



Community College Pathway to the BA: Challenges to Getting an Optimal Return

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Why Do We Care?

1.7 Million

new students enroll in a community college each year; groups with lower socioeconomic background are concentrated



80%

plan to get a bachelor's degree or higher

Too few students manage to make the leap



Just **33%** of students who started community college in fall of 2007 transferred to a four-year school

Source: Jenkins & Fink, 2016

Even when they transfer, we're still failing them



Of the students who successfully transferred, **only 42%** went on to get a bachelor's within 6 years of starting

Source: Jenkins & Fink, 2016



How and Why Does Two-Year College Entry Influence Baccalaureate Aspirants' Academic and Labor Market Outcomes?

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Data

- 2004-2005 cohort initiating in either two-year or four-year public and private not-for-profit colleges (SCHEV)
- Student award data matched with enrollment and graduation data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)
- Student unit-record administrative data matched with UI data from Virginia
- Followed to 2012
- BA seeking students: (N = 43,735, 1/3 in community colleges)

Key Findings: CC Entrants vs. 4yr Entrants

	Regression on unmatched sample	Regression on matched sample
BA Attainment	-0.379***	-0.218***
Average Quarterly Earnings in 2012	-\$1553***	-\$256
Average Quarterly Earnings in 2012 (conditional on BA attainment)	-\$1606***	-\$535

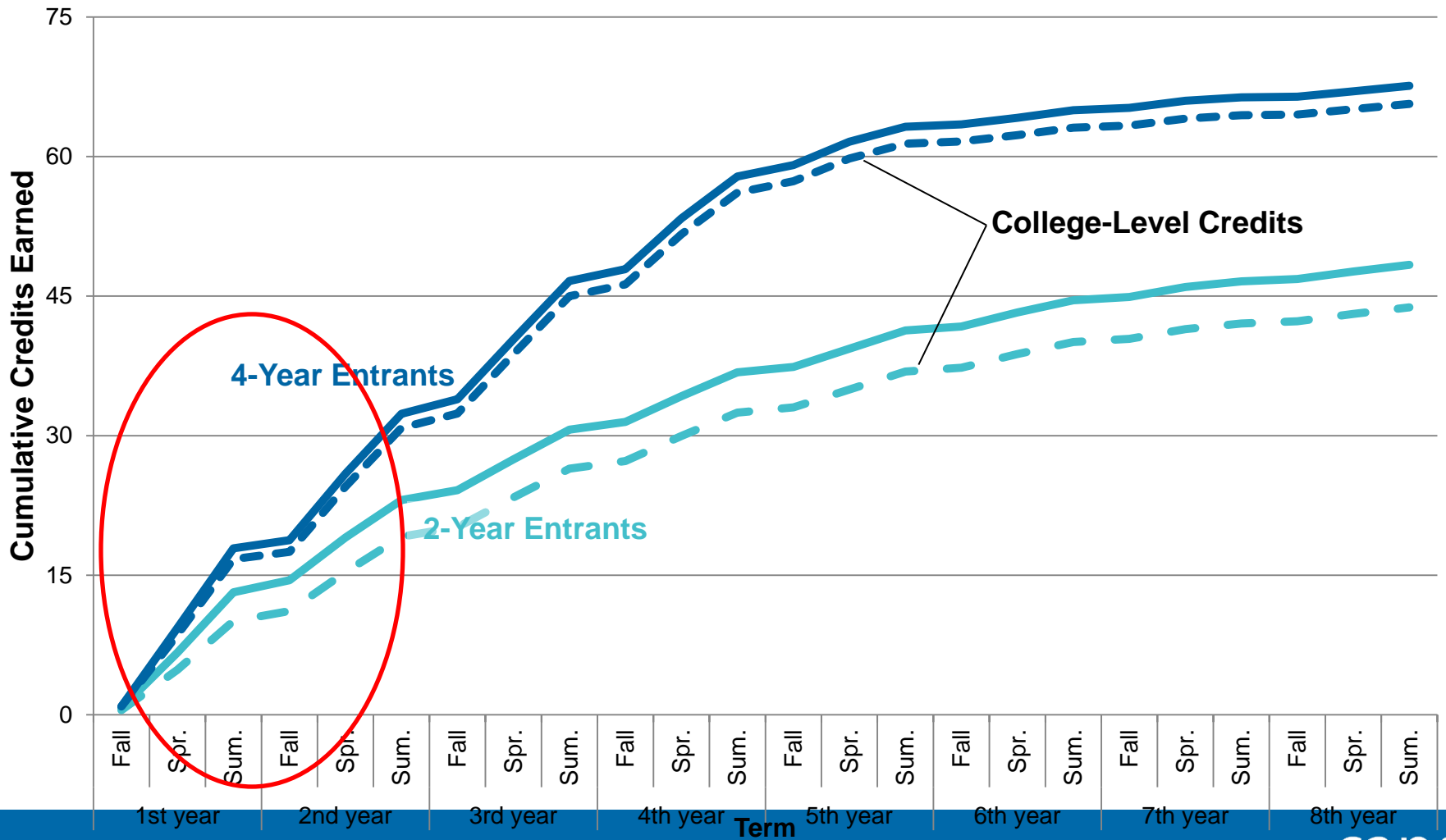
Barriers to Transfer Success

- 1) Slow early academic progress
- 2) Students make progress, don't transfer
- 3) Credit loss
- 4) Post-transfer “academic shock”

