



# Preparation for Liberal Studies

Nancy de Haro, Gabriel Rodriguez, Aleah Garnica  
Department of Liberal Studies



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## Research Questions

Understanding preparation for incoming student populations for the Liberal Studies program.

### FTF Student Populations

- What are FTF student populations' preparation for college prior to their CSULB experience? Why did our FTF student populations choose Liberal Studies?

### Transfer Student Populations

- Which community colleges offer the most transferable courses, and does that correlate with success in the program (GPA, grades, time frame to graduation, etc.)?
- How can the Department improve pathways for students?

## Introduction

Liberal Studies is a uniquely-structured undergraduate program that is traditionally geared towards students who hold an interest in teaching Elementary Education (K-8) or Special Education specifically. As result, students generally need to identify future goals for teaching or educational careers earlier on, including major selection.

The Department wants to better understand previous preparation and expectations of incoming students, from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives, prior to starting a first semester at CSULB. The Department aims to develop stronger CCC partnerships and advising techniques in first-term advising workshops, with a focus on the #NoBarriers movement and the GI 2025 Initiative.

## Methods

### Data Sources Utilized

Qualitative Analysis - Qualtrics Survey (26 questions)

- Fall 2018 FTF Cohort for Liberal Studies
- Reference: CIRP Freshman Survey 2018, 2017

### Procedure

- Administered online via link; attached to Mandatory Freshmen Advising requirement

### Data Sources Utilized

Quantitative Analysis - Transferable Courses from CCC

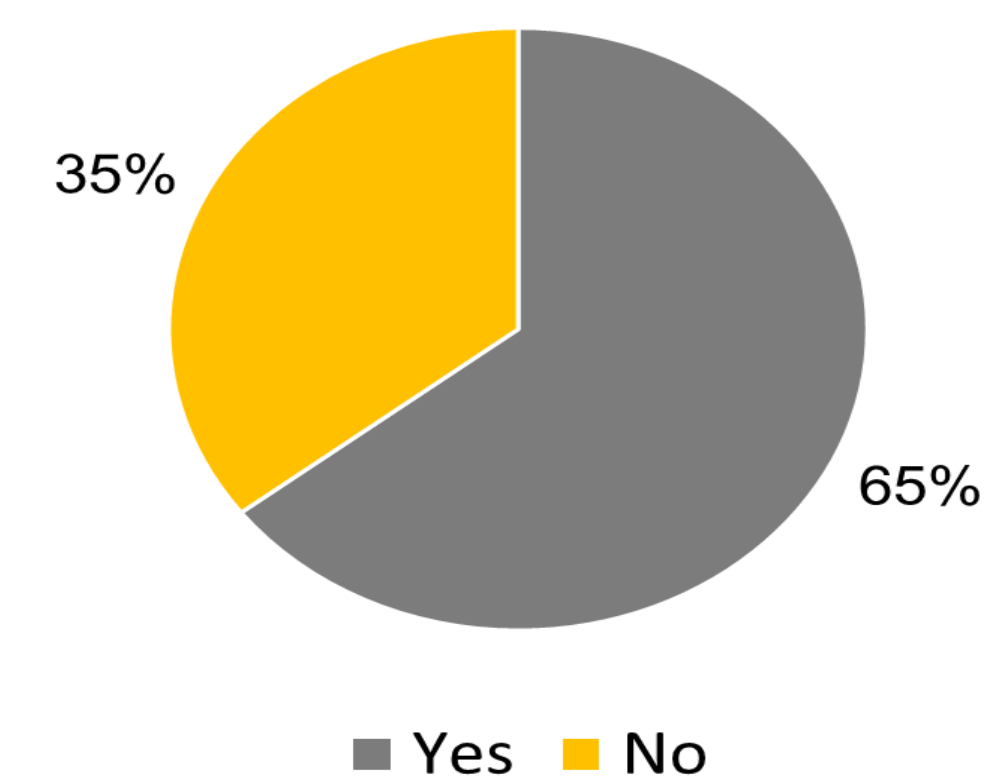
- Fall 2017 & Fall 2018 Transfer Cohort(s) for Liberal Studies
- CS-Link Report: New Undergraduates Intending to Matriculate
- EAB/SSC Filtered Search & Watch Lists by Cohort

