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Urban Transfer Research Network





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Improving Transfer and Degree Completion for Underrepresented Students

Kathi A. Ketcheson

Juliette M. Stoering

Rowanna L. Carpenter

Portland State University

The Urban Transfer Research Network

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Agenda

- Project Overview
- Review of findings by policy area
- Conversation/Feedback about policy implications

About the Project

- The Urban Transfer Research Network is a collaborative multi-institutional research project focused on underrepresented students who begin their postsecondary careers at community colleges and have a goal of attaining at least the Bachelor's degree.
- By the end of the project, the network will include urban regions from across the U.S. in order to have a broad impact on Bachelor's degree attainment rates by underrepresented students.

Study Context

- Over half of all students entering postsecondary education for the first time begin their education at community colleges (Suarez, 2003).
- The national transfer rate is only 22% (Suarez, 2003)
- Baccalaureate attainment is lower than for those who begin their studies in four-year institutions and underrepresented racial and ethnic groups have lower baccalaureate attainment rates than white students (Adelman, 2004; Wassmer, Moore and Shulock, 2004).
- For students in the lowest income categories, tuition at community colleges can be 20-40% of a student's income (Chronicle Almanac, 2010).

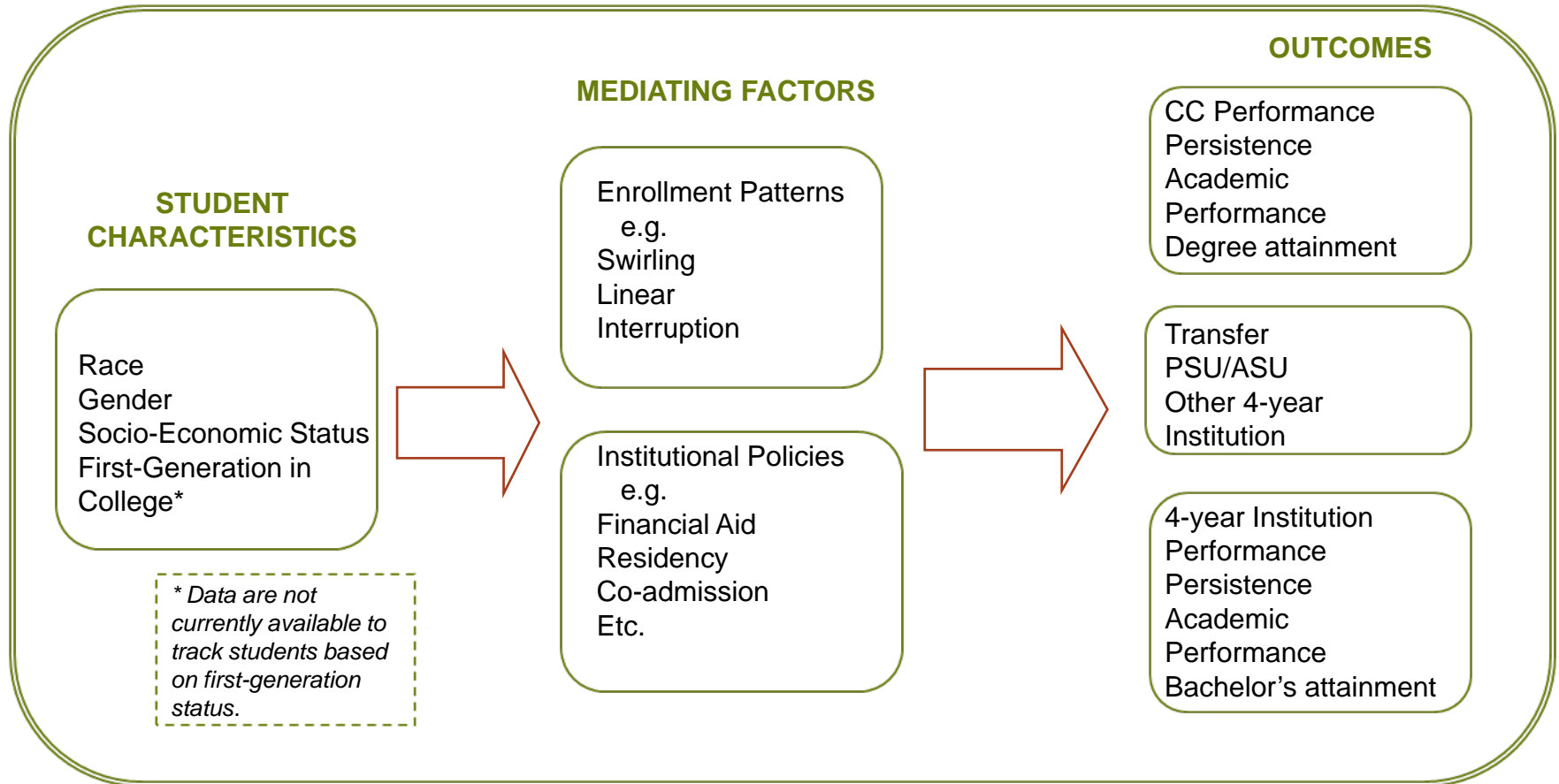
Research Questions

- What pathways through community college and university lead to or hinder successful baccalaureate completion?
- How do transfer and degree attainment rates of various sub-groups differ?
- What are the major contributors to discrepancies in attainment rates?
- How are the patterns similar or different across research sites, and how do state, regional or institutional policy contexts contribute to those differences?

