

NISTS 2023

BE A CONNECTOR FOR TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS

Virtual • February 1-3 | Portland, OR • February 22-24

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).

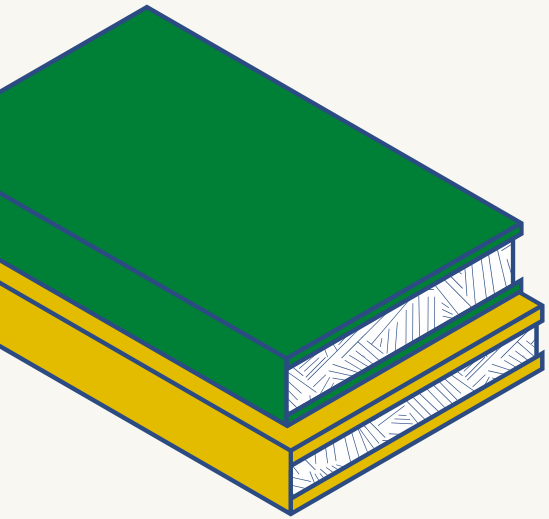
Educational Session

2834 - Transfer Transition: How 1-Credit Courses can be Utilized to Engage with First-Year Transfer Students

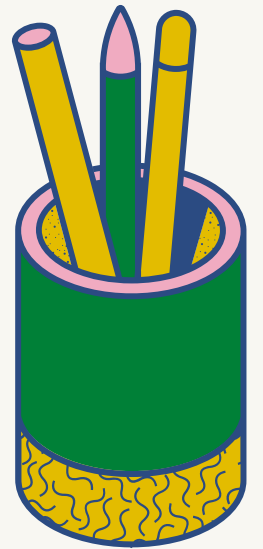
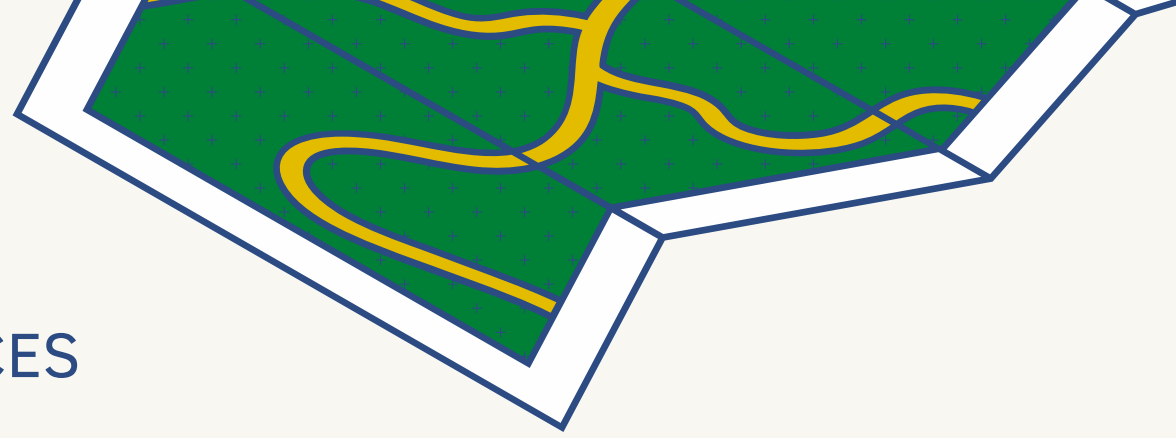
Transition Programs and Supports, Partnerships and Collaboration

This session will describe the 8-week, Transfer Transition course at George Mason University. This session allows participants to have a better understanding of how this course can increase engagement to a new institution by learning about the evolution of the course, its successes, and its challenges. As transfer students continue to increase at institutions across the country, it is crucial for new transfer students to get information in a way that makes sense for them.

Caroline Simpson, *Coordinator for Contemporary Students*
George Mason University