### Procedure

- Reviewed Initial SOAR Program Evaluations & Courses Prior to Transferring of Fall 2017 & Fall 2018 Transfers; Filtered by College, Term in Excel Sheets
- Reviewed Corresponding First-Term GPA & Units Completed per Student

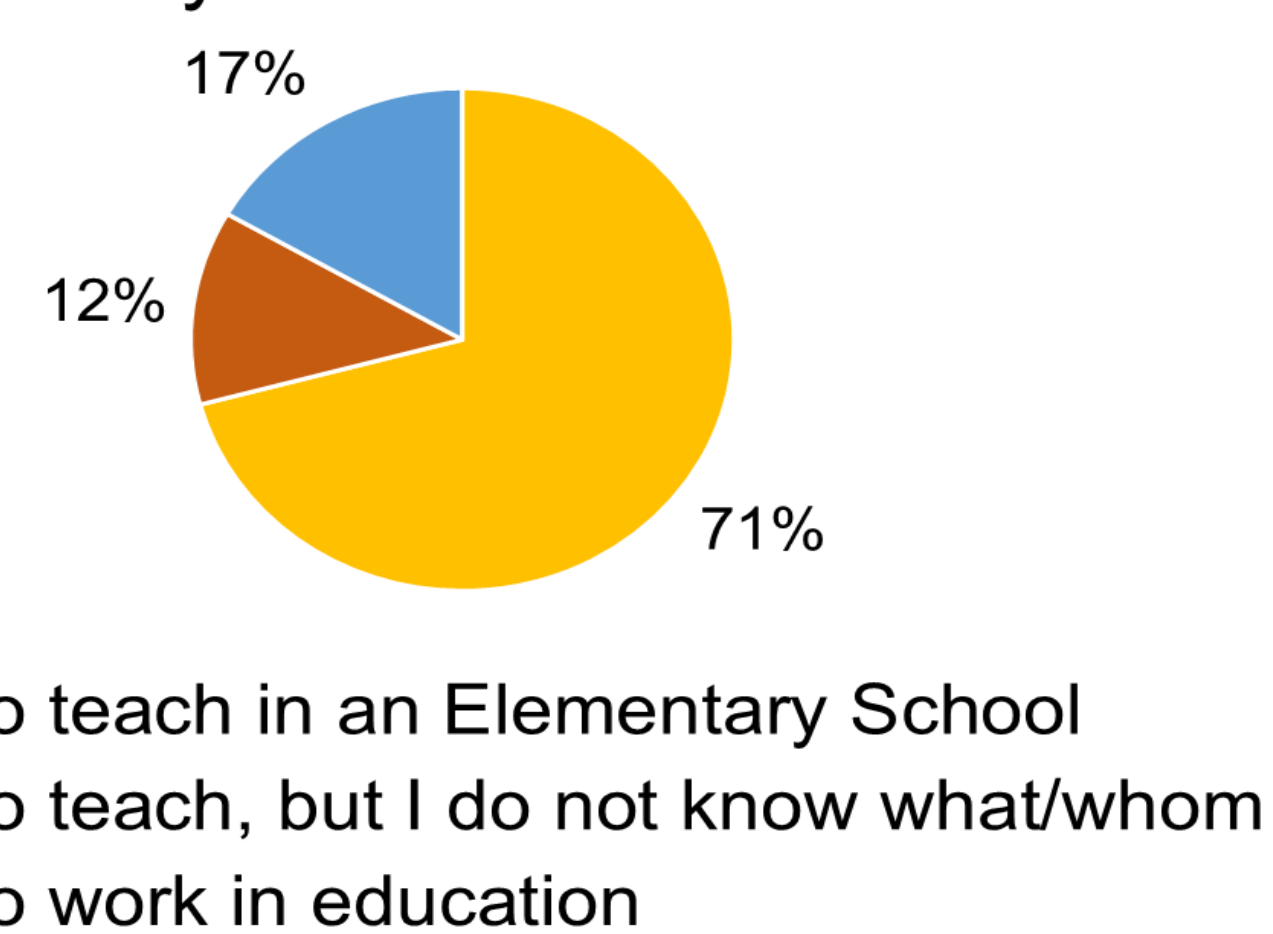
## Results

**Table 1**  
FTF Cohort Fall 2018  
Was Liberal Studies the major under which you were accepted to CSULB?



**Table 1**

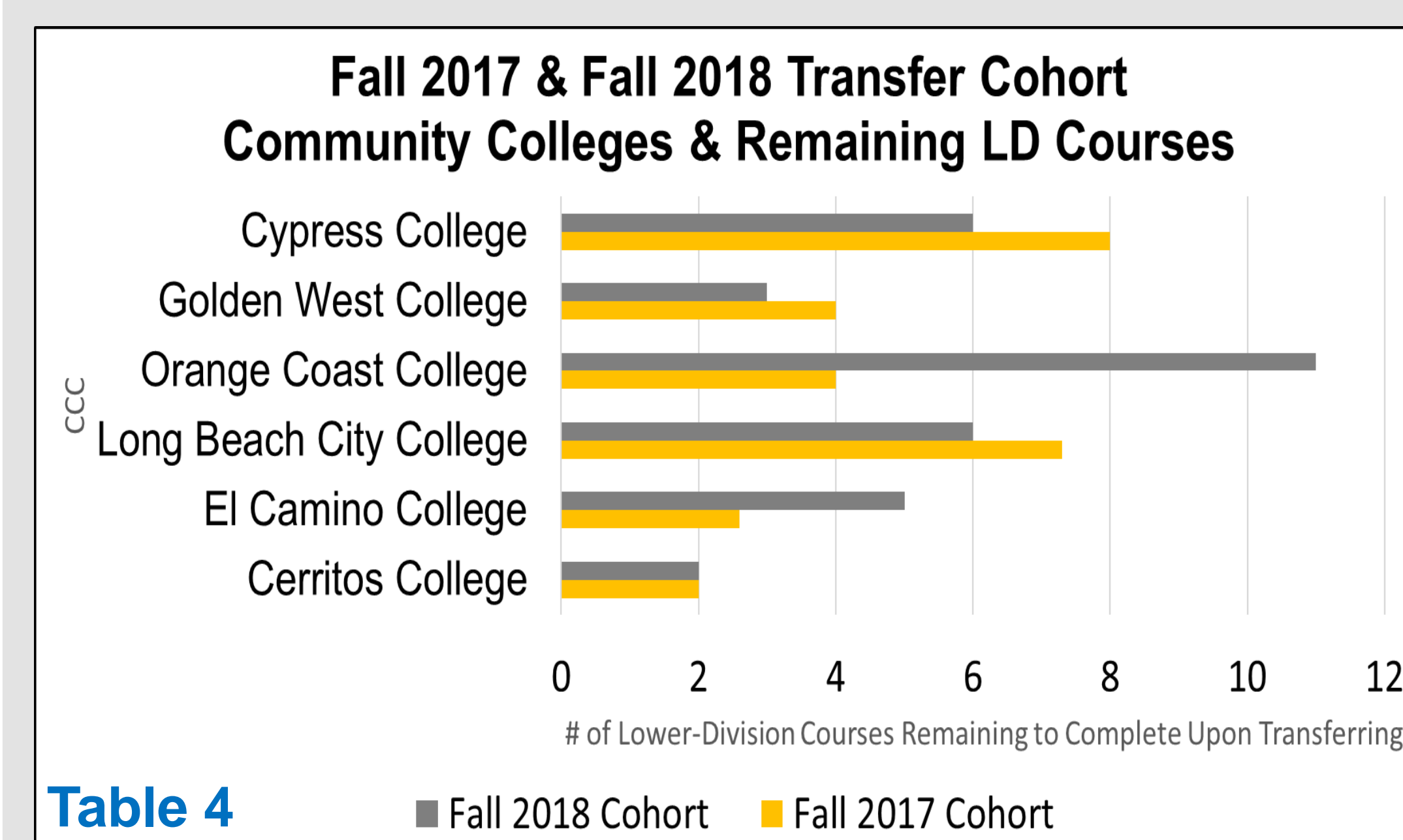
**Table 2**  
FTF Cohort Fall 2018  
Why Liberal Studies?



