

6. Transfer Student Report – 2014 ..... Kate Henz

**Situation:** Presentation of the Transfer Student Report

**Background:** Information is presented regarding the undergraduate transfer student population. This report discusses enrollment trends, demographics, and majors of transfer students as well as other initiatives focused on this student population.

**Assessment:** With 28% of all undergraduate students entering UNC institutions as transfer students, individual institutions continue to support transfer students. More than half of all transfers come from the NC Community College System (NCCCS), which is the impetus of many of the collaborative efforts between UNC and NCCCS. While transfer students overall graduate at a lower rate than non-transfer students, there are indications that those who transfer with an AA/AS degree and declare majors during the transfer process are enjoying high rates of success at UNC institutions.

**Action:** This item is for information only.

# TRANSFER STUDENT REPORT



48,000

NO. OF CURRENT TRANSFER STUDENTS  
ENROLLED (FALL '14)

1 IN 4

ENTERED A UNC INSTITUTION  
AS A TRANSFER STUDENT.

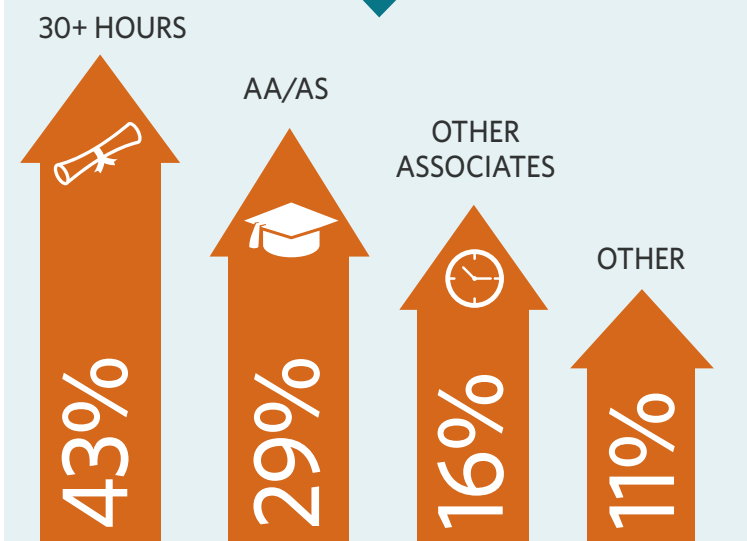
17%

INCREASE IN TRANSFER  
STUDENTS OVER THE PAST  
FIVE YEARS.

## TRANSFER STUDENTS TO UNC CAMPUS FROM:



## MOST NCCCS STUDENTS TRANSFER WITH: (FALL '14)



71%

FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE OF  
TRANSFER STUDENTS ENTERING AS  
JUNIORS (2010).\*

\*Compared to a 6-year graduation rate of 85% for non-transfer juniors.



80%

TRANSFER  
STUDENTS ENROLLED ON UNC  
CAMPUSES **FULL TIME**.



57%

TRANSFER  
STUDENTS THAT  
ARE **FEMALE**.

65% OF TRANSFER  
STUDENTS ARE

**<AGE 25**

STATEWIDE NURSING AND ENGINEERING  
ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS ESTABLISHED.



8%

REVERSE TRANSFER PROGRAM'S  
INCREASE IN ANNUAL DEGREE  
COMPLETION.

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
[NORTHCAROLINA.EDU/TRANSFER](http://NORTHCAROLINA.EDU/TRANSFER)  
[NORTHCAROLINA.EDU/REVERSETRANSFER](http://NORTHCAROLINA.EDU/REVERSETRANSFER)

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# The University of North Carolina

## Transfer Student Report

### 2014

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The University of North Carolina  
General Administration

October 2015

# Executive Summary

Since the fall of 2005, the number of students matriculating to University of North Carolina (UNC) institutions as transfer students has increased by approximately 29% and now constitute over one-quarter of the entire undergraduate population. These students originate from a range of institutions, coming to UNC from the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), NC private institutions, other UNC institutions, and institutions in other states. Due to this population's critical importance to UNC's five-year strategic plan, this report provides context, data, and analysis on these students and key findings include:

