

SERU/UCUES Research Symposium
A New Generation of University Students: Understanding the Student Experience and Seeking
Opportunities to Translate Analysis into Practice
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ABSTRACT

The “Choice Gap” in the Transfer Student Experience

Loni Bordoloi, USC Rossier School of Education
Hannah Alford, Long Beach City College
Estela Bensimon, , USC Rossier School of Education
Alicia Dowd, USC Rossier School of Education
Matthew Lawrence, Long Beach City College

Researchers interested in the transfer student experience typically focus on barriers impeding transfer from two-year to four-year institutional settings, or the experience of students who have already made the transition to four-year institutions. While this area of research is valuable in strengthening transfer and retention programs, it overlooks the significant number of qualified students who choose *not* to transfer to selective institutions, or worse, not transfer at all. These students fall into the transfer “choice gap.” At an urban community college that served as our research site, we found that students who had met the stringent requirements for admission to the University of California (UC) system, or other similarly selective institutions, overwhelmingly chose not to transfer to such institutions.