NISTS 2023
BE A CONNECTOR FOR TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS
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The following presentation was given at the 21st Annual Conference for the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students. Please cite responsibly and direct questions to the original presenter(s).

Educational Session

2830 - For Transfers, By Transfers: Co-Creating Student-Led Programming

Transition Programs and Supports, Partnerships and Collaboration

In 2018, Community Partnerships was created to build bridges between community colleges and 4-year institutions. We acknowledge the stigma transfer students face and believe higher education should be made accessible for all. Striving to share our resources to empower transfer students, we have expanded our social innovation initiatives to community colleges across the state. In this presentation, you will discover how we've co-created a student-led organization that serves over 350 transfer students annually.

Paige Horsburgh, *Community Partnerships Manager*
June Rayburn, *Graduate Student Assistant*
Alaa Shahin, *Graduate Student Assistant*
Stephany Mendez Ortega, *Graduate Student Assistant*
Jacqueline Lopez-Bravo, *Social Media Coordinator*
optiMize - University of Michigan

For Transfers, By Transfers:

Co-Creating Student-Led Programming

Today's Agenda

I. Introductions - Who are we?
II. Overview of Transfer Programming
III. What does it mean to co-create programs?
IV. What is the collaborative change model?
V. What does Servant Leadership entail?
VI. How can students job craft?
VII. Q&A

Who are we?

Paige (Baker) Horsburgh

Educational Background

- **MS Higher Education**, College Administration & Leadership, *Purdue Global*
- **BA English Literature**, LGBT Studies, *Purdue University*

Professional Experience

- 3 years at the University of Michigan
  - 1 year as Community Partnerships Manager with optiMize
  - 2 years as the Events Coordinator at the LSA Opportunity Hub

- Former Academic Advisor at Purdue Global
  - Special focus with non-traditional, transfer students in an online environment

- Former Peer Success Coach at Purdue University
  - Worked as a mentor during undergraduate studies to transfer studies

Stephany Mendez Ortega
Current Graduate Student

Grand Rapids Community College

B.S. Neuroscience
B.A. Communications & Media
Minor: Latinx Studies

Master of Public Health

June Rayburn
Current Graduate Student

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B.A. Psychology
Minor: Law, Justice,
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Master of Social Work

Alaa Shahin
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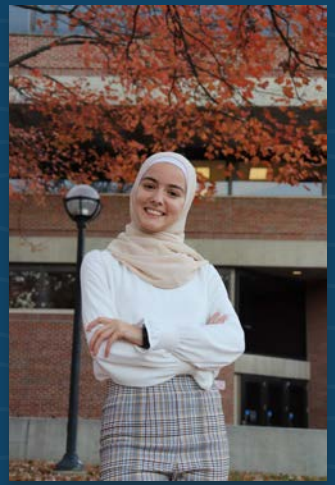
B.S. UX Research & Design
Minor: Entrepreneurship

Master of Information



Jacqueline Lopez-Bravo
Current Undergraduate Student

Grand Rapids Community College

Communications & Media and
Latinx Studies

optiMize is a **student-led social impact** organization that serves undergraduate through PhD students

4 Pillars of Student-Led Programming

1. Co-creating
2. Collaborative Change
3. Servant Leadership
4. Job Crafting

If you could change something, what would you change?

A lot of people will think, *someone* needs to do something about that.
Ask yourself...

why|not|me?

optiMize

A Brief History

2012

optiMize is founded

Began as as a student organization, with a mission to build a community that self-directed social impact projects each year

2015

Becoming a department

optiMize joins the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

2018

Building Transfer Bridges

Community Partnerships stems from the belief that social change is not exclusive to U-M

2022

10 Years Later

optiMize is a prototypical model for how universities can partner with students to create high impact experiential learning for the 21st century

Social Innovation Challenge

- Students **develop their own projects** over the course of 13 weeks
- optiMize offers five **workshops** & monthly **mentorship** opportunities
- A **supportive community** of students
- Up to $10,000 in funding for U-M students and **up to $1,000 for community college students**

Overview of Transfer Programs

What is Community Partnerships?