- Transfer students are a large, growing, and critically important segment of the UNC student body.
  - The fall 2014 undergraduate student body consisted of over **48,000** transfer students. System-wide approximately **28%** of all undergraduates, or **one in four**, entered a UNC institution as a transfer student. At some UNC campuses, this percentage is as high as 48% (Fayetteville State University).
  - Over the last five years, the total number of new transfer students increased **17%**, from **13,549** to **15,873**. Over the past year, the increase has been **6%**.
- The majority (56%) of transfers come to UNC from NCCCS institutions, with these students representing the fastest growing segment of the transfer population.
- The demographic details of the transfer student population mirrors that of the general UNC student population, with slightly more Pell grant recipients.
- Transfer students graduate at lower rates when compared to native UNC juniors, yet they make up **36%** of all graduates.
  - Transfer students entering UNC as juniors in 2010 had an overall graduation rate of **71%** compared to an **85%** graduation rate of non-transfer juniors.
- Transfer students who declare majors upon entering the UNC system have a higher graduation rate than undecided transfer students. Transfer students declaring a major had a **72%** graduation rate compared to **67%** for those entering undeclared.
- The Reverse Transfer program has increased NCCCS degree completion of Associates of Arts, Associates of Science, and Associates of General Education by approximately 8%, with over 1,400 UNC students receiving a credential through the nationally recognized program.
- Two new, statewide articulation agreements were approved by UNC's Board of Governors and NCCCS in 2015, providing clearer pathways and enhancing the educational pipelines for NCCCS nursing and engineering graduates to pursue bachelors degrees in these fields in the UNC system.

# Introduction

Over the past several decades students have become more mobile with the number of students transferring into North Carolina's public four-year institutions increasing dramatically. These students come from the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS), NC private institutions, other University of North Carolina (UNC) institutions, and institutions in other states. In order to better serve transfer students, UNC General Administration (UNC-GA) works closely with NCCCS and other partners to ensure continued improvement in the policies and services that promote seamless, inter-institutional educational experiences and foster student success.

The Transfer Student Report presented to the UNC Board of Governors (BOG) provides context, data, and analysis of transfer student success in the UNC system.<sup>1</sup> This report focuses on:

- Enrollment trends
- Demographics
- Entering class level
- Graduation and progress rates
- Declared majors
- Grade point average
- UNC graduates attending NCCCS institutions

This report also provides details on three major transfer student initiatives:

1. A UNC-NCCCS collaborative project (supported by USA Funds) that enables the “reverse transfer” of earned credits towards an associates degree from UNC institutions to the NCCCS institution where the student began their academic career, facilitating the increase of credentialed North Carolinians.
2. Statewide Nursing and Engineering articulation agreements that have been recently established to smooth the transfer of credit for these important disciplines.
3. Transparency efforts with UNC data dashboards and student success websites.

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<sup>1</sup> Definitions of terms used throughout the report are found in Appendix A.

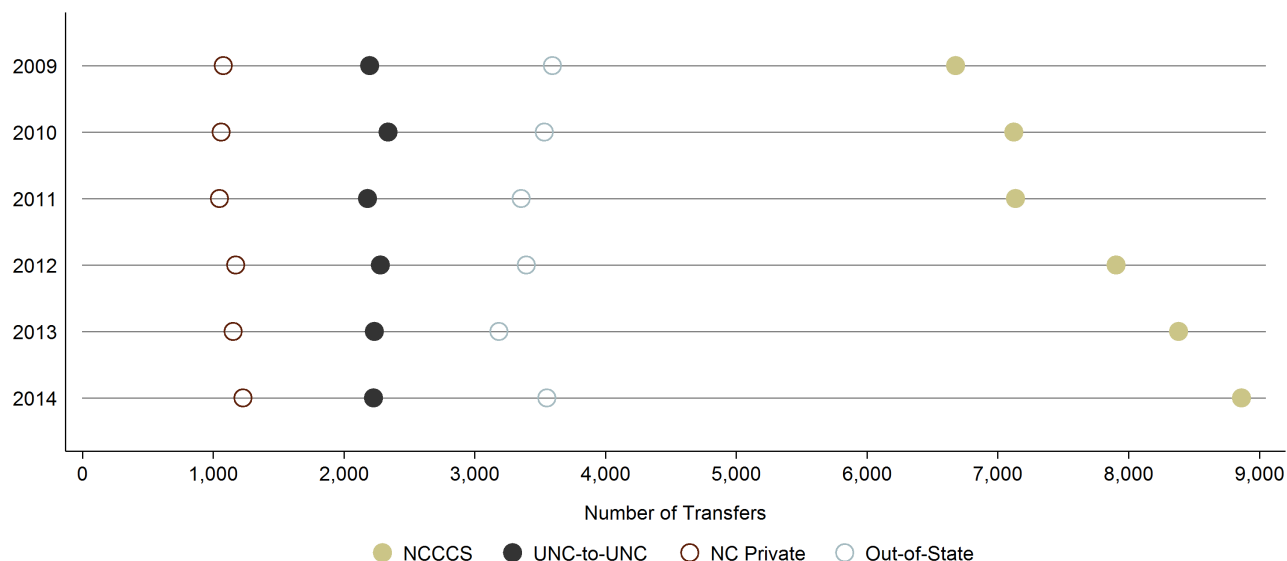
# UNC Transfer Student Enrollment Trends