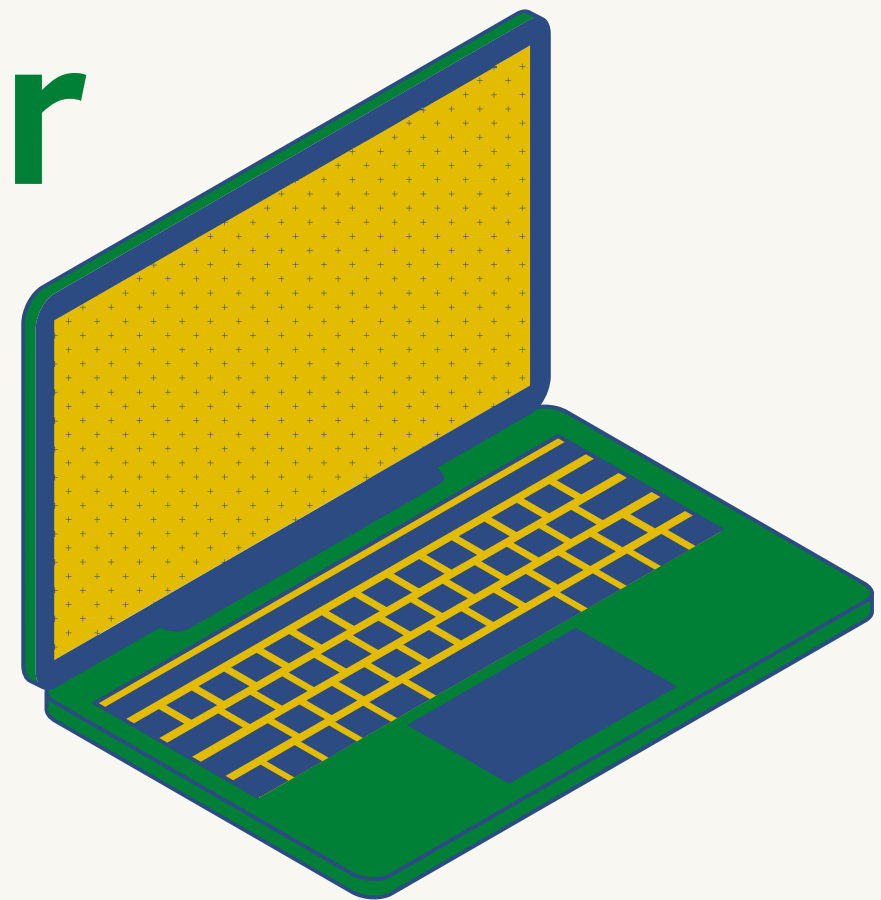
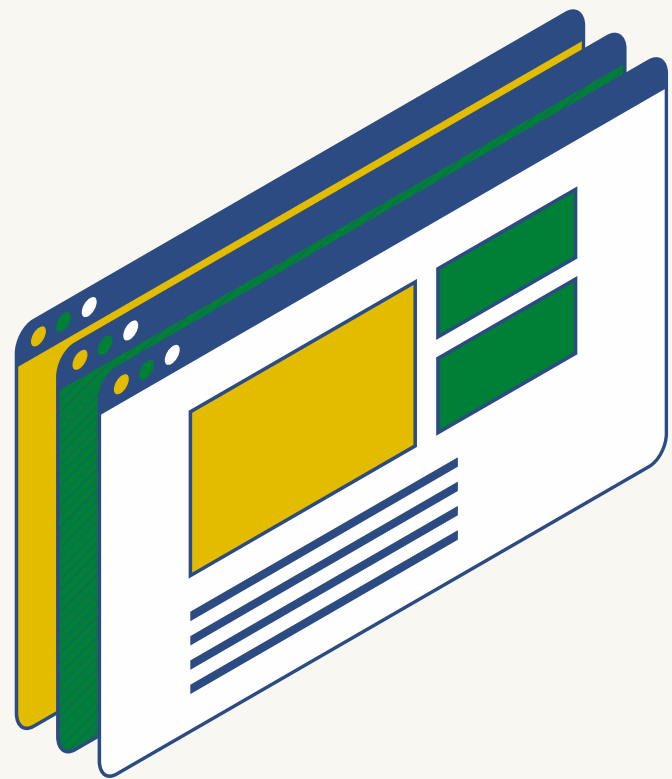


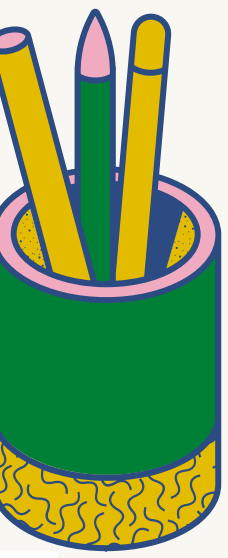
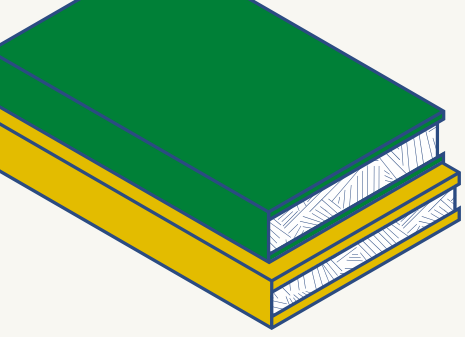
CONTEMPORARY STUDENT SERVICES
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY



Transfer Transition: How 1 credit courses can be utilized to engage with first-year transfer students

Caroline Simpson

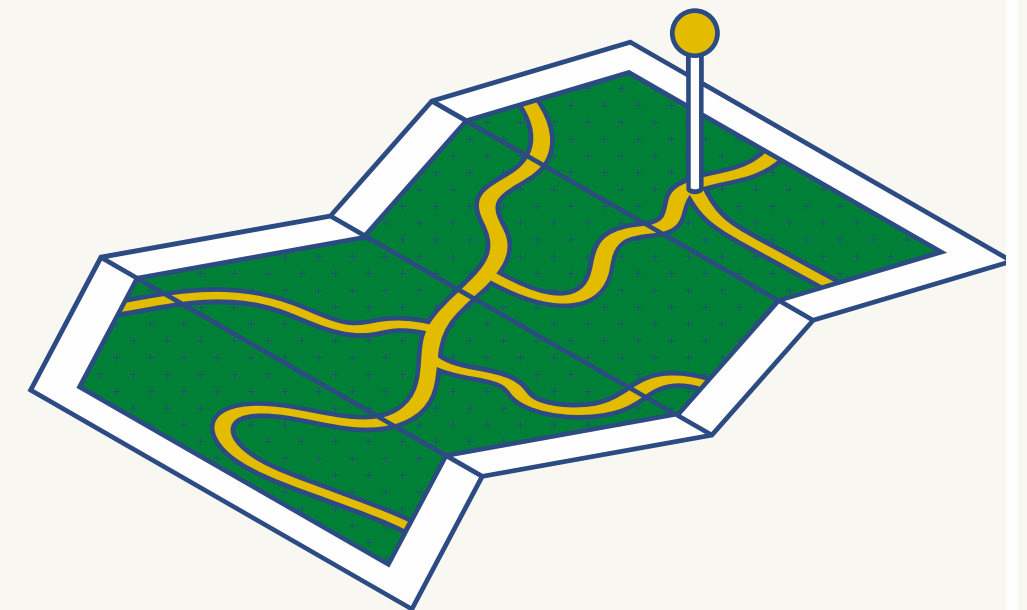




About Me



- Coordinator for Contemporary Students
 - Transfer Students, Adult Learners, Student Parents
- A transfer student to GMU in 2017 and graduated with a B.S. in Nonprofit Management in 2020
- M.A. in Higher Education and Student Development



George Mason University and Contemporary Student Services



- Large, public research university in Fairfax, VA
- Over 37,000 undergraduate and graduate students
- Over 5,000 transfer students a year
 - ADVANCE Program and Pathway to the Baccalaureate
- 20% of undergraduates are over 25-years-old
- 75% of students live off-campus
- Named one of the most diverse institutions by U.S. News and World Report (2021)

