

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 Partner/Sponsor Session

2837 - Build a Better Transfer Strategy: Peer Mentors to Increase Resource Utilization & Belonging

Transition Programs and Supports, Partnerships and Collaboration

Concentration on transfer student recruitment has gained momentum with the decline of first-year enrollment. The need to retain these students is paramount with a plateau of transfer enrollment at Community Colleges. In this session, we will discuss what student success looks like for our institution's diverse cohort, why working collaboratively with two-year institutions is critical, and the role of peer mentoring in improving retention, sense of belonging, self-efficacy, and help-seeking skills.

Samantha Raynor, *Asst. Vice Provost for Strategic Student Success Initiatives*
University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Robert Montgomery, *Vice President of Partnership*
Mentor Collective

Build a Better Transfer Strategy

Peer Mentors to Increase Resource Utilization & Belonging

Presented by:



UNC
GREENSBORO &



MENTOR
COLLECTIVE



Speakers

Special Guest Commentary



Dr. Samantha Raynor
Assistant Vice Provost for
Strategic Student Success Initiatives
University of North Carolina, Greensboro



Robert Montgomery
Vice President, Partnerships
Mentor Collective



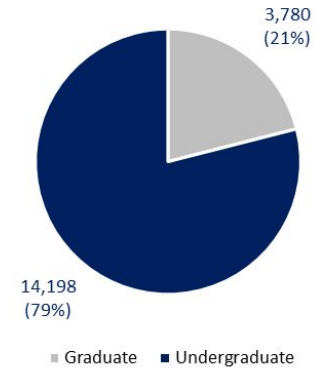
Trina Gabriel
Assistant Director of Transfer Initiatives
University of North Carolina, Greensboro



UNCG in Context

- Minority-Serving Institution
- Nearing Hispanic-Serving Institution Status
- #1 in North Carolina for Social Mobility
- Nearly 50% First-Generation Students
- 37% Pell Recipients
- High Research Activity
- Community Engaged

UNCG Enrollment



What About Transfers?

WE 
UNCG
TRANSFER
STUDENTS!

40% of Undergraduate Population

- 18.2 %First Generation*
- 47.4 %Pell Received
- 67 %Female
- 74 %Full-Time
- 38% Students of Color

60% Begin at NC Community Colleges

- System-level structures
- Institutional partners/structures
- Leaves 40% of transfers who come from some other institution

Average Age = 23

- Although the “average” transfer student appears to be similar to our first-time in college students, there are still a range of demographic characteristics.

*Of the students who reported. 66% of transfer student status as first-gen is unknown



Transfer Student Experiences at UNCG



- UNCG iBelong Survey
 - Campus Climate survey (Culturally Engaging Campus Environments-CECE)
 - 7,000 undergraduate students randomly sampled
 - 1,127 respondents/ 286 Transfer Respondents

