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## ABSTRACT

In 1995, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges in Washington forecasted that the number of students transferring from the two-year to the four-year sectors would flatten or even decline during the period from 1994 through 1998, and that the number of transfer students would rise by 50% from 1999 to 2010. This report reconfirms that projection. It also reviews the factors underlying that initial forecast, updates the forecast numbers, and provides a forecast of increasing transfer numbers through 2010. Information is included on the differences in current transfer patterns by institution, and the division of future enrollments is discussed. Alternative factors to those underlying the forecast may also impact transfer trends. The following details are presented: (1) the decline in transfer numbers from 1993-94 through the present year are consistent with a drop in the number of students 19 to 23 years of age enrolled in the colleges two years earlier; (2) transfer numbers will begin to increase this coming year, and will exceed past levels in 2000-01; and (3) the number of transfer students will increase more than 50% in the next ten years. The increase will be spread throughout Washington, though the largest increases will be from the colleges that serve Snohomish and King Counties. Contains 9 tables. (AS)

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# Patterns Underlying the Current and Future Trends in Transfers from Community Colleges to Four-Year Public and Independent Institutions

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

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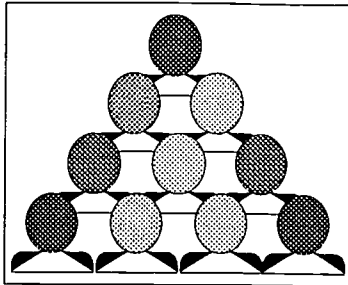
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## Research Report No. 98-7

Washington State Board for Community and  
Technical Colleges; Education Division

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### **PATTERNS UNDERLYING THE CURRENT AND FUTURE TRENDS IN TRANSFERS FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC AND INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS**

September 1998

Three years ago the State Board for Community and Technical College staff forecasted that the number of students transferring from the two-year to the four-year sectors would flatten or even decline during the period from 1994 through 1998 (Research Report 95-5). To a large extent, that flat or even declining scenario is now a reality.

That forecast called for the number of transfer students to rise by 50 percent from 1999 to 2010 with most dramatic growth in the five-year period between 2000 and 2005. This report reconfirms that projection. It also reviews the factors underlying that initial forecast, updates the forecast numbers and provides a forecast of increasing transfer numbers to 2010. This report also provides information on the differences in current transfer patterns by institution and describes how the future enrollments may be divided. It also provides alternative factors to those underlying the forecast, which may also impact transfer trends.

#### **Transfer Trends**

The number of transfer students increased dramatically in the early 1990s and has been relatively flat, even declining in some years, since that time.



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**Table I**  
**Annual Transfers from Community Colleges**  
**1988-89 to 1996-97**

		<b>Public</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>% Change</b>
		<b>Four Year</b>	<b>Independent</b>		
<b>1988-89</b>		6,457	2,000	8,457	
<b>1989-90</b>		6,991	1,800	8,791	4.3%
<b>1990-91</b>		7,646	1,700	9,346	7.0%
<b>1991-92</b>		7,245	1,800	9,045	-4.6%
<b>1992-93</b>		8,001	2,150	10,151	13.1%
<b>1993-94</b>		9,523	1,850	11,373	13.9%
<b>1994-95</b>		9,509	1,950	11,459	0.8%
<b>1995-96</b>		9,391	2,000	11,391	-0.6%
<b>1996-97</b>		9,811	1,791	11,602	1.9%
<b>1997-98</b>		8,785	1,662	10,447	-10.0%
<b>10 Year</b>	<b>Change</b>	36%	-17%	24%	
<b>5 Year</b>	<b>Change</b>	-9%	-9%	-9%	

### **The Impact of the “Baby Bust Generation” and the “Baby Boom Echo”**

The enrollment of students 19 to 23 years of age was the chief factor underlying the 1995 transfer forecast. Our 1995 analysis concluded that the number of transfers was related to the enrollment of state-supported 19 to 23 year old students, irrespective of purpose for attending, two years earlier. Further, the analysis showed how the number of 19 to 23 year old students is influenced primarily by the number of people in the state of that same age. That is, a given percentage of the population of that age group can be expected to enroll in college each year (participation rate). Over time that percentage has slowly increased in a predictable manner (increasing participation rate). The forecast of flat or slightly declining transfers in the near-term and increasing transfers in the longer-term was based on the number of Washington residents of this critical age group and the trend of slowly increasing participation rates for this group.