UNC transfer students continue to comprise a large segment of the overall UNC student body. In Fall 2014, over 48,000 students enrolled in UNC's campuses had begun their UNC career through transferring from another institution, a number constituting approximately 28% of the current UNC undergraduate population. The transfer student population is increasing, with newly matriculating transfers growing by 29% over the past decade and by 918 students in the last year alone.

Over half of all newly enrolled transfer students (56%) come to UNC campuses from NCCCS. Over the last six years, enrollment of new NCCCS transfers increased from 6,677 in Fall 2009 to 8,864 in Fall 2014 (+33%). Driving this growth is a significant increase in NCCCS transfers with an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science (AA/AS) degree, a sub-population that grew by over 31% in the last six years. During this same period, non-NCCCS transfers held steady, moving from 6,869 in Fall 2009 to 6,918 in Fall 2014 (+0.7%). Out-of-state transfer students account for 22.4% of the Fall 2014 transfer students and 56% of these out-of-state transfers claim North Carolina residency on their admissions documentation.

Figure 1 shows transfer student enrollment trends by origin of transfer (NCCCS, UNC campuses, NC private institutions, or Out-of-State) across time.<sup>2</sup> Summaries of enrollment data over time are found in Appendix B and Appendix C has Fall 2014 enrollment data by campus.

Figure 1: *UNC Transfer Student Enrollment Trends - By Origin, Fall 2009 - Fall 2014*



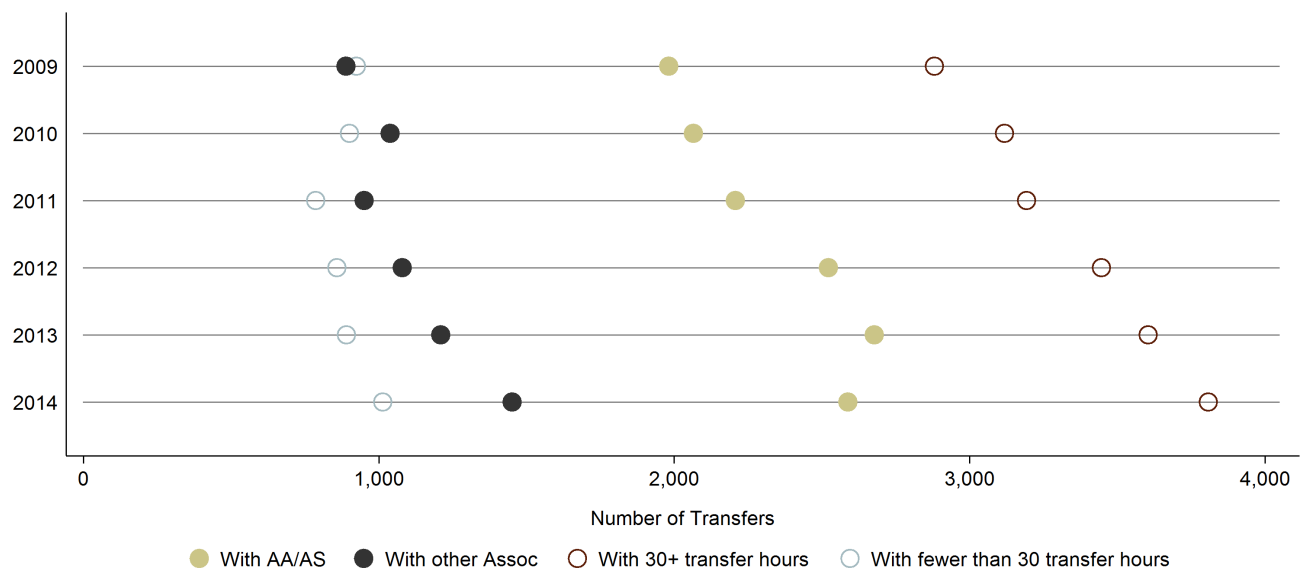
Source: UNC-GA IRA/UNCAPPA. Transfer15/20FEB2015

<sup>2</sup> Annual totals of transfer students across all transfer types can be found on the Transfer Student Enrollment Dashboard at <https://www.northcarolina.edu/?q=content/unc-data-dashboard>.