50%

Feel they don't belong
at UNCG

29%

Do not feel a part of
the UNCG community

75%

do not feel a strong
connection to
UNCG community



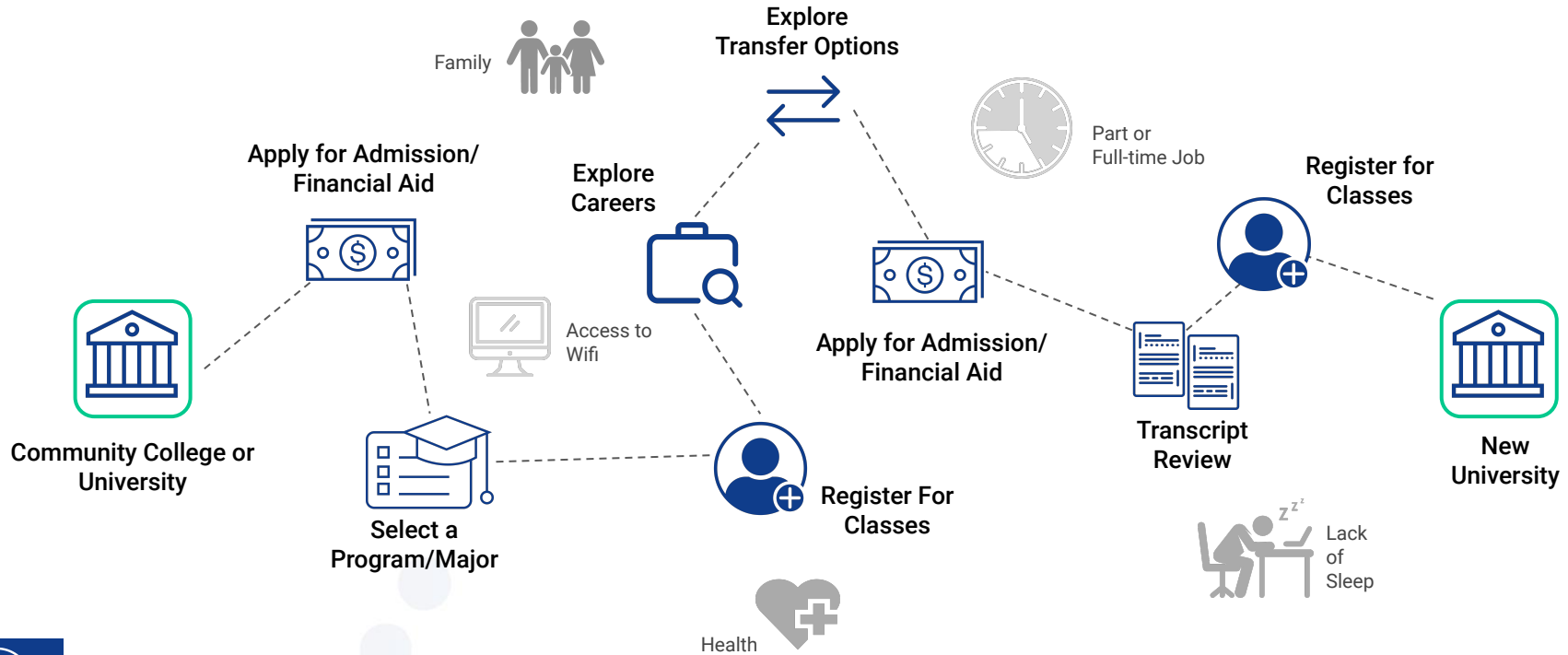
UNCG's Transfer Journey

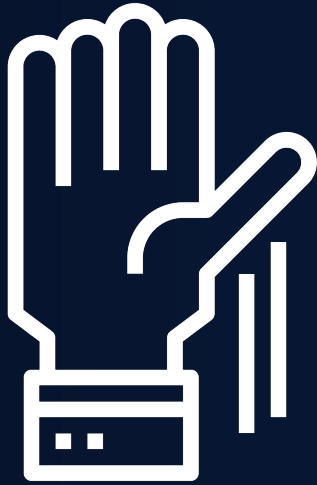


- Leveraged opportunities for partnership
 - Frontier Set Sub-Awards
 - Aspen/SOVA 90-day Improvement Cycle
 - Aspen/AACU Transfer Student Success Equity Intensive
 - Transfer Advisory Council
 - Advisory Board
- Personal Investments
 - Asst. Director of Transfer Initiatives
 - Rebuilding Transfer Admissions Team
- Strategic Financial Aid Investment
- AACC Equity Transfer Initiative Coach
- **Transfer2Transfer Mentors**



