

December 2005

Pilot Transfer Center Survey of Palomar College Students

Completed for:

**Transfer Center
Palomar College**

**The Office of Institutional Research and Planning
Palomar College**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Each year more than 1,000 Palomar College students successfully transfer to four-year colleges and universities¹. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IR&P), in collaboration with the Transfer Center Director Theresa Hogan Egkan, conducted a pilot survey of Palomar College students to discover the process by which students acquire the information they need to transfer successfully. The purpose of this survey was twofold: First we wanted to gain insight into Palomar College students' knowledge about transfer to a four-year institution, knowledge about how to obtain transfer information, and what additional transfer information they would like to receive, and second, we were striving to develop a process by which we could capture this information on an ongoing basis. This report summarizes the results of a survey of 328 Palomar College students attending at least one credit class on the San Marcos campus during the Fall semester of 2005. The information collected in this survey and in subsequent studies will help the Transfer Center tailor and direct their services to our students more effectively.

Overall Observations

The results of this study provide a detailed description of Palomar College students' transfer intentions, knowledge, preparation, and attitudes. Some of the key findings are listed below:

- Generally, there is a low level of transfer knowledge among the Palomar College students surveyed. However, this knowledge tends to increase as the number of semesters taking classes at Palomar increases.
 - The majority of transfer-oriented students at Palomar College are unaware of the number and maximum units needed to transfer.
 - Awareness of the priority deadline for transfer is not wide-spread, even among transfer-oriented students.
 - There is generally high awareness of the Math and English classes that are transferable to CSU and UC schools. There is higher awareness for English classes than math classes.
 - There is a low level of awareness of where to obtain transfer information online, but a higher level of awareness of where to obtain transfer information at Palomar College.
- The majority of the transfer-oriented students surveyed did not feel they knew all the requirements to transfer.
- There is a time-lag between when students' decide they wish to transfer and when they seek the information that will help them transfer.
- Transfer-oriented students meet with counselors less frequently than they ought to and less frequently than they feel they ought to.
- Those students who go to the Transfer Center at Palomar College are typically satisfied with the services they receive.
- Both transfer-oriented and students with other educational goals are interested in attending transfer-related workshops at Palomar.
- Almost half of the transfer-oriented students surveyed had not developed an Educational Plan with a counselor.

The majority of the students taking credit classes on the San Marcos campus intend to transfer to a four-year institution. The majority of them are aware of where to obtain transfer information at Palomar, but they have poor knowledge of the specifics of transferring, and are aware that they do not know all that they need to. Although they have the goal and do not have all the information they need to obtain that goal, our students are not taking the next logical step of seeking the information and services they need

¹ California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/OnLineData/TransferPathway.asp>

to achieve that goal. Taken as a whole it would appear that there is a disconnection between wanting to transfer and seeking the information and tools needed to successfully do so.

The recommendation for future research would be to monitor this situation and to further probe the reasons for it. This will provide valuable information regarding this “barrier” keeping students from obtaining information and services, and will assist the Transfer Center and the College as a whole in helping students overcome this barrier.

This survey was intended as a pilot to obtain a snapshot of the transfer knowledge and preparation of students who take classes on the main Palomar College campus. We believe that the results of this study identify potential areas for targeting and improving the excellent information and services offered by the Transfer Center. The results should not be generalized beyond these students to those who primarily take classes at Palomar’s education centers.

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INTRODUCTION

Each year more than 1,000 Palomar College students successfully transfer to four-year colleges and universities². The Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IR&P), in collaboration with the Transfer Center Director, Theresa Hogan Egkan conducted a pilot survey of Palomar College students to discover the process by which students acquire the information they need to transfer successfully. The purpose of this survey was twofold: we wanted to gain insight into Palomar College students' knowledge about transfer to a four-year institution, knowledge about how to obtain transfer information, and what additional transfer information they would like to receive, and we were striving to develop a process by which we could capture this information on an ongoing basis. The information collected in this survey and in subsequent studies will help the Transfer Center tailor and direct their services to our students more effectively.

During the 7th and 8th weeks of the Fall 2005 semester we collected data from 328 students taking classes on the San Marcos campus of Palomar College. To ensure a broad cross-section of students, we surveyed students enrolled in transfer-level, pre transfer-level, and vocational credit classes (see Appendix A for a list of classes surveyed). This report summarizes the results of that survey.

METHODS

Survey Respondents

The Transfer Center is currently located on the San Marcos campus of Palomar College. The target population for this survey was students taking at least one credit class held on the San Marcos campus. From this population we calculated that we needed to survey at least 300 students to obtain valid results.

To ensure a final sample of at least 300 students, we approximated needing to survey classes with a combined roster of enrollments totaling at least 500 to account for students who were not in attendance the day of the survey, who might be in more than one of the sampled classes, and those who had dropped the class but had not been removed from the roster right away.

Nineteen classes were randomly selected from three broad groups of classes held on the San Marcos Campus.

- Pre-transfer level classes
- Transfer level classes
- Vocational credit classes

The rosters for these classes indicated a total of 520 potential students.

Two classes of our initial sample of 19 did not participate in the survey. During the survey period, each of the remaining 17 classes was visited once to survey the students in attendance that day. A total of 328 students participated in the survey. The final sample by class type is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey Participants by Class Type

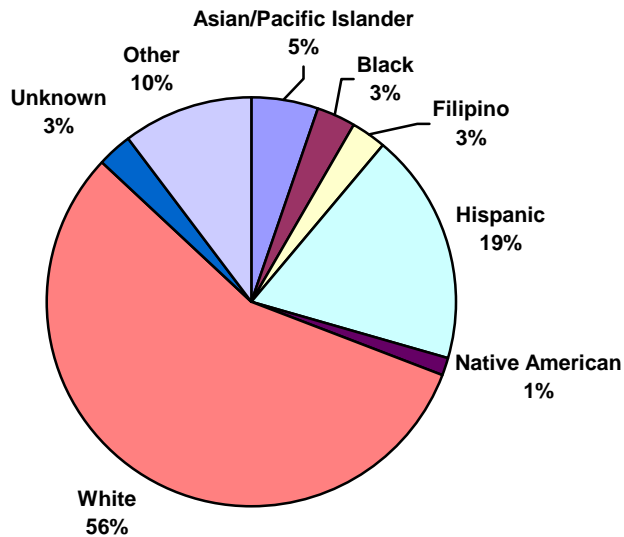
Class Type	Classes		Students	
	#	#	%	
Pre-transfer level classes	6	113	34.5	
Transfer level classes	5	125	38.1	
Vocational Classes	6	90	27.4	
Total	17	328	100.0	

² California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/OnLineData/TransferPathway.asp>

A review of the gender distribution of the 328 respondents indicated that 48% were male and 49% female³. The mean age of respondents overall was 24. However, the mean age of students from the vocational classes was 27.

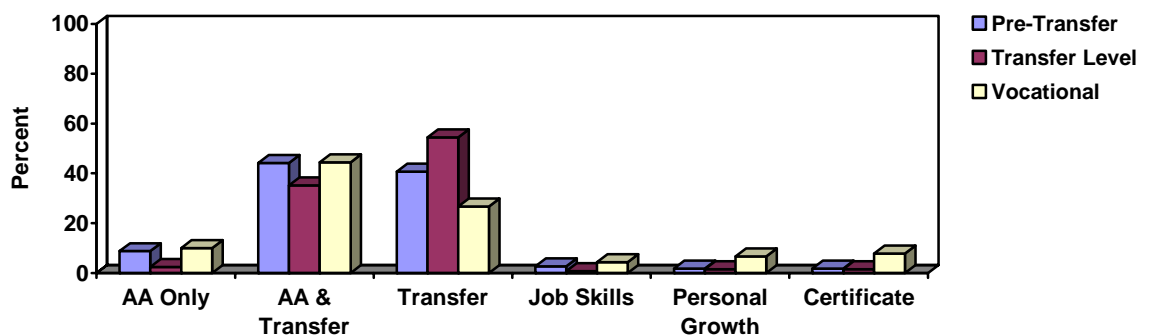
Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the ethnicity of survey respondents. The ethnic breakdown of the respondents in this survey is representative of the ethnic breakdown of Palomar College students enrolled in the Fall 2005 semester⁴.

Figure 1: Ethnicity of Survey Respondents



The survey was completed by students regardless of their reasons for taking classes at Palomar College. A review of the educational goals reported by the students in our sample reveals that 269 (83%) intend to transfer to a four-year institution (either with or without an AA degree). Figure 2 depicts the educational goals of students broken down by class type. From this graph, it is clear that although students taking vocational classes have a wider range of educational goals, the majority of them indicated that they intend to transfer.

Figure 2: Educational Goal of Survey Respondents by Class Type



Educational goal is important to keep in mind during the analysis of this survey, as the knowledge of, and preparation for, transfer may be different for each group of students depending upon their overall educational goals. Therefore, where appropriate students who indicate “transfer” or “AA and transfer” as

³ 4% of respondents did not indicate gender on their survey

⁴ Source: Palomar College FactBook, Fall 2005 data. <http://www.palomar.edu/factbook/Sec04/fb0406.pdf>

their educational goal will be considered “transfer-oriented students” and compared with those who are not, so we can isolate the knowledge, needs, and experiences of those students who are the primary “clients” of the Transfer Center.