Two Approaches to Studying Transfer

- Tracking student characteristics, enrollment patterns, progress and outcomes using term-by-term data
- Interviews with faculty, staff, administrators, and students

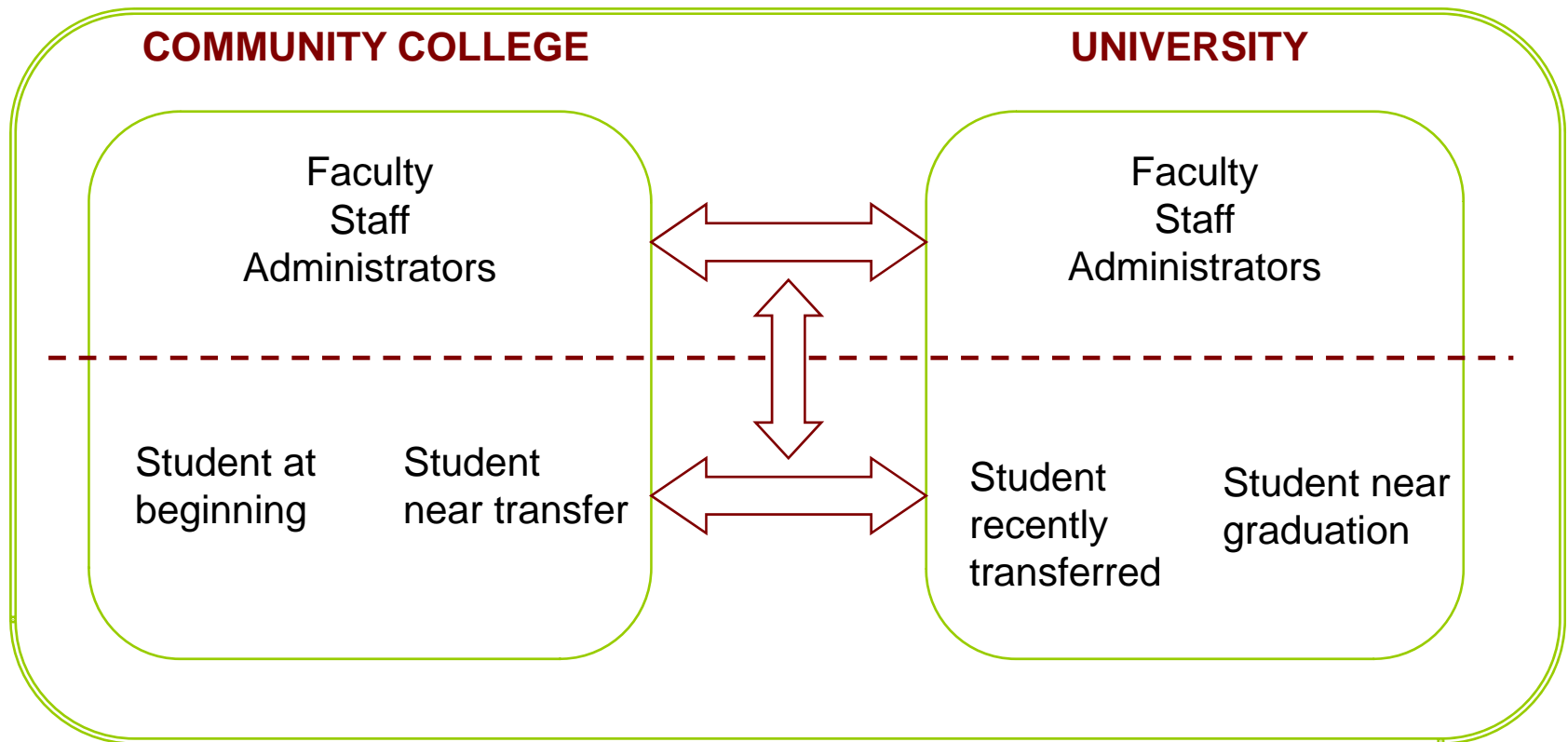
Quantitative Research Design



Qualitative Research Design

- Identify factors that facilitate and factors that hinder transfer
- Identify structural and interpersonal factors
- Identify factors of particular significance for under-represented students

Qualitative Research Design



Student Course-taking Patterns

- More lower-division college credits during Year 1 are associated with greater success; more developmental credits are associated with lower rates of success
- Students who are able to enroll full-time or to take more credits per term are more successful
- Most students never leave their home community college
- Structured swirl and linear are the most productive pathways to baccalaureate success.

Small Group Discussion

- Since these data were gathered are there new policies/practices in place that have an effect?
- What recommendations do we have for new or additional ways to address this issue?
- How do/can community colleges and universities work together to maintain or implement important practices and policies?

Attainment of Associate Degree

- Most students do not earn an associate degree at the CC
- Most students who transfer have not earned an associate degree
- Students who earn a transfer degree have a higher rate of transfer than students who earn other degrees or earn no degree

Small Group Discussion

- Since these data were gathered are there new policies/practices in place that have an effect?
- What recommendations do we have for new or additional ways to address this issue?
- How do/can community colleges and universities work together to maintain or implement important practices and policies?

Financial Aid

- Fin Aid information available for approximately 20% of CC students
- Despite earning more credits during year one, students who receive need-based aid at the CC are less likely to transfer than other students

Small Group Discussion

- Since these data were gathered are there new policies/practices in place that have an effect?
- What recommendations do we have for new or additional ways to address this issue?
- How do/can community colleges and universities work together to maintain or implement important practices and policies?

Final Discussion

- Wrap up of small conversations
- How could we assess the performance of the local urban transfer collaborative (i.e., the social 'system') over time