

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).

Research Spotlight

2831 - Student Feedback on the Transfer Experience Prior to and Following the COVID19 Pandemic

Transition Programs and Supports, Matriculation Trends and Issues

Some transfer students experience decreases in performance upon transitioning to a four-year institution. The COVID19 pandemic brought additional challenges for transfers. Surprisingly, the post-pandemic cohort of transfers academically outperformed the pre-COVID19 cohort. No differences between cohorts were found in usage of pre-transfer resources. Findings indicate resources provided to transfer students were not effectively utilized regardless of cohort. However, the circumstances of the pandemic changed the way transfers interacted with peers and instructors.

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Student feedback on the transfer experience prior to and following the COVID19 pandemic

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My Background

- Undergraduate degree from Iowa State University (ISU)
- Transferred to ISU from small, private four-year university
- Involved in peer mentor program in undergrad, working primarily with transfers
- Currently a Ph.D. candidate in Animal Breeding and Genetics
- Involved in research in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) since 2017
 - Peer mentor program
 - Transfer students and the transition to ISU



Introduction

- Academic performance of transfer students can decline in the semester(s) following transfer to a four-year institution
 - “Transfer shock” (Hills, 1965)
- Multiple factors impact the transition experience of transfer students
 - Social, psychological, environmental, and academic (Laanan 2000 and 2007)
- COVID19 pandemic brought additional challenges
 - Academically (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Brohawn et al., 2021; Metzgar, 2020)
 - Personally (Aucejo et al., 2020; Clabaugh et al., 2021)

Study Objectives

- Part of a larger research project
 - Examine the transfer process at a large, Midwestern, four-year research institution
- Compare differences in the transfer experience between a cohort of students that entered the university prior to the COVID19 pandemic (Fall 2019) and a cohort that started during the pandemic (Fall 2020)
- Assess differences and similarities of cohorts



Helpful links

[TRANSIT](#) →

[Transfer credit](#) →

[Course equivalency guides](#) →

[Credit by exam](#) →

[Transfer plans](#) →

[Transferology](#) →

[Office of Student Financial Aid](#) →



Today's Goal

- Indicate differences in the transfer experience between students that transferred to a large midwestern research institution pre- and post-COVID19 pandemic
1. Reflect on how the findings of the current study relate to observations and perceived changes due to the COVID19 pandemic at your own institution
 2. Consider the impact that online versus in-person attendance has on transfer resource access and usability, interactions with peers and instructors, and transfer student performance

Institutional Information

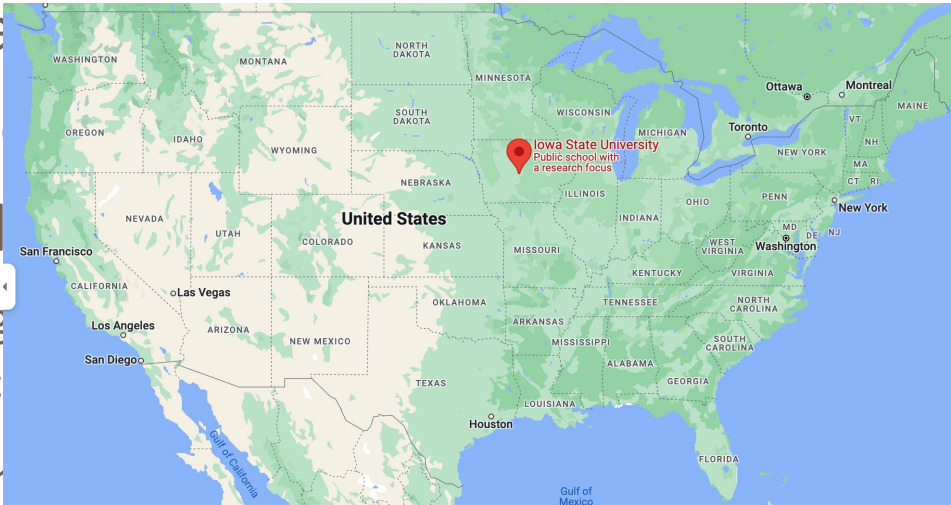
- Iowa State University, located in central Iowa