## NCCCS Transfer Students

There are several substantive differences among transfer students from NCCCS, differences that have implications upon enrolling at UNC institutions and the subsequent pathways to degree completion. The categories used throughout this report are: NCCCS transfers with an AA/AS degree; those with a non-AA/AS associate degree; transfers with 30 or more hours and no degree; and students who transfer with fewer than 30 hours of college credit (Other NCCCS Transfers). As shown in Figure 2, over the past six years, all NCCCS categories increased except “Other NCCCS Transfers.”<sup>3</sup>

Figure 2: *UNC Transfer Student Enrollment Trends - NCCCS Categories, Fall 2009 - Fall 2014*



Source: UNC-GA IRA/UNCAPPA.Transfer15/20FEB2015

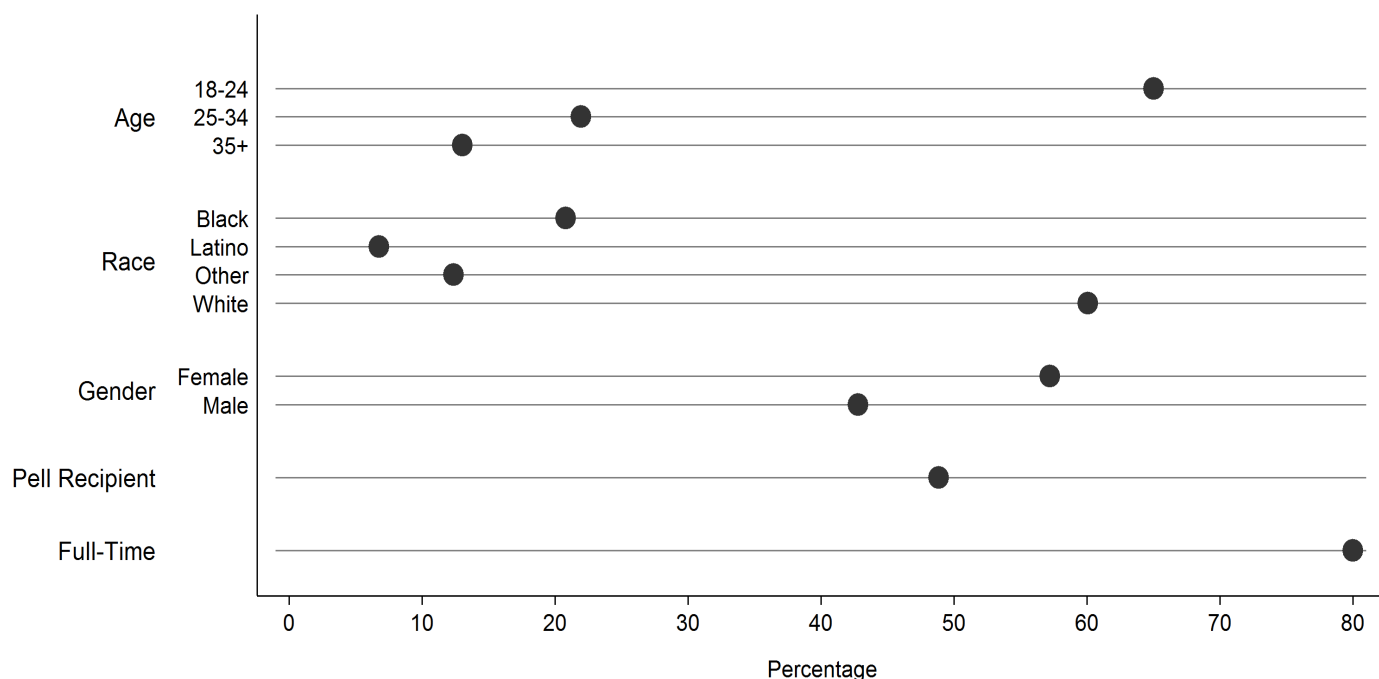
3 Campus-specific data for all transfer students from Fall 2005 through Fall 2014 is provided on the Transfer Student Dashboard at <https://www.northcarolina.edu/?q=content/unc-data-dashboard>.