Purpose

1. Build relationships with other institutions across the state of Michigan in order to empower students to create social change

2. Engage and empower students while creating and fostering a welcoming, caring, compassionate, and supportive community

3. **Increase transfer student population and diversity at UM through partnerships with community colleges. In doing so, increase access to higher education for underrepresented students**

Transfer Bridge Fellowship

The Transfer Bridge Fellowship is a **paid opportunity for U-M transfer students** to help build community, plan events, and gain professional development experiences.

- $6,000 stipend for academic year
- Professional skills like events planning and facilitation, media and marketing, public speaking, and more
- Be a part of a community and help welcome and support other transfers

Employment Past the Fellowship

Coordinator Position

15 hr/week

Specialized Area of Focus

Peer Mentorship

Graduate Student Assistants

15-20 hr/week

Committee Oversight

Supervision

Our Programs

At Community Colleges: Pre-transfer

- Direct link to advisors at community colleges
- Campus visits
  - We come to you (visit CCs)
  - You come to us (visit U-M)
- Workshops Series
- Honors Class Visits

juMpstart optiMize

moMentum

optiMize

Every summer optiMize offers a $500 paid opportunity

to participate in a two-day fellowship

for prospective or admitted transfer students

to connect them with U-M's campus resources

and turn ideas into impact

aMplify

optiMize

aMplify Nights bi-weekly events that serve as a chance for transfer, first-gens, non-traditionals, and international students to meet each other, learn about resources, and feel welcome on campus!

FREE FOOD
ACTIVITIES
aMplify
optiMize
BINGO

COMMUNITY
aMplify WinterFest
Kick-Off!

juMpstart
aMplify
moMentum

Non-optiMize Transfer Programs
Understanding the Landscape

Before Transferring
Experiential Learning

Undergraduate Research Opportunity Center (UROP)

Community College Summer Fellowship Program where students will be paid $3,000 - $6,000 over 10-weeks

Engelhardt Social Justice Fellowship (ESJF)

Students whose projects are selected will be paid $5,000 for ~300 hours of work with the sponsoring organization

After Transferring

Academic Support

LSA Opportunity Hub

Guide students in the professional development process that will help you grow into the career you want to achieve

Changing Gears

Designed for community college transfer students. Students in the program become a part of an ongoing research project in their field of interest and work alongside U-M faculty and scholars on groundbreaking research

ALA 171: Making the Most of Michigan

one-credit, seven-week course connects transfer students to community, campus, and an array of resources

After Transfer

Peer Mentorship & Community

Committee Advocating for Transfer, Nontraditional, and International Students (CATNIS)

Seeks to support the diverse needs of **our** students by addressing academic, social, and situational concerns

Theta Sigma

Transfer Student Professional Fraternity resource for transfer students to more easily transition into the new environment along with sharing their experiences

Transfer Connections

Transfer Connections is a non-residential Learning Community at the University of Michigan for new LSA transfer students.

M-Connect

Transfer Student Community for six community colleges across the state of Michigan

Michigan Engineering Transfer Support (METS)

1:1 mentoring with Transfer Student Leaders, academic advising, events and workshops

What unique programs does your institution offer for transfer students?

Co-Creating Strategies

What does it mean to co-create?

Students are able to **collaborate alongside** organizational leaders in **designing their experience**

Emphasis on Student Perspectives

“It is based on constructivist learning theory, which says learners construct knowledge and meaning from lived experiences rather than from passively taking in information

Meaningful learning opportunities are made possible by honouring student voices”

Co-creating for Equity

Open pedagogy

Renewable Assignments

Application through Guiding Principles

1. Student-led education, youth-led change
2. Asking ourselves, “Why not me?”
3. Sustainable social impact
4. Illuminating possibilities
5. Prototyping and iteration
6. Collaboration and mentorship
7. Supportive community
8. Free choice and self-direction
9. Responsible stewardship
10. Servant leadership
11. Living the future we want, today
12. A valued part of our local community

Application of Co-Creation Strategies

Start small

Invite Student Feedback

Engage in Reflective Practices

Survey/Interview Target

Demographics

Reflection:
How can your organization implement some of these strategies?

Collaborative Changes

optiMize embraces change, and we bring everyone into the changemaking process.