- 4-year

- Public

- 6 colleges



- Agriculture
- Science
- Business

- Human Sciences
- Liberal Arts and Colleges

- Incoming transfer student population

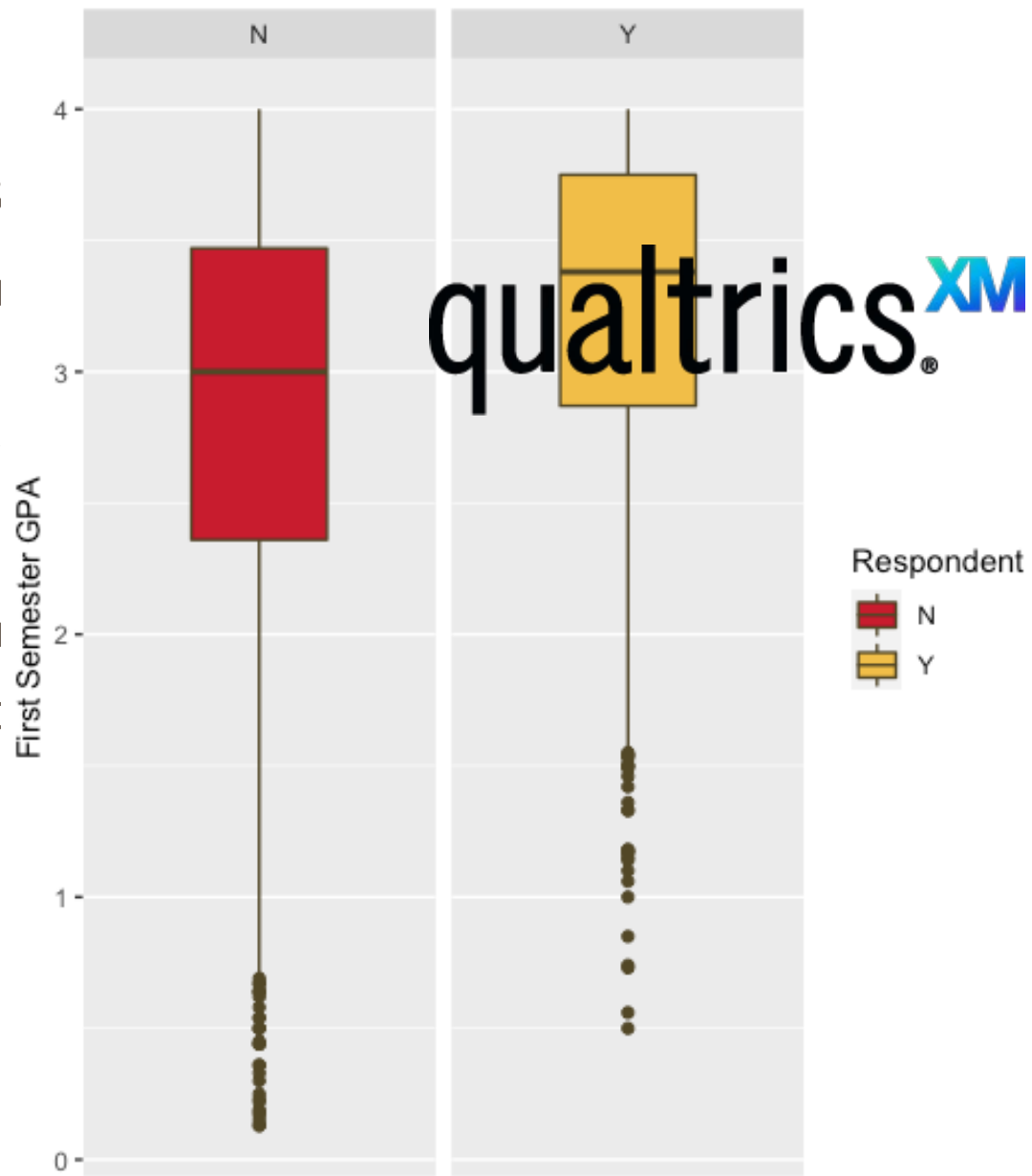
- 2019: 1483 transfer students (5.24% of total student population)
- 2020: 1373 transfer students (5.11% of total student population)

Survey Development

- Question development
 - Focus groups (Bundy & Siberski, 2019)
 - Utilized themes identified and previously documented findings from literature
- Content and validity
 - Instrument distributed to faculty and staff involved with transfer students
 - Feedback provided used to modify the number of questions and content
- Pilot study
 - Deployed to 88 students (response rate of 50%)
 - Refined questions included in final survey instrument

Survey Instrument

- Distributed via Qualtrics
- Transfer students contacted
 - During 2nd semester at ISU
 - 3 reminder emails sent out
- 28 questions total
 - Not required to answer all questions
 - Skip-logic was used for some questions
- Response rate
 - 2019: 51.85% (392/756)
 - 2020: 56.33% (374/664)
- Institutional data combined
 - E.g., credits transferred to ISU