# Demographics of UNC Transfer Students

Figure 3 shows the demographic composition of the UNC transfer student body. Highlights in comparison to the overall UNC student population include:

- The majority of transfer students (65%) are under the age of 25 and their average age is 26.5. In comparison, 83% of the total UNC undergraduate population is under the age of 25 and their average age is 20.8.
- The racial and ethnic composition of the transfer student population mirrors that of the total UNC undergraduate population, with the majority being white, followed by black and Latino.
- The majority of transfer students are female (57%), a figure comparable to the gender composition of the broader UNC undergraduate population (56%).
- In Fall 2014, a larger proportion of transfer students were Pell grant recipients (49%). Across the entire UNC undergraduate population, 38% received a Pell grant in Fall 2014.
- In Fall 2014, 80% of new transfer students began their studies as full-time students.

Figure 3: *Demographics of UNC Transfer Students, Fall 2014*



Source: UNC-GA IRA/UNCAPPA.Transfer15/20FEB2015

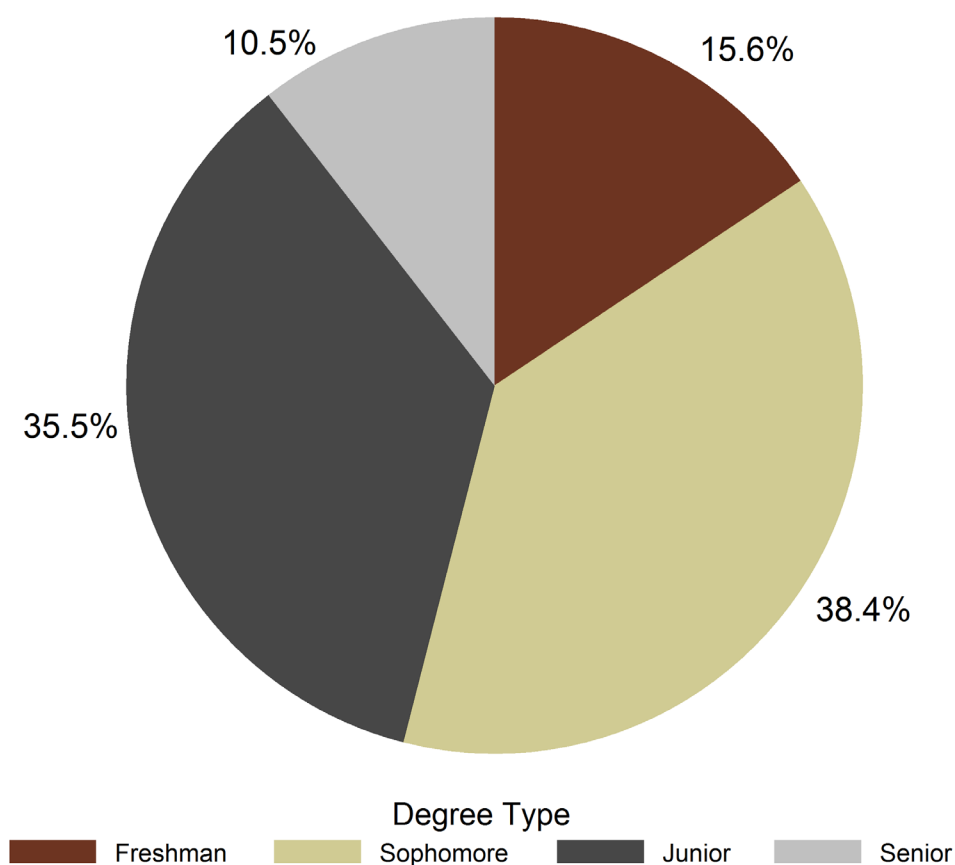


## Entering Class Level

Admissions officers at UNC institutions review transfer applicant transcripts and admit students at different class levels (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior). This process occurs at the institutional level, with decisions not already governed by the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement left to individual campuses. For example, a campus may choose not to award UNC credit for an NCCCS class in which a student received below a “C” grade.

Figure 4 displays the distribution of new Fall 2014 transfer students by entering class level. This composition has stayed relatively stable over the past several years. Across all transfer types, the largest entry points are at the sophomore and junior level.