Transferring is Complicated



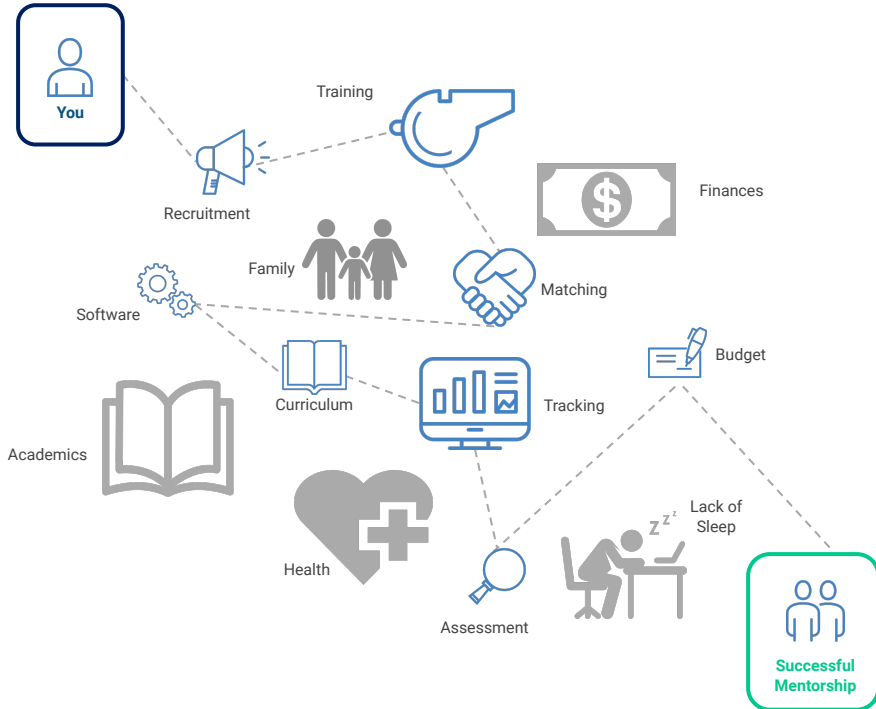


**Raise your hand if you are
using mentorship to support
transfer students?**

What is the **biggest barrier**
to starting a mentor
program at your institution?



Running a Mentorship Program is Complicated



MENTOR
COLLECTIVE

Approach

1. Program Design
2. Recruiting
3. Training
4. Matching
5. Engagement Support
6. Assessment

Successful Mentorship Programs...



**Engage Students
Authentically**



**Uncover Actionable
Student Insights**



**Supercharge Student
Success Strategy**



**Optimize Administrative
Resources**

Assessment to Validate Peer Mentorship for Student Success

Peer Mentoring Programs Work

Peer mentoring programs have been linked to desirable social, cognitive and motivational outcomes including sense of belonging, satisfaction, self-efficacy, and help-seeking skills.

Sense of Belonging is a Foundational Construct Associated with Persistence & Retention

In order for students to feel a sense of belonging, they must be both socially and academically integrated into the institution. Shields' (2001) research has linked the stress from a lack of integration (or sense of belonging) to attrition.

Self-efficacy is Another Construct Associated with Improved Retention and Graduation Rates

Past academic experiences influence a student's perception of their ability to complete college-level work. First-generation, low-income, and students of color often exhibit lower levels of self-efficacy.



Intended Outcomes & Assessments



Improve the
Transition
Experience

Improve Sense
of Belonging &
Campus
Connectedness

Fall-to-Spring
Retention

Increase
Awareness &
Utilization of
Campus
Resources

Retention Results (Fall 2021 Cohort):

- **93.1% of mentees returned** for spring 22' (compared to 84.7% of the mentee comparison group) and 80% returned fall 22' (compared to 73% of the mentee comparison group)
- **41.4% mentors graduated by fall 22' and 88% of the remaining students returned** for fall 22' (these rates are comparable to the mentor comparison group)



Mentor Collective Proven Outcomes

- ✓ Connect students with relevant, identify-aligned mentors
- ✓ Review match criteria for relevance and effectiveness
- ✓ Identify top concerns and topics during key periods in the campus experience
- ✓ Identify students' sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy at key points in the student experience
- ✓ Foster sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy
- ✓ Assess student success behaviors and nudge accordingly
- ✓ Compare and contrast melt, persistence, retention, and graduation rates for mentored and non-mentored students
- ✓ Benchmark efficacy