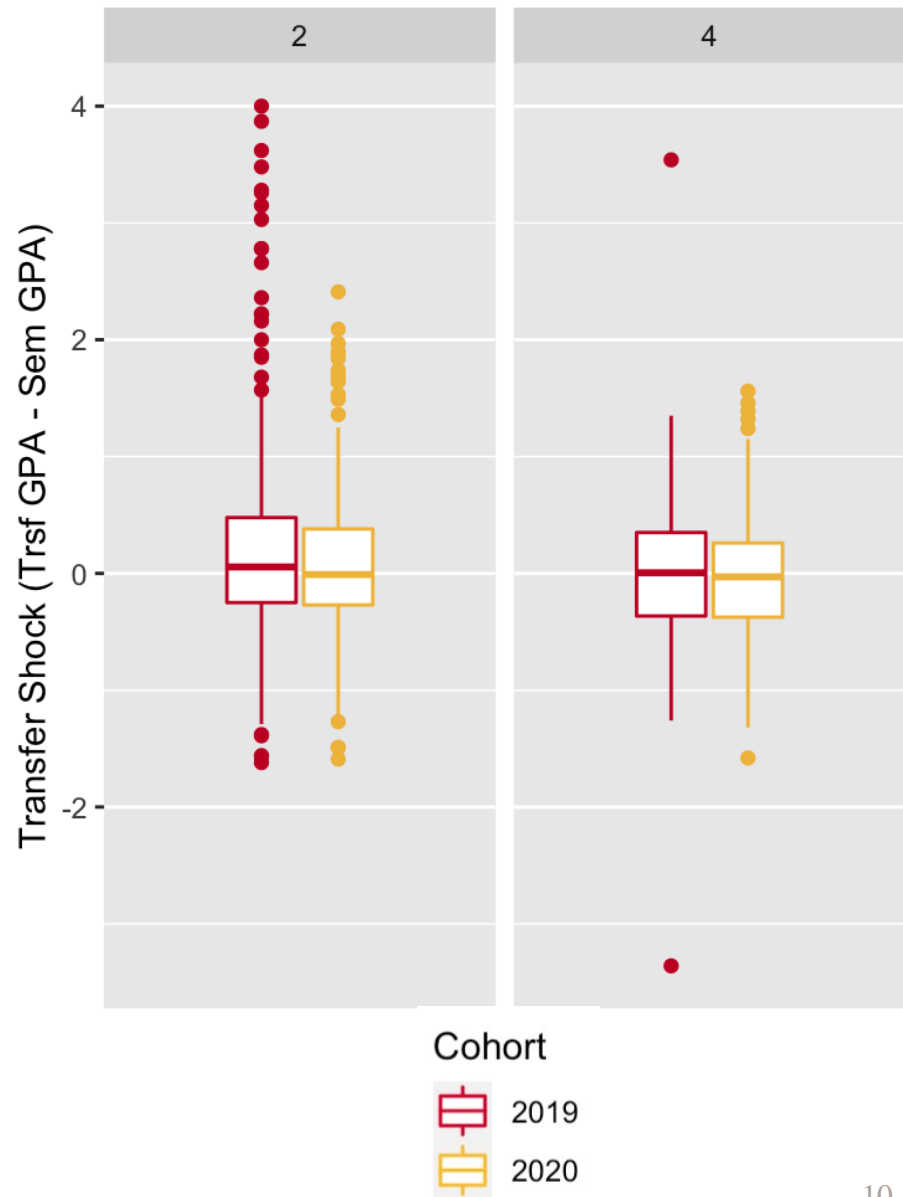


Data Analysis

- Data cleaning
 - Required less than 10% missing answers
- Differences in responses and performance of cohorts were analyzed using
 - T-tests (difference in means of continuous variables)
 - Analyzes the mean of two groups and assesses if they came from the same population
 - Chi-squared tests (differences in binary, categorical response)
 - Difference in observed and what is expected if the variables are independent
 - ANOVA (differences when more than 2 categories of responses)
 - Uses a fitted linear model and assess variance
- Significance threshold of $P < 0.05$

Results

- Transfer shock (difference between transfer GPA and first semester GPA) was lower in the 2020 cohort
- Driven by students transferring from a 2-year institution (0.044 ± 0.63 vs 0.18 ± 0.085 ; $P < 0.05$)



Results

- Poll:

What proportion of classes were held online at your institution in the Fall of 2020 (returning from the COVID19 pandemic)?



