



PROBLEM SOLVED:

PROBLEM SOLVED is an on-going **VOICE** feature aimed at breaking down common student problems with step by step solutions and easy to follow explanations.

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Reporter

Many students start their studies at MCCC without thinking about what comes next in their education or what is involved in the transfer process in general. They are just focused on that first semester and getting the hang of being a college student.

Many students, especially those that are the first to go to college in their family, might get a late start thinking about and planning for transfer because they feel unsure or overwhelmed by where to transfer or what to do and have no idea what steps are involved in the transfer process.

FIND A MENTOR

Students don't neces-

sarily know, for example, that it is important to find a mentor who knows the ropes and can take the mystery out of the process. This could be an academic advisor, a trusted professor, a success coach, or someone in transfer services.

A good mentor can help a student think about what matters to them and what they want in a transfer school. A specific program? Rural? Urban? In state? Out of state? Public? Private?

A mentor can also help explain things like how to fill out an online application, how to request transcripts, how to ask professors for recommendation letters, and how to write a good application essay.

VISIT TRANSFER SERVICES

Director of transfer services, Laurene Jones, says that she notices many students make the

mistake of waiting late in their journey at MCCC to talk to a transfer advisor.

"Students often think they can wait until it's almost time to leave Mercer to gather their information then. It's really important students start early."

The common notion is that students at community colleges transfer at the end of their sophomore year, but the definition of a sophomore year is more complex than it seems.

More than half of MCCC students attend part time and the number of students who complete their Associates degree in two years is under 20%.

STAY ON TRACK

For those on the two year track, thinking about the

transfer process early is critical, but for everyone else, it's important not to forget about it along the way because it seems so far away.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

Professor Bettina Calouri, director of the Honors program at MCCC, explains the importance of making connections.

She says, "Everyone should know how important it is to go to office hours because going to office hours is where a student talks one-on-one with the professor and the professor gets to know them a bit more. You're automatically forming a stronger impression about how motivated you are because you took the time to go to office hours, but the most important thing is that the professor knows

STAYING IN STATE

PROS:

- The transfer process is generally much easier if you are applying to state schools.
- NJ has some really good transfer schools.
- Going to a public state school is less expensive for students who reside in that state. (Not including international students)
- Public colleges in NJ are required to award you all 60 credits if you have completed your Associates degree, whereas private or out of state schools may choose not to give credit for some community college classes.
- (NOTE: If you apply to a private school like Seton Hall or Princeton, your process will be much the same as the out of state transfer process.)

CONS:

- You have fewer schools to choose from.
- You may have to keep working or keep taking on family obligations or be influenced by old friends who may be distracting or not be fully supportive.
- You may have less time to focus on studying and maturing and finding your own way in the world.

GOING OUT OF STATE

PROS:

- You have many more options. There are 3,313 non-profit colleges in the US, and there are only 47 in NJ.
- Sometimes leaving home gives you more time to focus on yourself and your education and personal maturing, rather than working or taking care of family members.
- Many out of state schools make a strong effort to enroll former community college students, particularly those who are high achieving, some with emphasis on minority and/or socio-economically disadvantaged students. Even the more expensive private ones often offer large or even complete scholarships.
- Many out of state colleges are in beautiful and interesting locations and have very comfortable spaces and educational resources that NJ schools don't offer.

CONS:

- You may have to take on more debt than staying in NJ and going to a public school.
- Unlike NJ public schools, private or out of state schools may choose not to give credit for some community college classes.
- You have to leave your comfort zone and adapt more to new cultures and experiences.
- Some students feel a sense of not belonging that is called "imposter syndrome" where they feel like they don't deserve to be at a "fancy" school. It can be isolating and tough to push through.

RIDE

IN STATE GUARANTEED TRANSFER

NOTE: To FAFSA is a step for guaranteed transfer

START YOUR PROGRAM AT MCCC

HOW TO START

- CORE CLASSES**
Start moving through your core classes in Math, English, Communication, Science and Language.
- TRY NEW THINGS**
Take a variety of Gen Ed classes. To start finding your interests.
- STAND OUT**
Make a good impression by sitting in the front, raising your hand, getting work in on time, and making steady improvement.
- OFFICE HOURS**
Go to office hours even when you don't need to. Make a good connection with a professor or two that you like.
- GRADES**
Work on getting your GPA up.
- HONORS**
If you have a strong GPA think about applying to the Honors program which has smaller classes and more academic rigor.
- ACTIVITIES**
Get involved in activities that will look good to your transfer school.

FIND A MENTOR

DECIDE WHAT MATTERS

DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO LOOK OUT OF NJ

Big school? Small school? Rural? Urban? Specific program of study? It's time for research. Make a list. Whether you plan to stay in state or not, it's wise to apply to multiple schools.

IN STATE PUBLIC COLLEGE-UNIVERSITY

NJ Common Transfer Public 4 Year Schools
Rutgers - Kean - NJIT - William Paterson
Montclair - Rowan - TCNJ - Stockton

IN STATE PRIVATE COLLEGE-UNIVERSITY

NJ Well Known Private 4 Year Schools
Princeton - Drew - Monmouth - Drew
Rider - Seton Hall - Fairleigh Dickinson

OUT OF STATE PRIVATE OR PUBLIC COLLEGE-UNIVERSITY

FAFSA

Complete your financial aid application early. You'll need several documents including your parents' tax info unless you are over 23, in which case you only need your own.

