

Transfer Rate

February 2023

BACKGROUND

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Rock Valley College (RVC) has identified KPI to inform the college community about institutional health and development. The College KPI are presented in five categories aligned to Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Public Agenda Goals. College KPI categories include *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success*; *Affordability*; *Educational Quality*; *Accountability*; and *Addressing Regional Economic Needs*.

Transfer Rate is a KPI aligned to the College category of *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success*, as well as the category of *Educational Quality*. As a measure of *Educational Attainment, Access, and Success*, this category is aligned to the IBHE Public Agenda Goal to increase educational attainment and is defined by efforts to raise success at each stage of the education pipeline and eliminate achievement gaps. As a measure of *Educational Quality*, this category is also aligned to the IBHE Public Agenda Goal to increase the number and quality of postsecondary credentials and is further defined by improving transitions along the educational pipeline.

Transfer Rate Data

Tracking student transfers from one institution of higher education to another has become increasingly complex. College students across the nation change from one institution to another in varying patterns, including the following:

- Students may engage in what is commonly called “swirling” or moving back and forth between institutions.
- Students may transfer with or without completing a credential.
- Students who complete “non-transfer” credentials may transfer.
- Students transfer in their own time, not necessarily immediately after leaving their first college.
- Students concurrently enroll at multiple institutions.
- Students transfer among 2-year institutions, from 2-year to 4-year institutions, and from 4-year to 2-year institutions (i.e., *reverse transfer*).

Data used to inform this report were derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), and various 4-year institutions. IPEDS transfer-out data reflect adjusted cohorts¹ of first-time, full-time degree/certificate-seeking students. The IPEDS data have limitations given that students may begin their studies in the spring term, start as part-time, or come to RVC with previous college experience and do not fit the IPEDS model.

¹ Cohorts are adjusted by removing allowable exclusions before calculating the transfer rate. Allowable exclusions include death or total and permanent disability, service in the armed forces, service with a foreign aid service of the federal government, and service on an official church mission.

The NSC allows the College to track institutionally defined cohorts of students, examining subsequent enrollment and even subsequent completion. Each year, the most recent ICCB Annual Enrollment (A1) data are uploaded to the NSC, and NSC returns data about subsequent enrollments and completions provided by participating institutions. The data uploaded to NSC include full-time and part-time students enrolled in credit courses at all levels. These students could be exclusively enrolled at RVC or concurrently enrolled at RVC and other institutions. NSC data should be interpreted with caution, because transfer patterns (as described on the previous page) can confound transfer data obtained from NSC. Transfer data included in this report reflect the subsequent enrollment of students enrolled at RVC during the 2019-2020 academic year as of August 1, 2020.

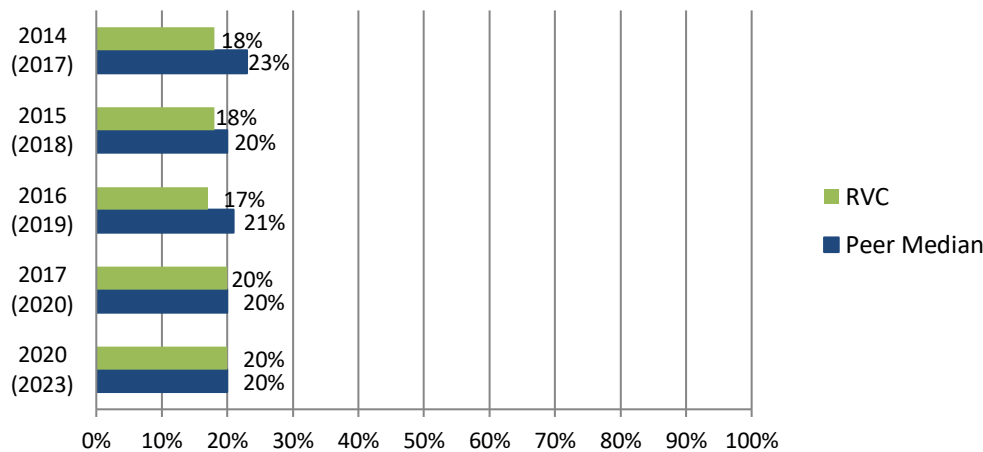


RESULTS

First-Time, Full-Time Students

Figure 1 shows the IPEDS transfer-out rates for RVC compared to the peer² median. Rates reflect the percentage of students from the entering cohort who transfer within three years without earning a credential. For example, the 2017 figures represent the percentage of first-time, full-time students who began in Summer/Fall 2020 and transferred out by August 31, 2023 without completing a degree or certificate.³

Figure 1: IPEDS Transfer-out Rates for RVC and Peer Institutions by Entering Fall Term (Transfer Year)



Source: IPEDS-College Navigator

Data presented in Figure 1 indicate:

- The RVC transfer-out rate has reached its highest percentage (20%) in the five year period.
- Until 2020, the RVC transfer-out rate had been less than the peer median but is now equal.

