Innovating with Design Thinking: How 7 Institutions Partnered to Reimagine Transfer Student Readiness and Success

In 2019 and 2020, seven institutions partnered to discover how best to impact transfer student readiness and success. Nearly 100 academic and student affairs personnel from the university and state college levels used designed thinking to examine “what is,” “what if,” “what wows,” and “what now” related to the transfer journey. In this session, the leads will present the approach and results, and offer identified best practices that participants may employ on their own campuses.

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University of Central Florida
Innovating with Design Thinking:

How Seven Institutions Partnered to Reimagine Transfer Student Readiness and Success

NISTS 2021 VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Session: Thursday, February 25th, 1:30-2:15pm
ABOUT UCF

**Big**

71,948 enrolled Fall 2020

**Transfer Friendly**

54% of population start as transfers

#1 top transfer student serving university in the country (2019, US News & World Report)

**Diverse**

Record number of minority students (48.5%) and Hispanic students (27.5%) in Fall 2020

**Accessible**

100+ fully online programs

#14 for best online bachelor’s programs; 4th consecutive year in the top 20 (2021, US News & World Report)
TRANSFER FOCUS

Culture of Transfer Support
Major Progression
Collective Impact
University Innovation Alliance (UIA)
Florida Consortium of Metropolitan Research Universities

Partnership-Driven
Central Florida Higher Education Consortium
*DirectConnect to UCF®*
Success Coaching
Curriculum Alignment
Annual College Access Summit
DIRECTCONNECT TO UCF®

Founded in 2005

College of Central Florida
Eastern Florida State College
Seminole State College
Daytona State College
Lake-Sumter State College
Valencia College

Benefits to Students

Embedded staff
Shorter time to graduation
Cost savings
Guaranteed admission
Success Coaches
Joint Philanthropy

Benefits to College Partners

Steering Committee
Working Groups
College Access Summit
Curriculum Alignment
CACC

College Access Summit
TRANSFORMATIVE WORK

Design Thinking: an action-driven method/process that focuses on user-lead, creative, solution-oriented, and innovative thinking. Collaborate, empathize, define, ideate, prototype, test, and implement.

2019 College Access Summit
Used design thinking to discover “what is,” “what if,” “what wows,” and “what now?”

Advanced knowledge to build practical solutions to transfer student challenges

2020 College Access Summit
Used design thinking to establish work teams to design and implement key projects for transfer student success
2019 COLLEGE ACCESS SUMMIT

100+ participants from seven institutions

Three applications of design thinking

➢ Review of past work
➢ Individual exercise
➢ Team-based poster board session
SYNTHESES OF TRANSFER WORK

**Discovery/Awareness Stage:**

**Positive Attributes**
- Partnership culture
- Brand awareness
- Data sharing/data reporting
- State college advisors
- UCF success coaches
- Johnson Scholarship
- Increasing knowledge of GEP
- Increasing knowledge of Meta Majors

**Challenges & Barriers**
- Too much information
- Students’ late completion of Math, English, Foreign Language
- Students getting mixed messages
- No/late major declaration
- Measuring success

**Pre-Transfer Readiness Stage:**

**Positive Attributes**
- Many resources for students
- Comprehensive orientation

**Challenges & Barriers**
- Lack of knowledge of resources
- Excessive hours
- Cumbersome orientation
- Availability of classes
- Unprepared for UCF class rigor

**During/Post Transfer Stage:**

**Positive Attributes**
- Many resources for students
- Comprehensive orientation

**Challenges & Barriers**
- Lack of knowledge of resources
- Excessive hours
- Cumbersome orientation
- Availability of classes
- Unprepared for UCF class rigor
163 areas working really well

156 areas that need slight modifications to be more efficient

163 areas not working at all

347 areas of opportunity!
WHAT IS YOUR "STAGE"?

WHAT IS YOUR FOCUS:
- To enhance an identified positive attribute?
- To solve an identified challenge or barrier?
- To create a new idea not yet explored?

WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN? HOW IS IT DIFFERENT AND INNOVATIVE? HOW DOES IT WORK TO IMPACT TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS?

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE? HOW WILL IT BE MEASURED?

WHO NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?
• 11 teams each developed a unique idea or concept to enhance transfer student readiness and success.