Given the emphasis on the Baby Boom Echo generation, little attention has been paid to the impact of the Baby Bust generation – that is, the group born in the late 1960s and early 1970s now in its mid-20s to early-30s. Despite the growing population in Washington this group is smaller today by 27,000 people than it was three years ago. Even as this group attends colleges at a higher rate than in the past, the actual number enrolled is smaller than in the past. Starting five years ago, the small size of this group created a downward pressure on transfer enrollments. Two years later this downward pressure began to show in the count of the number of transfers.

**Figure I**

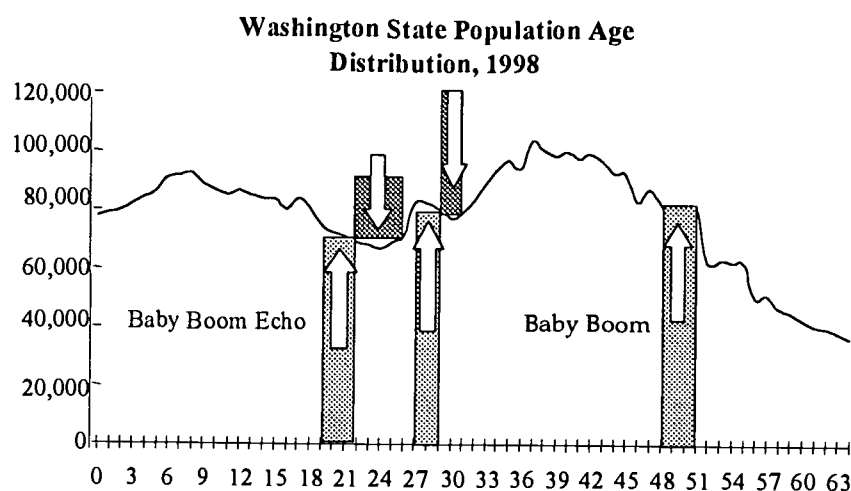


Figure I shows the upward and downward pressures on enrollment in the two-year system based on population of the state. The first downward area is the factor currently reducing transfer output.

At the same time, the Baby Boom Echo generation is beginning to enroll in higher education, including the two-year colleges, and should result in a small increase the number of students ready to transfer starting in 1998-99.

### Forecast

If participation rates for 19 to 23 year olds continue to grow and enrollments for this group continue to track with transfers two years later, future transfer numbers will increase starting in 1998-99. The number of students transferring to public and private institutions in Washington will exceed previous records in 2000-01.

**Table II**  
**Annual Transfer History and Forecast**  
**Transfers to Public and Independent Institutions**

	Forecast			Forecast	
	Actual	Population Only	Welfare Impact	Population Only	Welfare Impact
1988-89	8,457			1999-00	11,377
1989-90	8,791			2000-01	12,042
1990-91	9,346			2001-02	12,814
1991-92	9,045			2002-03	13,413
1992-93	10,151	10,710		2003-04	14,084
1993-94	11,373	11,368		2004-05	14,669
1994-95	11,459	10,869		2005-06	15,112
1995-96	11,391	10,737		2006-07	15,544
1996-97	11,602	10,506		2007-08	16,051
1997-98	10,447	10,851	10,351	2008-09	16,489
1998-99		11,179	10,679	2009-10	17,058
					16,558

## Other Factors of Potential Impact on Transfer

It is possible that the number of students that transfer is being influenced by factors other than participation rates of adults 19 to 23 years of age. Two potential impacts are Running Start and welfare reform.

In 1996-97, 5,400 welfare participants were enrolled for the purpose of transfer. Some who would have transferred in 1997-98 likely did not transfer because enrolling at a four-year institution would have jeopardized their welfare benefits. As a result of welfare reform, it is highly likely that 500 or more potential welfare transfers did not attend or even apply to attend a four-year institution in 1997-98. Since it is likely that the welfare factor is a permanent loss of potential transfer students, Table I provides the forecast excluding these 500 welfare students.

