Update on Transfer at PC, Rates and More

Student transfer to a four-year college is a major focus of the Porterville College student success agenda for 2025-26, so it is time to update the college community on where we are on the topic. First, a few notes:

A focus on both total number of transfers and transfer rates. Sometimes, we look at data in multiple ways. In the case of transfer, we look at both total numbers and the transfer rate of incoming students. The rate at which students transfer, typically measured within 3 years of coming to the college (150% time) is an important way we track how efficiently the college is working with students. But even if the rate remains the same, the total number of transfers is also important, and it can go up or down depending on both the transfer rate and the number of incoming students each year. If we embark on an initiative that brings in more students with a challenging route to completion, or who take longer to complete, such as adult learners, or part-time students, the transfer rate may go down even as we improve overall success in other important ways.

Transfer data are challenging and often incomplete. We get the number of transfers from the California Community Colleges Chancellors office, which uses a variety of methods to track which students transfer to California State Colleges and Universities (CSUs), University of California schools (UCs), In-State Private colleges, and Out of State colleges. They Chancellor's Office does the best it can, but because the data come from outside our system, they are often incomplete. We do not learn of every student who transfers, and the numbers they share are artificially low to an unknown degree.

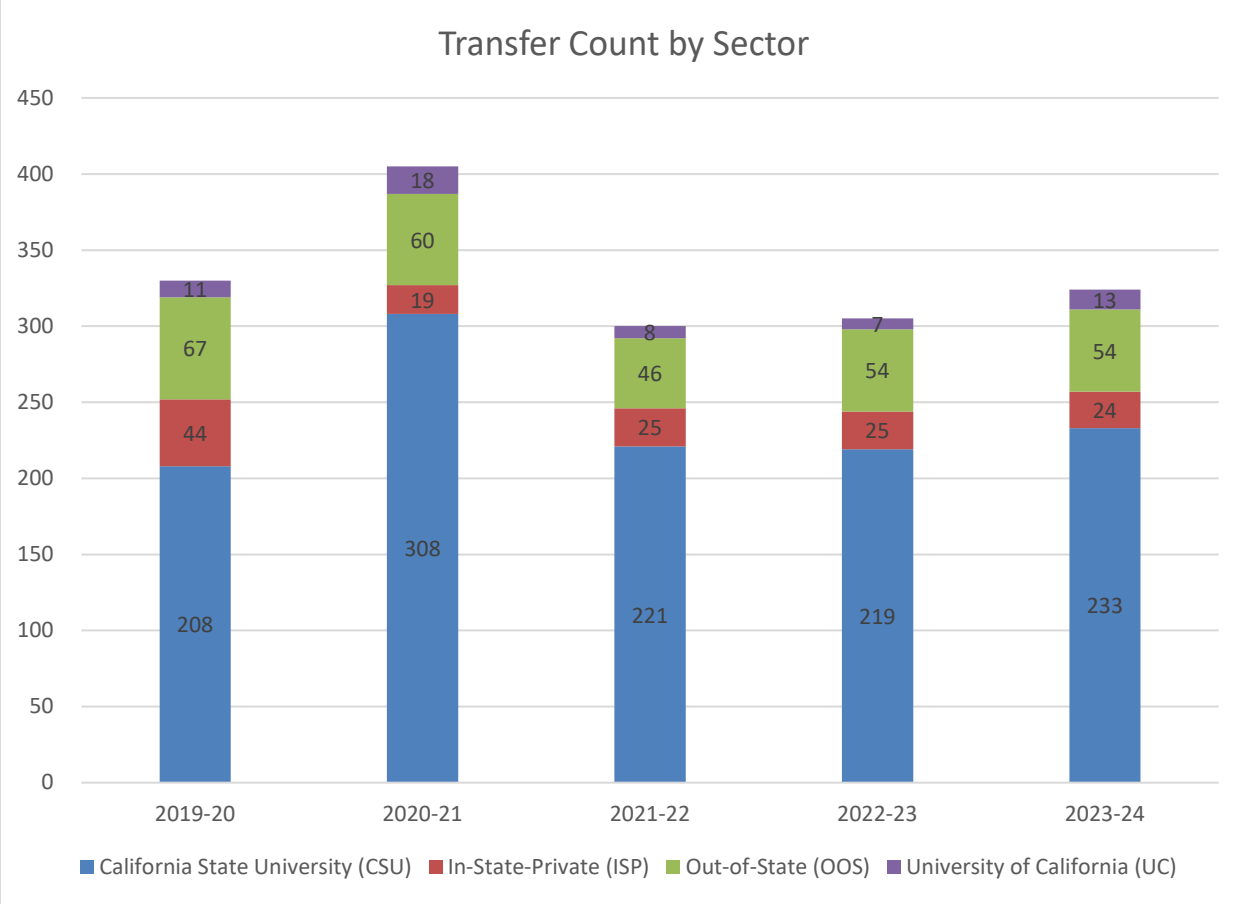
Similarly, our transfer rate information comes from matches we do through the National Student Clearinghouse, a nationwide data sharing network of educational institutions. However, student privacy rules at our college and at transfer institutions limits what information is shared, so students who have asked that their information not be shared may not be included in the data we gather.

