



# Backward Mapping the Transfer Path

How Students Experience  
Transfer in Professional Majors

Presenters

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theRPgroup



# RP Group: Research Cycle



# Cal-PASS/IEBC

- California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS)
  - Voluntary member driven collaborative
  - Action research paradigm
  - Student and institutional privacy protected
- Institute for Evidence Based Change (IEBC)
  - 501c3 that grew out of Cal-PASS and both supports and expands its work
  - Also implementing Tuning



**FEATURED PROJECT:**

# **Student Transfer in Professional Pathways Project [STP3]**

**The James Irvine Foundation  
The CCC Chancellor's Office**



# Objectives for STP3 Session

- Research Design – Follow the Student
- Findings -- Highlights
- Engaging Practitioners w. the Findings
- Lessons Learned



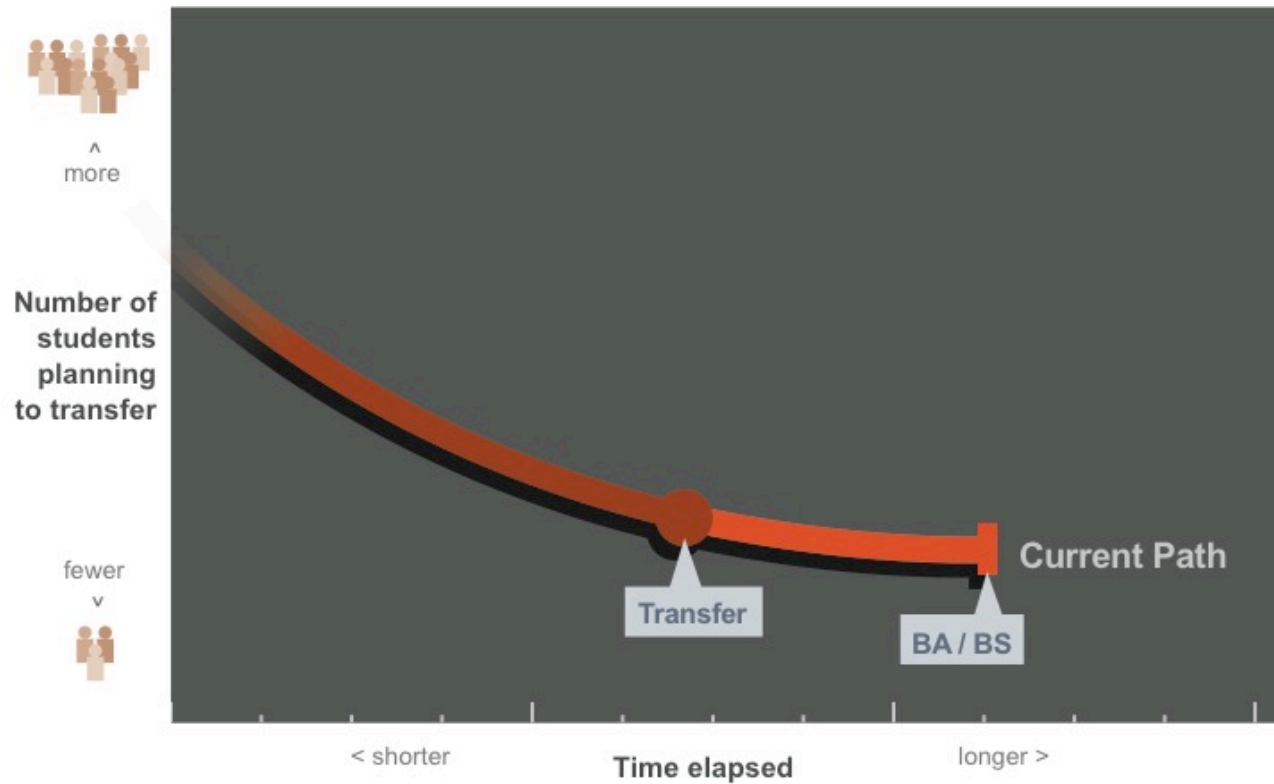


# Research Questions

- How do students use CCCs to prepare for transfer in: accounting, administration of justice, nursing, engineering & teacher education?
- Which factors complicate & support their journey?
- Which opportunities exist to improve the path to transfer?