This process encourages self-directed action, includes systematic checkpoints, increases productivity and relationships.

Six Steps to a Collaborative Change

1

Draft a purpose and vision

2

Get leadership alignment on the vision

3

Greenlight the vision

Designate a champion

4

Get help communicating the vision

5

Doers design their own action plan

6

Implement the change, together!

Fist to Five

Zero to Three: Not in favor, Collaborative Change is blocked
0. *This goes against my values*
1. There are major issues to address
2. There are minor issues to address
3. I have reservations.

Four or Five: In Favor, Collaborative Change passes
4. I support this
5. I am in total agreement

ONE BLOCK IS ENOUGH

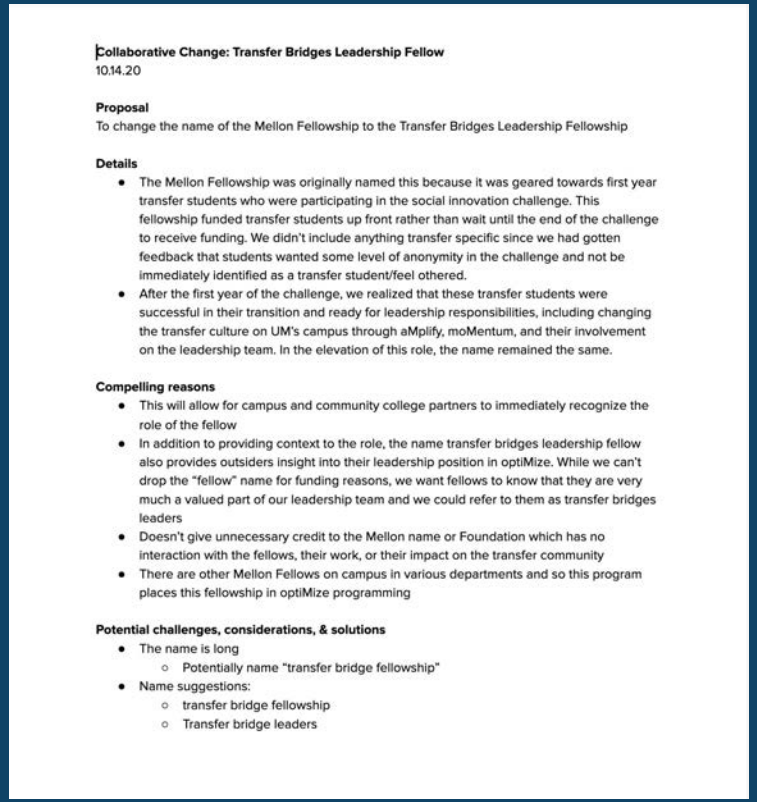
Collaborative Change:
Fellowship Name Change

In 2018, the ***Mellon Fellowship*** was founded.

Mellon Foundation as a way to support prospective as well as current transfer students, building bridges between community colleges around Michigan and the U-M.

The issue was that it didn't highlight the work that the group did, internally and externally. The issue was brought up to the rest of the team by some members and we all voted on the process.

In 2020, a collaborative change proposal was submitted to change the name to the ***Transfer Bridge Fellowship.***



Collaborative Change: Transfer Bridges Leadership Fellow
10.14.20

Proposal
To change the name of the Mellon Fellowship to the Transfer Bridges Leadership Fellowship

Details
- The Mellon Fellowship was originally named this because it was geared towards first year transfer students who were participating in the social innovation challenge. This fellowship funded transfer students up front rather than wait until the end of the challenge to receive funding. We didn't include anything transfer specific since we had gotten feedback that students wanted some level of anonymity in the challenge and not be immediately identified as a transfer student/feel othered.
- After the first year of the challenge, we realized that these transfer students were successful in their transition and ready for leadership responsibilities, including changing the transfer culture on UM's campus through aMplify, moMentum, and their involvement on the leadership team. In the elevation of this role, the name remained the same.