Recent events affect the data we report. There are two significant events in the past few years that affect the data we report on transferring students. First, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the number of students who enrolled at PC, the work we did to help them succeed, and the enrollment practices of some of our key transfer institutions. Secondly, from about fall 2021 through about fall 2023, the college experienced a significant amount of enrollment and financial aid fraud. While we identified and disenrolled fraudulent enrollments where possible, during that time, a small number of our identified students were indeed fraud-bots, thus inflating the denominator of our transfer rates.

Now, on to where Porterville College is on transfer.

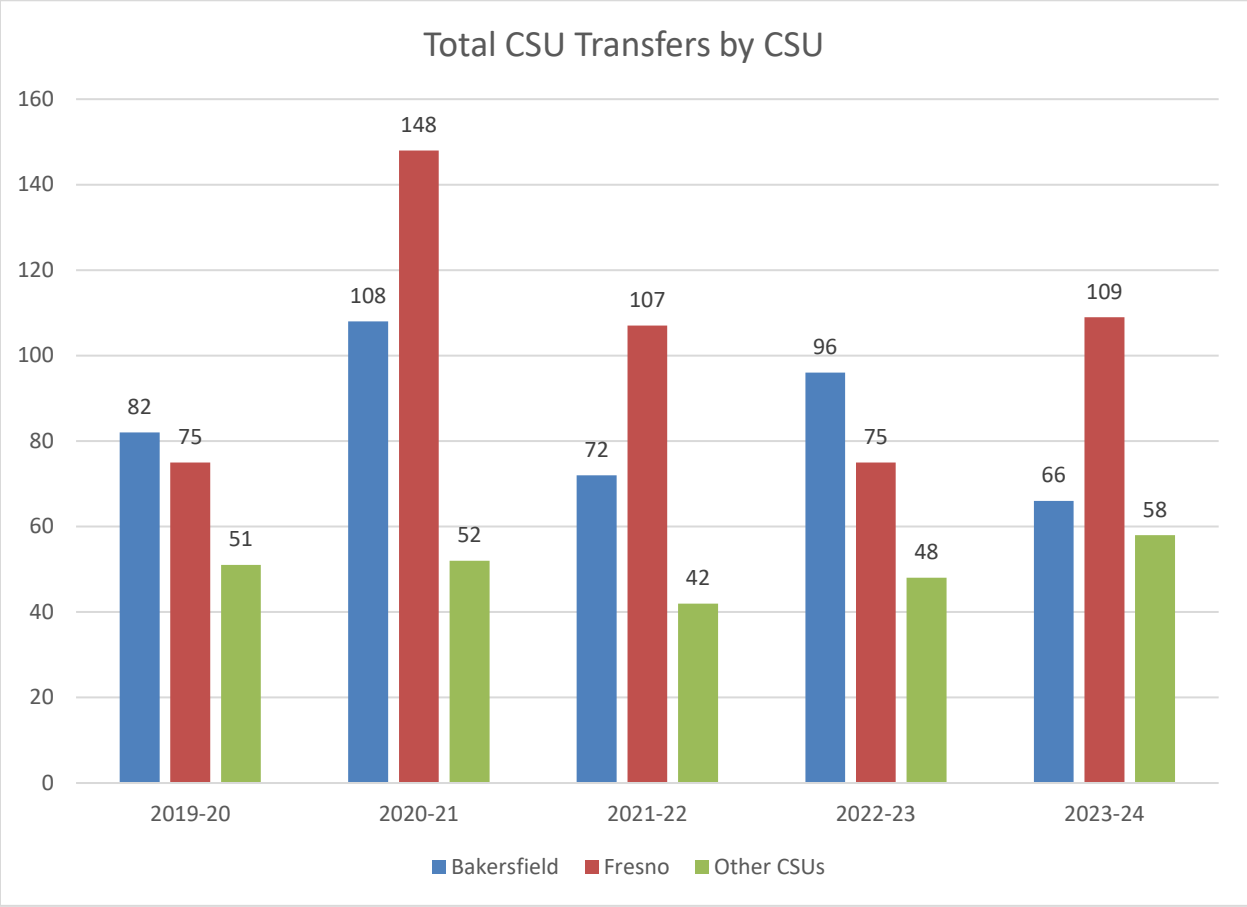
Information on the total number of transfers comes from our KCCD Transfer Dashboard. Unlike many of our Tableau dashboards, the transfer dashboard is fully open to the public because no individual student information is included. Even without a Tableau account, you can access the dashboard and peruse the data yourself.

