

Community College Transfers to the University of California

I. Research Objectives: The objective of this study is to examine the outcomes produced by the “partnership agreement” specified in the memorandum of understanding between the University of California system and the community colleges of California. The Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) is a document detailing programs design to meet the needs of a growing population of community college students with the University of California (UC) system. The 1997 memorandum of understanding between both institutions was design to increase the amount transfer student from community colleges into the campuses of the University of California system (Office of the UC President, June 2003). The study is examining the influence programs initiated by the memorandum of understanding such as the Puente project, towards community college students transferring into the University of California (UC) system.

II. Background: In 1997 the University of California and the California community college system signed a “partnership agreement” with the support of the administration of Governor Gray Davis to increase the admissions of community college students into the University of California system (Office of the UC President, June 2003). The University of California and community colleges helped fund programs designed to assist community college students in transferring to the University of California system.

The components of the memorandum include:

- *Bolster Community College Counselor Training.* The fall Counselor Conferences and spring Ensuring Transfer Success Counseling Institutes provide community college counselors forums to discuss the most effective ways to help students transfer to UC (Office of the UC President, June 2003).
- *Assistance.* A Web-based planning system for transfer students available online at www.assist.org. Students can use the Web site to see how specific course credits earned at a California community college can be applied to a major at UC or a California State University campus (Office of the UC President, June 2003).
- *Academic Development Programs.* The Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) program and Puente Project. These programs cultivate the academic potential of community college students who might not otherwise consider transfer to a UC campus (Office of the UC President, June 2003).
- *Outreach Programs.* Encourage qualified applicants to transfer to a UC campus. For example, representatives from UC visit community college campuses regularly and offer individualized advising sessions that help students stay focused on their transfer goals(Office of the UC President, June 2003).
- *Transfer Admissions Agreements.* UC campuses offer a variety of programs in support of transfer admission, many of which guarantee admission to a UC campus for community college students who earn the required grade point average in the appropriate lower-division coursework (Office of the UC President, June 2003).
- *Dual Admissions Program.* UC’s efforts to expand access for community college students will be bolstered even further with the implementation of the Dual Admissions Program beginning in Fall 2004. The program will provide an additional path to the UC system through the community colleges by granting admission at a UC campus to students who are between the top four percent and 12.5 percent of their high school’s graduating senior class, but who are not eligible to attend UC as freshmen. Dual Admission Program students will complete a transfer program at a community

college, then transfer to UC to complete baccalaureate requirements (Office of the UC President, June 2003).

The projected goal set by the 1997 MOU was to increase the amount of community college transfers into the UC system by fifteen thousand students within five years of the programs' implementation. The focus of this study will concentrate on the estimated projected goals set by the MOU compared to current UC admissions data. The effectiveness of the Puente project will be assessed by the amount of community college transfer students into the UC system. Since that "partnership agreement" in 1997, the number of transfers admitted to the University of California system has increased from 11,558 in 1997 to 14,665 in 2003 (Office of the UC President, June 2003)."

The "partnership agreement" or the MOU implemented academic development programs such as the Mathematics, Engineering, Science, Achievement (MESA) program and the Puente Project in order to increase the number of community college transfer students. The Puente Project was designed to "cultivate the academic potential for community college students who might not otherwise consider transferring to a UC campus (Office of the UC President, June 2003)." For over 20 years the program has assisted community college transfer students in attaining the academic skills necessary to meet the requirements of the University of California system.

III. Research Questions:

- Does Puente project participants' account for a large portion of the total transfer student enrollment in the University California system?
- Is the Puente project responsible for the increase in admissions of community college transfer students UC system?
- Are Puente project participants more likely to transfer into the UC system?

IV. Research Methods: The study will review UC admissions statistics in order to analyze the Puente Project. Finally, statistical analyses will examine the effectiveness of the MOU's projected goal of enrollment increase of fifteen thousand community college transfer students into the UC system. "In 1997, the University entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges to increase the number of students who transfer from community colleges to the UC system by nearly 5% per year; the new Partnership Agreement with the Governor increases this rate to 6% (The University of California system President's Message, October, 2000)."