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Results

- Poll:

What proportion of classes were held online at your institution in the Fall of 2020 (returning from the COVID19 pandemic)?

How might this have impacted the transition experience?

Results

- Word cloud development:

What types of pre-transfer resources are available at your institution?



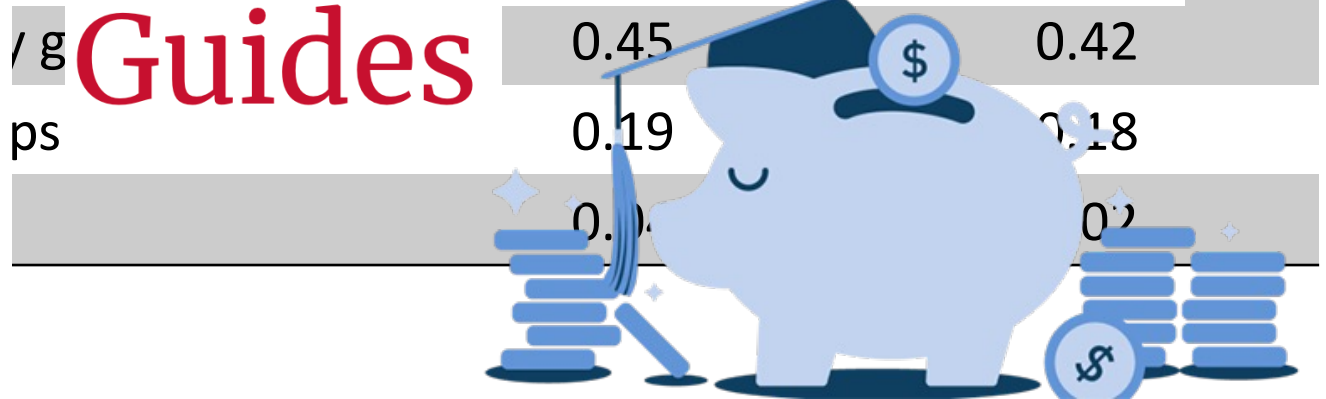
[PollEv.com/coricooper758](https://pollev.com/coricooper758)

Results

- No reported differences in transfer resources used between 2019 and 2020 cohorts



Transfer Plans Welcome to TRANSIT Course Equivalency Guides



Results

- Open text response:

How do you encourage use of transfer resources at your institution?



[PollEv.com/coricooper758](https://poll-ev.com/coricooper758)

Results

- Open text response:

How do you encourage use of transfer resources at your institution?

Are there strategies that are more successful in getting transfers to utilize resources?

What strategies could be implemented to encourage use of resources that are currently used infrequently?