Transfer Success Barriers:

1. Slow early academic progress

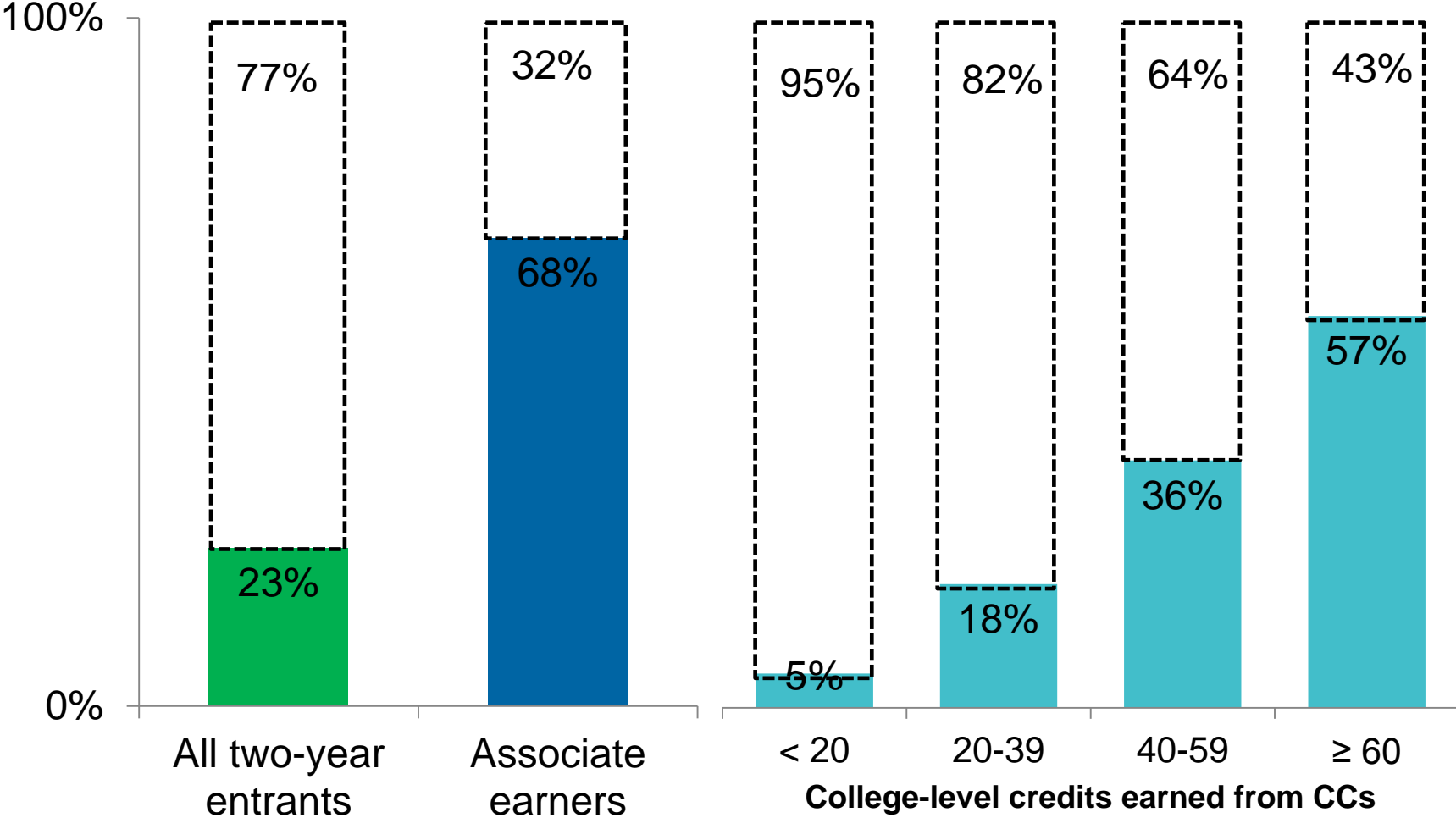
VA Fall 2004 Matched 2- and 4-Year FTIC Students Cumulative Credits Earned by Term



Transfer Success Barriers:

2. Students Make Progress,
Don't Transfer

VA Fall Starting 2004 CC Cohort, Bachelor's Degree Seekers Rate of Transfer to Four-year Colleges

