The Choice to Remain in STEM: A Characterization of Transfer Students’ Experiences

This study provides preliminary findings about perspectives of students who started and remained in a STEM major upon transferring to a new institution. Through interviews and inductive qualitative analyses, we identified challenges, relationships, and institutional affiliation represent the high-frequency codes. Using these categories, superimposed on a Phenomenological Variant Ecological Systems Theory conceptual framework, we describe potential influential factors on students’ decisions to stay in a STEM major, their influence on students’ perception and experience, and how they impact student response and outcome about their decisions to remain in their STEM major upon switching institutions.