I. Guaranteed Transfer Policies and Post-Secondary Outcomes (Job Market Paper)

Community colleges are a large part of the nation’s higher education system and provide an important access point to post-secondary education for many students. Transfer to a four-year institution is one of the many functions served by community colleges. Despite the importance placed on the transfer function, the transfer process between higher education institutions can be confusing for students. In order to reduce the uncertainty surrounding the transfer process, states have formalized and expanded pre-existing institutional transfer agreements to provide clearer linkages between two-year and four-year institutions of higher education, and many schools also maintain institution-to-institution agreements. This paper explores the effects of the transfer admission guarantees (TAG) between California Community Colleges and some University of California (UC) campuses. Specifically, I investigate the impact of TAG policies on transfer to and bachelor’s degree completion at UC campuses. These analyses indicate that TAG is related to increasing transfers and bachelor’s degree attainment, but no change in the rate at which transfer students graduate. There is no association between TAG policies and the grade point average (GPA) attained by transfer students.

II. Effectiveness of Statewide Community College Articulation Policies on Transfer and Attainment

A growing literature examines the relationship between state post-secondary transfer and articulation policies and the final educational attainment of students who begin at public two-year institutions. Researchers have used both the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, and various cohorts of the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS). Previous studies use cross-sectional differences in state policies to investigate the effect of such policies on educational outcomes. Most of these studies conclude there is little cross-sectional relationship between state articulation policies and education outcomes such as transfer, credit accumulation, persistence, and degree attainment. In this paper I build on the existing literature by using multiple cohorts of the BPS, allowing for the examination of changes in state policies over time. The panel data approach allows me to address the endogeneity issue of which states have articulation policies.

III. Relationship between private schooling and achievement: Results from rural and urban India (coauthored with Amita Chudgar)

This paper contributes to the important but small body of research on the role of private schools in Indian education. It uses a household dataset from India with a rich set of household covariates and student performance data on reading, writing, and mathematics. For both rural and urban India the results from regression analyses indicate that private school students perform better on tests controlling for covariates. In both contexts, however, the private school benefits becomes largely, statistically, insignificant after conducting multivariate analysis on data balanced using the propensity score matching technique. The paper also makes an initial attempt to identify ‘low-fee’ private schools; within the regression framework it finds that children in
such schools may perform no better than their public school counterparts. The data and methods used in this paper are not without limitations; however, these analyses call into question the claim that private school effect may be unequivocally positive and highlights the potential heterogeneity in private school performance in the Indian context.