

# Connecticut Community College Credits Do Transfer

By GENA GLICKMAN

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**T**he recent focus on transferability of credits from Connecticut community colleges to the University of Connecticut is raising concern for legislators, students and their families. This is understandable, as no one wants to repeat coursework, let alone pay for it a second time. When we examine the trends, however, we can see that there is actually a high level of transfer success for students at Manchester Community College and our sister community colleges.

The data submitted to the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee states that nearly 79 percent of community colleges' credits transfer to the university. At MCC, the transfer rate is even better — more than 90 percent of our students' credits transfer. This is possible through UConn's guaranteed admissions program, carefully constructed discipline articulation agreements and the relationships between MCC's faculty and those at UConn. These practices have led to MCC's recognition nationally by Teachers College Community College Research Center as having one of the nation's highest rate of baccalaureate completion for our transfer students.

Not only do our students succeed at baccalaureate institutions such as UConn, but because the first part of their coursework is completed at a significantly lower cost — often with the help of scholarship awards and Pell grants, not loans — they complete their bachelor's degrees and move forward in life with a lower burden of debt.

Connecticut's community colleges have the appropriate lower-division courses needed to meet the level of rigor required to successfully articulate credits to UConn — and elsewhere for that matter. Our students have successfully transferred to Trinity College, the University of Hartford, and Wesleyan and Yale universities, as a few examples. We are the University of St. Joseph's No. 1 feeder school. The new transfer articulation program, being implemented by the state Board of Regents for Higher Education in response to legislation, will make it even easier for our students to transfer to the four-year universities within the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities system. It is important to note, however, that 65 percent of our students chose to attend institutions outside of the CSCU system — with UConn being a primary destination. For these students, clearly articulated individualized pathways are critical.

Data from the National Students Clearinghouse indicate that, overall, one-third of students transfer or change schools at least once in five years, so this is a larger issue. There are few universities in the region that will accept all of the credits a community college student earns, yet many take the majority. I believe it's unrealistic to expect 100-percent transferability to all universities for several reasons: Individual universities have unique academic criteria and sequence of study in their majors, not all courses are equal, similar courses may have different prerequisites than required at any one university, and community-college students may spend a semester exploring educational majors. This last is a significant advantage for our students, allowing them to make a good choice for their major, but sometimes resulting in a semester's worth of credits not being applicable to the final choice of a major at their senior institution. Also, fundamentally, a student must achieve a certain passing grade, typically a C or better, for the credits to transfer to any institution.

I am proud of the success that Manchester Community College students have had at UConn and I know that the faculty at MCC looks forward to continuing existing partnerships and developing new ones with their colleagues at the university. Only by our continuing to collaborate on the articulation pathways for our students can we guarantee that the highest quality education is accessible to all of Connecticut's students, and ensure that Connecticut families who are considering community college before transferring to a senior institution are making a smart choice.

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