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

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
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

Fall 2013: 3,000
Fall 2014: 2,000
Fall 2015: 1,000
Fall 2016: 0
Fall 2017: 0
Fall 2018: 0
Fall 2019: 0
Fall 2020: 0
Fall 2021: 0
Fall 2022: 0

Spring 2013: 2,000
Spring 2014: 1,500
Spring 2015: 1,000
Spring 2016: 500
Spring 2017: 0
Spring 2018: 0
Spring 2019: 0
Spring 2020: 0
Spring 2021: 0
Spring 2022: 0
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?
## 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

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.

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.

Spring 2022
Ran the first two 8-week asynchronous courses to 7 students each.

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.

Fall 2022
Ran two more 8-week courses. The first 8-week course filled up.

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

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

**WHAT ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1</th>
<th>WEEK 2</th>
<th>WEEK 3</th>
<th>WEEK 4</th>
<th>WEEK 5</th>
<th>WEEK 6</th>
<th>WEEK 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board #1</td>
<td>Discussion Board #2</td>
<td>Discussion Board #3</td>
<td>Discussion Board #4</td>
<td>Discussion Board #5</td>
<td>Discussion Board #6</td>
<td>Final Video Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal 1</td>
<td>Journal 2</td>
<td>StrengthsFinder or Values Sheet</td>
<td>In-Person Workshop Week</td>
<td>Resume and Cover Letter</td>
<td>Comment on 2 other students'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus Participation 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On-Campus Participation 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On-Campus Participation 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Look for spaces of collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there already 1 credit course for the freshman? Who teaches those?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is offered at your local community college?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at the orientation office and the online materials they are sharing with students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utilize graduate student and undergraduate student help when possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connect with your students, make changes if needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do the students at your institution want?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could this format be applied without a class structure?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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!


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