• All participants were given 5 stars each, and they could apply those 5 stars, in whatever denomination they wanted, to vote for their favorite idea—not their own!
RESULTS & ONGOING WORK

- A common student ID
- Multiplatform mobile app
- Mobile app with include chatbot and other technologies
- A common application process
- RAISE: Reward & Incentivize Student Engagement
- More focused and personalized communication
- DC2UCF mobile app
- DC Virtual Community (webcourse) for connections
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- Concurrent Transfer Experience to help establish student connections
- 3-series webcourse for students to complete at the state college prior to transfer
- Inter-Institutional Partner Learning Community for success coaches, advisor, and other stakeholders
• The poster board session allowed us to consolidate many great ideas!

• The 11 broad concepts were further merged into 4 key concept areas.
  • Learning Communities, Communication, Information Sharing
  • A mobile app designed for student readiness, engagement, and success
  • Common Application and Data Sharing
  • Course(s) for student readiness and success

• Four working groups were established, and are in the process now of bringing these ideas to fruition.
130+ participants from seven institutions participated in the Zoom event

Launched the TEAMS Project:

• Seven institutions partnering toward the development and delivery of practical solutions that will enhance *Transfer Excellence, Achievement, Mindset, and Success* (TEAMS).
Opportunity to build on great work done in 2019!
Six teams focused on a goal of their own design:

- Team 1: Admissions, Financial Aid, Enrollment Process
- Team 2: Coaching, Advising, and Major Ready
- Team 3: Communication: DirectConnect Branding, Marketing, and Overall Messaging
- Team 4: Communication: Student information, Communication, and Mode of Delivery
- Team 5: Transfer Process and Preparation: Discovery & Awareness
- Team 6: Transfer Process and Preparation: Readiness
# TEAMS PROJECT

DirectConnect to UCF® TEAMS Project
(Transfer Excellence, Achievement, Mindset, and Success)

## Champions Committee
Representatives from the DirectConnect Steering Committee:
Co-Captains from each of the six teams:
Project Leads: Pam Covarrubias, Jenny Summer

### Team 1: Admissions, Financial Aid, Enrollment Process
- **UCF Captain:** [Name]
- **Partner Captain:** [Name]
- Team’s Proposed Deliverable:

### Team 2: Coaching, Advising, and Major Readiness
- **UCF Captain:** [Name]
- **Partner Captain:** [Name]
- Team’s Proposed Deliverable:

### Team 3: Communication: DirectConnect Branding, Marketing, and Overall Messaging
- **UCF Captain:** [Name]
- **Partner Captain:** [Name]
- Team’s Proposed Deliverable:

### Team 4: Communication: Student Information, Communication, and Mode of Delivery
- **UCF Captain:** [Name]
- **Partner Captain:** [Name]
- Team’s Proposed Deliverable:

### Team 5: Transfer Process and Preparation: Discovery & Awareness
- **UCF Captain:** [Name]
- **Partner Captain:** [Name]
- Team’s Proposed Deliverable:

### Team 6: Transfer Process and Preparation: Readiness
- **UCF Captain:** [Name]
- **Partner Captain:** [Name]
DC-TEAMS Project
Monthly Update Report to Champions Committee

Team: ______________________________

Deliverable:

Ongoing Strategy(ies) to Meet the Deliverable:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Updates about the Team:</th>
<th>Report on Your Team’s Progress: (Use Visuals of Scorecard/Data for Review)</th>
<th>Report on Your Team’s Cadence of Accountability:</th>
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Standing Questions:

- Did your team meet previous goals? Why or Why Not?
- What work did your team do this last month to move forward toward the deliverable?
- What will your team commit to doing before next month’s Champions Committee meeting?
- What are the one or two most important things that your team will do in the next month that will have the biggest impact on meeting your deliverable?
ONGOING WORK

Year-long initiative with support and motivation by the Champions Committee

Teams driven, not leadership driven:

- Leadership offers support, not direction
- Leadership helps to keep teams moving forward
- Leadership helps teams stay accountable for progress
- Leadership helps motivate teams to their own success
What we’ve learned

Design thinking is what you make it, but keys are:
✓ Partnership focus
✓ User-driven design and solutions
✓ Leadership motivation and enthusiasm
✓ Sustained rhythm of the process
✓ Acceptance of unforeseen pivot-points
✓ Accountability for progress
✓ End date with deliverables
✓ (And having fun with it!)
THANK YOU

For questions, or for more information, please contact:

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