Survey Development

During the Summer of 2005, the Office of Institutional Research & Planning (IR&P) worked in conjunction with the Transfer Center Director to formulate the questions in the survey. The survey was loosely based on the Student Services Learning Outcomes and Satisfaction Survey developed by and used at Mendocino Community College⁵. This instrument was modified and added to, to ensure it was relevant to Palomar College, but could also yield data that could be compared with Mendocino College.

The four broad areas of inquiry included in the survey are⁶:

- Existing Transfer Knowledge
- Obtaining Transfer Information
- Transfer Preparation
- Palomar Transfer/Counseling Center Usage

Once a final draft was developed, it was reviewed by the staff at the Transfer Center and then approved. The final questions were then formatted to enable scanning into REMARK survey software.

The final instrument was a three page paper and pencil survey containing 34 questions. The survey included open-ended questions, multiple choice, and attitude measurements on Likert-type scales. Students were required to fill in pre-printed bubbles to indicate their answers and to write in their responses where appropriate. The survey contained some demographic questions such as age, gender, and ethnicity, but did not contain any questions or identifiers that would enable responses to be linked back to an individual student. All survey responses were completely anonymous, and students were made aware of this during the verbal instructions they received from the survey administrator. Appendix B contains the final survey instrument used in the study.

Survey Administration

Surveys were administered to students in the selected classes during the 7th and 8th weeks of the Fall 2005 semester. Staff from IR&P and the Transfer Center approached each instructor ahead of time to gain access to their class. At the start of the appointed class session, the survey administrator introduced themselves, asked the students to participate in the survey, and gave brief instructions. The surveys were handed out and the students completed them in class time while the survey administrator waited at the front of the classroom. The administrator collected the completed surveys from the students, thanked them and the instructor for their assistance and handed out Transfer Center brochures to any student who raised their hand and indicated that they would like extra transfer information. Each survey session took approximately 10 minutes to conduct.

Data Analysis

The completed paper surveys were scanned into REMARK OMR software in the IR&P office. Data were then exported into statistical software (SPSS) for analysis. Quantitative data responses were analyzed for frequencies and percentages and cross-tabulated with other variables where necessary. Qualitative data (open-ended responses) were categorized into groups by theme and tabulated. The actual comments and responses to the open-ended questions are very rich in content and are worth examining. These are included in appendices C and D.

⁵ Please contact the Palomar College Office of Institutional Research & Planning for a copy of this survey.

⁶ Four questions pertaining to the Palomar College Student Health Center were included also. These data are presented in a different report.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section provides findings from the survey of students taking classes on the San Marcos campus of Palomar College. The findings are organized by survey topic area in the following order: Transfer knowledge, obtaining transfer information, transfer preparation, and Transfer/Counseling Center usage.

Transfer Knowledge

The survey addressed a number of areas related to specific information about the rules and regulations of transferring to a four-year university. Students must be aware of and adhere to these rules in order to transfer successfully. This part of the survey assessed how well Palomar College students know the rules of transfer, and consisted of questions about the number of units required for transfer, key transfer information such as application deadlines, and which classes are and are not transferable.

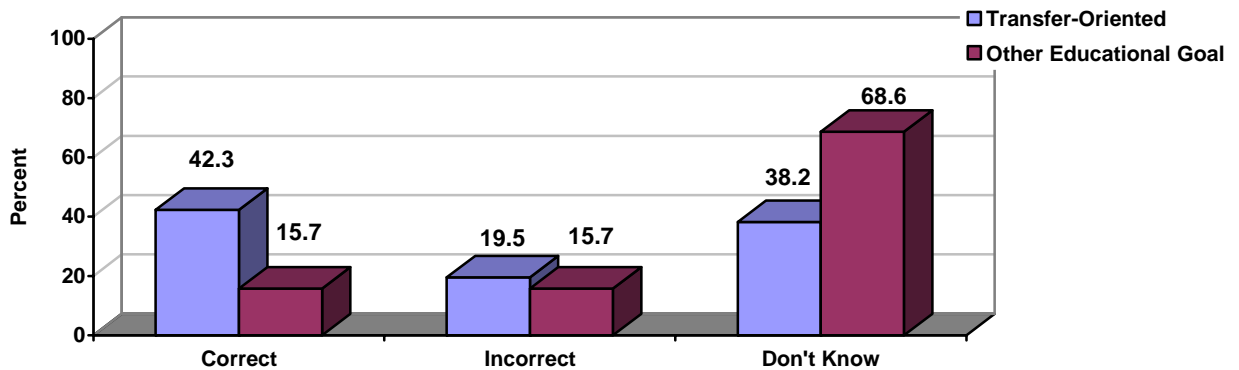
Transfer Units

Two questions relate specifically to the number of units required to transfer to a UC or CSU as a Junior, and the maximum number of units that will transfer. The answers to both questions were grouped into "correct", "incorrect", and "don't know" (if the students indicated that they didn't know the answer or if they failed to answer the question). The data were split between transfer-oriented students and students with other educational goals.

Students were asked how many transferable units were needed to transfer to a CSU or UC as a Junior. The correct answer is 60 units.

Only 38% of the students that we surveyed correctly answered the question relating to the number of transferable units needed for transfer to a UC or CSU. When these students are compared by educational goal, it is clear that those who are transfer-oriented have more knowledge about this requirement of transfer (see Figure 3). Although they have greater knowledge than those students who do not intend to transfer, only 42% of transfer-oriented students answered the question correctly.

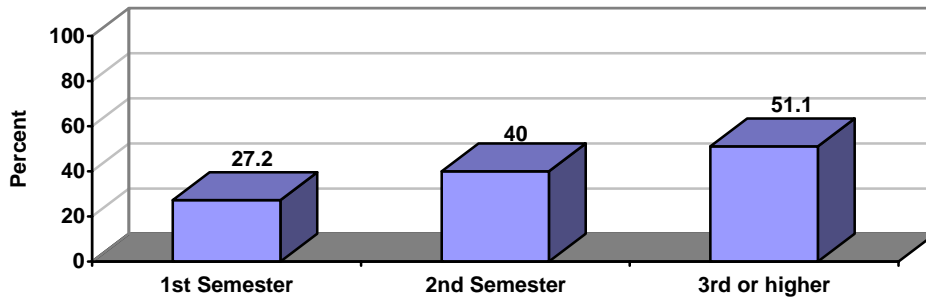
Figure 3: Number of Transferable Units Needed to Transfer as a Junior to a CSU or UC by Educational Goal



When the data from the transfer-oriented students is broken down further, we can see a trend emerging. The percentage of transfer-oriented students who correctly answered this question increases as number of semesters at Palomar increases.

For example, from Figure 4 we can see the percentage of transfer-oriented students who know how many transferable units they need to transfer to a CSU or UC as a Junior climbs from 27% to 51% as the number of classes taken at Palomar increases.

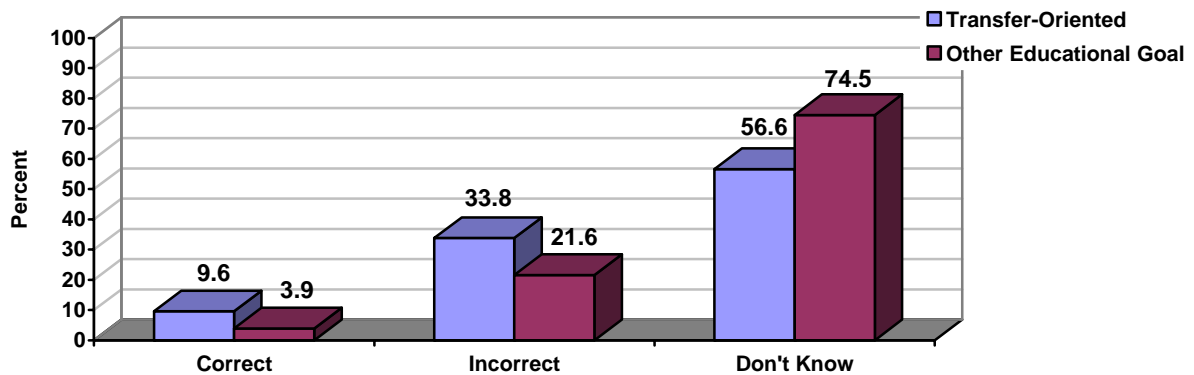
Figure 4: Correct Number of Transferable Units Needed to Transfer as a Junior to a CSU or UC by Semesters Attended at Palomar Transfer-Oriented Students only (N=269)



This trend indicates that transfer information may be acquired over time. This may be due to a lag in seeking information after the decision to transfer, and/or a delay in making the decision to transfer until a semester or two at Palomar.

It is clear that most of our students (even those who intend to transfer) are not aware of how many units they need to transfer. They have even less awareness of the *maximum number* of units that will transfer to a CSU or UC from a Community College. Only 9% of the students we surveyed could tell us that 70 units was the correct answer.

Figure 5: Maximum Number of Transferable Units that will Transfer to a CSU or UC by Educational Goal



Only 10% of transfer-oriented students could answer this question correctly (see Figure 5). This percentage only increased to 15% for students who had been at Palomar for at 3 or more semesters.

The answers to these two questions indicate that the majority of transfer-oriented students at Palomar College do not have a high level of knowledge about the units involved in transferring to a four-year institution in California. Although our students tend to acquire this knowledge as during the course of their career at Palomar, it is clear that they do not have a good grasp of it even after three or more semesters here.

Transferable Classes

In addition to knowing how many classes to take in preparation to transfer, it is important for a student to understand which classes to take. Understanding which classes are transferable to which four-year university system is knowledge that will assist the students' selection of the correct classes to enable them to transfer in a timely manner.