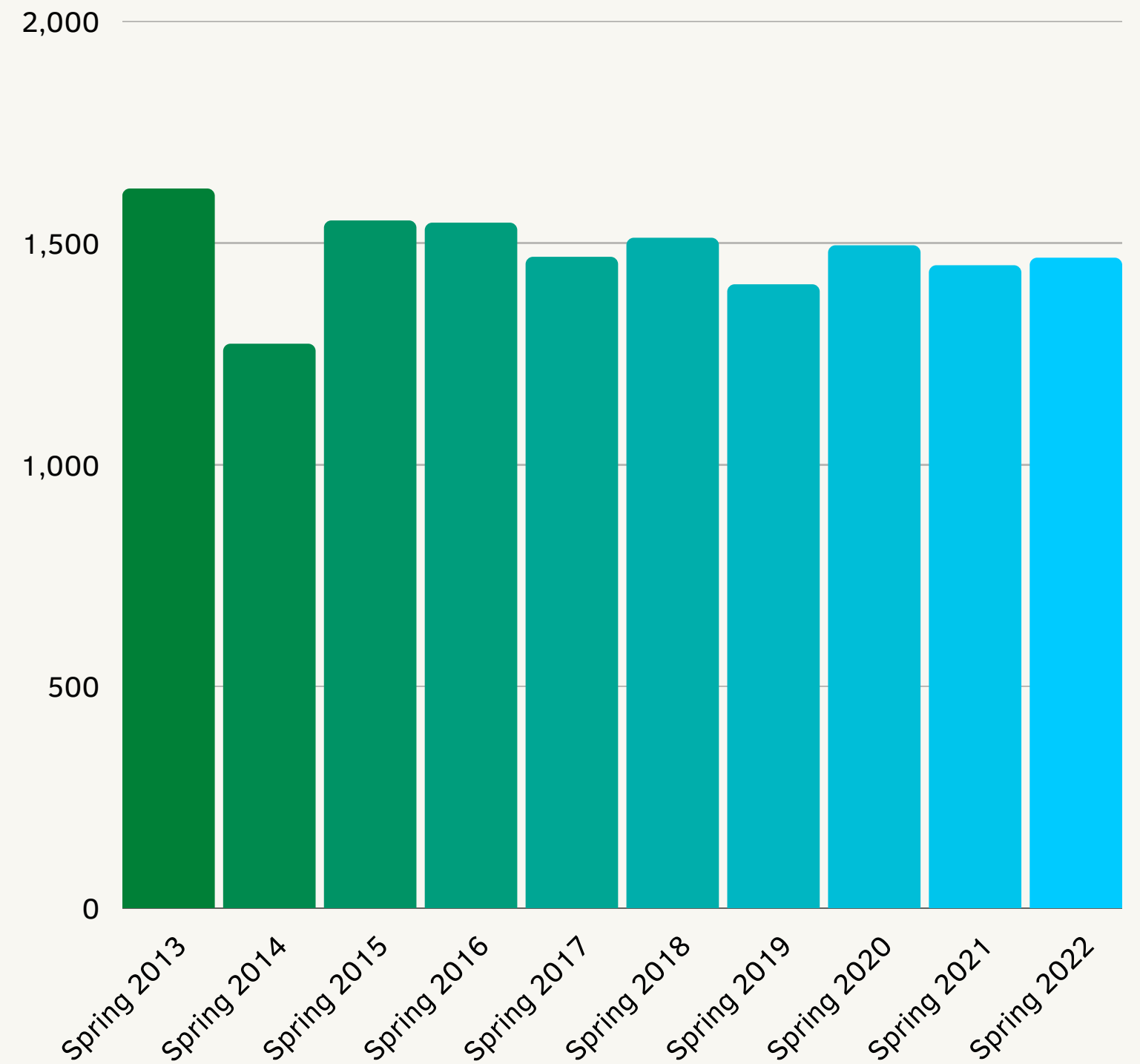
