Transfer United: Partnerships to Foster Transfer Student Success

Tuesday, November 5th (3:35pm-4:25pm)

Annice Fisher, Transfer Student Retention Coordinator
Danny Hall, Residence Coordinator
Overview

- Transfer Student Trends
- Transfer Student Success (Academic & Social)
- Transfer United Program
- Preliminary Assessment
  - Progress towards Academic & Social Adjustment Outcomes
- Conclusion
- Acknowledgements and References
Transfer Students
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 Perspective

• President Obama, American Graduation Initiative
  o By 2020, 10 million new graduates from universities and community colleges

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

- Global competition increase and demographic shifts in the US = increasing the graduation rates of diverse populations (Lopez, 2006)

- Increased focus on increasing transfer 4-year graduation rates (Ishtani, 2008)

- Who are transfer students?
  - Many are from under-represented populations such as low income, first generation, non-traditional aged, students of color
Transfer Student Trends: Academic Readiness

• Transfers and Academic Rigor
  o Transfers are more likely to be unprepared for the academic rigors of the research university
  o Increased rigor at the new institution leaves transfers feeling academically inadequate (Cejda, 1997; Hills, 1965; Laanan, 1996, 2001; Townsend, 2008; Townsend & Wilson, 2006).
  o Community college transfer students struggle to adjust academically to the size and pace of courses at a large university

• Transfers and Academic Engagement
  o Transfers perceive high impact educational practices such as internships and research as inaccessible (Ishtani, 2008).
Transfer Student Trends: Transfer Shock

- **Transfer Shock**
  - Initial transitional period for transfers (Hill, 1965)
    - Includes a drop in grades
  - Process of adjustment
    - Developing a sense of commitment to the institution and to degree completion as well as the absence of psychological distress (Chartrand, 1992)
Transfer Student Trends: Academic Adjustment

• Academic Planning
  - Receiving academic advising prior to their first semester
  - Negotiating the transfer credit evaluation process
  - Enrolling in the appropriate level of coursework
  - Selecting a major that best meets their academic ability
  - Students have reported that the expectation of community college instructors varies greatly from the expectations of instructors at four-year institutions.
  - Transfer students are also likely to struggle with academic-related administrative tasks including registration processes, dropping classes, and filing graduation paperwork (Townsend & Wilson, 2006).
Transfer Student Trends: Social Adjustment

Social Adjustments

- Transfers are more likely than other students to have work requirements, family obligations, and lack knowledge on how to become involved in campus activities (Wang, 2009).
- Many transfer students exhibit signs of imposture syndrome which thwarts their ability to cultivate a strong sense of belonging (Davis, 2012).
- Transfer students, especially those who are first-generation and from low-income families, may also suffer from performance anxiety (Davis, 2012).
- Transfers struggle making new friends and social connections within student organizations.
Transfer Student Success

• Tools for Success
  o Orientation, advising programs, career service counseling, financial aid, and wellness services should be integrated as pivotal resources to assist with social adjustment (Laanan, 2001).
  
  o The more students are involved in or integrated into college life, the greater the likelihood they will stay in college and attain their degree (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).
Transfer Students: UNC Profile

- Transfer students make up 11% of the student population

- 850-870 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.
## Transfer and Native First-Year Graduation Rates at UNC-CH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008 Transfer Cohorts</th>
<th>Transfer From</th>
<th>Within 4 Years</th>
<th>Within 5 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sophomore</strong></td>
<td>North Carolina Community College</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Community College</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-Year Institution</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>72.9%</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Junior</strong></td>
<td>North Carolina Community College</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Community College</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-Year Institution</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Transfers</strong></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native 1st Year</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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.*
Transfer United Living Learning Community
Est. 2011
Transfer United

• Mission
  o 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.

• Vision
  o 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.”
Transfer United

• Learning Outcomes
  o **Academics:** Participants will academically integrate into the university. They will develop a greater understanding of the academic rigor of Carolina courses. Students will be knowledgeable of and use university resources to support their success.

  o **Social:** Participants will socially integrate into the university. Students will enhance their sense of connection to the UNC-CH community.

  o **Wellness:** Participants will work towards developing a positive and healthy sense of self and will promote wellness in their community. Participants will enhance their individual success, satisfaction, and self-awareness.