Compelling reasons
- This will allow for campus and community college partners to immediately recognize the role of the fellow
- In addition to providing context to the role, the name transfer bridges leadership fellow also provides outsiders insight into their leadership position in optiMize. While we can't drop the "fellow" name for funding reasons, we want fellows to know that they are very much a valued part of our leadership team and we could refer to them as transfer bridges leaders
- Doesn't give unnecessary credit to the Mellon name or Foundation which has no interaction with the fellows, their work, or their impact on the transfer community
- There are other Mellon Fellows on campus in various departments and so this program places this fellowship in optiMize programming

Potential challenges, considerations, & solutions
- The name is long
  - Potentially name "transfer bridge fellowship"
- Name suggestions:
  - transfer bridge fellowship
  - Transfer bridge leaders

“Being a part of the discussion, I felt like **I mattered and I had weight in a decision.** I made terms to **better the organization,** and it made me feel like **I was important** and that I can be more of a **leader** in the organization, and in **my own future.** ”

Dallas McGhee Henry

Former Transfer Bridge Fellow
Current Marketing & Communications Manager with optiMize

Leadership Styles

Include in handout

Servant Leadership

optiMize's Leadership Style

Definition

Servant leadership is a leadership style where leaders prioritize serving others and putting their needs first, rather than exercising power.

Practices

It involves practices such as active listening, empowerment, ethical decision making, and building a supportive community within the organization.

Community Bonding

Prioritizing Wellness

Flexibility

Check-Ins

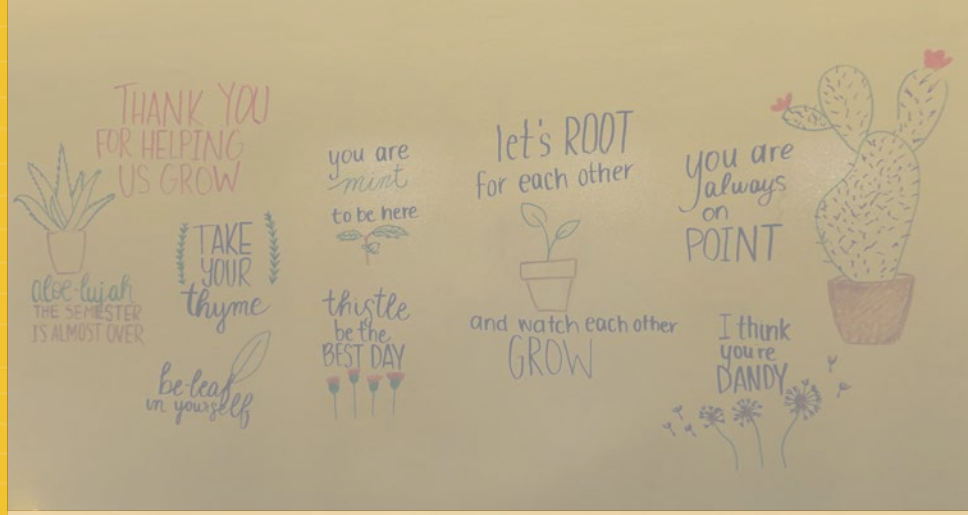
Group discussion

Reflection

Appreciations

The Goal

The goal of servant leadership is to create **a positive work environment** where all stakeholders **can flourish.**



Your turn!

Include in handout

What is your leadership style?

Take the next two minutes to reflect on your own leadership style *(2 mins)*

Pair and Share

Share your leadership style with a partner *(2 mins)*

Group Share

Sit in a group of 4 and

share your thoughts about

organizational leadership styles *(2 mins)*

Job Crafting

"***Job Crafting*** captures what employees do to redesign their jobs in ways that can foster **job satisfaction**, as well as **engagement**, **resilience**, and **thriving** at work."