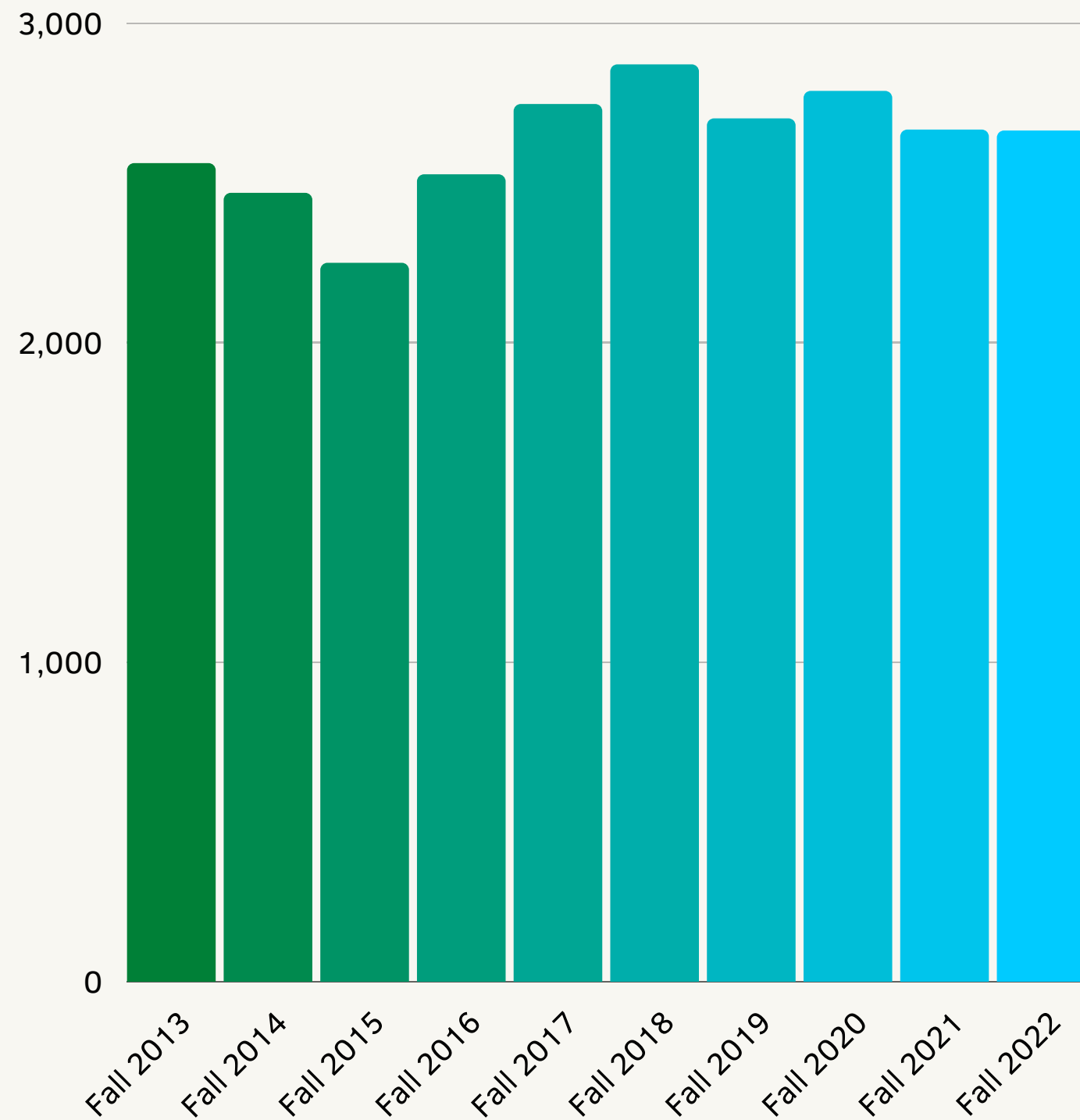