First, we report the number of students who transfer to four-year colleges each year, broken out by sector of their transfer institution. The college's transfer total peaked in the 2020-21 academic year when we sent over 405 students to four-year schools, including over 300 to California State Universities, and at least one to each of the nine University of California colleges.

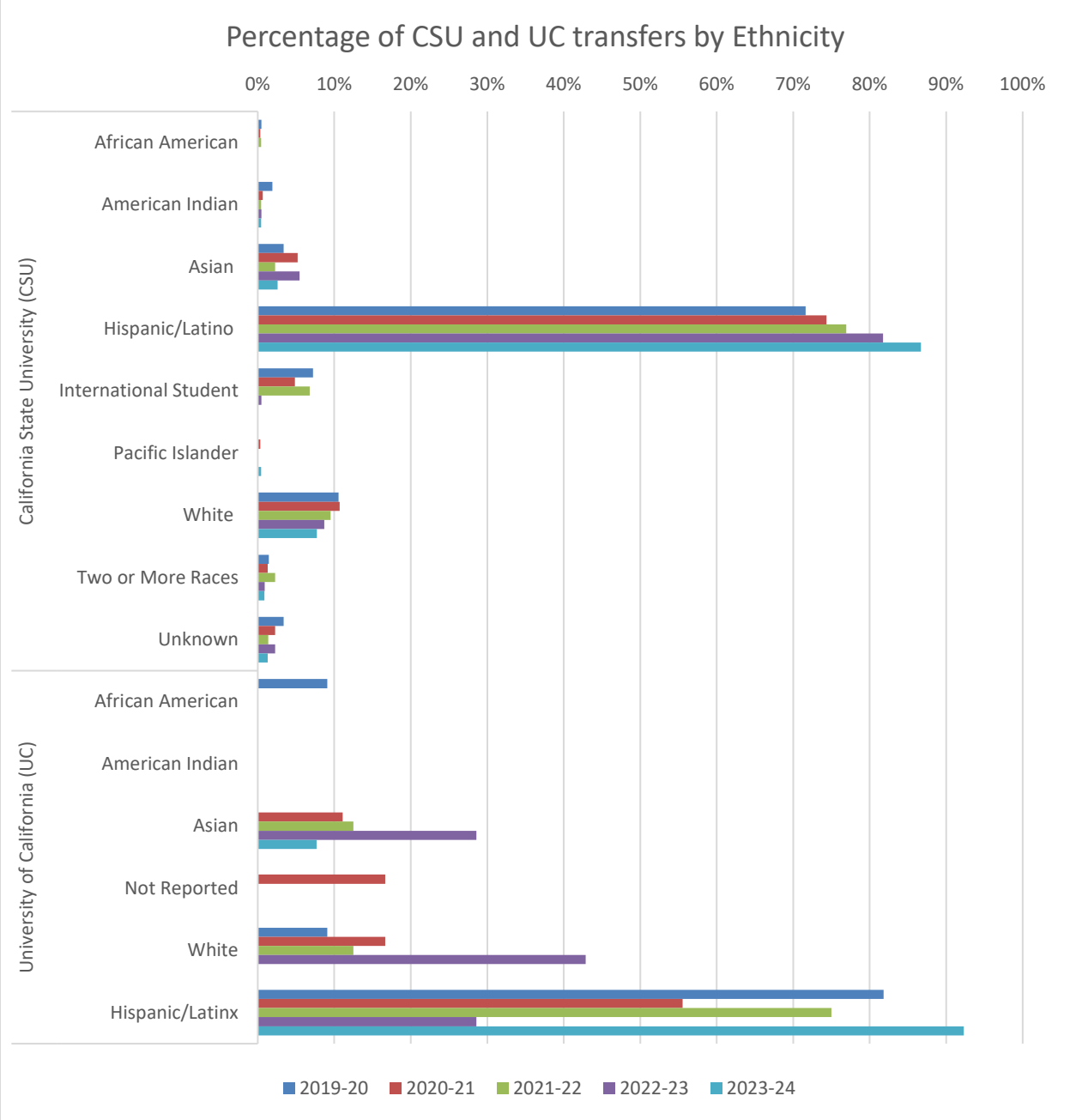


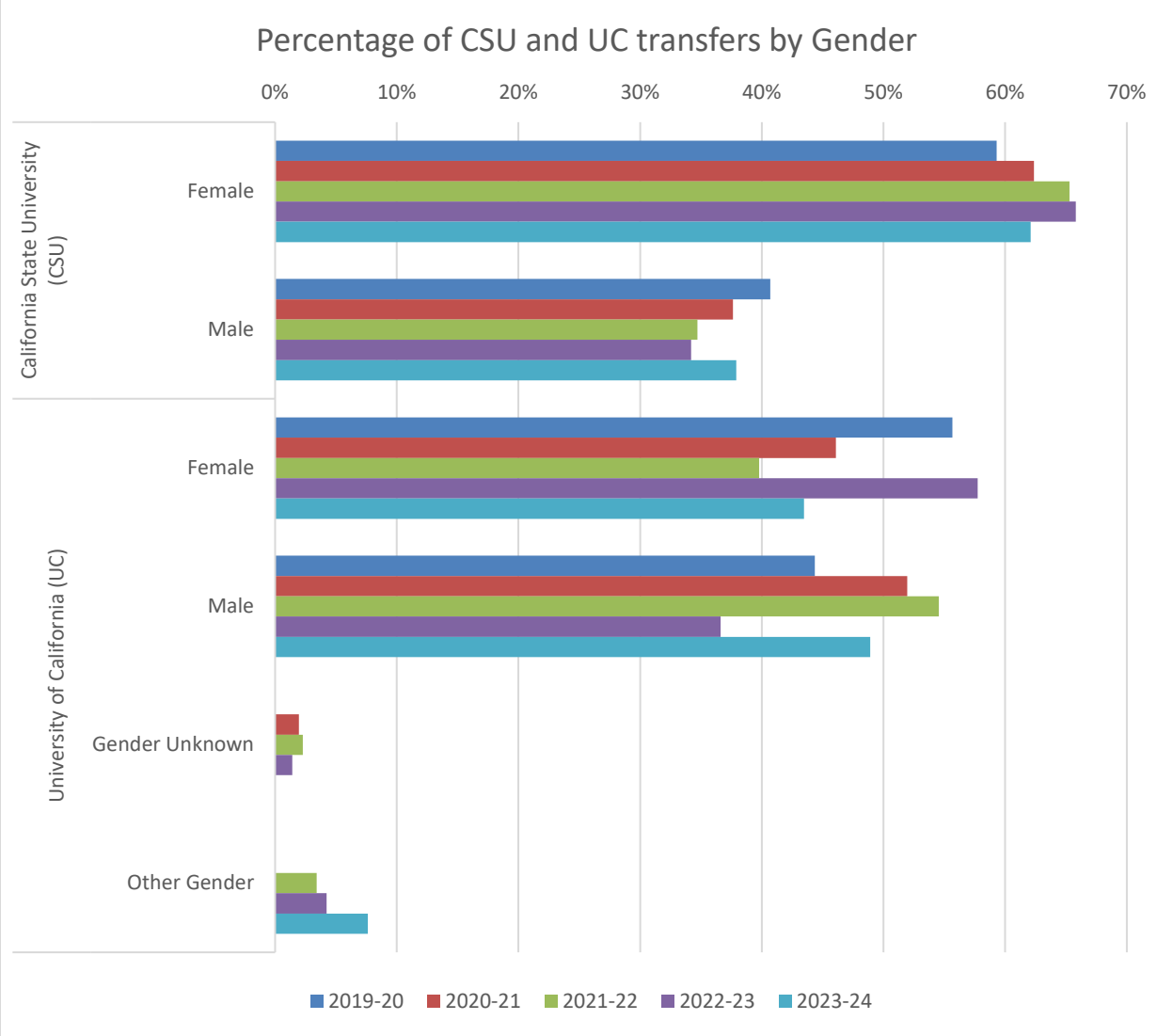
PC students mostly attend California State Universities, but we are working to make them aware of all options. But transfers are not evenly distributed among the CSUs. By far, students are most interested in our two closes CSUs, California State University Fresno, and Bakersfield. Fresno generally gets the most