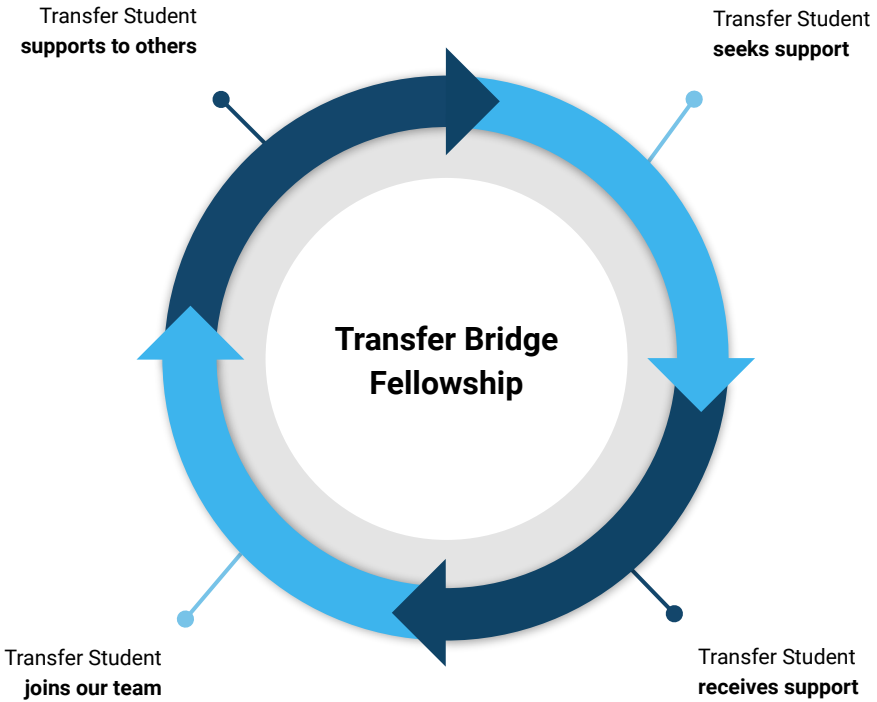
Job Crafting as a **pillar of the fellowship** rather than an after-product

We intentionally encourage fellows to “craft” their roles:

- **Asking in application and in onboarding “In what ways would you like to impact the transfer community?”**
- **Choosing a Committee**
- **Choosing Projects of Interest**
- **Decision Making and Leadership**

Transfer Bridge Fellowship is 2 Fold

1. Cyclical Programming



2. Professional Development

- **Exclusive** to Transfer Students
- **Skills Building:**
  Marketing, Event Planning, Public Speaking, and more.
- **Accessible:**
  $6000 for academic year