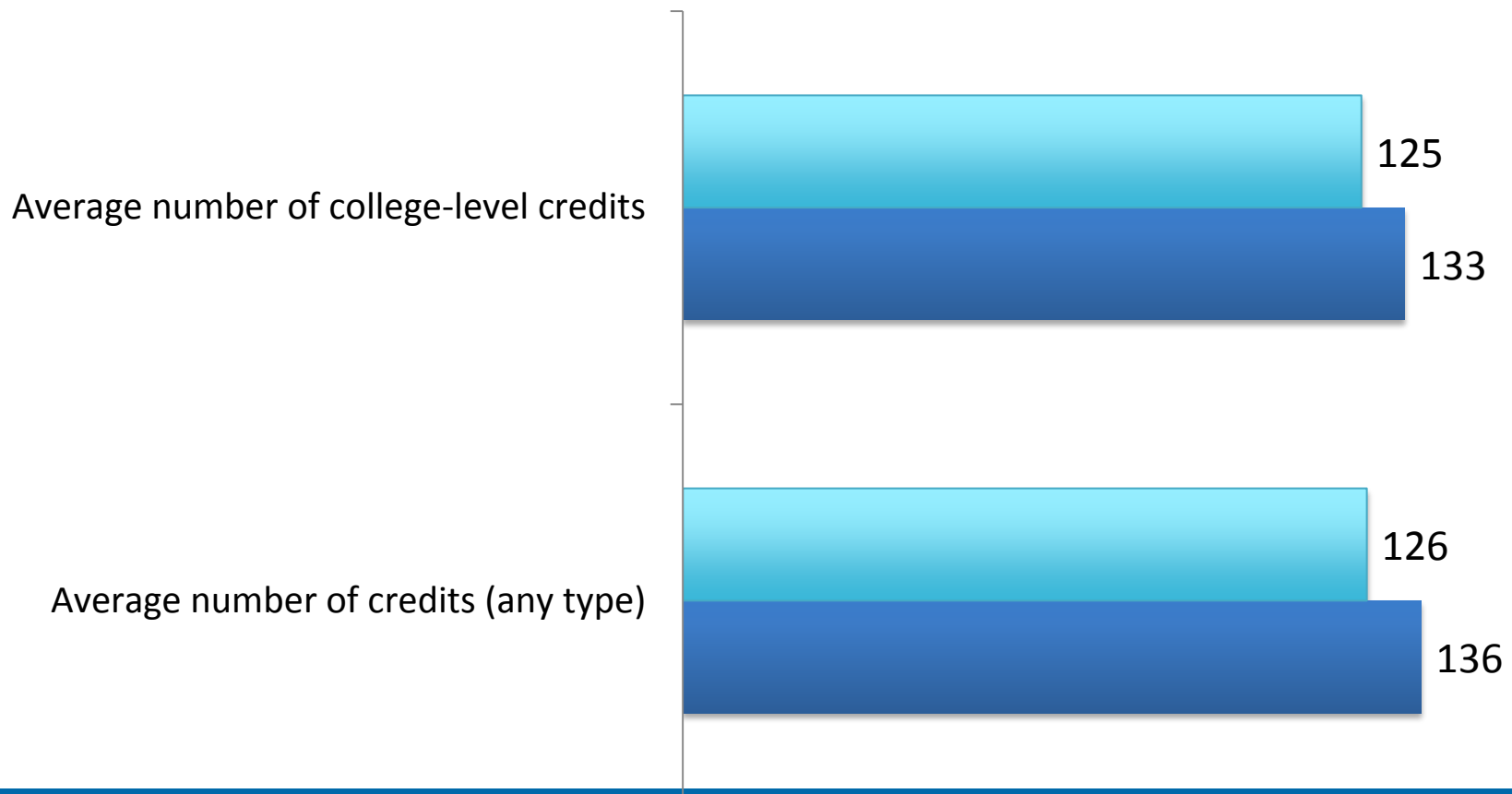


Transfer Success Barriers:

3. Credit Loss

VA Fall 2004 Matched 2- and 4-Year Entrants, Total Credits Earned at Graduation

4-Year Entrants 2-Year Entrants



Credit Transfer Inefficiency



Just **58%** of students successfully transferred 90% of their credits.



And **15%** can't transfer any credits at all.



Students who can transfer 90% of their credits were **2.5x** more likely to get their bachelor's degree, compared to those who transfer half or less.

Source: BPS data, Monaghan & Attewell, 2015.

Transfer Success Barriers:

4. Post-transfer “academic shock”

Term-by-Term Fluctuations in GPA Among Transfers and Matched Native Students

Transfer student community college GPAs pre-transfer much higher than matched sample of 4-Year Entrants

“Transfer Shock” initial drop in GPA; still higher than matched sample of 4-Year Entrants

Transfer Student GPA consistently higher than matched sample of 4-Year Entrants

