Transfer United: Partnerships to Foster Transfer Student Success

Tuesday, March 19 (10:15 AM - 11:15 AM)

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Ciji Heiser, Coordinator for Assessment
April Mann, Director
New Student & Carolina Parent Programs
Overview

• Transfer Students: National Profile
• Transfer Students: UNC Profile
• Living-Learning Communities at UNC
• Overview of Transfer United
• Assessing the Effectiveness
• Suggestions & Implications for your practice
• Future for UNC
The Student Perspective

**Transition is the natural process of disorientation and reorientation that marks the turning points in the path of growth...**

- **The Other First Years: Stories of Transfer Students at UNC-Chapel Hill**
Transfer Students: National Profile

• President Obama, Degree Completion Agenda
  – By 2020, 10 million new graduates from universities and community colleges

• National Trends
  – 1/3 of all students switch institutions at least once before earning a degree
  – More than ¼ of all transfers cross state lines
  – The most common time to transfer is in the student’s second year
  – 52% transfer in reverse (four year to two year public schools)
  – 41% transfer from two to four year public schools

Statistics obtained from: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Signature Report 2, Transfer & Mobility: A National View of Pre-Degree Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions
Transfer Students: National Profile

- Almost 60% of students who graduate from 4-yr institutions began at a different institution (NCES, 2007).

- Transferring is prompted by a variety of factors related to access, finances, institutional location, academics and other related reasons (Li, 2010; Townsend, 2008).

- Students experience an initial GPA decline in first semester (“transfer shock”), but after adjustment, a steady improvement in GPA and persistence toward degree completion (Dennis, Calvillo, & Gonzalez, 2008; Townsend & Wilson, 2006).
Transfer Students: National Profile

• Students participate in class-related activities to the same degree as native students but are less likely to engage in “high-impact” activities (Kuh, 2009).

• Notification of transfer student admission is often out of sync with processes for currently enrolled students. Deadlines related to housing, parking, financial aid, etc. may have passed or be well in process. This can be compounded by limited course availability, which can lead to confusion, frustration, and stress. (Cuseo, 1998; Kodama, 2002; Laanan, 2001).

• Support is needed to assist with challenges related to understanding the new university culture and learning new processes/policies related to conducting university “business” (Townsend, 2008).
Transfer Students: UNC Profile

- Transfer students make up 11% of the student population.

- 850 incoming transfer students are enrolled each fall as full-time, degree-seeking undergraduates.
  - Roughly 450+/- junior transfers.

- 66% of junior transfers graduate in 4 years compared to 80% of native 1st year students (UNC Institutional Research, 2012).
Transfer Students: UNC Profile

• Residency Status: 97% of community college transfers are NC residents compared to only 66% of 4-year institution transfers.

• Race/ethnicity: transfer students are similar to native first-year students in distribution by race/ethnicity

• Gender: Transfers from 4-year institutions include a higher percentage of males (47%) than our native first-year student cohorts (39%).

• Socio-economic status:
  • Transfers are more likely to be a first-generation college student
  • Transfers are more likely to be on need-based aid
## UNC Comparative Statistics: Graduation Rates

*Because of the difficulties in categorizing transfer students by institutional type and controlling for their wide variations in enrollment history, these statistics should be considered preliminary and subject to revision based on results of our continuing analyses of this population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Within 4 Years</th>
<th>Within 5 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore Transfers</td>
<td>NC CC</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other CC</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-Yr</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Transfers</td>
<td>NC CC</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other CC</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-Yr</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native 1st Year</td>
<td></td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transfer Students: UNC Profile

The Academic Plan

• Academic Plan Themes 1 and 4:
  • *Invest strategically* in programs encouraging transfer student success
  • *All Carolina students should have the resources and support to graduate in a timely fashion*
  • Examine *the services and programs provided to encourage transfer students' academic success*
Transfers Students: UNC Profile

Challenges to Success

– Decentralized Services
– Funding of Programs and Publications
– Student Perceptions: “The Step Child of the University”
– Receiving Academic Advising Prior to First Semester
– Negotiating Credit Evaluation and Re-evaluation in a Timely Manner
– Differences in Academic Rigor
– Social Acclimation
– Meeting the Unique Needs of Transfers (work, childcare, financial, personal)
What is a LLC @ UNC?

- **Shared learning environment** for students with **similar interests** to live within the **same residence hall** community while exploring **commonalities**

- Commonalities are explored through **academic courses, programming, faculty/student interaction, service learning, education, and leadership development**.