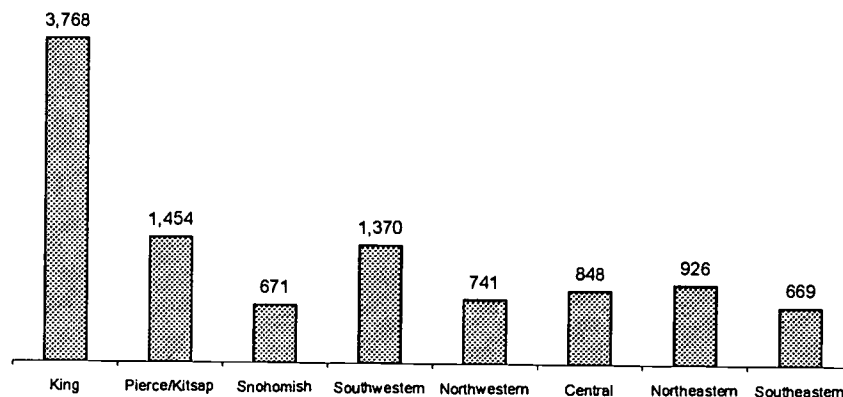
It is also possible that some students who had attended community colleges after high school to prepare for transfer are now taking those same classes while in high school. If they attend the four-year institution with less than 40 college credits immediately after graduation, they are not counted as a transfer student even though they would have counted as such had they taken those same classes after high school. Some 45 percent of Running Start students enroll for less than 45 credits and do not enroll in the two-year sector in the year after high school. It is possible that some of these 3,000 students would have been counted as transfer students in the past.

### Transfers by Region

The majority of all transfers (56 percent) come from colleges in the populous King, Snohomish, Pierce, Kitsap area. Students from these colleges attend the four-year

institutions all over the state, though some four-year institutions have high levels of service in fast-growing southwestern Washington or in eastern or central Washington.

Figure II  
1997-98 Transfers from Community Colleges by Region  
Transfers to Public and Private 4 Year Institutions

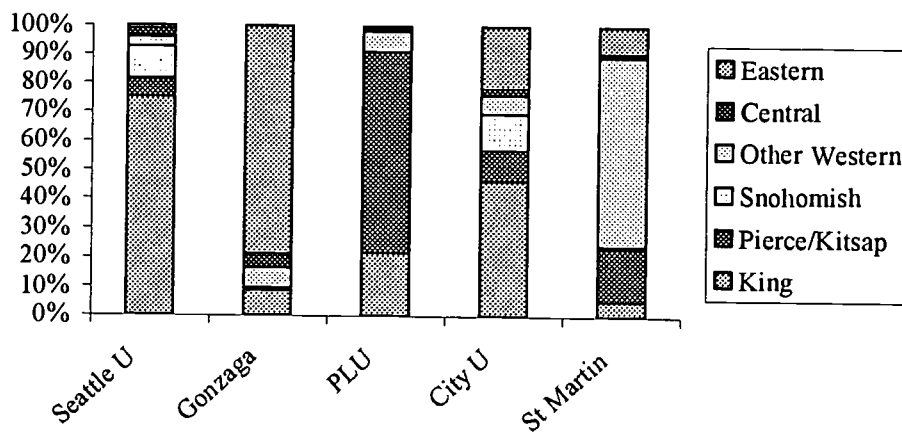


**Table III**  
**1997-98 Community College Transfers by Region**

Source of Transfers	UW	WSU	CWU	EWU	TESC	WWU	Independents
King	1,788	322	456	54	174	306	668
Pierce/Kitsap	481	154	157	41	180	135	306
Snohomish	238	68	117	9	16	104	119
Southwestern	131	527	107	31	316	109	149
Northwestern	90	124	53	24	35	365	50
Central	65	217	327	59	5	37	138
Northeastern	52	194	21	433	15	29	182
Southeastern	36	368	60	117	13	25	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,881</b>	<b>1,974</b>	<b>1,298</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>1,662</b>