- We provide hands-on guidance in finding and building the resources to support you through to graduation. We host programs, provide peer advising, and advocate for the needs of contemporary students.
- CONTEMPORARY STUDENTS ARE:
 - Adult Learners – 25 and older
 - Off-Campus Students – students who commute to campus
 - Transfer Students
 - Married, Widowed, or Divorced
 - Veteran and Military Affiliated
 - Took three or more years off from college
 - Pregnant or Parenting
 - Previously in the foster-care system / Foster Care Alumni

Transfer Population at George Mason

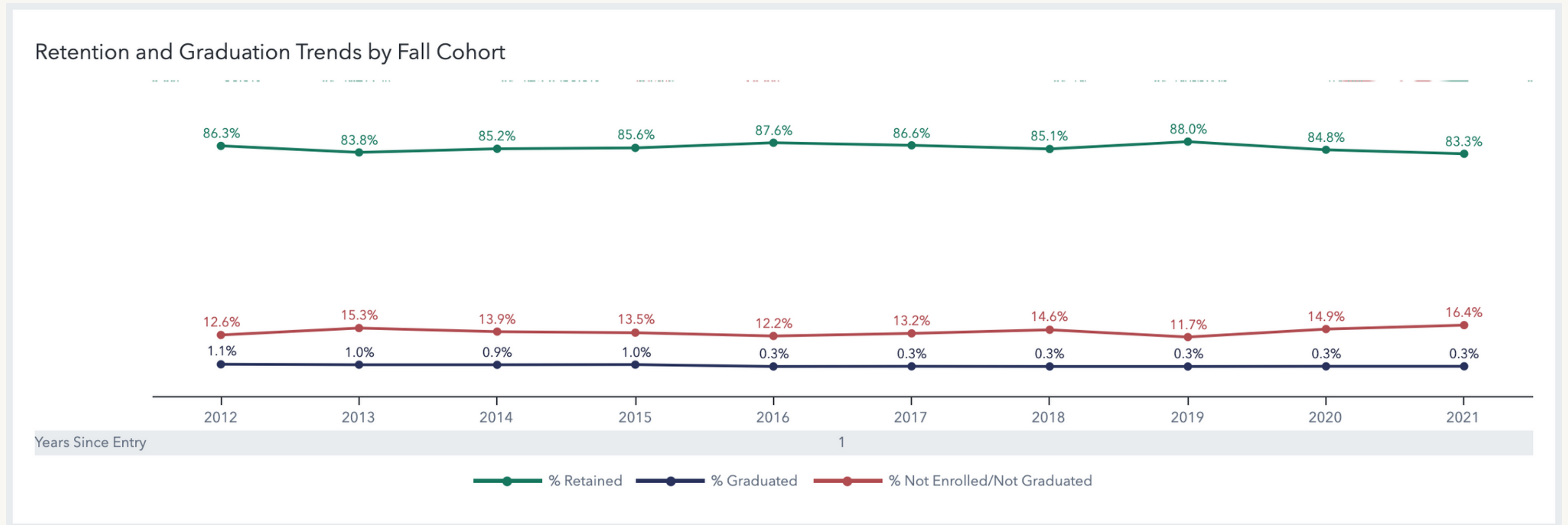
FALL AND SPRING SEMESTER ENROLLMENT

Enroll more transfer students than first time freshman in the spring semester

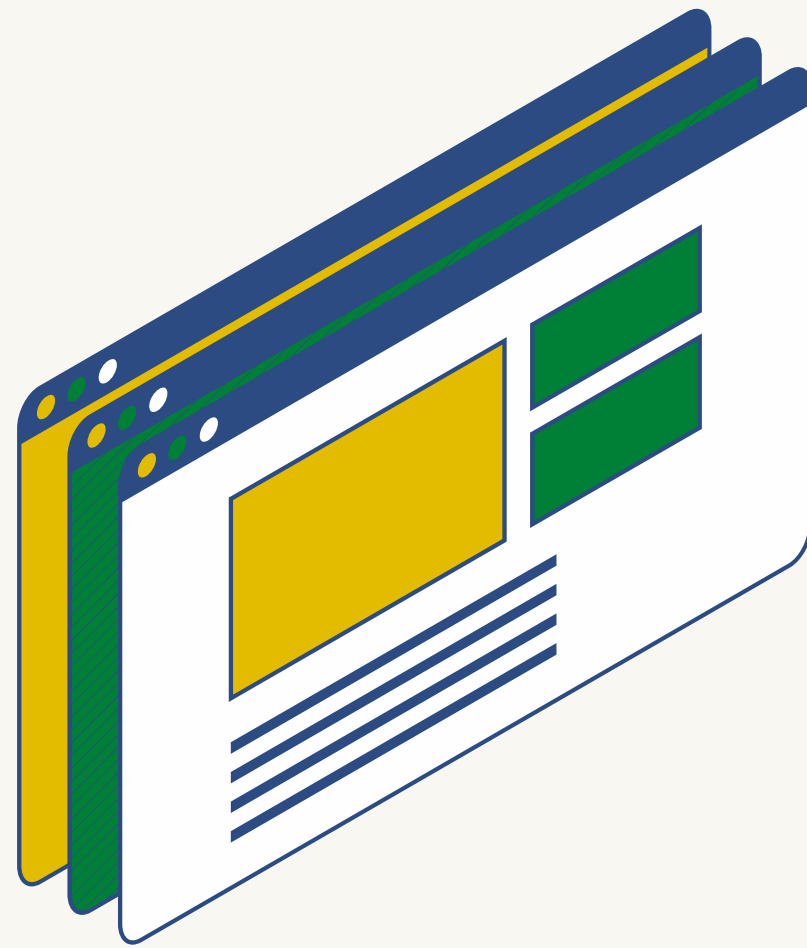


Transfer Population at George Mason

RETENTION AND GRADUATION (2012-2021)



Almost half of Mason's graduating class each year is comprised of transfer students



Share in the chat

- What institution do you work at?
- What kind of institution is it? (Public, Private, 4-year, community college)
- In what capacity do you work with transfer students? (Full time role versus only part of your role)
- What brought you to this session?

Research that helped me form the course

Improved Short-Term Outcomes for Students Who Take Student Success Courses

One example, a CCRC study of students in the Virginia Community College System found improvements in credit accumulation and persistence to the second year for students who enrolled in student success courses in their first semester (Cho & Karp, 2012).

Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1981, 2008)

Students in transition are in need of unique support to allow successful adaptation in a new environment.

Flaga's 5 dimensions involved in the transfer process

Flaga (2006) described five dimensions involved in the transfer process

- Learning Resources
- Connecting
- Familiarity
- Negotiating
- Integrating

EVOLUTION OF UNIVERSITY 300 AT GEORGE MASON

01

Before Fall 2021

College of Science ran a specific course for Transfer students in STEM.
Not one for General Transfer Students in a number of semesters.

02

Fall 2021

Reached out to University Studies to see if a course would come back, and offered for me to teach it as a GA. Developed a new curriculum based on what I was seeing post 2020.

03

Spring 2022

Ran the first two 8-week asynchronous courses to 7 students each.

04

Summer 2022

Looked at NOVA, local community college, to see what transfer students were learning in their required 1 credit college success course and made updates.

05

Fall 2022

Ran two more 8-week courses. The first 8-week course filled up.