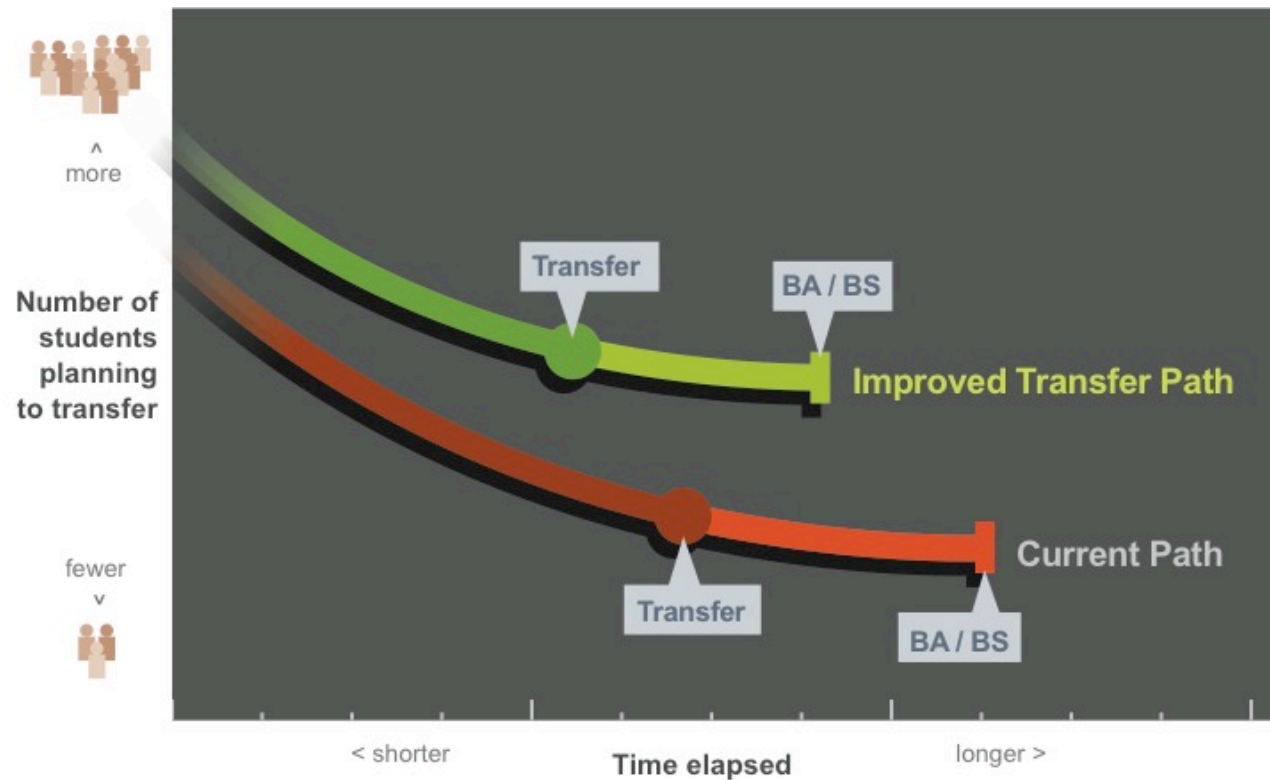


# Current transfer path



# 5 Ways to Improve the Transfer Path

Improved path...







# Project Activities

- Backward map 14,500 students' paths to transfer
- Collect in excess of 800 students' perspectives on transfer experience
- Identify potential areas for improvement within and across disciplines
- Convene practitioners to support/generate action



QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

**What did students do on  
their way to transfer?**



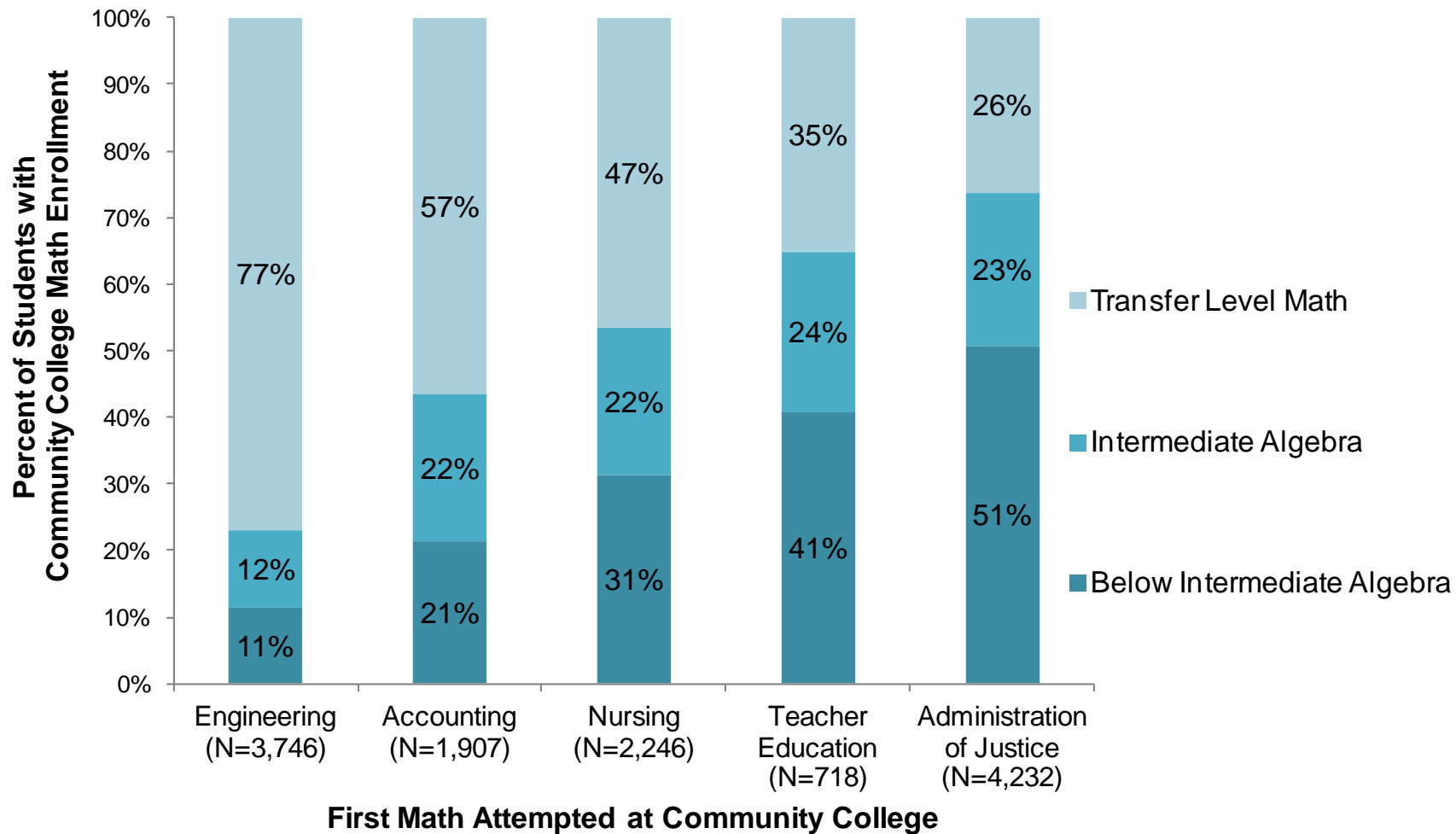
# Quantitative Research Design



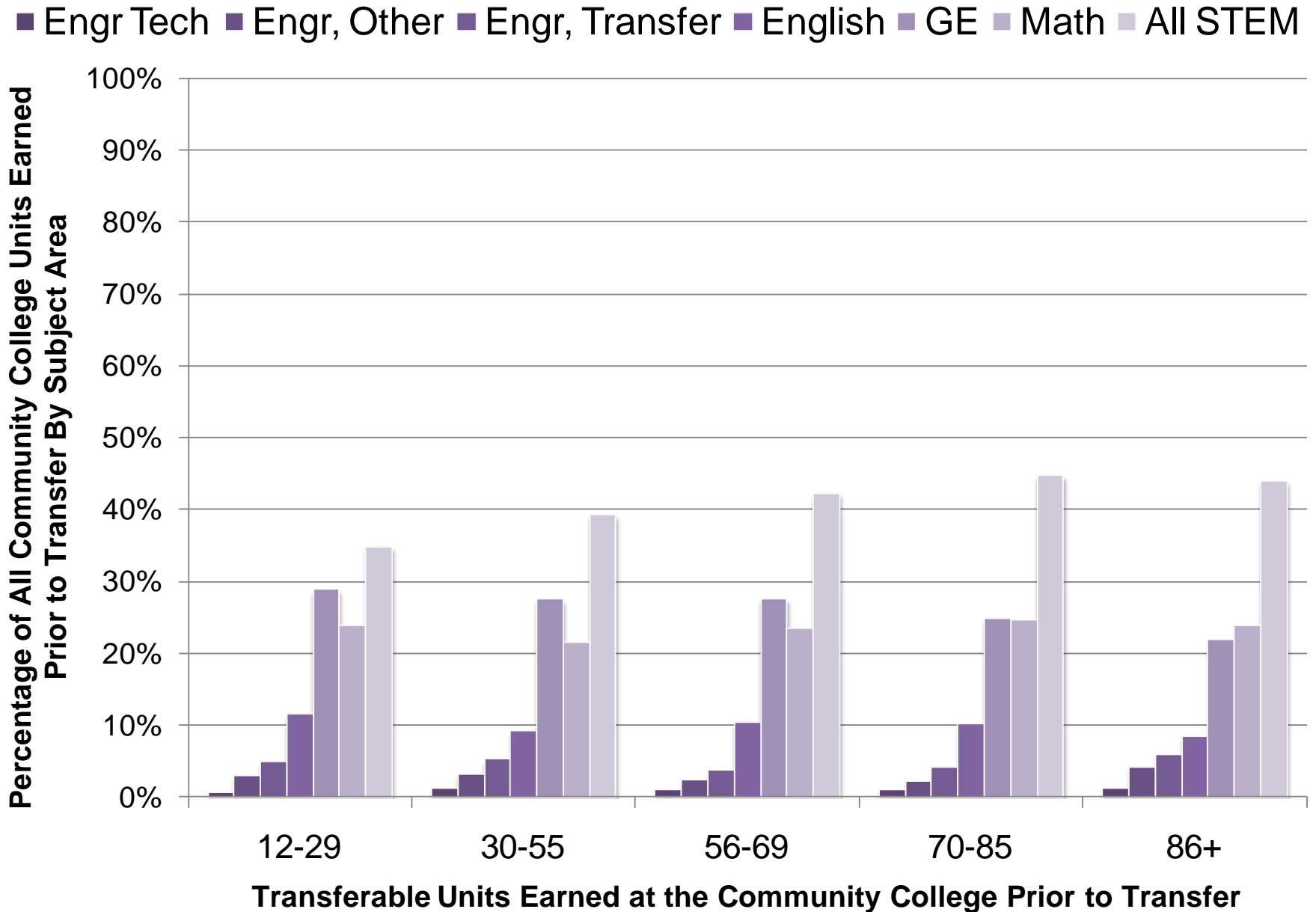