Table 1 disaggregates the IPEDS transfer-out rate data by gender and race/ethnicity for RVC and comparison groups.

² Peer institutions are those in RVC’s ICCB cohort (Black Hawk College, Parkland College, Illinois Central College, Southwestern Illinois College, Lincoln Land Community College, Richland Community College, and Heartland Community College).

³ Those completing a degree or certificate are identified as completers in the IPEDS Graduation Rate, which is reported in the Graduation Rate KPI Summary Report.

Table 1: IPEDS Transfer-out Rates Disaggregated by Demographics (RVC and Comparison Groups⁴)

Percent Transferring without a Degree/Certificate Within 3 Years										
Fall Term Entered (transferred)	Cohort	Overall	Gender		Race/Ethnicity ⁵					
			Male	Female	American Indian ⁶	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic	White	Two or more races
2014 (2017)	RVC	18	18	19	*	*	19	14	19	10
	Peer**	23	23	24	*	*	25	27	23	23
	Nation**	17	16	17	17	17	20	15	17	18
2015 (2018)	RVC	18	17	20	*	*	11	10	21	*
	Peer	20	19	20	*	*	23	24	21	29
	Nation	16	16	17	27	25	22	16	17	20
2016 (2019)	RVC	17	18	16	*	*	21	14	18	*
	Peer	20	19	22	*	*	21	22	19	16
	Nation	16	15	17	17	17	20	14	17	17
2017 (2020)	RVC	20	20	20	*	*	31	10	21	*
	Peer	20	19	21	*	*	22	17	21	16
	Nation	15	15	16	13	15	19	13	16	16
2020 (2023)	RVC	20	20	20	25	11	31	10	21	31
	Peer	20	19	21	*	*	22	17	21	16
	Nation	15	15	16	13	15	19	13	16	16

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

*Group size is less than or equal to 30 or group median is equal to 0%, which is likely the result of small groups.

Data presented in Table 1 indicate the following:

Gender

- Between 2020 and 2023, the rate for men and women increased to their highest levels in the five year period.
- In 2023, the transfer-out rate for RVC women were lower than the peer rate and higher than the national rate. Men had a higher rate than the national and peer medians.

Race/Ethnicity

- Over the five years reported, RVC transfer-out rates had increased to the highest level (31%) for Black/African American students. Hispanic students have decreased to their lowest point (10%). The transfer-out rate is at the highest level (21%) for White students.
- The Black/African American students transferred out at a substantially higher rate (31%) than all other comparison groups.
- Hispanic students have a lower transfer-out rate (10%) than all other comparison groups.

⁴ Comparisons represent the median value of the comparison group.

⁵ IPEDS added *two or more races* as an optional reporting category during the 2008-2009 collection cycle. This category became required as part of the 2011-2012 reporting cycle for graduation rates. Institutions may have implemented this change at various times, and the addition of this category may impact the numbers of students reported in other race/ethnicity groups.

⁶ The American Indian group includes Alaska Natives.

All Students

Transfer-out rates presented in Figure 1 and Table 1 reflect first-time, full-time students known to have transferred to another school within three years of initial enrollment at RVC. Table 2 summarizes the subsequent enrollment patterns of a larger, more inclusive group of RVC students. Specifically, subsequent enrollment for *all* students enrolled in the specified fiscal year is reported based on data from NSC. These data represent the percentage of students who continue in higher education, including those that return to RVC, transfer to another 2-year college, and transfer to a 4-year college.

Table 2: Subsequent Enrollment of RVC Students

A1 Cohort ⁷	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022
Continued in Higher Ed ⁸	51.3%	54.9%	54.4%	58.6%	54.1%
Returned to RVC	34.7%	31.6%	40.1%	42.3%	36.2%
Transferred to 2-yr College	2.3%	3.7%	4.1%	4.3%	1.8%
Transferred to 4-yr College	14.3%	19.6%	20.8%	25.2%	16.2%

Source: A1 upload to National Student Clearinghouse, StudentTracker Aggregate Report, StudentTracker Control Report

Data in Table 2 indicate the following about students enrolled at RVC during FY2021:

- 54.1% continued their higher education, with most of these students remaining enrolled at RVC,
- 16.2% subsequently enrolled at a 4-year college or university, and
- 1.8% subsequently enrolled at another 2-year college.

Table 3 summarizes the number of RVC students transferring to various institutions.

