

Profile of Student Leavers from City College of San Francisco (CCSF)

What do students gain by enrolling in City College of San Francisco (CCSF)? This report considers this question using the College’s Banner database and data from the National Student Clearinghouse, a system that tracks students transferring to other colleges. We look at a snapshot of students, a total of 72,230 students who left CCSF between 1997 and 2001¹. Using these two databases, we wanted to determine how many of them achieved a certificate or degree at CCSF or transferred to either a community college or baccalaureate institution. We understand that the results of this investigation provide limited answers, since many students achieve their educational goals and leave the College before receiving a certificate or degree.

Students enter and leave CCSF for many reasons. The “Educational Goal” section of the College’s application form encompasses some of these reasons. These goals range from transferring to a four-year university either with or without a degree to improving skills either as part of self-development or toward career advancement. Regardless of the reason for attending CCSF, the most surprising finding relates to the limited time students attend. Half of our students are here for one year or less; 60% earn fewer than 12 units.

Table 1 displays the educational achievements of all student leavers for the period 1997 through 2001. We found that 35% of the 72,300 students studied had achieved an educational benchmark recorded in one of the two databases used. A noteworthy discovery is that the most frequent student outcome is transfer to a baccalaureate institution. Several students (15%) transferred to a four-year institution without a degree from CCSF, while another 2% transferred with a degree. In general, the award of certificates and degrees (8%) were much smaller than two and four-year transfer (28%).

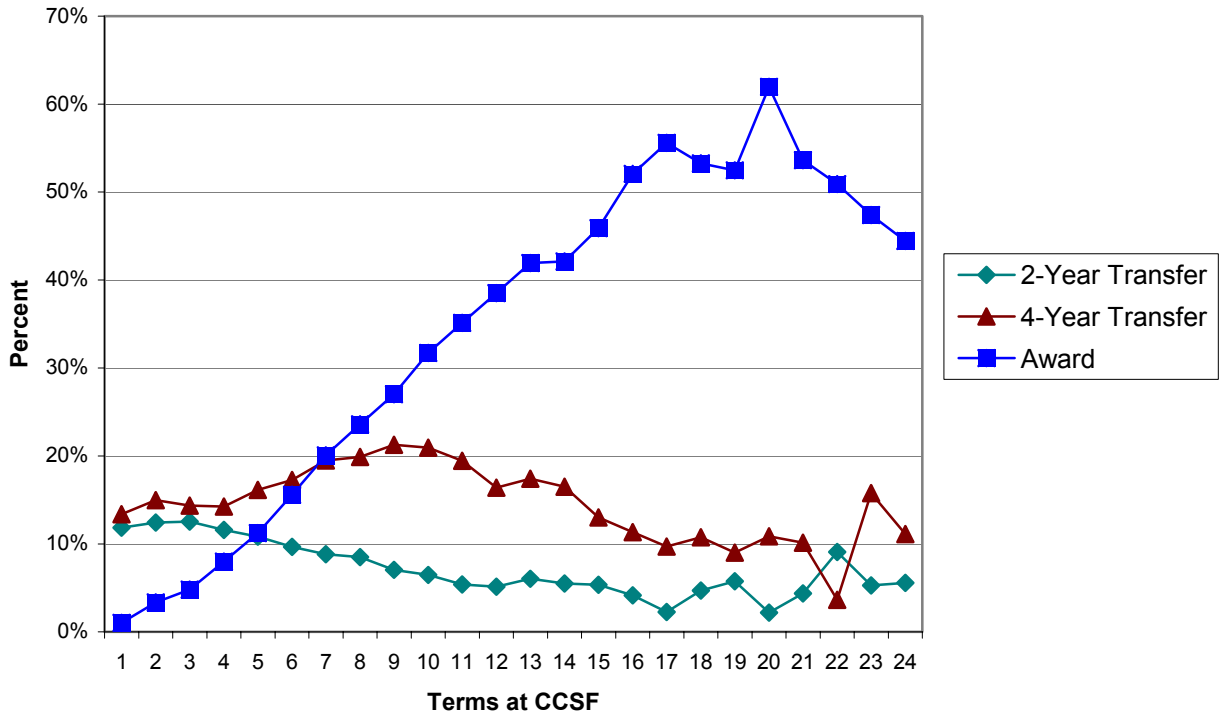
**Table 1
Achievement Benchmarks for Student Leavers 1997 - 2001**

Transfer or Award Achievement	Number	Percent%
2-Year Transfer	7,882	11%
4-Year Transfer	11,013	15%
Certificate + 2-Year Transfer	206	0%
Certificate + 4-Year Transfer	156	0%
Certificate Only	1,403	2%
AA/AS Degree + 2-Year Transfer	374	0%
AA/AS Degree + 4-Year Transfer	1,620	2%
AA/AS Degree Only	2,644	4%
No Transfer or Award	46,932	65%
Total	72,230	100%

¹ Some groups of students were removed from the analysis in order to focus on relevant groups. As mentioned a student had to be a leaver between 1997 and 2001. That means that students who were in attendance at CCSF after the Spring 2001 semester were removed from the analysis because they were not leavers. Another group that was removed was the summer-only students. These were students who were only enrolled during one or more summer terms.