To gauge this knowledge, we asked the students four questions relating to the transferability of classes at Palomar College. We asked which Math and which English classes transferred to the CSU and the UC systems. The students were given a list of classes (class number and name e.g. Math 110: College Algebra) and asked to select the classes that transferred to a CSU school and then which classes transferred to a UC school. Within each of these lists were 2 or 3 classes that did not transfer and 3 or 4 classes that did, and the option to indicate that they were not sure.

The answers were coded as follows:

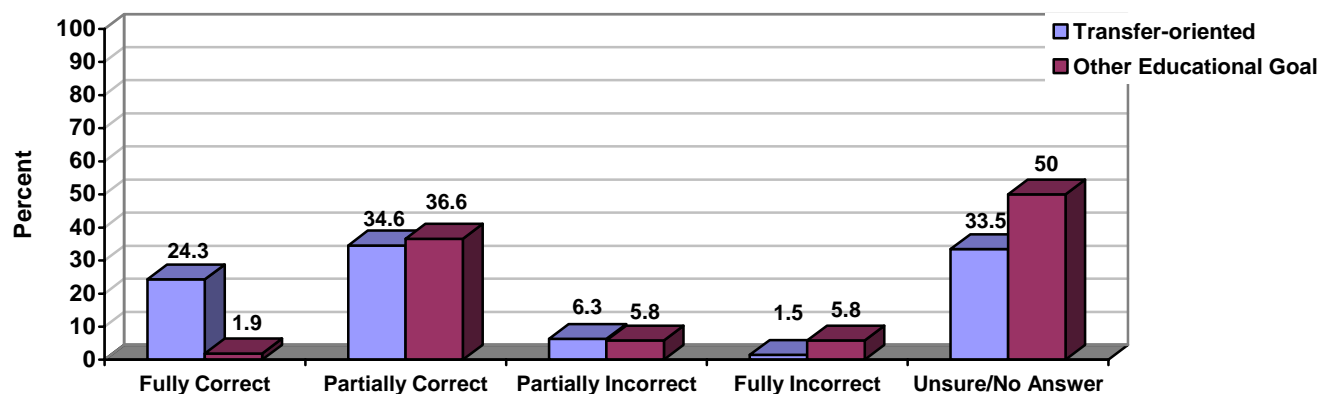
- **Fully Correct:** Student selected **all** of the transferable classes and did not select any non-transferable classes
- **Partially Correct:** Student selected **some** of the transferable classes and did not select any non-transferable classes.
- **Partially Incorrect:** Student selected **some** of the transferable classes and some or all of the non-transferable classes.
- **Fully Incorrect:** Student selected **some or all** of the non-transferable classes and did not select any transferable classes
- **Unsure/No Answer:** Student selected “unsure” or did not answer the question.

The distinction between partially correct and partially incorrect is an important one. Those students who were partially incorrect indicated that they believed that one or more nontransferable class was in fact transferable. This has implications for students taking classes that they mistakenly believe will transfer.

Math

For math, 24% of transfer-oriented students correctly selected the classes that were transferable to a CSU school. A further 35% answered the question partially correctly, meaning that they selected some of the transferable classes but did not select any of the non-transferable classes (see Figure 6). Therefore 59% of transfer-oriented students were not likely to take a nontransferable math class in the false belief that it would transfer to a CSU school.

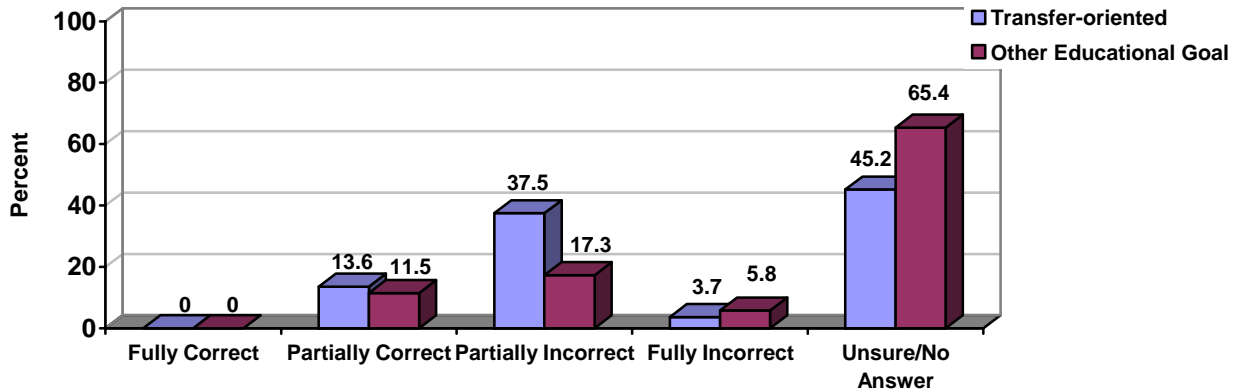
Figure 6: CSU Transferable Math Classes by Educational Goal



Interestingly, students who were surveyed in a math class (and therefore in the math transfer stream) were no more likely than any transfer-oriented students enrolled in other classes to correctly guess the answer to this question.

Unfortunately, students did not fare as well at selecting which math classes transferred to a UC school. No transfer-oriented students answered this question correctly, and only 14% answered the question partially correctly (see Figure 7). Clearly there is far less understanding of the UC transferable math classes at Palomar compared with the CSU transferable classes.

Figure 7: UC Transferable Math Classes by Educational Goal



The reason for the sharp decrease in fully correct for UC transferable class compared with CSU transferable classes was Math 115: Trigonometry. Math 115 was included on both lists, but is transferable to a CSU school but not a UC school. The vast majority of students mistakenly included Math 115 as transferable to a UC also. This would indicate that there is a lack of clarity regarding Math 115. It is possible that there is an assumption that this class transfers to a UC because it does to a CSU.

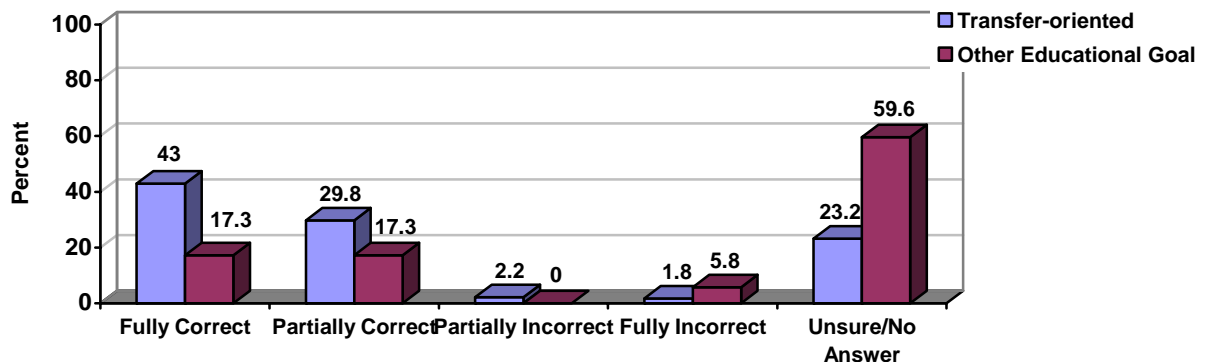
English

There was a much higher awareness of which English classes transferred to four-year colleges than which math classes transferred.

For English, 43% of the transfer-oriented Palomar College students in our sample correctly selected the classes that were transferable to a CSU school. A further 30% answered the question partially correctly, meaning that they selected some of the transferable classes but did not select any of the non-transferable classes. Therefore 73% of transfer-oriented students were not likely to take a nontransferable English class in the false belief that it would transfer to a CSU school.

A very small percentage got the answer fully or partially incorrect (see Figure 8).

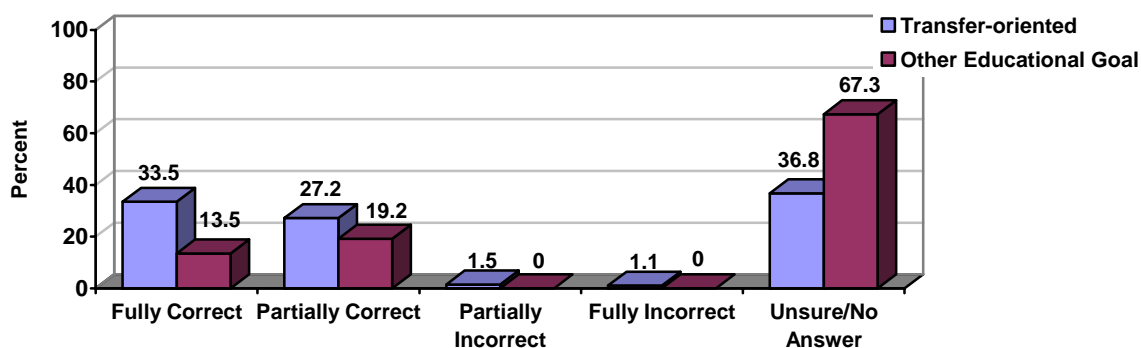
Figure 8: CSU Transferable English Classes by Educational Goal



Although, slightly lower than the results for the transferability of English classes to CSU schools, 34% of the transfer-oriented students in our sample correctly identified the classes that transferred to the UC system (see Figure 9). A further 27% answered the question partially correctly, meaning that they selected some of the transferable classes but did not select any of the non-transferable classes. Therefore 73% of

transfer-oriented students were not likely to take a nontransferable English class in the false belief that it would transfer to a UC school. Again, a very small percentage of our students got the answer to this question either partially or fully incorrect.

