



TCC INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH BRIEF

TCC Transfers to Virginia Public Four-Year Institutions of Higher Education 1996-97 and 1997-98

Guideline 8, established by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), sets forth standards to facilitate data sharing between public four-year institutions and community colleges from which 5 or more students transferred. During the 1996-98 biennium, data were provided for 871 Tidewater Community College (TCC) students who attended 11 different four-year institutions. The analysis of this data is reported in the study, *Tidewater Community College Biennial Transfer Student Report* (August 2000). This brief highlights that report.

For the purposes of this report, a transfer student is defined as one who completes a minimum of 12 credit hours at TCC and enrolls at TCC during the year immediately preceding transfer to the four-year institution. The majority of transfer students (77%) were not TCC graduates; however, they did enroll at TCC for the equivalent of one semester or 12 credit hours. The greatest proportion of transfer students (20%) was enrolled in the Science/Computer Science curriculum prior to transfer. Students enrolled in Business Administration (17%), Education (16%), and occupational/technical curricula (13%) also comprised a large portion of the transfer population.

Students transferring to Old Dominion University (ODU) consistently account for the largest percentage of TCC transferees. For the 1996 biennium, 64% of TCC transfer students included in the data shared by four-year colleges and universities transferred to ODU. The next largest group of TCC students (13%) matriculated at Norfolk State University (NSU). Another 7% enrolled at Christopher

Newport University (CNU), with the remaining 17% transferring to the other eight reporting four-year institutions: Radford University (RU), Virginia Tech (VPI), University of Virginia (UVA), Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), The College of William and Mary (WM), George Mason University (GMU), James Madison University (JMU), and Mary Washington College (MW). Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of TCC students who transferred to each of the reporting four-year institutions.

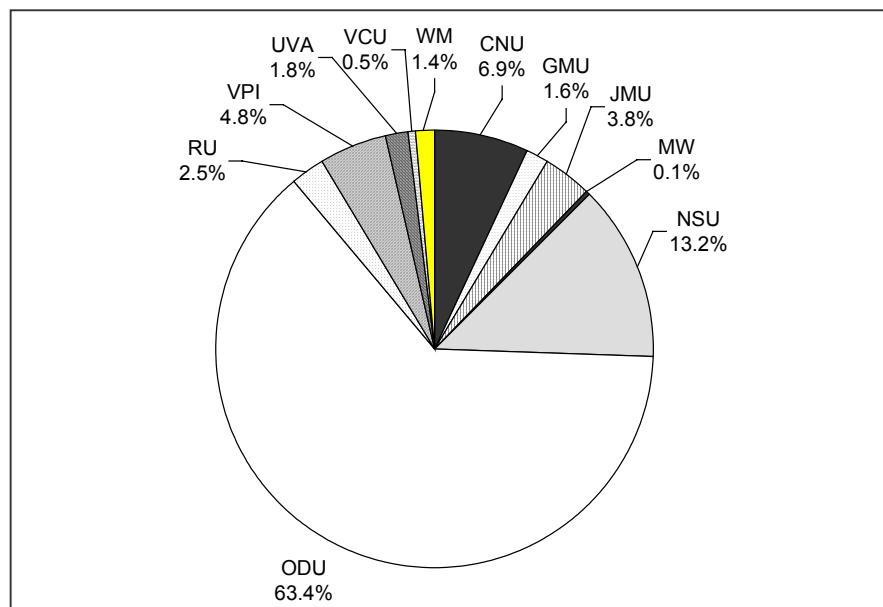


FIGURE 1. 1996-1998 Transfers by Institution

With the majority of TCC's transfer students (64%) enrolled at ODU, a comparison of their performance at ODU with the performance of students native to ODU is an important indicator of preparedness for the baccalaureate environment. The average GPA of TCC students after their first year at ODU was 2.76, which compares favorably with the overall average GPA of native ODU students, 2.57. Clearly, the academic rigor at TCC prepares its students to perform at the same level as (or slightly better than) students attending the four-year institution from the beginning of their collegiate experience.