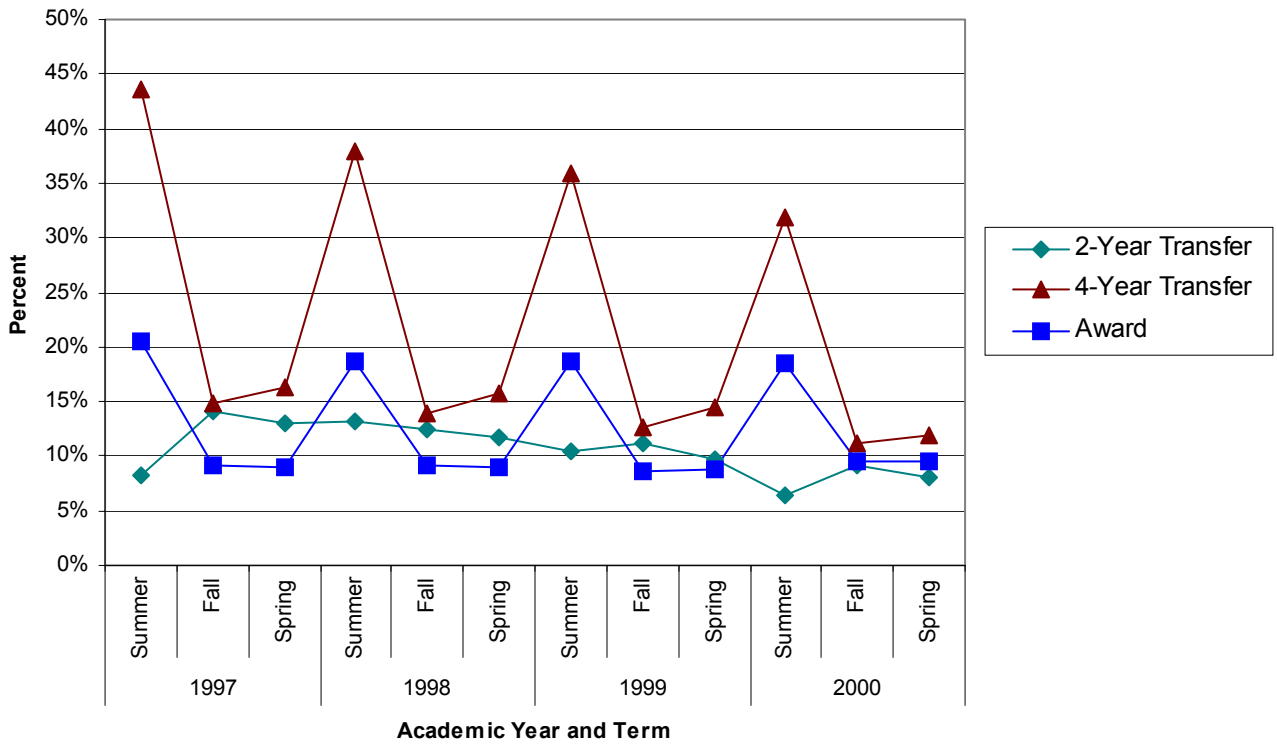
Graph 1 displays the correlation between the number of terms a student enrolls at CCSF and their rate of transfer or achievement of award. A pattern emerges among students achieving certificates, awards and/or transfer to other postsecondary institutions. Students achieving a certificate and/or an award stay longer at CCSF than those students transferring to other postsecondary institutions.