- Students **bridge** their **academic, social, and institutional experiences**.
LLC Philosophy & Approach

Learning, Relationships, and Social Change

3’Cs

• **Curricular approach to LLCs** (foundation & guiding principles, curriculum design, academic initiatives, training & development, recruitment & selection, administration)

• **Connection:**
  – Interdependency of the University Experience
  – Focused connections between the academic, institutional, and social contexts (Learning Reconsidered)

• **Commitment:**
  – Shared responsibility for exploring passions
  – Active participation in community programs and development of new ideas

• **Citizenship:**
  – Understand self as a change agent
  – Service learning and civic engagement opportunities
LLC Structure & Process

- Staffing Structure
- Participants
- Selection Process
  - Essay questions
    - What experiences or skills do you possess that make you a good candidate for the Transfer United Living-Learning Community?
    - What challenges do you anticipate as a result of your transition to UNC? How will you utilize your personal and academic strengths to overcome these challenges?

- Criteria
Transfer United Living Learning Community
Est. 2011
Community Demographics (2012-2013)

• 25 Total Residents

• Community Colleges- 17 out of 25

• Out of State- 13 out of 25

• Racially/Internationally diverse population

• All students sign a Community Agreement at the beginning of the year

• All students are responsible for peer accountability in order to ensure the commitment to a vibrant community

• Campus and University Partners
  – Housing and Residential Education, Office of Undergraduate Education, New Student and Carolina Parent Programs, Academic Advising, Admissions, University Career Services, Faculty, CSTEP
Transfer United

• Mission
  – Transfer United is a living-learning community designed to promote the seamless transition of transfer students to Carolina by encouraging student success including academics, wellness and engagement. Transfer United is a part of a larger university initiative that includes participation in the Junior Transfer Seminar and Junior Transfer Success Group.
Transfer United

• Vision

– The Transfer United program will help transfer students **connect** to the university and their undergraduate experience at Carolina and, ultimately, **persist to graduation**.

“I don’t know what I would have done without TU.”
Academic Engagement

• IDST 301: The Junior Transfer Seminar—*American Colleges and Universities*
  
  – Required Readings
  
  – Field Work
  
  – Final Project & Presentation: The Auto ethnography

• High Impact Educational Practice
Academic & Social Engagement

• **Success Group**
  – Time management and SMART goal setting
  – Faculty Expectations, Academic Advising and Undergraduate Curricula
  – Undergraduate Research
  – Planning for graduate
  – Networking and mingling

“Speakers from across campus helped me navigate UNC and speed up transition.”
Academic & Social Engagement

2011-2012 programs

• Programming: Led by the Student Coordinator and supported by the Peer Mentor, RA and CD
  • Diverse Reverse Fair
  • Final Exam Stress Release Session
  • What Happens Next: Post graduation workshop
• Spring Leadership Retreat/Workshop (Caswell)
  – High Impact Educational Practice

2012-2013

• Early move-in
• Fall Retreat (Roommate Agreement)
• Partner Lunch
• Transfer credit reevaluation discussion with advisor
• TU meeting focusing on transition and academics. Participants from last year’s TU group comprised a panel and answered questions
Assessment Overview

• 2011-2012
  – Before and After Survey
    • Social Integration
    • Academic Integration
    • Personal Wellness
  – Focus Group

• 2012-2013
  – Outcomes-Based Assessment
    • Goals & Outcomes (Learning & Programmatic)
    • Before and After Survey
    • Focus Groups
    • Minute Papers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>Change Over Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connection to Campus</td>
<td>59% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel connected to campus</td>
<td>75% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel connected to campus</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection to TU</td>
<td>59% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel connected to TU</td>
<td>50% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel connected to TU</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection to other Transfers</td>
<td>65% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel connected to other transfer students</td>
<td>50% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel connected to other transfer students</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to Make New Friends</td>
<td>47% agreed or strongly agreed that they found it easy to make new friends</td>
<td>50% agreed or strongly agreed that they found it easy to make new friends</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to Join Student Organizations</td>
<td>76% agreed or strongly agreed that they found it easy to join student organizations</td>
<td>88% agreed or strongly agreed that they found it easy to join student organizations</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Integration (11-12)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>Change Over Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared for Academic Rigor</td>
<td>77% agreed or strongly agreed they feel prepared</td>
<td>88% agreed or strongly agreed they feel prepared</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know How to Access Academic Resources</td>
<td>65% agreed or strongly agreed they know how to access resources</td>
<td>88% agreed or strongly agreed they know how to access resources</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Confident in Chosen Major</td>
<td>88% agreed or strongly agreed they feel confident</td>
<td>75% agreed or strongly agreed they feel confident</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met with an Academic Advisor</td>
<td>82% agreed or strongly agreed they have met with an academic advisor</td>
<td>88% agreed or strongly agreed they have met with an academic advisor</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Academic Goals for Beginning of the Semester</td>
<td>94% agreed or strongly agreed they have set academic goals</td>
<td>88% agreed or strongly agreed they have set academic goals</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Goals for After Graduation</td>
<td>88% agreed or strongly agreed they have set post-graduation goals</td>
<td>100% agreed or strongly agreed they have set post-graduation goals</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve Transfer Credit Issues</td>
<td>76% agreed or strongly agreed they know how to resolve transfer credit issues</td>
<td>88% agreed or strongly agreed they know how to resolve transfer credit issues</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Academic Integration (11-12)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>Change Over Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognize When I Need Academic Assistance</td>
<td>100% agreed or strongly agreed they know when they need academic help</td>
<td>88% agreed or strongly agreed they know when they need academic help</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cope Effectively with Stress</td>
<td>65% agreed or strongly agreed they can cope with stress</td>
<td>63% agreed or strongly agreed they can cope with stress</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively Manage Time</td>
<td>71% agreed or strongly agreed they know how manage their time</td>
<td>75% agreed or strongly agreed they know how manage their time</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Study Strategies Specific to my Classes</td>
<td>71% agreed or strongly agreed they have developed study strategies</td>
<td>75% agreed or strongly agreed they have developed study strategies</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Work, School, &amp; Co-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>76% agreed or strongly agreed they can balance priorities</td>
<td>75% agreed or strongly agreed they can balance priorities</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• 2011-2012 Focus Group Responses
  – Community
  – Resources
  – Academic Support
  – Self-Awareness
  – Early Arrival