06

Looking ahead

Conversations around adding a Summer 2023 course or workshop. Adding an in-person session in the Fall 2023.

Content of the course

WHAT MATERIAL IS COVERED IN THE COURSE



WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7
Welcome Video from Caroline	Scavenger Hunt	Career Ready	Financial Well-Being	Well-Being	Research	Extra Credit Due
Mason Checklist	Imposter Syndrom	Graduate School Readiness	Scholarships	On-Campus Workshop Week	Continued Career Readiness Conversation	Final Presentations Due
Transfer Shock	First Zoom Meeting	Building their network	Building Resilience		Mason Bucket List	All Assignments Due
Fill out form for Drop in hours and on-campus workshop topics	Mental Health Conversation and CAPS					

Assignments

WHAT ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE



WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7
Discussion Board #1	Discussion Board #2	Discussion Board #3	Discussion Board #4	Discussion Board #5	Discussion Board #6	Final Video Assignment
	Journal 1	Journal 2	StrengthsFinder or Values Sheet	In-Person Workshop Week	Resume and Cover Letter	Comment on 2 other students'
	On-Campus Participation 1					On-Campus Participation 2
						On-Campus Participation 3



Successes

- A session filled in Fall 2022 (22 students), after only being back as a course for 1 semester
- New transfer students are able to get 1 credit of an upper-level 300 course
- All students who have taken the course so far and passed have said it was worth their time and they would recommend it.
- Numbers in the course were similar to some of the transfer events attended in Spring 2022 and Fall 2022

Challenges

- Marketing to Transfer Students
- Having students follow through with coursework, since it is an asynchronous course
- Getting enrollment numbers up in the Spring

Student Feedback

What students have shared about the course

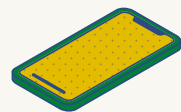
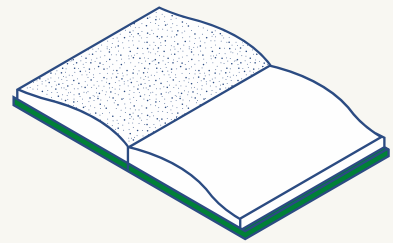
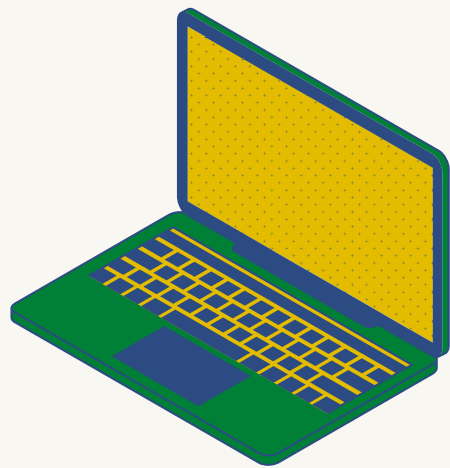
"At first, I was hesitant about the purpose of this class because it was only a half-semester course and it was solely for transfer students, so I did not see the point, but I received so much information from this course. This course has allowed me to solidify my decision to attend graduate school as well as the path I intended to walk down. I also think that this course made speaking with advisors and getting academic help easier to access."

"One of the reasons why I like this class is because it took me out of my comfort zone. If it was not for this class, I would have not gone to the outside events I went to."

"I am glad I took this course as it has helped me find the information that would have been provided if I was a first year student. I got a lot of helpful information from my last university and I thought it would apply similarly here, but I was 80% wrong."

Takeaways

HOW COULD THIS BE
USED AT OTHER
INSTITUTIONS?



Look for spaces of collaboration

Are there already 1 credit course for the freshman? Who teaches those?

What is offered at your local community college?

Look at the orientation office and the online materials they are sharing with students.

Utilize graduate student and undergraduate student help when possible

At Mason, graduate students are able to teach university courses after completing 18 credits. There is also a paired program with UNIV 100 where an undergraduate student will teach with a full-time staff member.

Connect with your students, make changes if needed

What do the students at your institution want?

