How Porterville College Students Do After Transfer
Fresno State Data Provides Evidence

One area of research that usually gets little attention is how community college students perform after transfer. One way a college can measure how well it prepares students is by comparing the performance of its transfer students with those from other community colleges. That has often proven difficult, until now. A series of Tableau dashboards created by the California State University, Fresno Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides data on community college transfers. A report recently compiled by the Porterville College Office of Institutional Research, and summarized here, provides a summary of some of the available data.

A few key points:

• Porterville College is one of the smallest, and the most distant, if the community colleges that send students to CSU-Fresno. The number of fall transfers from 2007 to 2015 ranged from 32 to 41, while full-year transfers ranged from 34 to 56. (Most of the data in this report are based on fall transfers only.) Other colleges have many more, particularly nearby schools like Fresno City College and Reedley College. Most of the tables in our transfer report show comparisons between Porterville College transfer students and those of all other valley community colleges.

• In seven of the past eight years, a higher percentage of PC transfer students were receiving Pell grants than transfer students from other community colleges. In all of those years, a higher percentage of PC transfers were first-generation college students (defined here as students for whom neither parent graduated from a 4-year college.)

• PC students had higher average transfer GPAs than other community college transfers (these are the GPAs they bring to CSU-Fresno from us). A better measure for how well the college prepares students is the average GPA in their first term after they transfer. The data on this was more mixed, with PC outperforming other transfer students by a small margin in several years, but performing less well in the years 2012-2014. However, the situation reversed itself again in fall 2015, with PC outperforming other community college transfer students, this time by the largest margin of all the years considered.

• Term-to-term retention (which we usually call persistence) is measured in three ways: to the following term, to the next year, and to two years later. The results of this were mixed, with older PC cohorts showing slightly below average persistence rates for the shorter term, but slightly higher rates when looking over a two-year period.

• Similarly, degree completion is measured in 3, 4, 5, and 6-year increments. The data here are also mixed. The 2009 incoming cohort had higher completion rates throughout the period measured, and the 2008 cohort was higher for most, but some of the other cohorts showed below average degree completion rates.
Those wanting to explore further can play with the dashboard data on their own. In addition, there are data on transfer students available on the CSU Analytics page and the UC Information Center page.

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