Figure 4: *UNC Transfer Student Entering Class Level, Fall 2014*



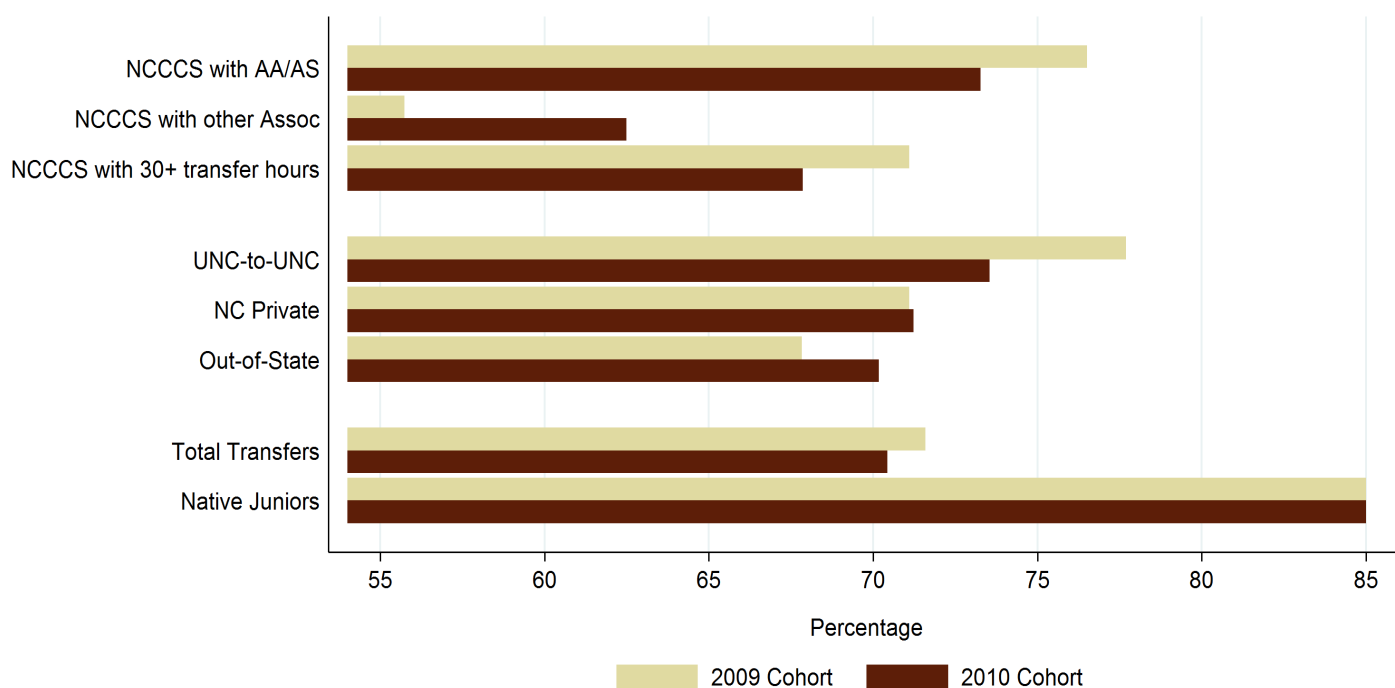
Source: UNC-GA IRA/UNCAPPA.Transfer15/20FEB2015

## Graduation & Progress Rates

UNC-GA tracks the graduation rates of all transfer students who enroll at a UNC institution. One measure of particular importance is the four-year graduation rate of transfer students who enter the UNC system as juniors. This four-year graduation rate is used to create an analogous group against which the six-year graduation rate for first-time freshmen who continued to their junior year at a UNC institution (native juniors) are benchmarked.

Figure 5 shows that the four-year graduation rates for students transferring as juniors in the Fall 2009 and 2010 entering cohorts are 72% and 71%, respectively.<sup>4</sup> These graduation rates include full-time and part-time students. For the Fall 2010 cohort, other NCCCS transfers and UNC-to-UNC transfers graduated at the highest rates, 72% and 74% respectively. NCCCS transfer students with a non-AA/AS associates degree had the lowest graduation rate at 62.5%. The six-year graduation rate for native juniors is 85%, 14% points higher than the 2010 transfer student cohort's graduation rate.

Figure 5: *UNC Transfer Student Graduation Rates - Juniors, 2009 & 2010 Cohorts*



Source: UNC-GA IRA/UNCAPPA.Transfer15/20FEB2015

4 Please note that the four-year graduation rates discussed here indicate the time accumulated after transferring to UNC institutions as juniors.

## Transfer Student Declared Majors

Studies find that early declaration of a major leads to timely graduation and this proves true for UNC transfer students.<sup>5</sup> For transfer students that entered the UNC system in 2010, the four-year graduation rate for entering juniors who declared a major upon entry was 72%, compared to 68% for those entering undeclared.