Results

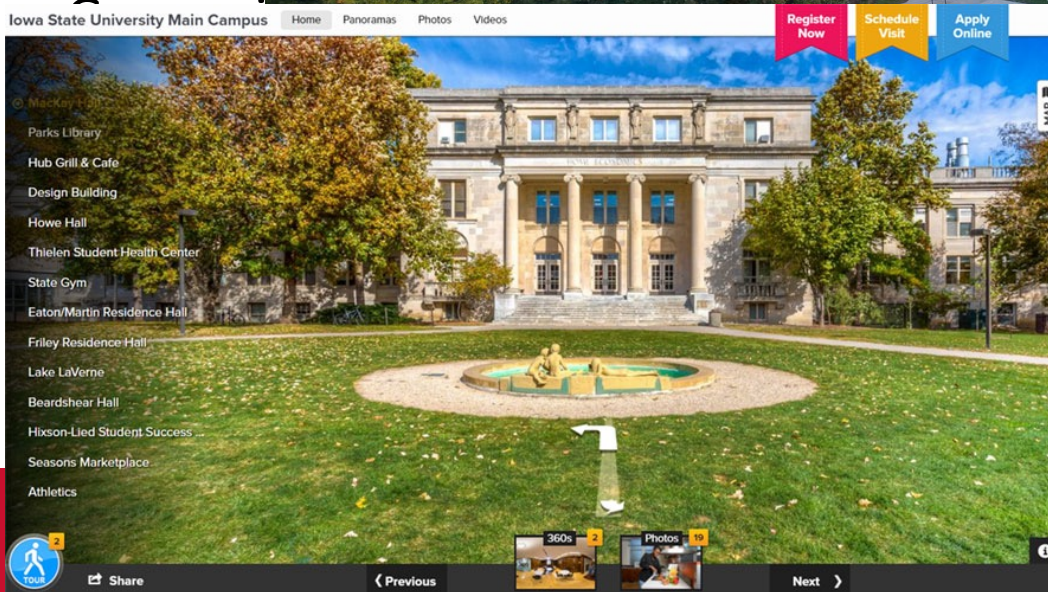
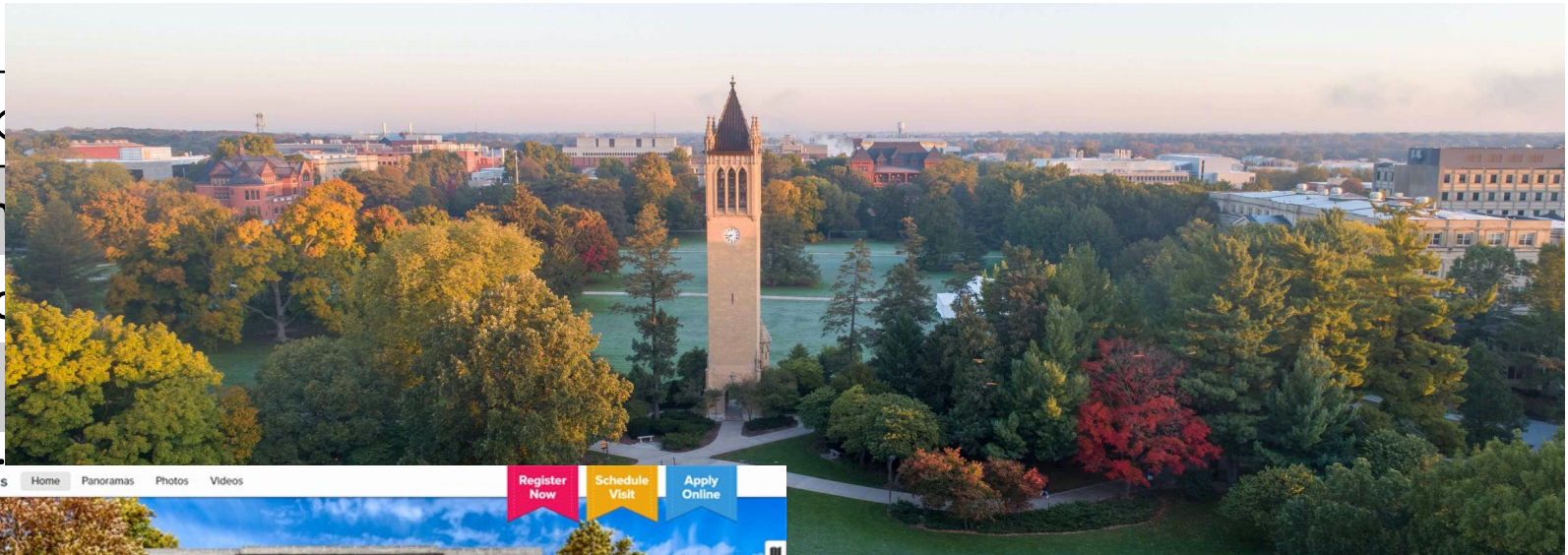
- There were significant differences in the type of university visits transfer students participated in

Visit Type

Experiential

Admission

Transfer



0.04	0.04
0.05	0.16
0.00	0.06
0.04	0.07

Results

- Poll:

Was your institution allowing in-person visits prior to the Fall 2020 semester?



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Results

- Poll:

Was your institution allowing in-person visits prior to the Fall 2020 semester?

In the future, will your institution continue offering virtual visits?

Results

- Open text response:

What transfer student recruitment strategies were used at your institution during the COVID19 pandemic?



[PollEv.com/coricooper758](https://poll-ev.com/coricooper758)

Results

- Open text response:

What transfer student recruitment strategies were used at your institution during the COVID19 pandemic?

Will your institution continue to utilize some of these recruitment strategies?

Do some of these recruitment strategies allow institutions to reach more potential transfer students?

Conclusions

- Transfer students from 2-year institutions had a less severe drop in GPA upon transferring during the COVID-19 pandemic
- No difference in transfer resource use between 2019 and 2020 cohorts
- The type of university visits utilized during the pandemic differed from those used pre-pandemic

Implications

- Need to develop new of assess current transfer student tools
- Consideration should be given to continued use of virtual or alternate university visits and recruitment strategies to cater to more students