# Study Inclusion Criteria

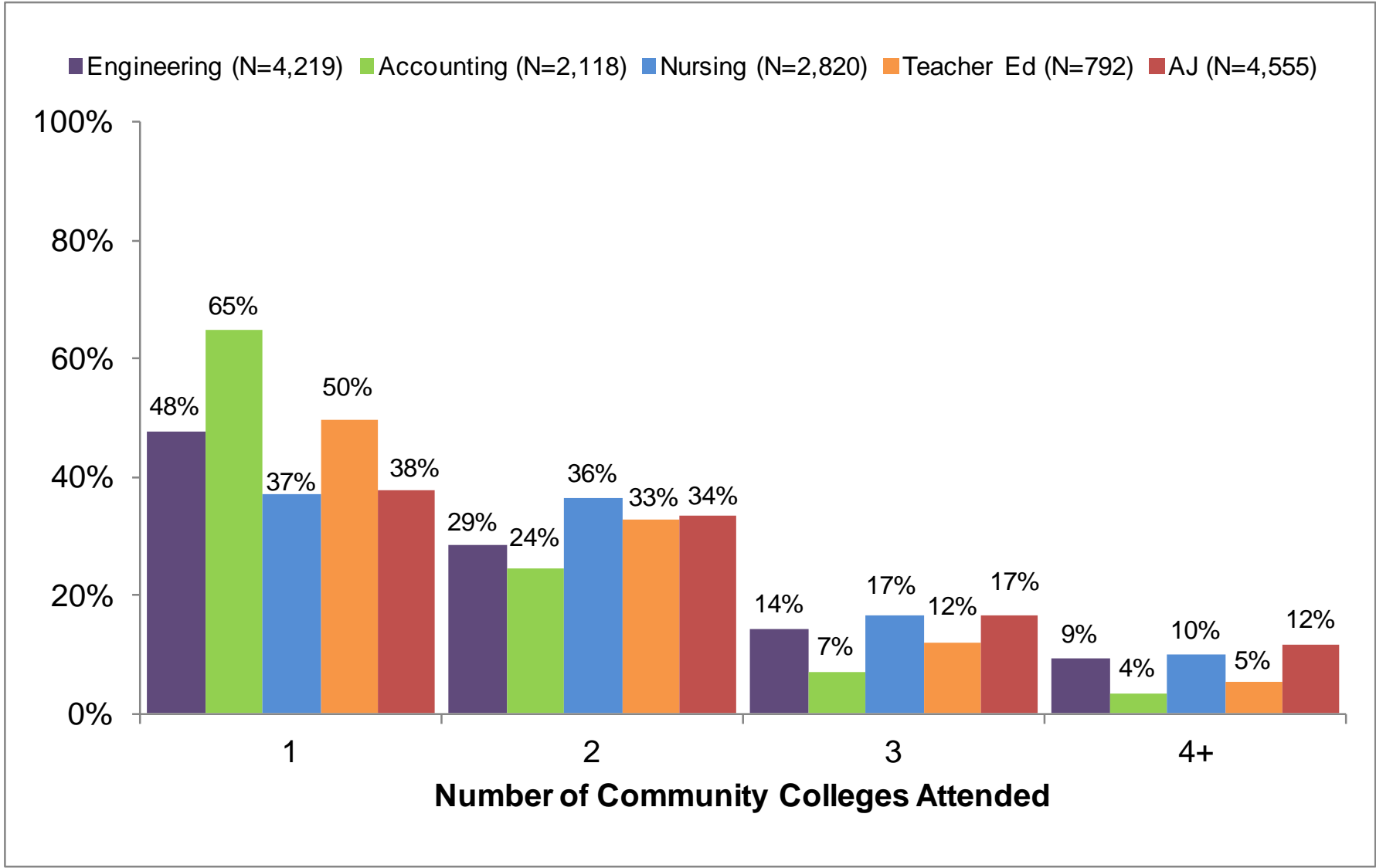
Discipline	Post-BA Credentials		BA Completers		Any CC Enrollment		Met all criteria	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Engineering	na	na	17,731	100%	10,306	58%	4,219	24%
Accounting	na	na	5,966	100%	4,108	69%	2,118	36%
Nursing	na	na	8,568	100%	5,361	63%	2,820	33%
Teacher Education	14,496	100%	2,935	20%	2,135	15%	792	5%
Administration of Justice	na	na	10,179	100%	9,403	92%	4,555	45%