Marketing & Communications

Community College Outreach

Tech Ops

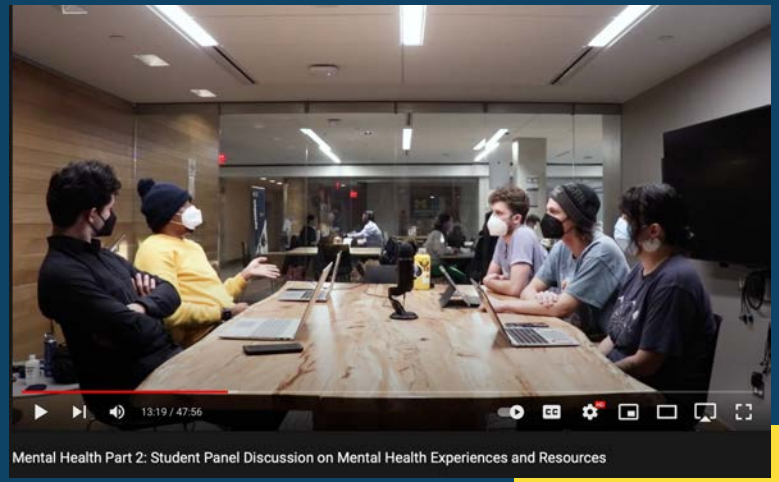
Community Engagement

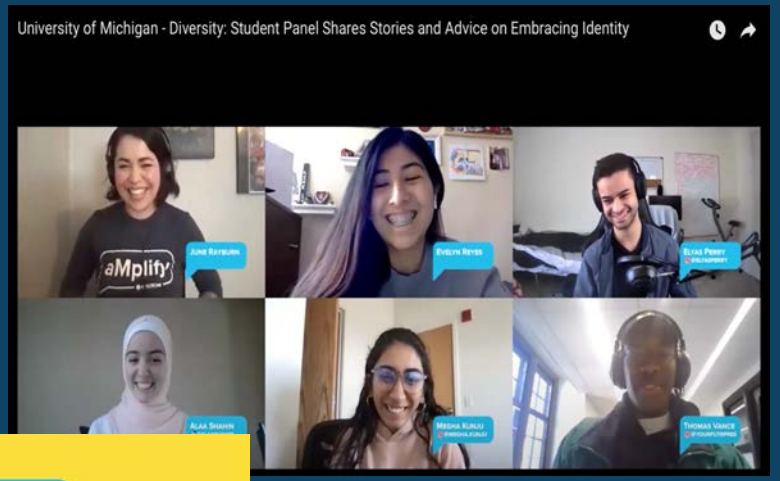
Program Development

Examples of Fellows Job Crafting

- **Creative control of marketing**
  - social media, flyers, brand design
- **Event Planning**
  - Bi-weekly events for 50+ students
- **Wide variety of professional development opportunities**

The aMplify Podcast





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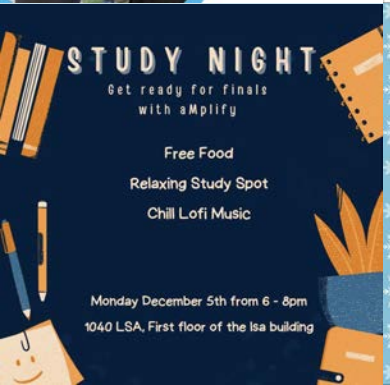
Creative Control

- Idea: Let's have some kind of marketing in the Transfer Student Center for aMplify Nights
- Fellows brainstorm what they want to do. Poster? Flyer?
- Result: A huge, hand-drawn art piece on the wall with basic info and Instagram handle
- Fellow was able to engage her personal artistic goals and meet a marketing goal at the same time

Creative Control



?

@amplifyumich

@amplifyumich

Scan QR code for more information

Regardless of institutional size and resources, potential initiatives:

Creating a student-led organization where transfer students can learn skills, find support, and **a welcoming community**.

Permission to fail and learn. It is important to allow your students to learn new skills and shape the transfer community. Guidance, mentorship, and support from professionals to learn these skills are crucial; however, allowing the transfer students to be the leaders of the program is a unique and engaging opportunity.

Allow students to **craft their role** within your organization - start with foundational experiences, and create space for creativity and flexibility.

THANK YOU

Questions? optimizecpteam@umich.edu

APPENDIX

Learning Goals

(1) Discover how to engage and empower students while creating and fostering a welcoming, caring, compassionate, and supportive community

(2) Describe strategies on how to build relationships with other institutions across the state to empower students to create social change.

(3) Discuss strategies on how to increase the transfer student population and diversify your institution through partnerships with community colleges. In doing so, it increases access to higher education for underrepresented student populations.

(4) Reflect on leadership style and organizational structure to better understand what support students need.

(5) Formulate the next steps for your institution; learn how to incorporate job crafting and student-led initiatives into your transfer programming.

The “Transfer Bridge”

1. **Before the bridge**: Prospective students receive support through workshops and mentorship while attending their community college.

   We call this part of our programming **juMpstart.**

2. **On the Bridge:** Students currently applying to transfer get help with Common App + support to recently accepted students in their transition.

   We call this part of our programming **moMentum.**

3. **After the Bridge:** Current U-M transfers welcomed and engaged by community events. Transfers giving back!

   We call this part of our programming **aMplify.**

External Partnerships

- Henry Ford College
  - Honors Program
  - Black Male and QUEENS Focus Group
  - MDICE
- Grand Rapids Community College
  - Honors Program
  - Experiential Learning
  - TRiO Program
  - Advising
- Washtenaw Community College
  - Entrepreneurship Center
  - A2 Entrepreneurship Club
- Schoolcraft College
  - Honors Program
- Eastern Michigan University
  - Engage@EMU

Campus Partnerships

- LSA
  - Transfer Student Center
  - The Opportunity Hub
  - Newnan Advising
  - Recruitment
  - Central Student Government
  - Comprehensive Studies Program - Campus Connections
- Other UM Schools & Colleges
  - Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
  - School of Information: Transfer Student Initiatives
  - Office of New Student Programs
  - College of Engineering
  - Ross School of Business

optiMize and Transfer Student Center at the NISTS Conference

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