Executing a Needs Assessment Survey: Transfer Edition

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Why conduct a needs assessment?

• Provides information about what is working, what isn’t working, and what is missing or needed
• Less assumptions, more evidence
What is your target population?

Transfer Students:

New transfer students at UNC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of transfer students</td>
<td>863 entered Fall 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age upon enrollment</td>
<td>22 years, 1 month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>54% Female, 46% Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Generation College Student</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Veteran</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living On-Campus</td>
<td>23%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What do you want to know?

@UNC: Gain an understanding of new transfer students’ needs and experiences in their transition to Carolina
Who would benefit from the collected information?

@UNC:

• Campus Offices and Resources
• Faculty and other Staff
• Prospective Students
You’re not alone...

- **Transfer Student Success Committee:**
  - Made up of students, staff, and faculty from 12 departments across campus

- **Subcommittee on Assessment:**
  - Identify issues
  - Establish a means for gathering information from the larger transfer student population
What do we want to know?

• **Demographic information**
  – Age
  – Gender
  – Race/ethnicity
  – Sexuality

• **Previous institution**
  – Two-year institution
  – Four-year institution
  – Military training
  – Vocational-Technical Institution

• **Sub-populations**
  – FGCS
  – Carolina Covenant/Achieve Scholar
  – Student Veteran
  – Parent
  – Dependent of an active duty military member or veteran
What do we want to know?

• Use of Campus Resources and Services
  – Office of Undergraduate Retention
  – Dining Services
  – Accessibility Resources & Services
  – Student Aid
  – Student Veteran Services
  – Undergraduate Admissions

• Use of Academic Resources
  – Academic Advising
  – University Career Services
  – Learning and Writing Centers
  – University Libraries
What do we want to know?

• Other information
  – Sense of belonging
  – Campus involvement
  – Barriers to involvement
  – Barriers to educational goals
  – Communication and interactions with University
  – General experiences
Design and Distribution

• Questions were designed, revised, and finalized through multiple meetings of the subcommittee
• Created and distributed using Qualtrics
• Distributed to 873 students via email in mid-November
  – Remained open until the first week of December
  – Incentive to win 1 of 10, $10 gift certificates to the Student Store
• 159 students completed the survey, an 18% response rate
2015: Who took the survey?

- 35% FGCS
- 10% Student Veterans
- 9% Student Parents
- 74% use some form of financial aid
  - 35% had significant financial need
- Previous Institutions:
  - 53% previously attended a 2-year institution
  - 56% previously attended a 4-year institution
  - 9% attended both 2- and 4-yr institutions
- Racial/Ethnic representation of UNC population
2015: Key Takeaways

- Balancing Priorities:
  - 9% are Student Parents
  - Over 40% worked in their first semester
  - Over 80% of those who worked, worked 6+ hours/week
  - 91% identified limited time as a barrier for involvement

- Sense of Belonging:
  - 83% would choose Carolina again
  - 65% felt a sense of belonging to campus community

- Desired contact with University:
  - 78% prefer email communication
How to use the information gained?

● Results were shared with Undergraduate Retention team, Transfer Student Success Committee, Academic Advising

● Continued Email communication with all transfer students

● Pilot P2P mentoring program
  ○ Intention to develop a more personal experience than the larger T-Link program currently in place

● Timing of survey
Re-Design of TNAS for 2016

- Larger Subcommittee and Campus Partners
- Discuss what we learned from 2015 and what we wanted to change for 2016
  - What is our purpose?
  - What do we want to learn?
- 828 new transfer students
Question Revisions

What barriers exist to completing or participating in out-of-class opportunities?

2015
- Cost
- Limited Time
- Parking Options
- Transportation Options
- The options available at UNC do not match my interests

2016
- Cost to participate in activities
- Cost to travel to meetings and events
- Live off campus
- Transportation options
- Parking options
- Balancing commitments with family/relationships
- Limited time due to work
- Limited time due to classes
Additional Revisions

- Had students enrolled in summer courses at UNC prior to their first fall term?
- Expanded list of sub-populations
- Updated pertinent campus resources and engagement activities
- New question format
Next Steps @UNC

- Create a factsheet representing our findings that will be made publicly available
  - Where are we strong?
  - Where are students challenged?
  - How do we support them to overcome challenges?
  - How do we communicate information?

- Consider the best way to represent the data
  - Data is only a sample
  - Make sure respondents align with the population
Next Steps @UNC

● Frequency of Assessment
  ○ What happens in between cycles to process and utilize the data?

● Consider alternative methods of assessment
  ○ Focus Groups, Interviews
  ○ Using activities as assessment
  ○ Partner with colleagues to identify other assessments in place

● Do we design something similar for those beyond the first semester?
Food for thought...

- Incentives are a must
- Consider your number of questions
- Students with opinions are more likely to respond than those in the middle
- Have a plan for the information before collection begins
- Utilize campus partners
Questions?