Data in Table 3 indicate the following:

- Five of the fourteen schools represented are private 4-year institutions (four non-profit, one for-profit), five are public 4-year institutions, and four are 2-year public institutions.
- Northern Illinois University, the closest public 4-year institution, is consistently the top transfer destination for RVC students.

Table 3: Multi-year Comparison of Transfer Destinations for RVC Students by Headcount

		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Northern Illinois University	Public, 4-year	230	219	222	265	322
Rockford University	Private, non-profit, 4-year	99	132	137	114	130
Upper Iowa University	Private, non-profit, 4-year	18	14	14	8	6
Illinois State University	Public, 4-year	50	38	40	63	80
St. Anthony College of Nursing	Private, non-profit, 4-year	57	64	65	57	57
Judson University	Private, non-profit, 4-year	13	7	7	6	6
Western Illinois University	Public, 4-year	5	17	17	16	22
Kishwaukee College	Public, 2-year	16	17	19	15	22
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	Public, 4-year	22	21	22	17	27
Harper College	Public, 2-year	--	8	7	5	5
University of Illinois @ Urbana	Public, 4-year	36	30	34	59	67
Highland Comm. College	Public, 2-year	15	27	27	23	14
Chamberlain University	Private, for-profit, 4-year	5	2	2	4	1
McHenry County College	Public, 2-year	4	10	10	5	7

Source: National Student Clearing House: -- Data not available from transfer institution

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

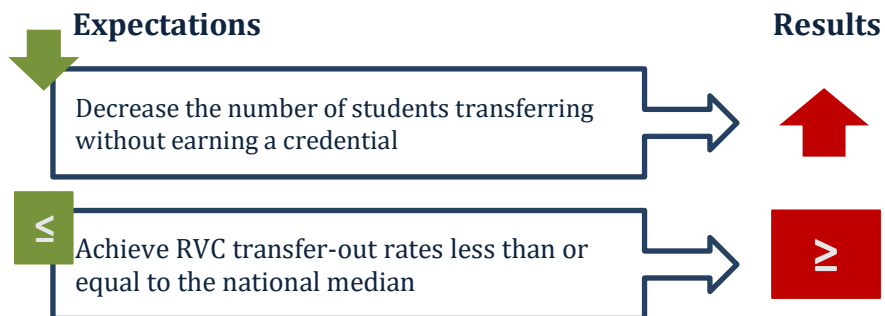
Transfer Rate is examined as an institutional KPI which provides information about the College's efforts in the area of *Educational Attainment* and *Educational Quality*. Specifically, data within this summary report support decision making about efforts to raise success and improve transitions within the educational pipeline, as well as eliminate achievement gaps.

Current evaluation of transfer rate data is complicated by variant patterns of transfer and a definition of student success based on completion or graduation. However, transferring without a credential may be a measure of student success depending on individual goals and intents for attending a community college. The rate of transfer without a degree/certificate needs to be explored further in conjunction with other College data (e.g., identified entry goal and intent and graduation and completion data) to determine the degree to which reported transfer rates are representative of students' expectations and needs. Nonetheless, given the current expectation that student success is equivalent to earning a credential, success on this KPI is evidenced by a stable or declining transfer-out rate. Data in this KPI report suggest the following:

Raising Success and Improving Transitions within the Educational Pipeline

Raising success and improving transitions within the educational pipeline would be reflected in transfer rates that demonstrate students' potential for successful completion of post-secondary credentials. As shown in Figure 2, the expectations are that there should be a decrease in the number of RVC students transferring without earning a credential and RVC transfer-out rates should be less than or equal to the national average. The general overall transfer rate has remained steady until 2020 where it increased to the highest level in the five year period. As a result, this increase has brought the RVC transfer-out rate (20%) much higher than the national median (15%).

Figure 2: Current Results on Raising Success within the Education Pipeline



Eliminating Achievement Gaps

As shown in Figure 3, expectations for eliminating achievement gaps include narrowing group disparities in transfer rates (i.e., one group improves at a faster rate than the other to close the gap, not one group improves while the other declines in performance) and gaps smaller than or equal to the national gaps. Expectations have not been met for narrowing the achievement gap between men and women, with women transferring without a credential at a higher rate than men. This gap is higher than the gap observed at the national level. The gap between Black/African American and White students has increased by eight percent over the 5 year period. At the national level, Black/African American students were more likely to transfer without a credential than their White peers. The gap between Hispanic and White students has increased over the five year period.

NOTE:
Findings related to transfer rate data should be considered along with graduation rate data and other indicators of completion to better inform conclusions.

Figure 3: Current Results on Eliminating Achievement Gaps