Additionally, the data show that students transferring from TCC are successful in their first year at other four-year Virginia colleges and universities. According to Guideline 8 data, TCC students who transferred to The College of William and Mary, Virginia Tech, and George Mason University earned a 3.00 GPA or greater at a rate of 64%, 57%, and 50%, respectively. No transfer students performed below a 2.0 GPA.

An examination of performance in the four-year institution as it relates to TCC curricula is another important aspect of preparation for transfer. The current educational literature describes an average GPA change of -0.5, known as "transfer shock," when a community college student transfers to a four-year institution. The average GPA change for TCC students was significantly lower than the national average. In fact, students transferring in the Fine Arts curricula exceeded their TCC GPA's, and students in the Liberal Arts curricula experienced a drop of less than 0.1. Figure 2 shows a GPA comparison for TCC students by curriculum while enrolled at TCC and after transfer to a four-year institution. Again, the change is quite minimal.

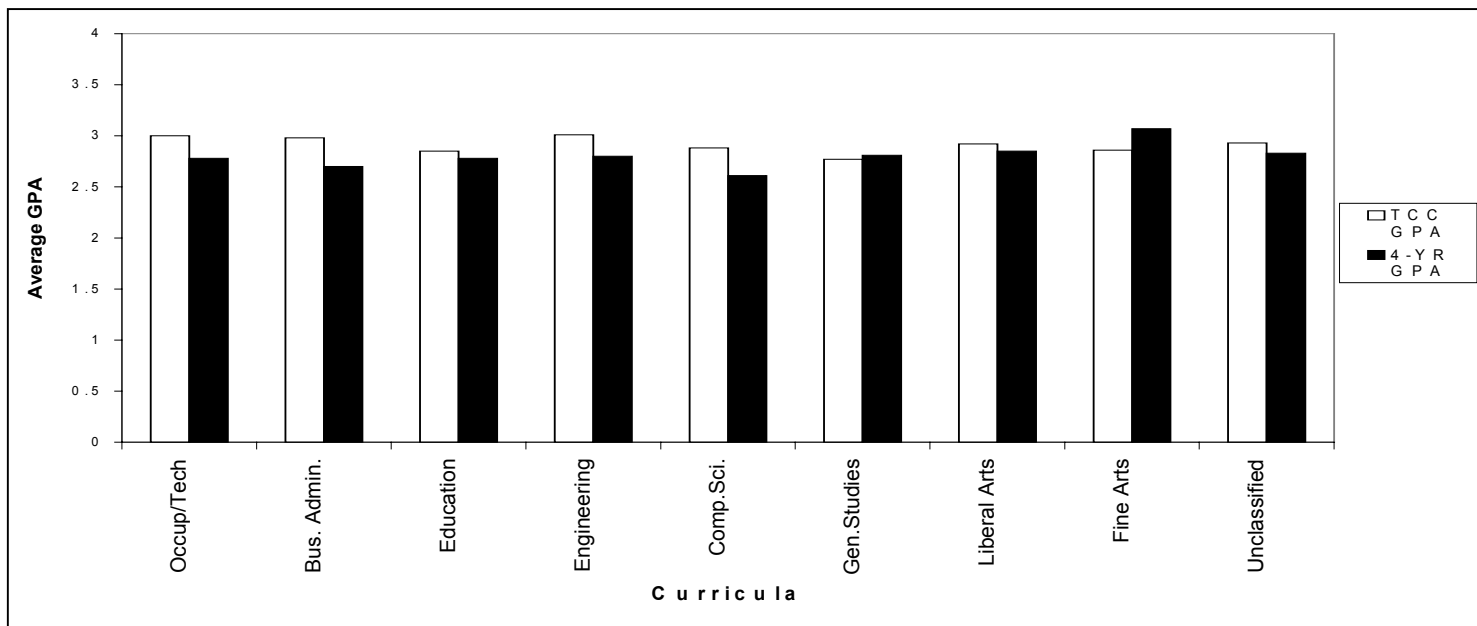


FIGURE 2. TCC Curricula and GPA

Clearly, students attending TCC as freshmen and sophomores are well prepared for the baccalaureate experience. TCC students are competitive with students native to the primary transfer institution and perform at above average ranges in a diversity of colleges and college programs.