MAKE A LIST OF:

- DEADLINES for each app (put them on your calendar)
- CONTACT INFO for each school
- ANY SPECIAL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS (such as SAT)

EARLY DECISION
Deadline is usually **Nov. 1**. Apply early decision if you have one school you have your heart set on. If they offer you admission, you are required to go there. You get your decision in December.

REGULAR DECISION
Deadlines is usually around **Jan 1**. You get your answer by May 1.

BASIC TIMELINE

FIRST 15 CREDITS

SECOND 15 CREDITS

THIRD 15 CREDITS

HOW TO TRANSFER

you more as an individual, and that will help when they want to write a letter of recommendation.”

A basic timeline Jones says is this: “In the beginning, attend a [transfer] workshop, come in and meet with a counselor and then each semester choose your classes, maybe visit the school, gather information, go to transfer days.”

KNOW THE OPTIONS

Jones says staying in state and graduating MCCC with an Associate’s Degree is usually what most students decide to do because state schools are lower cost and because NJ has a beneficial transfer law.

“They have to give you 60 credits no matter what,” Jones says.

This means that while

private and out of state schools may look at a MCCC transcript and not award credit for certain classes, New Jersey state schools are required to give transfer students who have completed their Associates all 60 credits.

This is a law that has benefited many transfer students as well as limiting the programs to 60 credits for each degree program, instead of allowing more credits to be added as requirements.

As a result, most of the transfer workshops at MCCC are held are for in state schools.

MCCC alumni, Jackson Thompson, who transferred to Rutgers University and is now a Senior majoring in Journalism, says this transfer agreement was very helpful in his decision to stay in state. He knew that it would be an easier process

when transferring credits.

Thompson gives this advice to students, “Treat the transfer process like it’s going to determine your life, so just cherish the process.”

But Jones notes that there are resources available on the web for students looking to consider other options. One program that connects a significant number of MCCC students with out of state schools is Mercer Honors and having honors classes on a transcript can look good when it is time to transfer.

GIVE YOURSELF AN EDGE

Professor Calouri says, “If it works for someone’s program and they’re a strong student, then the nice thing about an Honors course is that it’s discussion-oriented, and the smaller class size [means] stu-

dents can function more as leaders. The four year [transfer] schools will assume [the student has] a level of initiative, and a deeper engagement with a topic, and that can help.”

In addition to finding a mentor, going to transfer workshops, and considering Honors classes, other things that help make a student a strong transfer candidate are maintaining a strong Grade Point Average (GPA), and participating in sports or curricular activities, particularly ones that are related to the field they want to study.

Jones says, “The idea is you don’t have to do it alone. That is what we’re here for. We do this day in and day out and meet with students and try to guide them as much as possible.”

THE TRANSFER TRAIN

NOTE: The goal of this chart is to give students a basic starting point for thinking about transfer decisions and plans. It is not a substitute for talking to an advisor.

CHECK ELIGIBILITY

Students in certain majors with a high enough GPA (and, in some cases, other factors) may be qualified to automatically get into certain NJ schools. Check if your program and if you qualify.
www.mccc.edu/student_services_transfer_dual.shtml

FILL OUT FORMS

There is often an “intent to enroll” form that you need to fill out in a timely manner. Check deadlines. Call the school’s transfer office to be sure you didn’t miss anything.

typically the final guaranteed offers.

COMMON APP



Most schools use the Common Application which must be completed online. You can fill it out once and then submit it to multiple schools. Start it early and save it as

TRANSCRIPTS



You will need to fill out a form to get copies of your official transcripts (lists all your courses and grades) from MCCC, any other colleges you’ve gone to, and sometimes your high school. You may have to do this more than once.

REC LETTERS



Ask 2 professors whose classes you’ve done well in and with whom you’ve made a connection, if they will write a recommendation letter for you. Ask them well in advance of the deadline.

ESSAYS



The Common App has several written portions and you have to write them well to get into good schools. Write a draft, work on it, then consult with a trusted mentor for advice on how to improve it.

SUBMIT



Make sure you’ve read over and completed every portion of your Common App to the very best of your ability. Proofread one more time. Then hit SUBMIT.

WAIT

Different schools take different lengths of time to review your work. Watch your calendar.

DECIDE

Wait to hear from all your schools then talk through your options with a mentor. Make your pick and respond YES to your new school and NO to the others.

MAKE CONTACT

Be in touch with the admissions offices at each school you are interested in. Double check that you have the right deadlines. Ask if you qualify to get application fees waived.

TAKE SATs if NEEDED

Not every transfer school asks for standardized test scores, but many do. Starting this process early is key.

1. Check if school requires it for you
2. Apply to get fee waiver call: 888-SAT-HELP
3. Register to take the test on a date BEFORE your application deadlines.
4. Get a test prep book and study.
5. Take the test.
6. Make sure scores are sent to correct schools.

COMPLETE ANY SUPPLEMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

Some schools ask for extra items like a sample graded essay from class, midterm grade reports, or a portfolio of work, if you are applying to a specialized program (like art, design, or film). Take care of special requirements early. Check that each school received what they needed.

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15 CREDITS

FINAL 15 CREDITS