In the 2014 cohort, 75% of students declared a major upon entry, a 3% increase from 2009. Among all transfer students declaring a major, 32% selected a major in one of three fields. The top three fields for declared majors of transfer students are:

- Business (13%)
- Health Professions (12%)
- Education (7%)

## Transfer Student Grade Point Average

Transfer students perform well upon enrolling in a UNC institution. The first year GPAs of transfer students (which includes courses taken in the fall, spring, and summer of 2013-14) were:

- NCCCS: 2.95
- UNC-to-UNC: 2.97
- NC Private: 2.81
- Out-of-State: 3.10

When aggregating the GPAs of all transfer students, 85% have a first-year GPA above 2.0, which is the minimum threshold for being in good academic standing at all UNC institutions.

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5 For example, see “Get With the Program: Accelerating Community College Students’ Entry into and Completion of Programs of Study” by Davis Jenkins and Sung-Woo Cho, Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.

## UNC Graduates Enrolling at NCCCS Post-Graduation

There has been recent discussion regarding the number of UNC graduates enrolling in NCCCS institutions to earn further credentials. The reasons for pursuing additional education vary, but a review and discussion of the data is merited.

A small minority (1.0% or 1,293) of UNC bachelors degree recipients enrolled in a degree-track program<sup>6</sup> at a NCCCS institution.<sup>7</sup> The most common degree programs that these UNC degree recipients enrolled in were: Biological Sciences (14.0%); Psychology (10.4%); Business (10.3%); Social Sciences (9.0%); and Health Professions (8.4%).

The top two NCCCS fields that UNC graduates enrolled in at NCCCS institutions account for 69.2% of the total and are Liberal Arts (37.1%) and Health Professions (32.1%). The large share of Liberal Arts enrollment likely represents a placeholder major as many NCCCS institutions require students to designate a major when they initially enroll.

When examining those UNC enrollees who earned an associates degree from the NCCCS, over 70% (180 students) earned their associates degree in Health Professions.

## Articulation Agreements & Other UNC Transfer Initiatives

### Comprehensive Articulation Agreement

Originally implemented in 1997 following a legislative mandate, the North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) is a statewide agreement governing the transfer of credits between NCCCS and UNC institutions with the objective of smoothing the process of cross-sector transfer. In February 2014, the CAA was updated, amended, and refined to improve transfer for this increasingly important sub-population. UNC and NCCCS have partnered to strengthen the CAA and have created two statewide, discipline-specific articulation agreements: one for Nursing and the other in Engineering. Both were approved in February 2015. These plans assure that students who successfully complete an Associates Degree in Nursing or an Associates in Engineering from a NC community college are awarded credits for their coursework to apply towards a bachelors degree in those fields from a campus in the UNC system.

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6 AA, AAS, AGE, AFA, or AS

7 This analysis included graduates from four academic years: 2007-08 to 2010-11. Graduates were tracked for three years (nine semesters including summers). An additional 1,801 UNC graduates (1.5%) enrolled in non-degree track NCCCS courses.

## **Reverse Transfer**

The Reverse Transfer program is a nationally-recognized collaboration between the UNC and NCCCS systems. Officials at the two systems have developed a process to award associates degrees to students that fulfill community college requirements while pursuing their baccalaureate degree at a UNC institution (also known as reverse transfer). To date, the program has awarded over 1,400 Associates of Arts, Associates of Science, or Associates of General Education, representing an approximate 8% annual increase in annual completion rates for these degrees.

## **Transparency**

A significant effort has been undertaken by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis at UNC-GA to provide even greater data transparency and availability than in the past. One of the foundational projects in this effort has been to create data dashboards that give “students, parents, policymakers, and taxpayers expanded access to detailed system data on selected core measures.” A number of dashboards exist to provide detailed, interactive content on a variety of topics, including enrollment, student success, and degrees awarded. A recently-added feature to the suite of dashboards provides data on transfer students. This information can be accessed by going to the dashboard site and selecting the “Detailed Dashboard View” under the “Transfer Students” option: [www.northcarolina.edu/content/unc-data-dashboard](http://www.northcarolina.edu/content/unc-data-dashboard).

## **Transfer Student Success Website**

To further assist transfer students from all types of institutions and circumstances, UNC-GA has created a website that serves as the key resource for community college students, traditional and non-traditional students, and military students to explore course equivalencies, degree programs, financial aid opportunities and other important information that will enable a successful transfer to a UNC institution. This information can be found at: [www.northcarolina.edu/?q=transfer](http://www.northcarolina.edu/?q=transfer).