**Table 2**

**Table 4**

Chart show analysis of transferred coursework of incoming Transfer Cohorts (Fall 2017 & Fall 2018) from community colleges with highest number of transfer admits (based on admissions). Reviewed number of courses completed at the CC, and calculated number of lower-division courses remaining after transferring. Lastly, calculated the average number of lower-division courses remaining for graduation of students from the colleges. Cerritos College showed the lowest average number of LD courses remaining, with Cypress, Long Beach, and Orange Coast showing more on average (6+).



**Table 4**

**Table 3**

Factors in College Preparation	# of FTF Students	% of FTF Students (48 respondents of 110 FTF Cohort)
First Generation (Parents Did Not Attend)	23	47.92%
Parents Attended College	25	52.08%
Total # - Enrolled in Community College Courses in High School	3	6.25%
Total # - Completed Advanced Placement Courses (AP) and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) Courses	23	47.92%

**Table 1**

Of the total respondents, the chart shows the total number of FTF students from the Fall 2018 Cohort who are currently in the major, 65% were originally admitted to the L/ST major and 35% were originally admitted to a different major. By end of first year, for the Fall 2018 Cohort, over 30% migrated from other programs of study.

**Table 2**

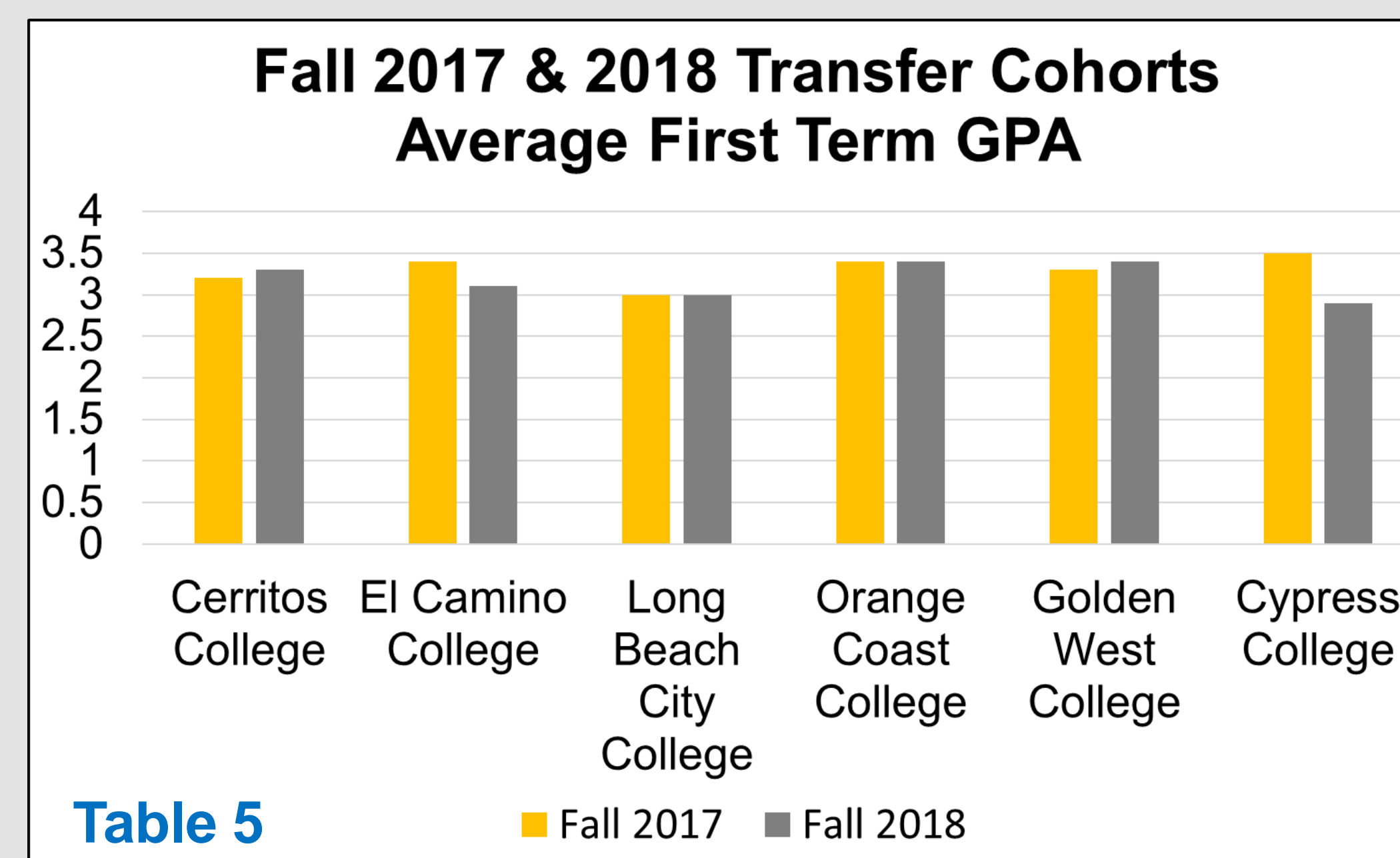
One survey question inquired with FTF students on *why* they chose the Liberal Studies program for their major, from multiple choice answers. A majority of students are focused on teaching K-6 Elementary Education specifically, yet over 29% are still exploring teaching and/or careers in education generally.