The study will include anonymous, informal interviews with Puente project administrators and counselors in three community colleges located in Orange County. The interviews will be transcribed and identify reoccurring themes from participant responses. Interviews will also be conducted in three University of California campuses. The total number of participants will be pending upon the availability to participate in the study.

Interview questions that will be asked to current Puente project administrators and counselors will include:

- Why did you choose to be part of the Puente Program?
- Are you familiar with the projected goals set by the MOU between the UC system and the community colleges of the state of California?
- What is the goal of the Puente Project?
- What is the number of Puente project participants transferring to the UC system?

UCI administrators will also be asked to participate in an informal in order to assess the effectiveness of the MOU and its projected goal. The question will also require administrators to provide their point of view concerning the success of the Puente project in assisting community college students to transfer into the UC system.

Interview questions that will be asked to current Puente project administrators will include:

- Are you familiar with the projected goals set by the MOU between the UC system and the community colleges of the state of California?
- Do you think the Puente project is meeting the goals of the M.O.U?
- Do you think that Puente project participants account for a large proportion of transfer students coming to the UC system?

V. Itemized Budget

Audio cassette recorder	\$ 176 (\$88 each)
Office of the UC President (round trip to Oakland)	\$350 (\$175 each)
Computer printer ink cartridge used to print various articles from article database	\$68 (\$34 each)
AAA batteries	\$18 (\$9 each)
Pocket folders project organizer	\$20 (\$10 each)
CD 10/Pack	\$9
SPSS software and manual	\$166 (\$83 each)
White illustration board	\$52
Clipboard, 9" x 12 1/2"	\$8 (\$4 each)
Writing pads, 8 1/2" x 11 3/4"	\$18 (\$9 each)
Transportation expenses to UC campuses (UC, Riverside, and UC, Los Angeles) and community colleges (Los Angeles Valley college, and Southwestern college)	\$300
Total	\$1185

Explanation

In order to conduct this research successfully several items will need to be purchased. Items will include: a audio cassette recorder, AAA batteries, computer printer ink cartridge, CD 10/pack, SPSS software and manual, pocket folder organizer, clipboard, 9" x 12 1/2," writing pads, 8 1/2" x 11 3/4," white illustration board, transportation expenses to UC campuses and community colleges, transportation expenses for a trip to Oakland, California to visit the office of the UC President.

In order to conduct interviews accurately we will use an audiocassette recorder to record interviewees responses and several packages of AAA batteries to power the recorder. Since we anticipate printing several academic articles and pamphlets that will be distributed to participants, printer cartridges will need to be purchased. A copy of SPSS software and manual will be used to asses the data used in this study. We will store SPSS data and articles necessary for this project in CD's from a CD packet. In additional will need to travel expenses to travel to community colleges and UC campuses to attain the interview responses necessary for this study.

During this study a trip to Oakland, California will be necessary, in order to interview administrators at the main office of the Puente Program and the administrators of the Transfer Student Relations Office and ask for their opinions towards the MOU and it's components.

During our visits at each campus and Oakland we will need to take notes during our interviews and we will need to purchase clip boards, note pads, and organizing pocket folders. Finally we will use a white board to display our findings of our research during the UC Irvine Undergraduate Research Symposium in the Spring quarter.

VI. Time Line

Fall Quarter:

- Turn in proposal into UROP for review and approval
- Gather statistics and data on the Puente Project
- Apply for IRB approval
- Upon IRB approval begin the interview process in the winter quarter

Winter Quarter:

- Conduct interviews with UCI administrators and Puente project administrators and counselors
- Transcribe recorded interviews
- Begin to analyze data for any reoccurring themes

Spring Quarter:

- Finish analyzing data and write possible future research recommendations
- Present findings at research symposium
- Submit research findings into the UCI Undergraduate Research Journal for possible publishing

References

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