Figure 9: UC Transferable English Classes by Educational Goal



To further explore the increased knowledge of English classes over math classes, we compared the results of our students to the students who took a similar survey at Mendocino Community College (a smaller, rural college). Following the pattern we found, more Mendocino students also knew the transferability of English classes compared with math classes.

In summary, more than 70% of transfer-oriented students at Palomar are aware of the transferability of math and English classes. This indicates that transfer-oriented students are receiving and retaining accurate information about these core transferable course areas. Although this is a positive finding, it indicates that almost a third of our transfer-oriented students are unaware of the transferability of math and English classes at Palomar. The one piece of information that was not widely understood and may have implications for our students was the non-transferability of Math 115 to the UC system.

Pattern of Classes to Follow

To gauge what classes beyond math and English transfer-oriented students knew to take, we asked students a question about the general education pattern they should follow if they are planning to transfer to a UC school and wish to complete the lower division general education classes at Palomar College. The answer to this question is IGETC. This was a multiple choice question and students could select their answer from a choice of CSU GE Pattern, IGETC, Seven course pattern, and Major Prep.

Of those transfer-oriented students who answered the question, 42% correctly chose IGETC compared with 12% of students with other educational goals. This indicates that there is some awareness of the name of the IGETC educational pattern and this awareness is substantially higher for transfer-oriented students than students with other educational goals.

Although this is a positive result, we must keep in mind that correctly identifying the name the educational pattern to follow doesn't necessarily imply that students are aware of the exact courses to take to fulfill the IGETC pattern. Additional questions could be included in future surveys to gauge the level of this knowledge. It is also important to remember that the vast majority of our students transfer to CSU schools rather than UC.

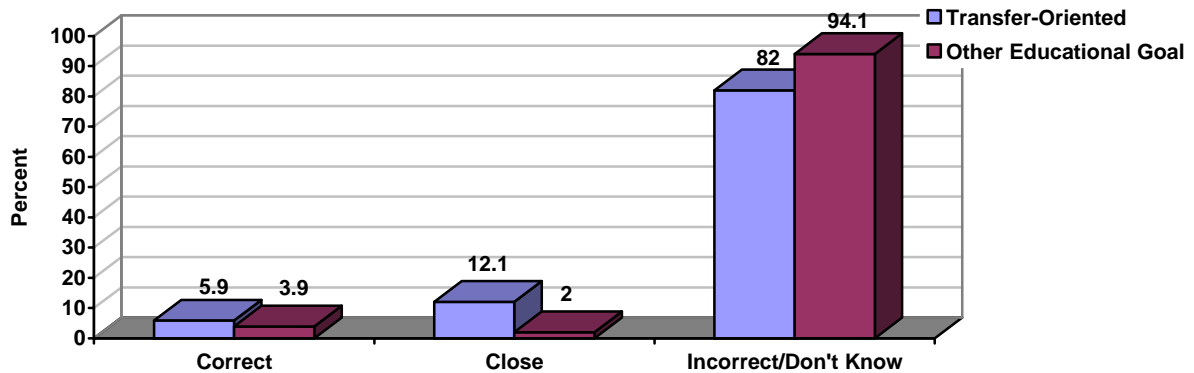
Key Transfer Information

In addition to questions about transferable units and classes, we asked about another very important aspect of transfer: the priority deadline for applying. The priority deadline for applying is a well-publicized and very important piece of transfer information.

The priority deadline for applying to transfer to a UC or CSU is November 30th the year prior to intended transfer. The answers to this question were coded “correct” if the student answered November 30th (or November 31st), “close” if they answered with a date in the fall semester earlier than November 30th, and incorrect if they failed to answer at all, answered with a date in the fall later than November 30th, or if they answered with any other date or date range outside the prior fall semester.

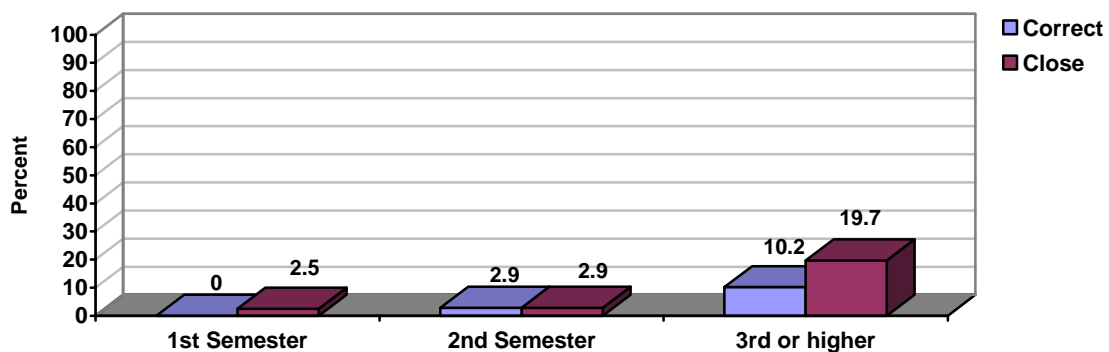
Figure 10 shows the percentage of both transfer-oriented and other students’ awareness of the transfer application deadline. Only 6% of the transfer-oriented students indicated the correct deadline date. A further 12% were close. Therefore only 18% of transfer-oriented students in our sample had any awareness of what date they needed to submit their application to a CSU or UC college.

Figure 10: Awareness of Priority Transfer Application Deadline by Educational Goal



The same trend emerged as for other transfer information. The longer a student has been taking classes at Palomar College, the more likely they are to know specific transfer-related information. 30% of students who had been taking classes at Palomar for 3 or more semesters either knew or guessed close to the priority application deadline compared with 2.5% of transfer-oriented students in their first semester (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Awareness of Priority Transfer Application Deadline by Number of Semesters at Palomar Transfer-Oriented Students only (N=269)

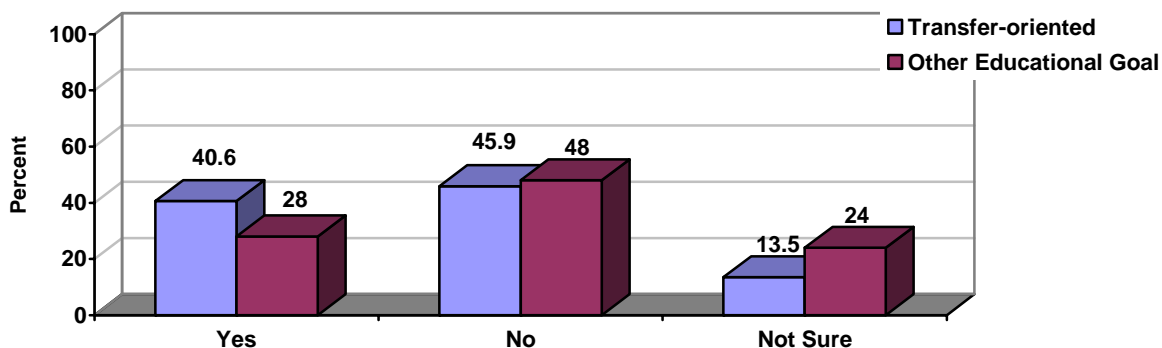


It is clear that there is very little awareness of the priority application deadline, even for transfer-oriented students. This lack of awareness could have an impact on transfer success and timing, as this date is almost a full year prior to intended transfer.

Cross-enrollment

The last question we asked regarding transfer knowledge was about students' awareness of Palomar College's cross-enrollment program with CSUSM, SDSU, and UCSD. From Figure 12, it is clear that almost half of the transfer-oriented, and almost 30% of students with other goals indicated that they are aware of this program. What this question does not answer is how many of these students are enrolled in the program, know exactly what the program offers, or how many are interested in enrolling. These may be topics for a future survey.

Figure 12: Awareness of Palomar's Cross-Enrollment Program



Summary: Transfer Knowledge

We asked the students in our sample a number of questions to gauge their level of transfer knowledge and when they acquired it. From the survey it is clear that the transfer knowledge of Palomar College students is sporadic: strong in some areas and weak in others.

- Palomar students do not have a high level of awareness of the number or maximum number of transferable units.
- Transfer-oriented Palomar students have quite a good grasp of the transferability of math and English classes
 - Our students have greater awareness of the transferability of English classes compared with math
 - The awareness of which math classes transfer to a CSU school is far greater than those that transfer to a UC. This is due to some confusion over the transferability of Math 115: Trigonometry
- There is a very low awareness of the priority deadline for submitting an application to transfer
- All transfer knowledge increases as the number of semesters at Palomar increases
- There is a fairly high awareness of name of the educational pattern to follow in order to transfer to a UC school
- There is a fairly high awareness of Palomar's cross-enrollment program.

Obtaining Transfer Information

Another important aspect of transfer knowledge is the knowing where to obtain transfer information. We asked students questions about obtaining transfer information both on and off campus, and we asked them how well they thought they knew where to obtain transfer information.

Online

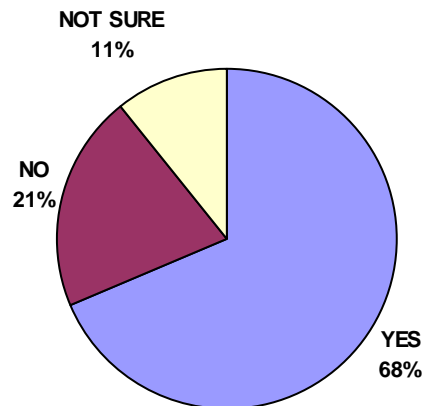
The website www.assist.org is the official repository of transfer information for California, and a resource that transfer-oriented students should know about. We asked the students in our survey if they knew which website allowed them to compare Palomar College classes to the equivalent CSU/UC preparation for major classes to see how many would identify www.assist.org.