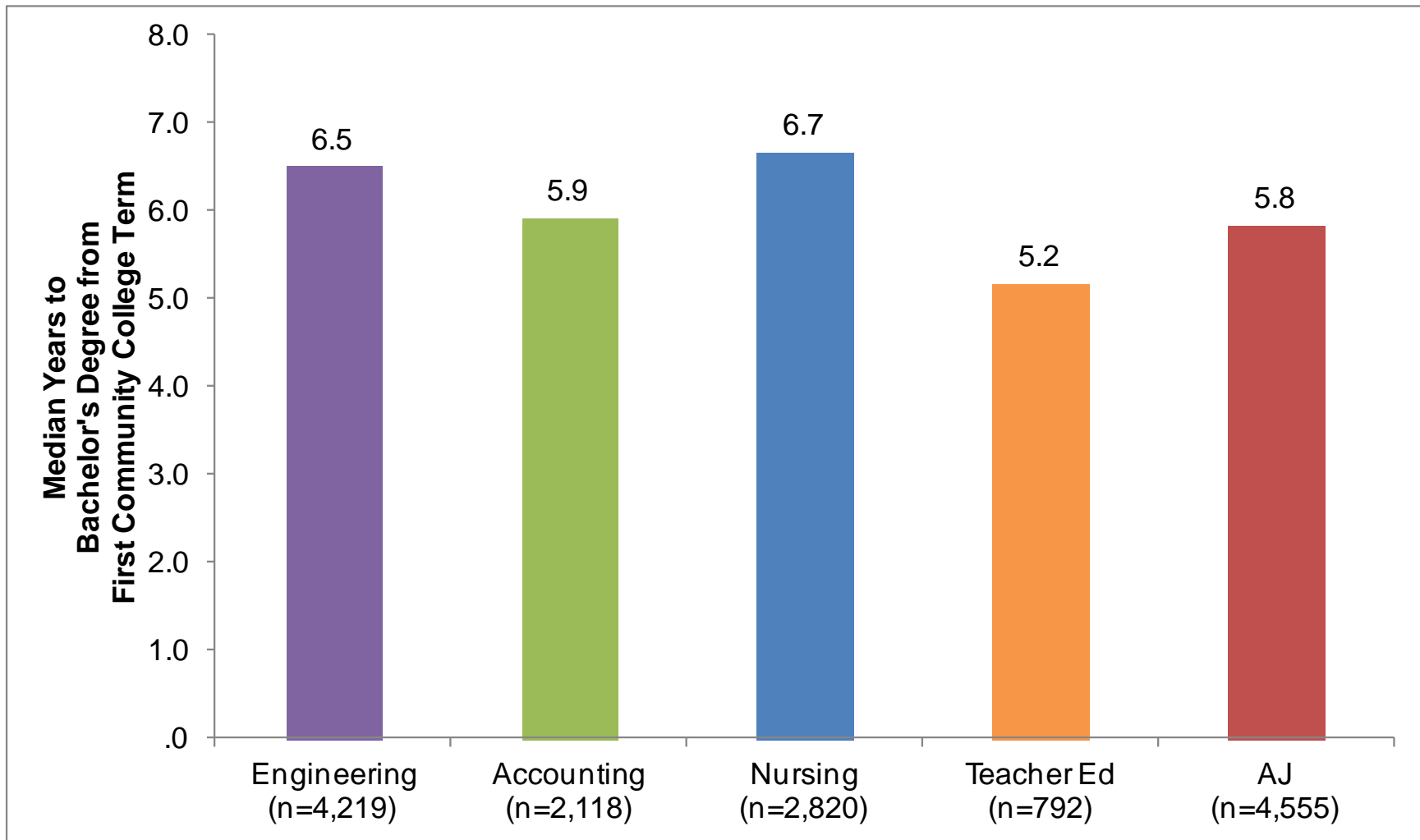
- Bachelor's degree in target discipline
- $\geq 12$  transferable units completed at the community college prior to first term at the university of their bachelor's degree
- $\geq 2$  years of university data available from the university granting their bachelor's degree



# Engineering Unit Balance












# Selected Regression Findings

- African American students had fewer total CC units in Engr and were more likely to swirl in Acct, Nurs and Teacher Ed
  - Male students spent longer time to degree in Engr, Acct, and Nurs
  - Special admit students spent shorter time to degree in all five disciplines
  - Higher percentage of total units taken at CC in the major equals:
    - Shorter time to degree in Engr and Nurs
    - Shorter time at university in Engr
    - Fewer total CC units in Engr, Acct, Nurs, and AJ
    - Fewer total university units in Engr, Nurs, and AJ
    - More likely to swirl in Engineering
  - From a series of exploratory regressions with adj.  $R^2$  ranging from 0.10 to 0.86 .
- 



# Caveats

- Not all universities participate
  - Creates biases for certain disciplines
  - Limits representativeness
- No common university course coding schema
- Forward mapping desirable but difficult due to focus on GE courses at CC and lack of incentive for CC students to declare and update majors
- Ignored concurrent and post-graduate CC



QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

**What do students say about  
the road to transfer?**






# Qualitative Research Design

- Identify major transfer centers from among UCs, CSUs, private 4-year colleges in targeted majors
- Partner with them to survey and conduct focused conversations with transfer students
- Investigative themes:
  - What supported you?
  - What challenged you?
  - Advice
- 750 student perspectives collected to date






# What supported students toward their transfer goal?

- Ed plans
  - ASSIST.org
  - Encouraging, guiding faculty
  - EOPS, MESA, Clubs – but many did not use supports
  - Strong personal motivation, determination and advocacy
- 