**Impact on Student Learning**

- Academic Resource Workshops: 14% (n = 25)
- Residential Community Programming: 21% (n = 38)
- Fall Junior Transfer Seminar: 29% (n = 50)
- Junior Transfer Support Group: 36% (n = 62)

**Focus Group Response Themes**

- Early Arrival: 5% (n = 2)
- Self-Awareness: 15% (n = 6)
- Academic Support: 15% (n = 6)
- Resources: 18% (n = 7)
- Community: 47% (n = 19)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Description</th>
<th>Corrective Action Sought</th>
<th>Task Assigned To</th>
<th>Timeline Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Meetings & Programs  | • Evenly distribute programs & meetings so that more students can attend & are not overwhelmed.  
• Support group meetings will be held bi-weekly. | Danny, Student Coordinator  
Candice | AY 2012-2013 |
| Leadership Retreat   | The retreat will be moved to August | Danny | Complete |
| Additional Resources | • Provide well-timed resources for Learning Center Services, tutoring, transportation, & involvement opportunities within & outside of TU.  
• Restructure the class to include more in class learning and application opportunities.  
• Increase the number of speakers to expose students to a variety of resources. | Danny, Student Coordinator  
Candice | Aug./Sept. and after mid-terms  
Complete |
| Class                | • Provide an orientation to the class so that students know what to expect.  
• Talk about learning at UNC.  
• Give students the skills to navigate difficult hall dynamics that may be created as a result of challenging class topics and conversations. | Danny, SC  
Andrea, Dr. Rachel Murphy-Brown | Complete |

Making Data-Driven Improvements
• Outcomes-Based Assessment
  - “...is about improving student success and informing improvements in the practice of student services and programming” (Bresciani, 2009, p. 15)
  - LLC Specific Goals & LLC Overarching Goals

• Goals
  - Broad statements
  - Measured through combination of multiple learning outcomes (derived from goals)
  - Describe the overarching, long-range intentions of a program (Bresciani, 2009)
• Outcomes (Programmatic & Learning)

  – As a result of active participation in TU Students should be able to...

    • Articulate a connection between academic, social, and institutional experiences.
    • Demonstrate cognitive complexity by reflecting in community programming.
    • Summarize their level of satisfaction with the LLC experience.
    • Demonstrate a commitment to their community.
• Connecting Learning:
  – Intentional interactions with UNC faculty/staff through class project increased awareness of UNC community
  – The program helps some to see how they fit into this institution and be successful in a different environment.

"TU has introduced me to the tools and resources that I can use in order to succeed at Carolina."

2012-2013 So far...
• Academic Success:
  – IDST 301 fulfills the EE requirement and prepares us for the rigors of UNC academics

  “It helps me know what to expect from my classes.”

• Engagement:
  – Students are engaged and participatory. Two TU members created their own philanthropy project

2012-2013 So far...
2012-2013 So far...
Suggestions for Higher Education Professionals

• Create a campus-wide committee to focus on the transfer student persistence, retention, and graduation

• Collaborate with campus partners to build sustainable programs

• Review institutional policies and practices (orientation, advising, registering for classes, transfer credit process, etc.) for accessibility and ease of use by transfers

• Compare transfer graduation rates to those of native 1st year students

• Seek feedback from transfer students and design programs that support their retention and persistence

• Stay abreast of national and local literature on transfer students
Future for UNC

- Transfer Student Coordinator Position
- Informational Interviews and Fact-Finding regarding the transfer experience
- Transfer website as a communication hub
- Institutional Research profiles for transfer students
- Academic Advising Module for Transfer Students
- Earlier Admissions notifications
- Transfer Specific Programming for Housing Students
- Funding Transfer Peer Mentors
- CSTEP required meetings with academic advisors
- Assessing the Transfer Experience
Best Practices

Group Sharing & Questions

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