Of the transfer-oriented students, 73% did not have an answer for this question. Only 15% of transfer-oriented students and no students with other educational goals correctly identified www.assist.org as the website that would allow them to compare prep. for major classes. A further 4% of transfer-oriented students wrote in that www.csumentor.edu was such a site, and 7.4% indicated that they could get the information at www.palomar.edu. These were the only close guesses made. Therefore, only 26.4% of transfer-oriented students could make a reasonable guess at a good source of online transfer information.

On Campus

To get a more general feel for how confident students' felt they were about obtaining transfer information at Palomar, we asked them directly. Almost 70% of transfer-oriented students felt they knew where to obtain transfer information on campus (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13: "Do you feel that you know where to get transfer information at Palomar?"
Transfer-Oriented Students only (N=269)**



Unlike knowledge about transfer requirements which tended to increase for students who had been at Palomar longer, the percentage of students who felt they knew where to obtain transfer information at Palomar was about 70% for transfer-oriented students regardless of how long they had been taking classes here.

Summary: Obtaining Transfer Information

These results would indicate that:

- The majority of transfer-oriented Palomar College students feel they know where to obtain transfer information
- Specific knowledge of where to obtain transfer information online is not high for either transfer-oriented students or those with other educational goals.

What the answers to these questions do not tell us, is exactly what students have done to obtain transfer information (both on and off campus) and at what stage of their academic career they sought transfer information from various sources.

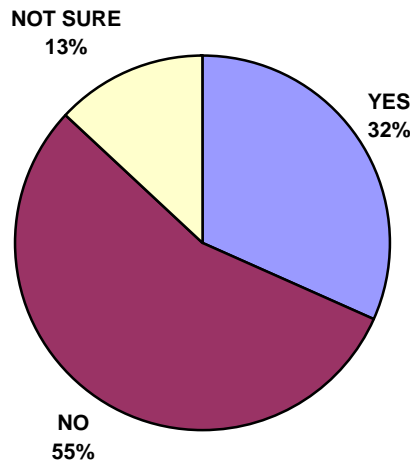
Transfer Preparation

To get a sense of students' awareness of their own level of transfer knowledge, we asked a variety of questions about how well prepared to transfer they felt they were, and at what point they had sought transfer information at Palomar College.

The results in this section will primarily focus on the responses of the 269 students who indicated that transferring was their goal at Palomar. We will contrast these data with responses from the students with other goals where appropriate.

From Figure 14 it is clear that the majority of transfer-oriented students do not feel that they know all the requirements for transfer. Only 32% indicated that they felt they knew all they needed to know.

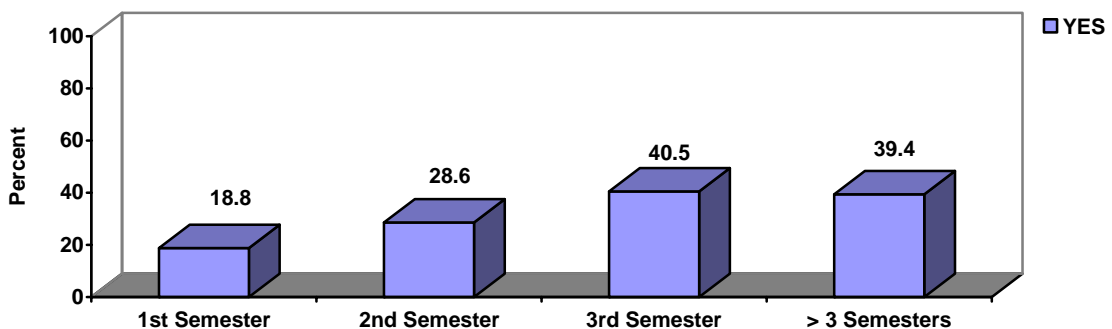
**Figure 14: “Do you feel that you know all the requirements for transfer?”
Transfer-Oriented Students only (N=269)**



To explore the idea that it may take students a little time after their arrival at Palomar to seek out the information they need to help them achieve their transfer goals, we split this group of students up into two sub-groups: those who were in their first or second semester at Palomar and those who had been here longer, and compared their responses.

Figure 15 indicates that about 19% of transfer-oriented students in their first semester feel they know the requirements for transfer. This percentage rises to almost 29% of students in their second semester, and to 41% of students in their third semester. The percentage remains at around 40% for those students who have been at Palomar for more than three semesters.

**Figure 15: “Do you feel that you know all the requirements for transfer?” =YES
by number of Semesters at Palomar
Transfer-Oriented Students only (N=269)**



This supports our earlier findings that transfer knowledge (and perception of) tends to increase as the length of time spent taking classes at Palomar College increases.

These findings would indicate that students acquire transfer information during the first three semesters they are at Palomar, but that more than half of transfer-oriented students are not fully aware of the requirements to transfer by the end of their third semester.

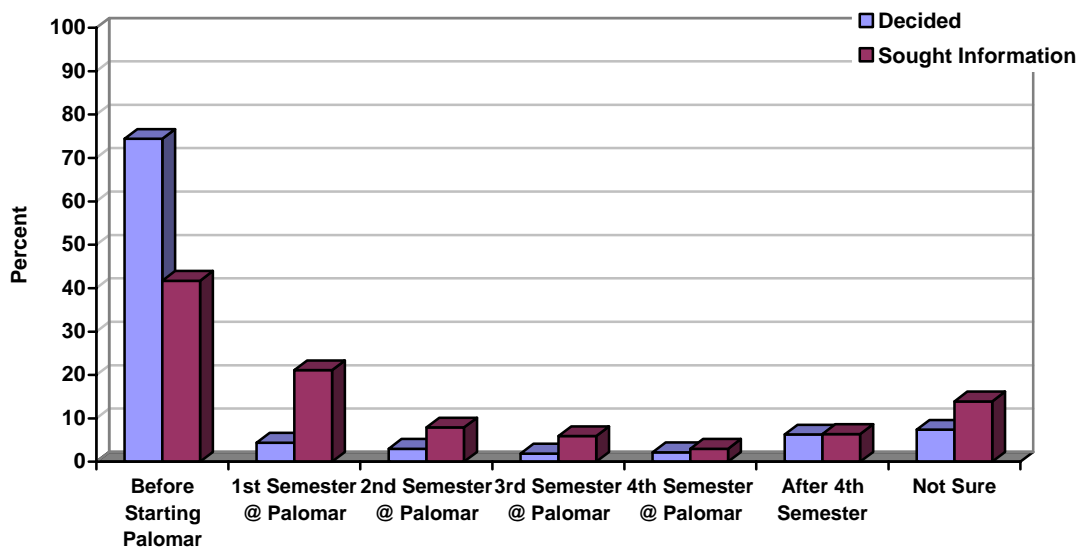
Viewed in conjunction with results from the previous section, although a high percentage of transfer-oriented students did not feel that they knew all the requirements for transfer, the majority of them (68%) felt that they knew where to obtain transfer information at Palomar. It would appear that there is a sizable proportion of transfer-oriented students who know they wish to transfer to a four-year school, know they do not have all the information they need in order to transfer, know where to obtain this information on campus, but have yet to obtain this information.

The point in their careers' when Palomar students decide that transferring is a goal, may help shed some light on this situation. We asked students at what point in their Palomar career they made the decision to transfer and at what point they sought transfer information.

The majority (74%) of transfer-oriented students had decided that they wished to transfer from Palomar to a four-year college before they started classes at Palomar. Essentially they entered with the intention to transfer. Only 42% of transfer-oriented students sought information about the classes they should take in order to transfer prior to commencing classes at Palomar.

Figure 16 shows the time lag between the decision to transfer and the seeking of information to assist with the transfer process. The majority of transfer-oriented students seek information either the semester they decide to transfer or the next semester. What this tells us is that there is a lag between the decision to transfer and seeking out the information to successfully transfer.

**Figure 16: “When did you decide that you wanted to transfer?”
& “When did you seek information about what classes to take to transfer?”
Transfer-Oriented Students only (N=269)**



What we do not know is what negative impact (if any) this time lag has had on student’s academic plans. To gain some insight into what impact this time lag had on student’s transfer plans, it would be of value to ask a group of transfer-oriented or successful transfer students some retrospective questions about their preparedness to transfer and what they would do differently if they could go back in time.

Summary: Transfer Preparation

Overall, there is a low level of transfer preparation among the transfer-oriented students at Palomar College. Although they intend to transfer to a four-year school, and know where to obtain transfer information on campus, students are not obtaining this information in a timely manner. A qualitative piece of data that may be of interest was the overall response of students as they were taking the survey. At the end of the survey, the survey administrator thanked the students for their participation and then offered some Transfer Center information in the form of the standard Transfer Center brochure. Almost every student in every class requested a brochure and thanked the survey administrator for providing the information. There was an overall sense of desire for more transfer information, even though the majority of students indicate that they know where to obtain this information on campus. Further surveys or focus groups could be used to find out more about the barriers that are preventing students from seeking the information that they need to transfer.