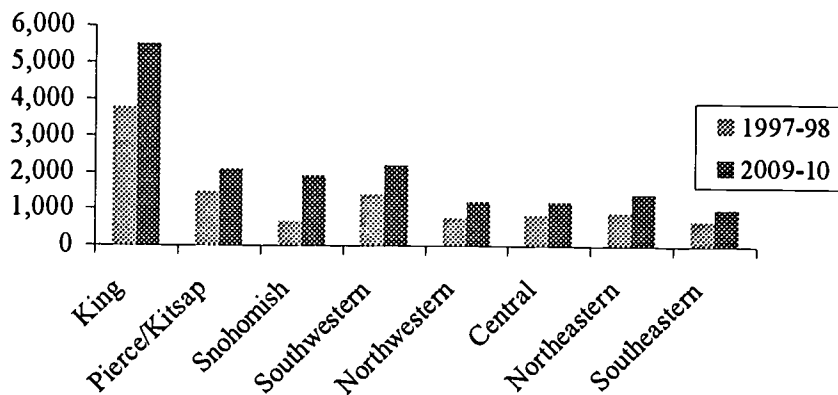
The source of transfers by region varies greatly for the colleges in the independent sector. Figure III shows the pattern for the larger institutions with data in the fall 1997 Mobility Study.

**Figure III**  
**Source of Community College Transfers for Selected Independent Colleges**



Population and thus enrollment growth will not be equal throughout the state. Nevertheless, all areas of the state will experience a proportional share of the transfer growth with the exception of King County, which will lose some of its share to its northern neighbor, Snohomish County.

**Figure IV**  
**Current and Forecasted 2010 Transfers by Region**



### Potential Enrollments by Institution

It is extremely difficult to predict that pattern of transfers by institution. This analysis is based on the assumption that choices of future students from a given region will be identical to the current pattern. While this assumption is unlikely to be true, the results based on that assumption might have value in planning for the future.

**Table IV**

**Change in Number of Transfers by Institution  
Assuming No Change in Capture Rate by Region**

	1997-98	2009-10	Growth
UW	2,881	4,600	1,719
WSU	1,974	3,100	1,126
CWU	1,298	2,100	802
EWU	768	1,200	432
TESC	754	1,200	446
WWU	1,110	1,800	690
Independents	1,662	2,600	938
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,447</b>	<b>16,600</b>	<b>6,153</b>

Transfers to specific independent colleges could increase by 46 to 65 percent to 2010. The largest increases will be at those colleges like Seattle University and City University, which draw students from the fast growing Snohomish county colleges. The growth will still be substantial, but less for colleges like Gonzaga and Pacific Lutheran University which do not draw students from that area, unless of course, the pattern of transfer changes to draw more students from that area.

### Summary

This analysis of the 1995 transfer forecast affirms the general size and timing of that forecast:

- Transfer numbers have been stable and even declining from 1993-94 through the present year consistent with drop in the number of students 19 to 23 years of age in the colleges (the Baby Bust generation).



- Transfer numbers will begin to increase this coming year, and exceed past levels in 2000-01.
- The number of transfer students will increase more than 50 percent in the next ten years.

This analysis also found that policy changes might be impacting transfer numbers now and in the future. Welfare reform, in particular has likely had an impact on the number of students transferring in 1997-98 and who will in the future. Running Start may also impact the count of transfer students.

This forecast also provides detail on transfers now and in the future from colleges in various regions in the state:

- The increases will be spread throughout the state, though the largest increases will be from the colleges that serve Snohomish and King counties.
- The number of transfers will increase by 400 to 1,700 at the four-year public institutions and by nearly 1,000 at the private institutions, assuming each institution captures the same share from each region.

## Appendix

### Forecast Regions

Regions	Counties in Region	Community Colleges in Region
King	King	Bellevue CC Green River CC Highline CC North Seattle CC Seattle Central CC Shoreline CC South Seattle CC
Pierce/Kitsap	Kitsap Mason Pierce	Olympic College Pierce College Tacoma CC
Snohomish	Snohomish	Edmonds CC Everett CC
Central	Adams Chelan Douglas Grant Kittitas Klickitat Okanogan Yakima	Big Bend CC Wenatchee Valley College Yakima Valley CC
Southwestern	Clark Cowlitz Grays Harbor Lewis Pacific Skamania Thurston Wahkiakum	Centralia College Clark College Grays Harbor College Lower Columbia College So Puget Sound CC
Northwestern	Clallum Island Jefferson San Juan Skagit Whatcom	Peninsula College Skagit Valley College Whatcom CC
Southeastern	Asotin Benton Columbia Franklin Garfield Walla Walla	Columbia Basin College Walla Walla CC
Northeastern	Ferry Lincoln Pend Oreille Spokane Stevens Whitman	Spokane CC Spokane Falls CC



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