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# Book Review - Community College Transfer Guide.pdf

David D Costantino



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## Community College Transfer Guide

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## Media Feature and Review

# Community College Transfer Guide

Silver, D. (2014). *Community College Transfer Guide*. Los Angeles, CA: Adams-Hall Publishing. 144 pp. ISBN: 9780944708842.

*Reviewed by David D Costantino, Seton Hall University*

During the 2013–2014 academic year, 46% of students who completed a degree at a four-year institution were enrolled at a two-year institution at some point in the previous 10 years (Dewitt, 2015). For students contemplating following a similar path, the *Community College Transfer Guide* reads like a manual: easy to read and easy to understand. This book should be compulsory reading for every high school senior, community college student, and career/transfer counselor. Starting with choosing a community college and ending with the acceptance letter to a four-year institution, the book's 18 chapters cover every step of the sometimes convoluted process of transferring from a community college to a four-year institution.

A recurring theme throughout the book is planning. Silver repeatedly mentioned how easy it is for students to lose their way or spend more time and money than originally intended due to poor planning and lack of organization.

While the entire book is mandatory reading, the following chapters are especially important. Chapters 4 and 11 offer suggestions on how to conduct research designed to help the transfer aspirant:

- Find the community college that best meets your requirements;
- Pare down the list of four-year schools you are interested in;
- Determine the extent of the relationship, if any, between the two schools.

Aiding the student in conducting their research, Chapters 6, 10, and 12 describe important questions to ask regarding transfer requirements, articulation agreements, admission policies, and graduation rates. Chapter 8 addresses an issue that may arise either before or after selecting a school: choosing a major. Chapter 14 offers invaluable advice on the benefits of taking articulated courses that apply to the major before actually transferring. Chapters 9 and 15 present helpful information about the cost of attending college such as housing and tuition. These chapters also provide an excellent discussion of ways students can reduce out-of-pocket expenses through financial aid. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is explained in great detail. The author also furnishes a list of websites dedicated to helping students find scholarships and grants.

The author gives simple yet valuable advice on how to choose a four-year college. For example, students must keep in mind four-year colleges are not compelled to accept transfer students; this is especially true of private schools. Even if the college of choice does accept transfers, it may place a lot of weight on the transferee's community college academic performance and, subsequently, less on high school GPA and SAT scores. Potential transferees should inquire where their school of choice places its emphasis.

Chapter 14 is probably the most important chapter in the book. In this chapter, the author explains the different types of classes: transferable, non-transferable, and articulated. Silver advises students with differing needs and goals to take different approaches to selecting classes. A student who has yet to decide on a field of study but still wishes to attend a four-year college should choose a different mix of classes than a student who has declared a major and is focused on earning a bachelor's degree. Another very important topic covered in Chapter 14 is articulation agreements. The author covers the different types of agreements and explains the similarities and differences between them. If a student successfully completes an articulated class at a community college and transfers to a four-year college that is bound by the articulation agreement, those classes will then be accepted and applied to their field of study.

The author urges students to talk with counseling staff at their community college and at any four-year college they are considering attending, at least every semester. A counselor can help point a student in the right direction. The author also advised students not to trust course catalogs and college websites since they can change without notice, which is why he recommended frequent face-to-face meetings with counselors. Lastly, the author cautions students to keep in mind community colleges and four-year colleges may have conflicting interests. Students are encouraged to respectfully ask counselors "why?" after being given advice so the student understands the counselor's reasoning and to ensure no misunderstandings exists.

Sound advice would be for the student to learn as much as possible about the state laws that govern higher education in the state where their chosen four-year college is located. Silver reminds readers of the decentralized U.S. education system and that each state has its own board of education, policies, and laws. A student who intends to transfer out of state should be especially cognizant of this information. For example, there are states which limit the number of credits for a bachelor's degree. A student who exceeds the state's credit threshold will have to pay out-of-state tuition rates because the college will not get reimbursed by the state.

The Internet is another wealth of information on the topic of community college transfer. The author notes at least three states—New Jersey, Maryland, and California—have websites devoted solely to the topic of community college transferability. Throughout the book's 18 chapters, the author provided 69 websites related to the topics discussed in the book. As an added convenience, these sites are also listed in the Appendix in the order in which they appear in the book, divided by chapter.

Don Silver's book is bursting at the seams with a wealth of information presented in an enjoyable and well-articulated manner. This book is also timely, given the rising cost of higher education and the current fiscal situation in the United States. There is no doubt more people will be turning to community colleges to begin their college careers and may subsequently be seeking to transfer.

## Reference

DeWitt, J. (2015, March 24). "Snapshot report—Contribution of two-year institutions to four-year completions," *National Student Clearinghouse [Web site]*. Retrieved from <http://nscresearchcenter.org/snapshotreport-twoyearcontributionfouryearcompletions17/>