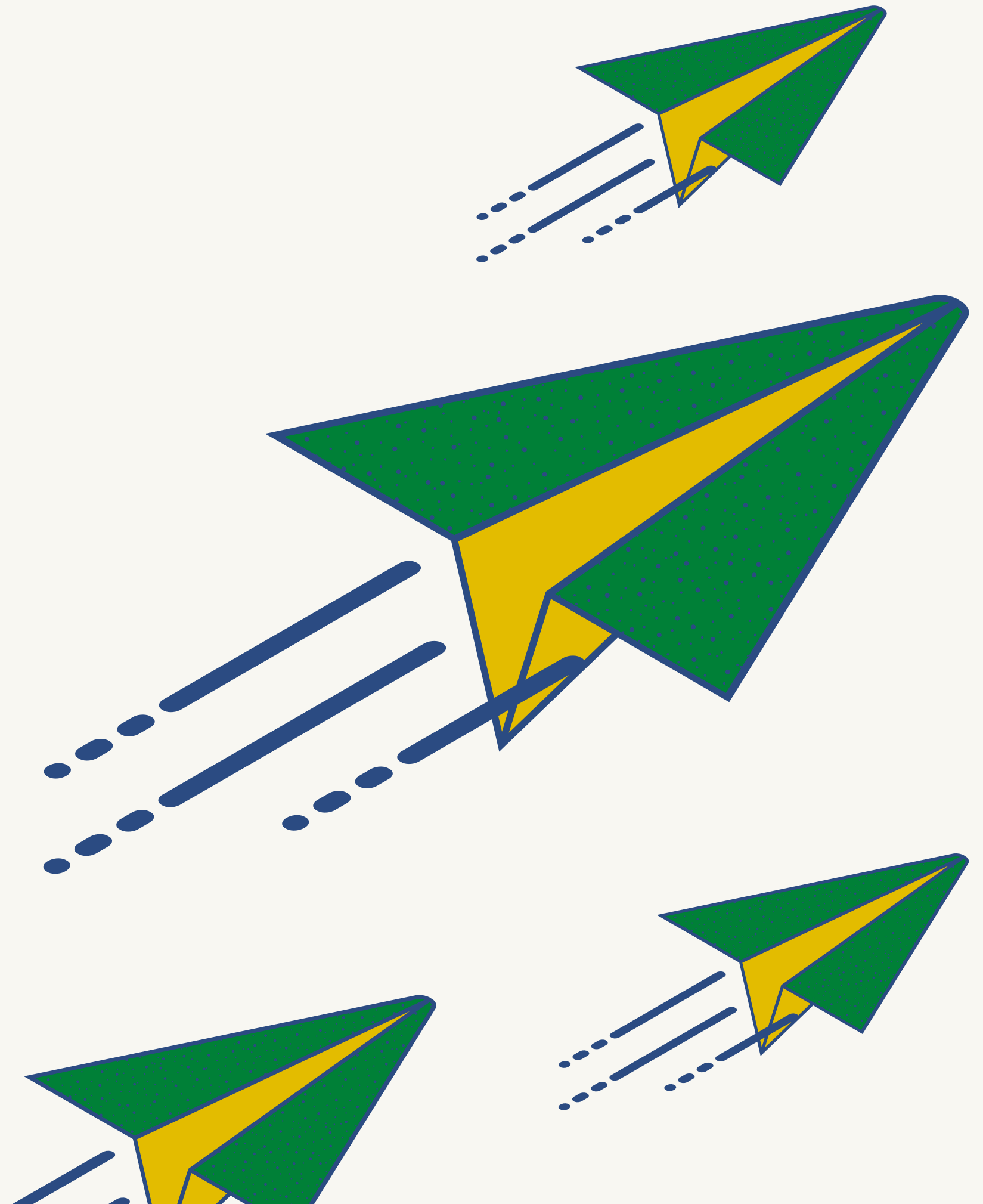
Could this format be applied without a class structure?



Pair and Share Activity

Thank you for attending! Any questions?

Think of one later or want to talk through how this could look at your institution? Reach out to me at csimpso@gmu.edu.



References and Thank You!

Catherine T. Flaga (2006) The Process of Transition for Community College Transfer Students, *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 30:1, 3-19, DOI: 10.1080/10668920500248845.

Community College Research Center (2013). *Student Success Courses for Sustained Impact. Student Success Courses.*
<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/student-success-courses-for-sustained-impact.pdf>.

Fillmore, Jessica C., "Supporting Transitions: Success Interventions for Transfer Students" (2022). *Culminating Experience Projects*. 138.
<https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/gradprojects/138>.

Schlossberg, N.K. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 9(2), 2-18.

Schlossberg, N.K. (2008). *Overwhelmed: Coping with life's ups and downs* (2nd ed.). M.Evans & Company Inc.

Big thank you and shout out to those who helped make this course possible:

Jacquelyn L. Nash
Associate Director, University Studies
Office of Undergraduate Education
George Mason University

Aslihan Yildiz-Odeh
Associate Director, University Studies
Office of Undergraduate Education
George Mason University

Kerin Anne Hilker-Balkissoon
Director of Educational and Career Pathways
College of Science Instructor
George Mason University