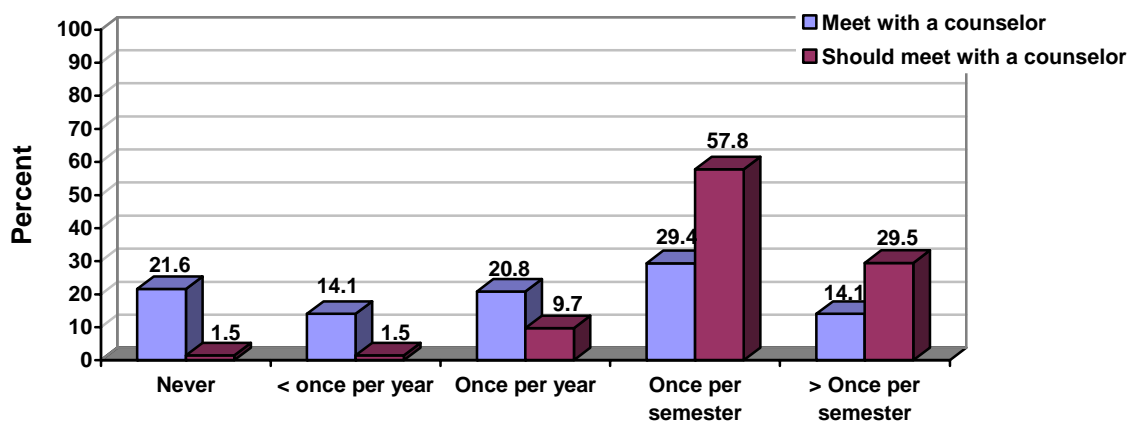
Transfer/Counseling Center Usage

As the counselors and the Transfer Center on the San Marcos campus are the key place for obtaining transfer information at Palomar College, we asked students how often they had used these services and how often they felt they should do so.

Counselor Meetings

We asked the students how often they met with a counselor and how often they thought they should meet with a counselor.

**Figure 17: “How often do you meet with a counselor (not counting in-class meetings)?” & “How often do you think you should meet with a counselor?”
Transfer-Oriented Students only (N=269)**



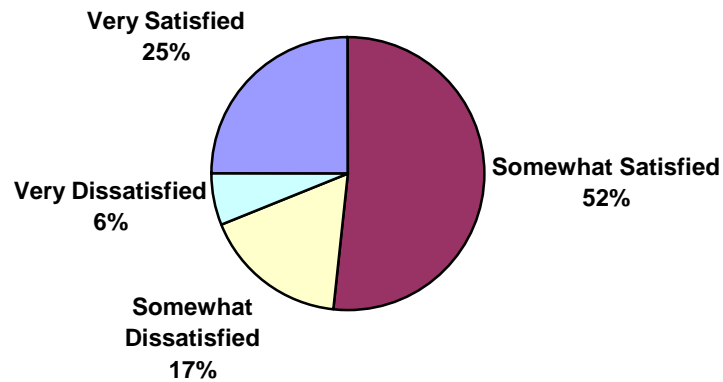
From Figure 17 it is clear that there is large disconnect between the number of times transfer-oriented students believe they should meet with a counselor and the number of times they actually do so within a given year. For example, 58% believe that they should meet with a counselor once per semester, yet only 29% actually do so. It would be of interest to ask these students why they do not meet with a counselor as often as they feel they should.

Transfer/Counseling Center Satisfaction

Students' rating of their satisfaction with the services they receive at the Transfer/Counseling Center, may offer a little insight to their behavior in terms of seeking transfer advice. When asked their satisfaction with the services they received from the Transfer/Counseling Center the majority (56%) of transfer-oriented students who had previously met with a counselor rated their experiences as either very or somewhat satisfying (see Figure 18).

Most of these students rated their experience(s) as “somewhat satisfying” which would indicate that the Transfer/Counseling Center is doing a good job, but that there is room for improvement. It would be of interest to ask these students what they feel could have been improved with regard to the information and services they received at the Transfer/Counseling Center.

Figure 18: “How satisfied are you with the services you received from the Transfer/Counseling Center?”
Transfer-Oriented Students who had met with a counselor at least once (N=197)



Summary: Transfer/Counseling Center

The issue with the services provided by the Transfer/Counseling Center appears to be one of underutilization of services rather than satisfaction with the services received. To summarize, although most of the students who have used the Transfer/Counseling Center are satisfied with the services they received, students who intend to transfer are not utilizing the Transfer/Counseling Center as frequently as they feel they should. Although the comments in appendices C and D shed some light onto why this may be, only a small number of the students surveyed chose to leave comments. Future surveys could probe more deeply into the reasons that students do not utilize the Transfer/Counseling Center at Palomar more.

Transfer Center Events

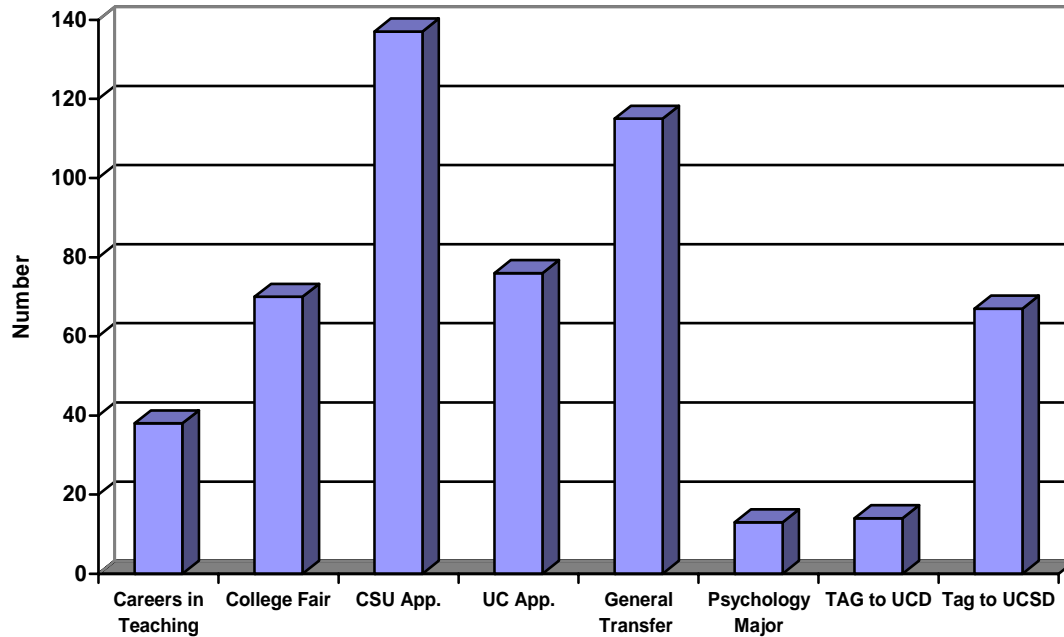
Transfer-related events are a good way for students to obtain information. To assist with the planning of transfer-related events on campus, we asked students some questions about the type of events they would be interested in attending.

Transfer Workshops

The attendance of a transfer workshop represents an excellent opportunity for Palomar students to acquire the transfer information they need. When asked what transfer workshops they would be interested in attending, 39% of transfer-oriented students and 43% of students with other educational goals indicated at least one workshop. It is interesting that so many students with other educational goals were interested in attending a transfer workshop. This would indicate that there may be some change of educational goals for some of these students, and would reinforce the notion explored earlier, that the intention to transfer may develop during the first few semesters of attendance at Palomar.

Students were presented with a list of possible transfer workshops and asked to check all of the workshops that they would be interested in attending. Figure 19 summarizes those responses. The CSU application, general transfer, and UC application workshops were the top three chosen by Palomar College students. This may be as expected as these topics are more general and may be applicable to more transfer-oriented or information seeking students than some of the more specific topics such as careers in teaching or psychology majors.

**Figure 19: Transfer Workshops Interested in Attending
All Students (N=328)**

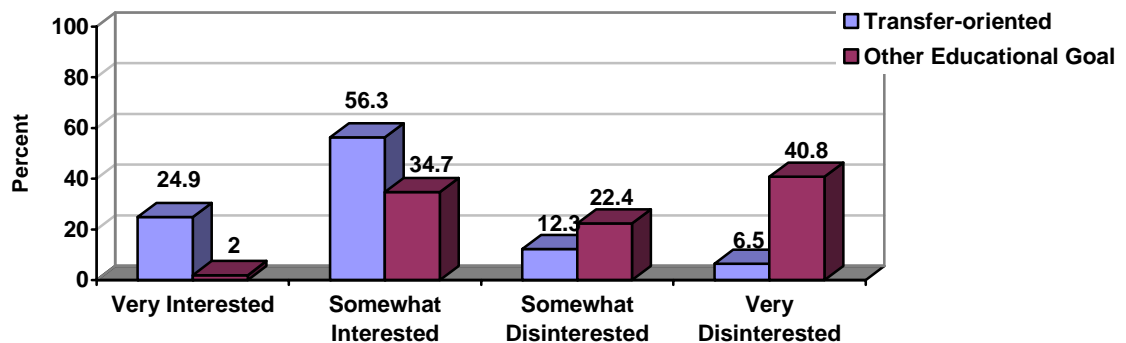


As we have seen in the previous question relating to frequency of counselor appointments, intention does not always turn into action with our students. Although there appears to be interest in attending the transfer workshops held at Palomar College, this interest has not translated into action in our sample of students. When asked if they had ever attended a transfer workshop at Palomar, only 12 out of the 328 students in our sample indicated that they had attended one. This represents 4.4% of our transfer-oriented sub-sample. Even accounting for those students who are in their first semester at Palomar, and may not have had a chance to attend a transfer workshop, this is a very small percentage.