interest, but in some years, some of their programs are significantly impacted such that we send more students to Bakersfield.



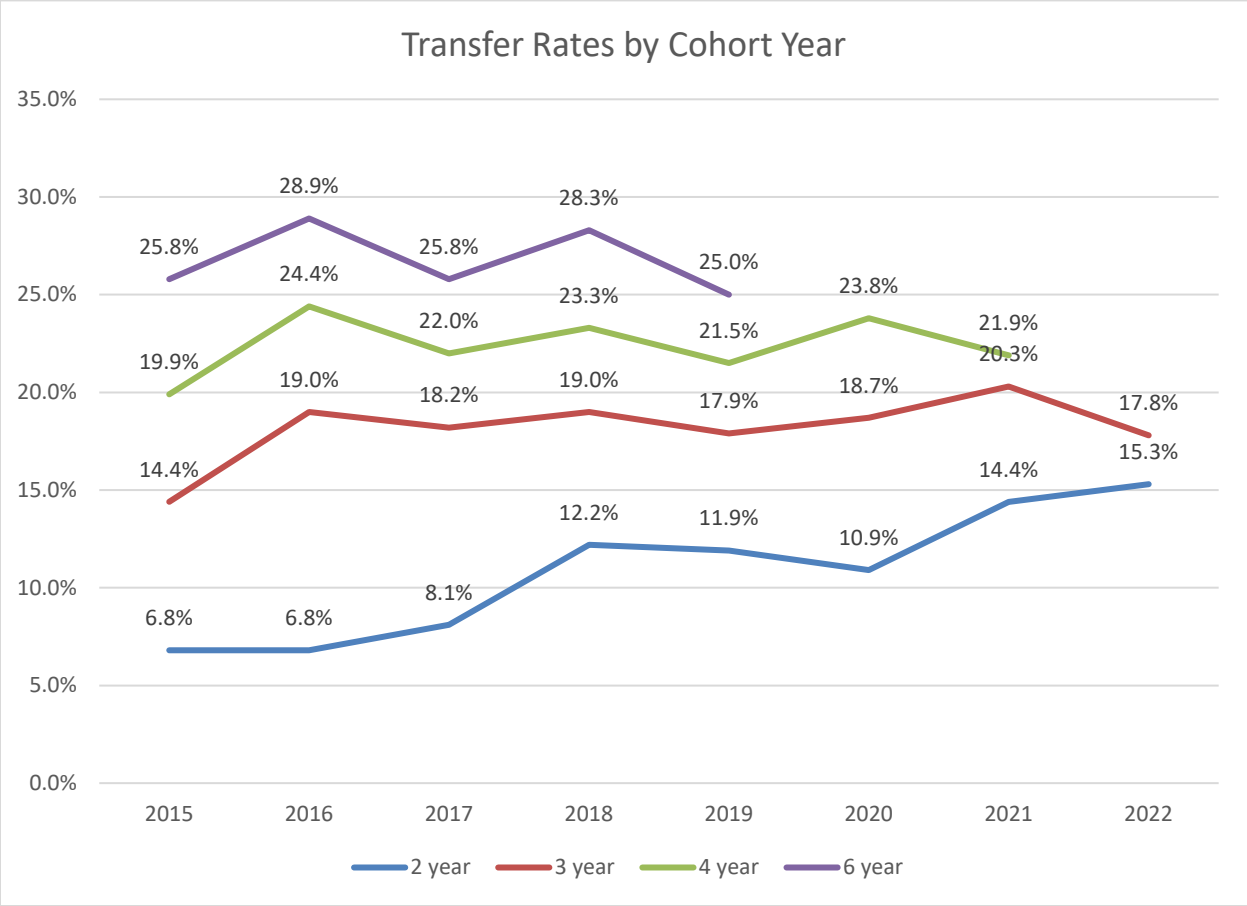
For CSUs and University of California campuses, we have some basic demographic information, essentially ethnicity and gender data. The proportion of PC transfers who are Hispanic has increased in recent years, matching or exceeding the proportion at the college. More than 60% of PC transfers are women most years, very similar to the college proportion.