**Table 3**

One survey question inquired with FTF students on parental education and first-generation status. Results were split in the middle, with 48% being first-generation and 52% coming from parent(s) with college experience. Another survey question inquired about additional preparatory experiences, including enrollment at a CCC and/or completing AP/IB credit. About 48% of respondents had experiences with AP/IB credit or preparation, but a very small number of students (6%) had experience with a CCC.

**Table 5**

Shows average first-term GPAs for the Fall 2017 & Fall 2018 Transfer Cohorts. There doesn't appear to be any patterns noted between CCCs and first-term GPA, and number of LD courses remaining. Transfers on average had above a 3.0 first-term GPA.



**Table 5**

## Conclusion / Discussion

### FTF Student Populations

Of the Fall 2018 Cohort, select survey questions inquired about general college preparatory experiences or factors prior to their first-term at CSULB. Half of the survey respondents indicated they were first-generation, and half reported they had experience with an AB/IB course or exam. Very few students indicated any experience with community college enrollment during high school. Over a third of students majoring in pre-liberal studies by Spring 2019, of respondents, migrated from another program on campus – and about a third of respondents are still exploring teaching options and/or other careers in education.

### Transfer Student Populations

Cerritos College and El Camino College students, on average, tend to transfer to CSULB with typically more lower division courses completed prior to arrival, having less to complete after first-term. However, based on first-term units completed & average GPAs, we cannot assume they are better prepared or will be more successful. Transfer students from these two identified CCCs didn't necessarily perform better in their first semester at CSULB.

## Implications for Action

With **Freshmen** analysis, a primary component will be further development of Freshman Mandatory Advising workshops and usage of Peer Mentors. Focused advising efforts may hone in more on reminders on college basics, exploring types of teaching/education careers, and enrollment at community colleges.

With the **Transfer** analysis, a primary component will be further collaboration with partnered CCCs on identifying number of/types of courses students are transferring in with, and how to improve those rates for strategically completed coursework prior to admissions. Outreach efforts would be strengthened, in both advising and potential curriculum development and/or articulation.

## Next Steps / Future Directions

Moving forward, for **Freshmen** analysis, there are plans to administer another survey to the Fall 2017 FTF cohort, and compare responses. It would be helpful to know if students who are finishing their second year have similar backgrounds and/or sentiment.

For **Transfer** analysis, continued research will be explored on other characteristics of these cohorts, including differentiating ITEP/BA pathways for graduation, time frame for graduation, and final GPA & units completed.