. You understand the study's purpose as indicated and/or as explained by me.
2. You understand that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences.
3. You may skip a question or not answer any of the questions.
4. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and digital data will be stored in secure computer files after it is entered. Any report of this research that is made available to the public will not include your name or any other individual information by which you could be identified.
5. You agree for this interview to be tape-recorded. You understand that the audio recording made of this interview will be used only for analysis. You will not be personally identified. You understand that no other use will be made of the recording without your written permission and no other entity will have access to the original recording.
6. You understand that there are no known risks or discomforts associated with this interview.
7. You can discontinue your participation in the study at any time.
8. You are at least 18 years of age.

**Questions/Concerns:**

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact the researcher at the contact information noted at the top this Consent Form. You may also contact by phone Dr. Brett Provance, faculty advisor for this research at 951-343-5561 and/or by email at [bprovance@calbaptist.edu](mailto:bprovance@calbaptist.edu). If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the California Baptist University Institutional Research Board (IRB) at [IRB@calbaptist.edu](mailto:IRB@calbaptist.edu).

**Thank you** for your willingness to be interviewed as part of this qualitative case study research.

**Consent**

By signing below you acknowledge that you have read and understood the above information. By signing below, you also consent to participating in this study with the understanding that you can change your mind.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### Research Interview Questions

#### Interview Questions (Semi-Structured) for Community College Participants

##### **Research Title: Community College Transfer Outcomes: A Measure of Accountability**

1. How do you feel the institution is meeting its mission? Will you share some examples of how the institution is meeting its mission?
2. What do you think are the barriers to transferring to university?
3. How familiar are you with the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act, 2010 (SB 1440)?
4. What new programs has the institution implemented to meet the requirements of the law (STAR Act, 2010) for student completion?
5. In what ways do you think the STAR Act of 2010 increases public accountability for the college?
6. What other practices does the college plan to implement in the future to continue to meet the requirements of the law (STAR Act, 2010) to further increase the number of students who earn associate degrees for transfer (ADT) and subsequently transfer to university?
7. Do you have any questions for me?

## **Interview Questions (Semi-Structured) for Public University Participants**

### **Research Title: Community College Transfer Outcomes: A Measure of**

#### **Accountability**

1. How do you feel the institution is meeting its mission? Will you share some examples of how the institution is meeting its mission?
2. What do you think are the barriers to community college students transferring into the university?
3. How familiar are you with the California Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act, 2010 (SB 1440)?
4. What new programs has the institution implemented to meet the requirements of the law (STAR Act, 2010) to increase the number community college students who transfer into the university?
5. In what ways do you think the STAR Act of 2010 increases public accountability for the university?
6. What other practices does the university plan to implement in the future to continue to meet requirements of the law (STAR Act, 2010) to further increase the number of community college students who transfer into the university to attain a baccalaureate degree?
7. Do you have any questions for me?