TransferFest

We asked a question about TransferFest – a day on campus featuring different components of transferring to a four-year institution - to gauge students’ interest in such an event. The vast majority (81%) of transfer-oriented students stated that they were interested in attending a TransferFest on campus. Figure 20 shows the responses to that question.

Figure 20: “Would you be interested in attending a TransferFest – a day on campus featuring different components of transferring to a 4-year college or university?”



Interestingly, 37% of students with goals other than transfer were interested in attending TransferFest. This further underscores the notion that the educational goals of Palomar College students are not set in stone upon enrollment. The desire to transfer to a four-year school or learn more about it may develop over time.

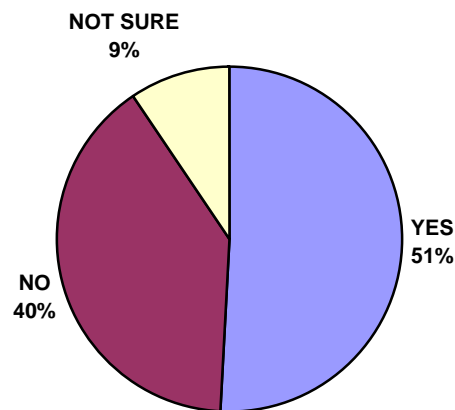
In summary, there appears to be a high level of interest among transfer-oriented students and students with other educational goals in attending transfer-related events on campus. Despite this high level of interest, very few of the students we survey had actually attended such an event. Therefore, the challenge will be to motivate students to attend the transfer-related events that are held at Palomar.

Orientation and Education Plans

New student orientation and the development of an Education Plan (Ed Plan) are important steps in the journey to successful transfer. We asked Palomar students questions about orientation attendance and the development and adherence to an Ed. Plan to gauge the experiences of our sample. Of the students we surveyed, 34% said that they had attended a new student orientation. Transfer-oriented students were no more likely to have attended an orientation than students with other educational goals.

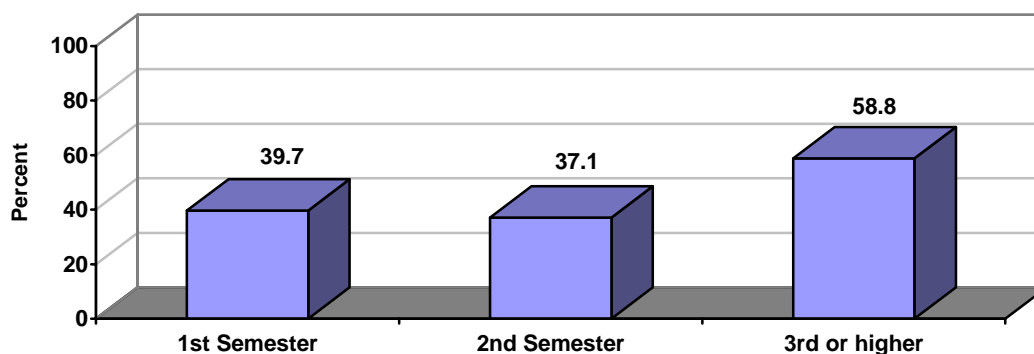
Interestingly, only 51% of transfer-oriented students had developed an Ed. Plan with a counselor (see Figure 21). This percentage seems low considering that an Ed. Plan would be a crucial element to successful transfer.

**Figure 21: Have Developed an Education Plan with a Counselor
Transfer-Oriented Students only (N=269)**



Although, there was a slight trend indicating that students who had been taking classes at Palomar for more than one semester were more likely to have developed an Ed. Plan, it only rose to 59% of transfer-oriented students who had been at Palomar for 3 or more semesters (see Figure 22). This would further indicate a gap between those students in need of an Ed. Plan and those who have developed one with a counselor.

**Figure 22: Developed an Education Plan with a Counselor
by Semesters Attended at Palomar
Transfer-Oriented Students only (N=269)**



Of the students who had developed an Ed. Plan with a counselor, 86% of them were following that plan. We asked the students who were no longer following their Ed. Plan why this was the case. The verbatim answers to this question are listed in Appendix C, but they fell into the broad categories of:

- work and other time constraints getting in the way
- not really being sure what their Ed. Plan was
- following an Ed. Plan they made on their own, and
- unhappiness or dissatisfaction with the plan created with the counselor.

Finally we asked students to provide any additional comment about the transfer information or services they had received at Palomar College. 36 out of the 328 students who participated in the survey gave comments and suggestions. These are listed verbatim in Appendix D.

Summary: Transfer/Counseling Center Usage

The overarching message that came from the questions that we asked about students' usage of the Transfer/Counseling Center is that there is an underutilization of transfer services and events by our students. Palomar Colleges' transfer-oriented students are aware of where they can obtain transfer information on campus, but are not utilizing the services of the Transfer Center as often or as soon as they should to ensure timely, successful transfer.

Those students who are visiting the Transfer Center are typically satisfied with the services they receive. The vast majority of those who have developed an Ed. Plan with a counselor are following it. The problem appears to lie in directing more students who know they want to transfer and know about the Transfer Center into using the services of the Transfer Center in a timely and regular fashion.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The majority of the students taking credit classes on the San Marcos campus intend to transfer to a four-year institution. The majority of them are aware of where to obtain transfer information at Palomar, but they have poor knowledge of the specifics of transferring, and are aware that they do not know all that they need to. Although they have the goal and do not have all the information they need to obtain that goal, our students are not taking the next logical step of seeking the information and services they need to achieve that goal. Taken as a whole it would appear that there is a disconnection between the wanting to transfer and seeking the information and tools needed to successfully do so.

The recommendation for future research would be to monitor this situation and to further probe the reasons for it. This will provide valuable information regarding this "barrier" keeping students from obtaining

information and services, and will assist the Transfer Center and the College as a whole in helping students overcome this barrier.

This survey was intended as a pilot to obtain a snapshot of the transfer knowledge and preparation of students who take classes on the main Palomar College campus. We believe that the results of this study identify potential areas for targeting and improving the excellent information and services offered by the Transfer Center. The results should not be generalized beyond these students to those who primarily take classes at Palomar's education centers.

APPENDIX A: List of Classes Surveyed

ACC 104	ACCT ELECTRONIC SPRDSHEET LAB
AJ 100	INTRO TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE
ECHT 203	DIGITAL/COMPUTER ELECTRONICS
ENG 10	ENGLISH ESSENTIALS
ENG 50	INTRODUCTORY COMPOSITION
ENG 205	INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE
GC 142	DIGITAL IMAGING/PHOTOSHOP III
MATH 10	BASIC ARITHMETIC
MATH 50	BEGINNING ALGEBRA
MATH 60	INTERMEDIATE ALGEBRA
MATH 130	CALCULUS FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES
NURS 110	LVN-RN TRANSITION
PHOT 105	INTER BLACK/WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY
POSC 102	INTRO U.S./CALIF GOVERNMENTS
PSYC 125	HUMAN SEXUALITY
READ 50	READING IMPROVEMENT
RTV 120	BASIC TELEVISION PRODUCTION

APPENDIX B: Survey



Please answer all of the questions and take your completed survey to the front of the classroom

Answer Selection: Correct = ● Incorrect = ☒ ☑ ●

Academic Experience and Goals

1. Why are you taking classes at Palomar College?
Please mark the **best** response.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Transfer | <input type="radio"/> Certificate |
| <input type="radio"/> AA and transfer | <input type="radio"/> Personal growth/fun |
| <input type="radio"/> AA only | <input type="radio"/> Improve job skills |

3. What is your highest *desired* educational level or goal (choose **one**)?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> GED | <input type="radio"/> Bachelor's degree |
| <input type="radio"/> H.S. Diploma | <input type="radio"/> Master's degree |
| <input type="radio"/> Cert. of achievement | <input type="radio"/> Ph.D. |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 year degree/AA | <input type="radio"/> M.D. or J.D |

2. What is *currently* your highest educational level?
(choose **one**)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Still in High School | <input type="radio"/> 2 year degree/AA |
| <input type="radio"/> Completed some H.S. | <input type="radio"/> Bachelor's degree |
| <input type="radio"/> GED | <input type="radio"/> Master's degree |
| <input type="radio"/> H.S. Diploma | <input type="radio"/> Ph.D. |
| <input type="radio"/> Cert. of achievement | <input type="radio"/> M.D. or J.D |

4. How many semesters have you been taking classes at Palomar College? _____

5. How many units are you taking this semester? _____

6. What is your overall Palomar GPA? _____

Graduation & Transfer Knowledge

1. What is your major/area of interest? _____ undecided

2. Which of the following Math courses *transfer* to a Cal State University (CSU)? **Mark all that apply.**

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Math 50: Beg. Algebra | <input type="radio"/> Math 100: Exploring Math | <input type="radio"/> Math 115: Trig | <input type="radio"/> Not sure |
| <input type="radio"/> Math 60: Int. Algebra | <input type="radio"/> Math 110: College Algebra | <input type="radio"/> Psyc/Soc 205 Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences | |

3. Which of the following Math courses *transfer* to a University of California (UC)? **Mark all that apply.**

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Math 50: Beg. Algebra | <input type="radio"/> Math 100: Exploring Math | <input type="radio"/> Math 115: Trig | <input type="radio"/> Not sure |
| <input type="radio"/> Math 60: Int. Algebra | <input type="radio"/> Math 110: College Algebra | <input type="radio"/> Psyc/Soc 205 Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences | |

4. Which of the following English courses *transfer* to a Cal State University (CSU)? **Mark all that apply.**

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Eng 10 | <input type="radio"/> Eng 202 |
| <input type="radio"/> Eng 50 | <input type="radio"/> Eng 203 |
| <input type="radio"/> Eng 100 | <input type="radio"/> Not sure |

5. Which of the following English courses *transfer* to a University of California (UC)? **Mark all that apply.**

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Eng 10 | <input type="radio"/> Eng 202 |
| <input type="radio"/> Eng 50 | <input type="radio"/> Eng 203 |
| <input type="radio"/> Eng 100 | <input type="radio"/> Not sure |

6. How many *transferable units* do you need to *transfer as a Junior* to a CSU or UC school? _____

7. What is the maximum number of units that will transfer to a CSU or UC school from a Community College? _____

8. What is the date of the **priority deadline** by which you need to submit your application if you want to transfer to a CSU or UC school in the Fall? _____
9. Which website allows you to compare Palomar College classes to the equivalent CSU/UC prep for major classes? _____
10. Are you aware of the cross-enrollment program Palomar has with CSU San Marcos, SDSU, and UCSD? Yes No
 Not sure

Transfer Preparation:

11. Do you want to transfer to a 4-year school? Yes No Not sure
12. Do you feel that you know all the requirements for transfer? Yes No Not sure
 I do not intend to transfer
13. Do you feel that you know where to get the transfer information that you need at Palomar? Yes No Not sure
 I do not intend to transfer
14. When did you decide that you wanted to transfer? (choose **one**)
- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Before I started classes at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> 2 nd semester at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> 4 th semester at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> Not sure |
| <input type="radio"/> 1st semester at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> 3 rd semester at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> Sometime after 4 th semester at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> I do not intend to transfer |
15. When did you seek information about what classes to take to transfer? (choose **one**)
- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Before I started classes at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> 2 nd semester at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> 4 th semester at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> Not sure |
| <input type="radio"/> 1st semester at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> 3 rd semester at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> Sometime after 4 th semester at Palomar | <input type="radio"/> I do not intend to transfer |
16. How well do you feel that you understand which classes you need to take at Palomar to prepare you for your major at a 4-year college/university? Please mark the **best** response.
- Completely Understand Understand Somewhat Do not understand at all N/A
17. Which general education pattern should you follow if you are planning to transfer to a UC school and wish to complete the lower division general education classes? Please mark the **best** response.
- CSU GE Pattern IGETC Seven course pattern Major Prep.

Transfer/Counseling Center Usage:

18. How often do you meet with a counselor (not counting any in-class meetings)? (choose **one**)
- Never Less than once a year Once a year Once per semester More than once per semester
19. How satisfied are you with the services you received from the transfer/counseling center? (choose **one**)
- Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied No Opinion
20. How often do you think you should meet with a counselor? (choose **one**)
- Never Less than once a year Once a year Once per semester More than once per semester

21. Have you ever attended a **Transfer workshop** at Palomar College? Yes No Not sure
22. What was the name of the workshop(s)? _____
23. What Transfer workshops would you be interested in attending? (check all that apply)
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> CSU Application | <input type="radio"/> UC Application |
| <input type="radio"/> Transfer Admission Guarantee to UCSD (TAGS) | <input type="radio"/> Transferring in Psychology Major |
| <input type="radio"/> Careers in Teaching | <input type="radio"/> Transfer Admission Agreement to UC Davis (TAA) |
| <input type="radio"/> General transfer information | <input type="radio"/> College Fair |
24. Would you be interested in attending a **“TransferFest”** - a day on campus featuring different components of transferring to a 4-year college/university?
- Very Interested Somewhat Interested Somewhat Disinterested Very Disinterested
25. Did you ever attend a new student orientation? Yes No Unsure/Don't remember
26. Have you developed an educational plan (Ed Plan) with a counselor? Yes No Unsure
27. Are you following your Ed Plan? Yes No Unsure
- If not, why are you not following your Ed Plan?
-
-

Additional Comments

Please share any additional comments about the transfer information or services you have received at Palomar College.

Health Services

1. How often do you use the Health Services at Palomar College? Often Sometimes Rarely/Never
2. Are you satisfied with the Health Services you have received at Palomar? Very Somewhat Not at All
3. How important is Health Services at Palomar College? Very Somewhat Not at All

Demographic Information

1. Age: _____ 2. Home Zip Code: _____ 3. Gender: Male Female
4. Is English your first language? Yes No (Please specify 1st language): _____
5. What is your ethnicity?
- | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> African American | <input type="radio"/> Asian/Pacific Islander | <input type="radio"/> Hispanic | <input type="radio"/> Other |
| <input type="radio"/> Native American | <input type="radio"/> White/Non-Hispanic | <input type="radio"/> Filipino | |

Thank You!

APPENDIX C: Reasons for Not Following Education Plan.

“Why are you not following your Ed Plan?”

Schedule/Work/Time Constraints

- Work gets in the way
- I work full time
- I am not sure or not if I am following a plan. Choices usually boil down to what I can do between work.

Unsure of what an Ed Plan is/don't have one

- Not sure what that means
- I don't know what it is. (7)
- I don't have one yet (18)
- I am meeting with my counselor this Friday
- I don't know I guess I never got around to it
- I don't have a plan - I need to make an appointment with a counselor
- I haven't met with a counselor yet
- I have never met with a counselor - I don't know who mine is.
- I do not have an Ed Plan because I am unable to obtain an official evaluation until I complete this semester.

Created own plan/working at own pace

- I'm following the CSU requirement sheet.
- Trying to be a police officer - need 60 units
- So far I am on track with the classes that need to be taken
- I made my own plan and took it to the counselor because they did not provide good guidance my first semester
- I have got my own pace to move on to the next step.
- I am trying to ease back into school so I don't become overwhelmed and don't want to attend at all.

Unhappy with Counselor/Ed. Plan

- I want to know what is required for a degree in photojournalism but every time I try to find out nobody knows
- Did not do that good of a job when explaining what classes to take at Palomar. Confused on where to go next.
- By following the Ed Plan I would transfer and 2.5 years. I'm taking more classes than suggested so I can transfer in 2 years.
- Because the plan was not oriented toward my goals
- Because the counselors gave me 3 different plans
- Because it doesn't involve the classes I truly want to take
- Because I had a false plan that a counselor gave me.
- My first counselor was good. My 2nd counselor did not listen to what I wanted so I had to change counselors.
- I'm planning to transfer to a school in Canada so I don't know what an Ed Plan really is. I have talked a lot with counselors at the other school for what classes I need.

APPENDIX D: Additional Comments about the Transfer Services or Information Received at Palomar

"Please share any additional comments about the transfer information or services you have received at Palomar College."

General positive comments

- Very well organized. I know every class I need to take to transfer to a private and UC.
- Mrs. Leser in my counseling 110 class has given me lots of information on transferring.
- I transferred from PC to CSUSM 2 years ago and I was very happy with the service I received from the transfer center and PC counselors.
- Athletics counselor White is the best.
- DDR Rocks

Accuracy/helpfulness issues

- The counselor I saw was helpful but he did not pull up any records of classes I have already taken - thus making me remember and guess about the classes I have taken.
- The counseling center should do more to help students choose necessary classes to be successful instead of suggesting courses that they have no interest in.
- Counselors lacked helpfulness
- Counseling has been difficult to get and of low quality at Community Colleges
- Our counselors are no help. I went to State and they gave me a better guide to transfer.
- Not always accurate
- I've met with 1 counselor who was extremely rude to me and even made me cry. Luckily when I went back I got an extremely nice lady who helped me out a lot.
- It seems to be very hard to find information on schools which offer photography as a major
- I talked to a counselor and told them what I wanted and it was not until the 4th counselor I saw that I got helpful information.
- I have learned everything I need to know about transferring on my own because I feel that people in the counseling department have no clue what is going on.
- I had to talk to the counselor @ Cal Poly Pomona to get the correct info - Palomar Counselor did not know.
- I am sticking to the counselors at Mira Costa
- I had a counselor who told me what I cannot do instead of what I can do and then I was not happy to go to a counselor.

Lack of information

- Never received any information that has been mentioned in this survey.
- Need info on when to transfer
- More info. should be given for out of state transfers.
- I am confused about what Gen Ed to take if I am undecided
- I am really not sure about it because I did not know about the center. I think it is a good idea to randomly attend classes to inform students.

Scheduling issues

- I really don't like how I cannot schedule an appointment with a counselor at the beginning of the semester. I have a tight schedule and cannot wait in line for an hour.
- I work full time and attend night classes. Counselor's hours are not available to me.
- Appointments with counselors on campus are not very convenient for me.

General Comments

- Surveys are lame - don't make us take any more.
- Students need more help with academic planning now than ever.
- Nothing much really. I will be here for a while.

- I want to take more fun classes
- I transferred from a Cal State and I want to know my options for transferring to a UC
- I need to talk with a counselor
- I haven't received any yet
- I have only met with my EOPS counselor once so far.
- When I called for a counseling appointment they suggested that I assemble all of my other college transcripts 4 first.

Website/online information issues

- The Palomar website needs to be more intuitive. It took me forever to find transfer info.
- Sometimes it is hard to find info online - not always clear. I work full-time have a family and would like to do as much online as possible.