• Campus and University Partners
  o Housing and Residential Education, Office of Undergraduate Education, New Student and Carolina Parent Programs, Academic Advising, Admissions, University Career Services, Faculty, CSTEP
## Logic Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Student Success</th>
<th>Program Component</th>
<th>Academic Adjustment Outcome</th>
<th>Social Adjustment Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>3 Credit Academic Course</td>
<td>Appreciation of the ways in which wellness issues (sleep, healthy habits, help seeking behaviors, goal setting) influence academic performance</td>
<td>Participants become a member of a community of scholars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Transfer Success Group</td>
<td>Learning introduced in the classroom is continued beyond the classroom setting</td>
<td>Introduction to and interaction with university resources results in students being more likely to engage with faculty and staff and utilize resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Living-Learning Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhanced sense of belonging including commitment to a peer group and commitment to the university</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community Demographics

- **25 Total Residents**
  - Plus RA, Student Coordinator, and Community Mentor

- **70% Community College Transfers**

- **40-50% Out of State**

- **Racially/Internationally diverse population**

- **Recruitment & Selection**
  - Personal Letters, Website, Admissions Brochure, Social Media
  - Application and Interview

- **Accountability**
  - 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
IDST 301: American Colleges & Universities

• Academic Success:
  o Goal:
    • Give new transfer students the opportunity to work closely with an instructor in a small-class environment and to meet other transfer students.
    • Enhance communication, research, and critical thinking skills.
  o 3 Credits, Graded, fulfills the Social Science and Experiential Education requirement
  o Designated as research intensive course, 30 hours of qualitative research

• Curriculum:
  o Interdisciplinary texts focused on: faculty, teaching and learning, curriculum, college students, organizations, leadership and governance, and higher education policy
  o Autoethnography final project

Student Quote: “It helps me know what to expect from my classes.”
Transfer Success Group

• Academic, Personal, and Professional Development
  o Meets the first 8 weeks of the semester, 25 students, 2 staff co-leaders
  o Topics:
    • Week 1: Introductions, Success Habits, Goals
    • Week 2: Faculty Expectations, Academic Advising, and Undergraduate Curricula
    • Week 3: Academic Resources and Tools
    • Week 4: Staying Balanced: Health, Wellness, Safety, and Money
    • Week 5: Opportunities Beyond the Classroom
    • Week 6: Opportunities Beyond Undergrad
    • Week 7: Leadership, Engagement, and Networking
    • Week 8: Career Networking Meet Up

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

• Early Move-in and Retreat
• Orientation
• Weekly programming (sample)
  o Major exploration
  o Academic success
  o Social programming
  o Study skills
  o Career development
  o Leadership development
  o Service Learning
  o Personal Wellness

• Academic, Wellness, and Engagement Committees
  o Student-led programming during the Spring
Assessment Tools

- Course evaluations
- Focus groups
- Pre-program and post-program surveys
- Post-program interviews
Assessment

• 2011-2012
  o 24 out of 25 retained to their second semester (96%)
  o 14 had a over 3.0 in the first semester
  o 6 had above 2.5
  o 5 less than 2.5
  o Of the original class, all have either graduated, will graduate in the fall, with the exception of 1 person is ineligible but working towards restoring eligibility

• 2012-2013
  o All on track to graduation and retained to their second year
Assessment

• Progress towards Academic Adjustment
  o 88% felt academically prepared at the end of TU
  o 63% agreed they knew how to access resources pre-TU and 88% agreed post TU
  o 7% increase in use of academic advising
  o 14% increase in setting post graduation goals
  o 16% increase in knowing how to resolve transfer credit issues

• Quotes
  o “Success group helped me learn the professor perspective for success in the classroom and that perspective taught her how to be successful in class”
  o “Nothing could have fully prepared them for the academic rigor at UNC-CH”
  o Many students remarked that “it is something every student has to experience and learn how to navigate” Students suggested
  o “Add more academic advising resources and transfer credit evaluation support”
Assessment

• Progress towards Social Adjustment
  o 16% increase in feeling connected to campus
  o 16% increase in ease with joining student organizations
  o 6% increase in making new friends

• Quotes
  o “Living arrangements positively influenced sense of community and support group”
  o “Helped break me out of my shell”
  o “Enjoyed sharing goals and life lessons from one another”
  o “Everyone should have a TU experience”
  o “TU provided a social foundation, instant support system and group of friends”
  o “TU helped me get connected and remain connected to UNC”
  o “TU motivated me to give back to other transfers at UNC”
Conclusion

• The success of transfer students has become increasingly important.

• Colleges and universities need to develop innovative programs to meet the needs of transfer students and encourage their persistence.

• Such programs require strategic partnerships to meet both the academic and social adjustment needs of transfer students.

• The Transfer United program is premised on the notion that student success is a combination of academics, wellness, and engagement.
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
Questions?

Transfers.unc.edu

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References


References