Graph 1
Transfer and Award Achievement by the Number of Terms Enrolled at CCSF



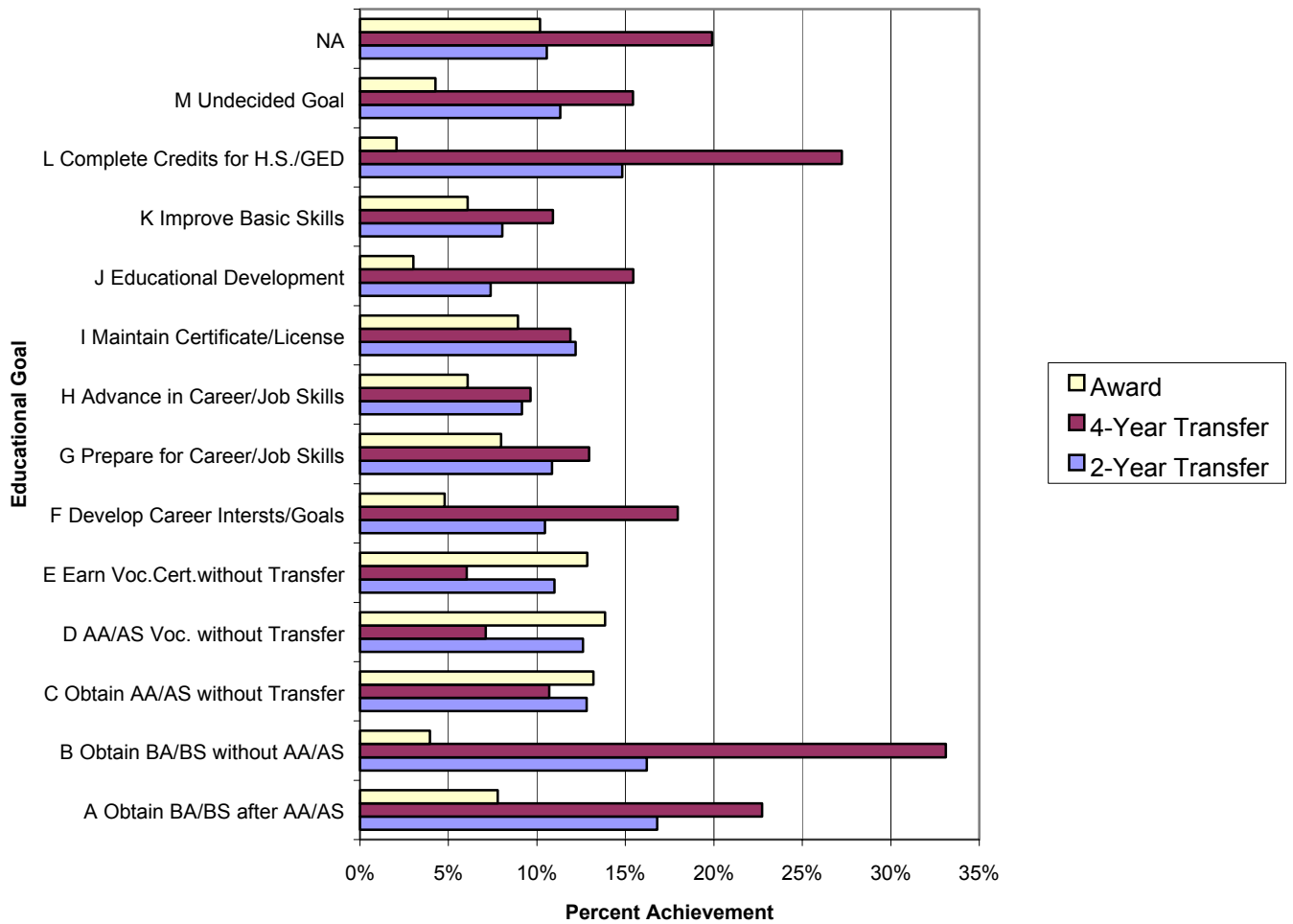
Graph 2 presents students' educational outcomes by last semester of attendance. Note the spike in percentages of four-year transfers in the summer terms. This suggests that the summer term is frequently the final semester prior to transfer to a baccalaureate institution.