## Appendix A - Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are only for the purpose of this report:

- **Transfer student:** an undergraduate student entering a UNC institution for the first time but known to have previously attended a postsecondary institution as an undergraduate.
- **NCCCS transfers:** transfer students who attended one of the 58 NCCCS community colleges before entering a UNC institution.
- **NCCCS transfers with AA/AS:** NCCCS transfers who were awarded an Associate in Arts (AA) or an Associate in Science (AS) degree before entering a UNC institution.
- **NCCCS transfers with Other Associate Degree:** NCCCS transfers who were awarded with an associate degree other than an AA or AS (e.g., Associate in Applied Science (AAS), Associate in Fine Arts (AFA), or Associate in General Education (AGE)) before entering a UNC institution. These degrees are not part of the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) developed and implemented between the NCCCS and the University of North Carolina (UNC).
- **NCCCS transfers with 30 or more transfer hours:** NCCCS transfers who do not have an associate degree, but have 30 or more transferable hours when entering a UNC institution.
- **Other NCCCS transfers:** NCCCS transfers who do not have an associate degree but have fewer than 30 credit hours when entering a UNC institution.
- **UNC-to-UNC transfers:** transfer students who last attended one of the 16 UNC institutions before entering another UNC institution.
- **NC private transfers:** transfer students who last attended one of the North Carolina private institutions before entering a UNC institution.
- **Out-of-state transfers:** transfer students who last attended an institution outside of North Carolina before entering a UNC institution.
- **Class level:** upon admission, class level is evaluated and decided by UNC institutions based on course work, credit hours, GPA, and selected fields.
- **UNC native juniors:** students that enrolled as first-time undergraduates at UNC and are first-time juniors at the start of the semester indicated in the tables.
- **Reverse Transfer:** a student's course credit is sent back to the community college for the purpose of evaluation for an associate degree while enrolled at a UNC institution.
- **CAA Baccalaureate Degree Plan:** Each UNC institution will develop, publish, and maintain four-year degree plans identifying community college courses that provide pathways leading to associate degree completion, admission into the major, and baccalaureate completion.

## Appendix B - UNC Transfer Student Enrollment Trends, Fall 2004 - Fall 2014

Transfer Type	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
All NCCCS	5,803	5,940	5,931	6,190	6,353	6,677	7,122	7,136	7,905	8,383	8,864
NCCCS with AA/AS	-	-	-	-	1,679	1,982	2,065	2,207	2,522	2,678	2,589
NCCCS with other Associate's	-	-	-	-	831	889	1,038	950	1,079	1,210	1,452
NCCCS with 30+ transfer hours	-	-	-	-	2,926	2,881	3,118	3,193	3,446	3,605	3,809
Other NCCCS Transfers	-	-	-	-	917	925	901	786	858	890	1,014
UNC-to-UNC	2,134	2,305	2,293	2,192	2,188	2,198	2,338	2,182	2,278	2,233	2,228
NC Private	898	1,089	1,105	1,181	1,065	1,079	1,062	1,047	1,172	1,152	1,228
Out-of-State	2,789	3,006	3,383	3,335	3,418	3,595	3,532	3,356	3,394	3,187	3,553
<b>TOTAL Transfers</b>	<b>11,624</b>	<b>12,340</b>	<b>12,712</b>	<b>12,898</b>	<b>13,024</b>	<b>13,549</b>	<b>14,054</b>	<b>13,721</b>	<b>14,749</b>	<b>14,955</b>	<b>15,873</b>

## Appendix C - UNC Transfer Student Population by UNC Campus, Fall 2014

	All NCCCS	UNC-to-UNC	NC Private	Out-of-State	TOTAL
ASU	898	175	102	184	1,359
ECSU	63	15	13	39	130
ECU	1,237	183	86	272	1,778
FSU	394	64	62	278	798
NCAT	289	91	113	182	675
NCCU	255	69	37	85	446
NCSU	650	288	102	213	1,253
UNCA	218	43	25	80	366
UNC-CH	310	186	36	352	884
UNCC	1,573	381	230	610	2,794
UNCG	813	335	159	373	1,680
UNCP	367	59	39	126	591
UNCW	1,056	177	96	384	1,713
UNCSA	13	7	5	25	50
WCU	528	50	37	215	830
WSSU	200	105	86	135	526
TOTAL	8,864	2,228	1,228	3,553	15,873