Percentage of CSU and UC transfers by Ethnicity
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%
California State University (CSU)
African American
American Indian
Asian
Hispanic/Latino
International Student
Pacific Islander
White
Two or More Races
Unknown
University of California (UC)
African American
American Indian
Asian
Not Reported
White
Hispanic/Latinx
2019-20
2020-21
2021-22
2022-23
2023-24

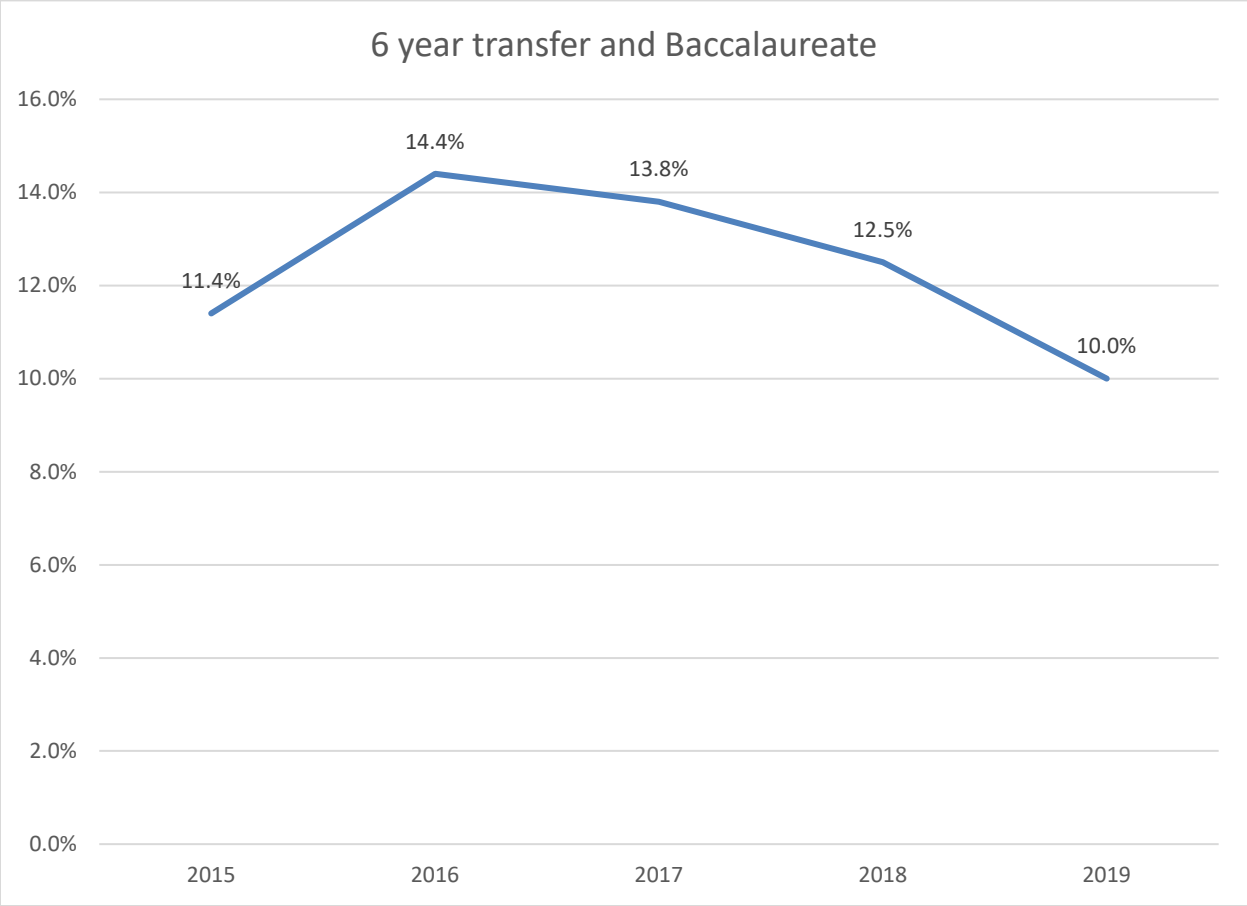


Next, we turn to transfer rates. The chart below shows the transfer rate within 2, 3, 4, and 6 years for each of our recent starting cohort years.

A few years ago, we noted that completion rates overall had improved, but was still stagnant for completion within two years. Now, we see the opposite. In recent years, 3, 4, and 6-year transfer rates haven't improved by much, but the 2-year transfer rate has roughly doubled. So students are transferring more efficiently.



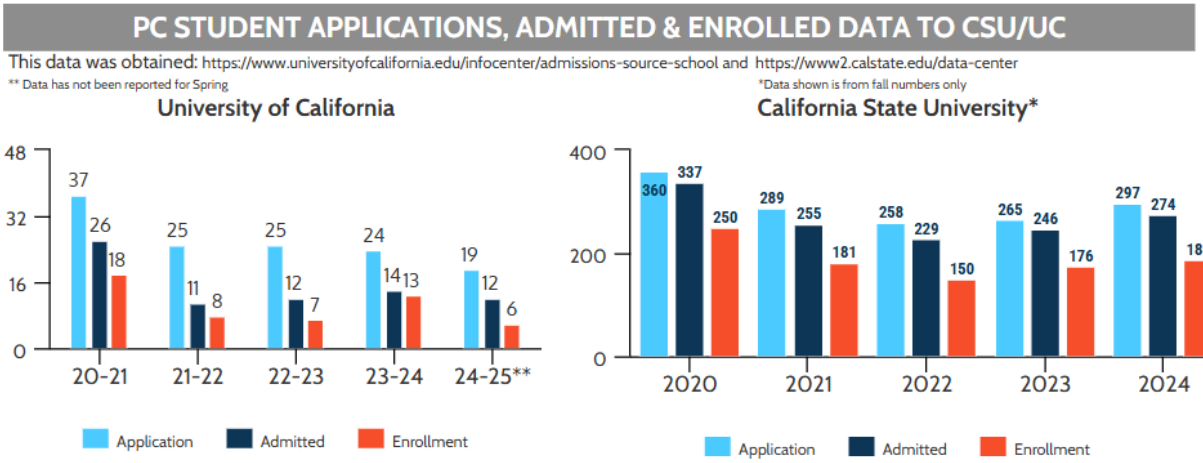
An additional measure we examine is the percentage of students who transfer and earn a baccalaureate degree within six years. This had improved for a number of years, but declined for each of the three most recent years, ones that began just before the COVID-19 pandemic.



Lastly, we note that most of the work toward student transfer occurs much earlier. Students must onboard successfully, engage with the college, and complete momentum points, such as succeeding in their courses, persisting to the next year, and completion of gateway courses, such as math and English. Focusing on those improves transfer rates.

But there is value in focusing on transfer itself, as evidenced by two other statistics. First, we have improved far more in getting students to complete degrees and certificates than we have in transfer, perhaps due to the distance the college is from four-year institutions. But also, we prepare many students for transfer, and even get them accepted, only to have them not attend the transfer institution. The chart below shows this for both the University of California system and the California State Universities.

Indeed, a focus on transfer itself will also help Porterville College students succeed.



Questions, as always, are welcome. You can contact the research office at research@portervillecollege.edu.