# What challenged students along the way to transfer?

- Difficulty balancing school, work, family
  - Insufficient guidance, advising on path to transfer
  - Inadequate understanding of, facility with transfer resources, including articulation agreements
  - Inability to access required courses
  - Differing requirements across transfer destinations
  - Limited connection to CC, peers with similar goal
- 



# Discipline Specific Findings

- **Nursing students:**
    - Came to CCs with a focus on their major
    - Intentionally used CCs to work toward a degree
  - **Accounting students:**
    - Came to CCs with a general transfer goal
    - Chose their major later when compared to other disciplines
  - **Engineering students:**
    - Took courses they did not need, followed less than efficient path
    - Praised Intro to Engineering course for providing navigational support
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TAKING THE FINDINGS TO THE FIELD

# Engaging practitioners in conversations about the findings








# Engaging Practitioners w. Findings

## Approach

- Develop briefs (instead of long reports)
  - Create web presence
  - Develop Listservs
  - Organize debriefings
  - Convene practitioners
  - Participate in existing convenings/meetings of key stakeholders
- 



# Uses of the Research

- Program Planning
  - College Level
  - Regional Level
  - State Level
- Basis for Additional Research
  - Customized for a region
  - More disciplines





IMPLICATIONS

**What did we learn?**



# Lessons Learned

- Study Design
  - Discipline-based approach
  - Focus on key components of transfer process
- Engagement
  - Value of talking directly to students and faculty
  - Value in working regionally
  - Briefs rather than lengthy technical documents



# Studying Transfer

IMPROVING  
TRANSFER



# Studying transfer by discipline

Discipline
Accounting
Criminal Justice
Engineering
Nursing
Teacher Ed



# Studying transfer by discipline and by objective

Steps on Transfer Path	Recruit	Retain	Cut time-transfer	Cut time-degree	Retain post-transfer	Optimization units
Discipline						
Accounting						
Criminal Justice						
Engineering						
Nursing						
Teacher Ed						



# Studying transfer by discipline and by objective

REGION: X & Y CSU/CC Districts in Southern California.

Steps on Transfer Path	Recruit	Retain	Cut time-transfer	Cut time-degree	Retain post-transfer	Optimization units
Discipline						
Accounting						
Criminal Justice						
Engineering						
Nursing						
Teacher Ed						







## Projects

[Current Projects](#)

[Past Projects](#)

### Student Transfer in Professional Pathways Project (STP3)

[Engineering Transfer](#)

» [About STP3](#)



transfer

## About the STP3 Project

### Information on what the project includes why study occupational transfer and who funds the project

With California projecting considerable shortages in multiple occupations requiring bachelor-level preparation and nearly 75% of the state's students starting their higher education in community colleges, **promoting transfer between community colleges and four-year universities in professional majors offers one strategy for addressing our workforce needs.**

### What is STP3?

To better understand how students travel through the state's community colleges and universities—public and private—to ultimately achieve a professional degree, the RP Group is currently engaged in a multi-year, comprehensive study focused on:

- The current **infrastructure for transfer** between community colleges and four-year institutions in **occupational disciplines**
- **Ways students use the community college system to prepare for transfer** in high-demand disciplines (specifically, engineering, accounting, nursing, teacher education and administration of justice)
- **Factors that complicate and support** their journey
- **Opportunities to increase students' access** to these pathways and **improve their completion** of transfer and a degree

### What does the project include?

Current activities focus on (1) quantitative analysis of the paths taken by transfer students who successfully completed a degree, (2) documentation of students' perspectives on how they prepared for and experienced transfer and (3) engagement of stakeholders—including community college practitioners, four-year educators, employer representatives, students, policy makers and funders—with research findings that can be used to drive action that increases and facilitates transfer.

# Thank You!

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The logo for theRPgroup, featuring an orange square with white abstract lines on the left and the text "theRPgroup" in white on a grey background.

The logo for Cal-PASS, featuring the text "Cal-PASS" in blue and green with a star above the "S", and "California Partnership for Achieving Student Success" in small black text below.

The logo for the Institute for Evidence-Based Change, featuring the text "IEBC" in large blue letters with parentheses on either side, and "INSTITUTE for EVIDENCE-BASED CHANGE" in smaller blue letters below.