Graph 2
Transfer and Award Achievement by Last Semester of Attendance



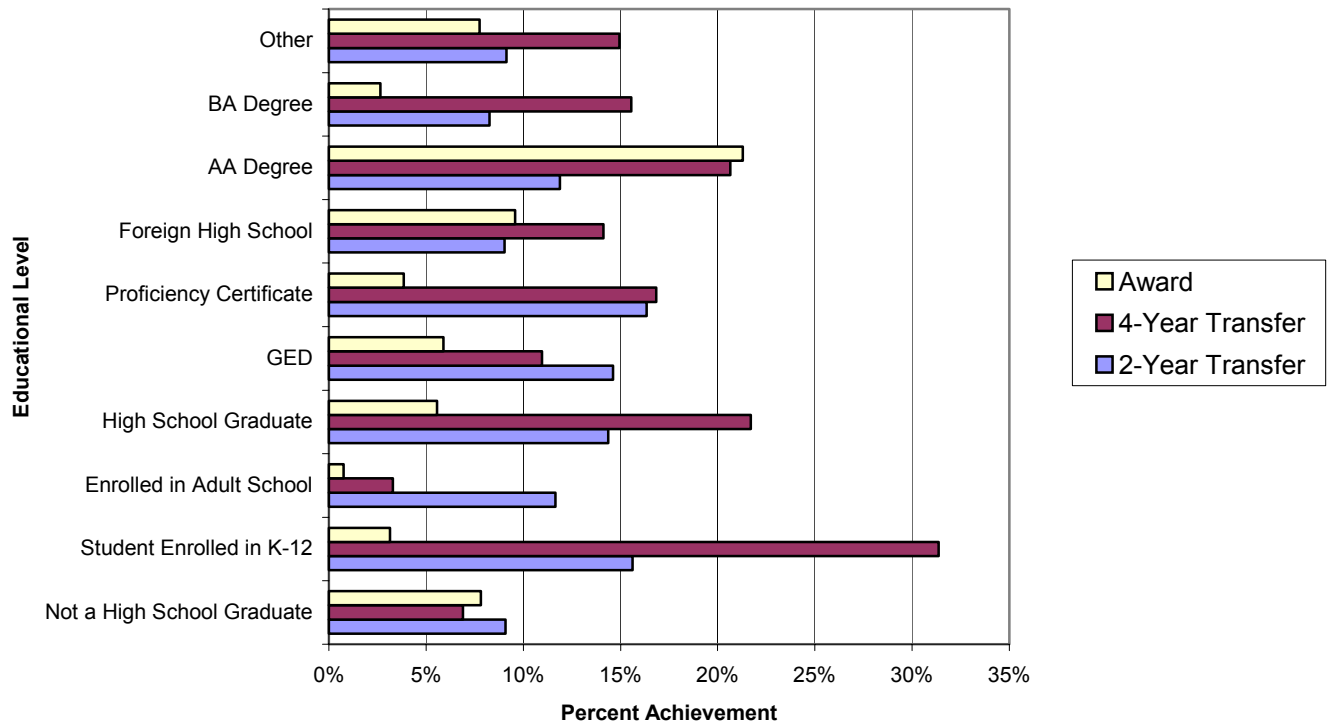
Graph 3 presents transfer and award outcomes by initial educational goal. As one might expect, four-year transfer is related to the stated goal of transfer either with or without a CCSF degree. An unexpected finding is the large number of students whose initial goal is the attainment of a high school diploma or passage of the GED who eventually transfer to four-year institutions in somewhat larger percentages than others.

Graph 3
Transfer and Award Achievement by Initial Educational Goal



Graph 4 presents educational outcomes by students' entering educational level. This graph shows an interesting correlation between a high school students' concurrent enrollment and the frequency with which they transfer to a baccalaureate institution. Many of these students (31%) go on to transfer to a four-year institution, indicating that CCSF serves a launch pad for their continuing education. This finding also holds true for many students who enroll at CCSF to complete their GED; XX% go on to transfer or achieve a degree or certificate at CCSF.

Graph 4
Transfer and Award Achievement by Educational Level



Summary Findings

Students enroll at CCSF for many reasons and for varying amounts of time. Half of CCSF students enroll for one year or less. While such limited enrollment at the College indicates these students will not achieve a CCSF degree or certificate, limited enrollments do indicate other educational benchmarks. About 10% of students who attend only one to two semesters transfer to a four-year institution; another 10% transfer to another two-year institution. Overall, 28% of our students transfer to other postsecondary institutions. Among these transfer students are a significant number—over 7,800 during the period 1997 through 2001—enrolling in another community college in the region. This pattern supports a theory that students are increasingly using multiple colleges to achieve their educational goals, rather than the more traditional idea of enrolling in one lower division and then one upper division school—the so-called “transfer pipeline” metaphor. Additional research is needed to examine what happens to two-year transfer students. Do they stay at their second school or move to a third school? What kind of course of study do these students pursue? And are students swirling to different schools to pick up so-called “easy courses” for transfer purposes?

Over 15% of student leavers during the period under study transfer to a baccalaureate institution, and many of these students use the summer semester to complete their course of study prior to transfer. This suggests that summer session is critical for many CCSF transfer students, and strategic enrollment planning should take this pattern in to account.

We also found that concurrently enrolled high school students and students completing their high school diploma or a GED are meeting significant benchmarks related to transfer or achieving certificate or degree from CCSF. This suggests that CCSF plays a key role in helping many young students, some of them low achievers in high school, reach their goals in postsecondary programs.