Mentor Collective Assessment

Tracked Engagement

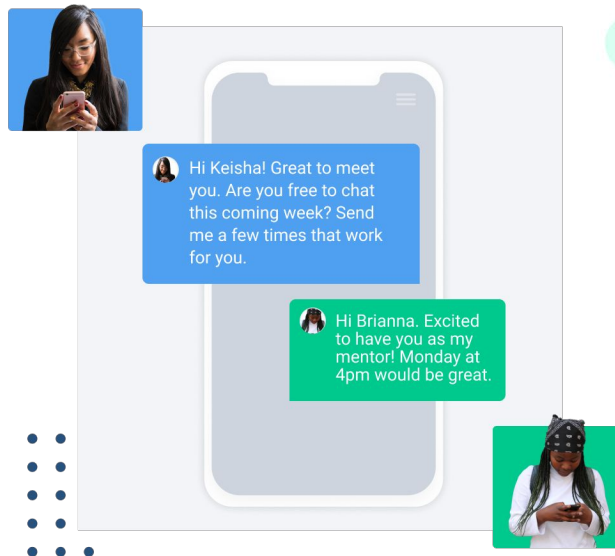
- Frequency of texts exchanged (content is private)

Mentor Self-Reporting

- Conversations - Mentors submit on the topics of discussion
- Flags - Early alert system to highlight urgent issues

Mentor & Mentee Self-Reporting

- Program Assessment Surveys
 - Pre/Mid/Post program
 - Track student sense of belonging



Assessment Surveys

Peer-reviewed, published scales that are intentionally designed to assess students' needs.

To uncover key insights about each specific mentorship program, we ask consistent questions throughout each participants' mentorship journey.

Sense of Belonging Sample Questions:

- I feel comfortable at my school.
- I feel like I am an important member of my school.
- I am supported by my school.

Timing of Survey Reminders (*all timing is approximate*)

- The pre-program-survey is administered prior to creating the mentorship, which provides a point of comparison.
- The mid-program-survey is given the first week of winter quarter/spring semester.
- The post-program-survey is given approximately two weeks after finals.



Executive Summary (21-22)



455+ students served in the 21-22 academic year with only 1-2 hours of staff time per month



43.5% of matched students were in highly engaged, substantive, & sustained mentorships*



2,300+ conversations logged & 8,200+ text messages exchanged between pairs



How is This Year Going?

PROGRAM OVERVIEW	21-22	22-23 (To Date)
Students Matched	457 (26.14%)	487 (35.19%)
Mentors Matched	134 (6.06%)	117 (5.78%)
Conversations Logged*	2,327	2,014
Highly Engaged (3+ Conversations)	43.5%	42.7%



Program Outcomes 2021-22

Sense of belonging and self-efficacy have been shown in academic literature to be closely connected to better retention rates, higher academic success, and positive career outcomes.

+6.70%

Mentee Sense of Belonging

+4.90%

Mentee Self-Efficacy



Program Outcomes 2021-22

Mentee Retention

79.4%

Mentees Returned
for Their Second Fall
(Consecutive Enrollment)

72.7%

Comparison Students Returned for
Their Second Fall
(Consecutive Enrollment)



Program Outcomes 2021-22

Mentor Retention

86.8%

Mentors Returned
for Their Second Fall
(Consecutive Enrollment)

86.4%

Comparison Students Returned for
Their Second Fall
(Consecutive Enrollment)

The Mentee/Mentor Experience



"I started out as a mentee and I loved it so much that I decided to become a mentor..."

"The best advice my mentor gave me was to get involved in clubs and activities that had specifically to do with my major...**now I have connections in the field and friends studying the same thing I am.**"

"This [being a mentor] has also been a good experience towards my career goals - one of them is being a mentor/advisor to graduate students getting their PhDs"



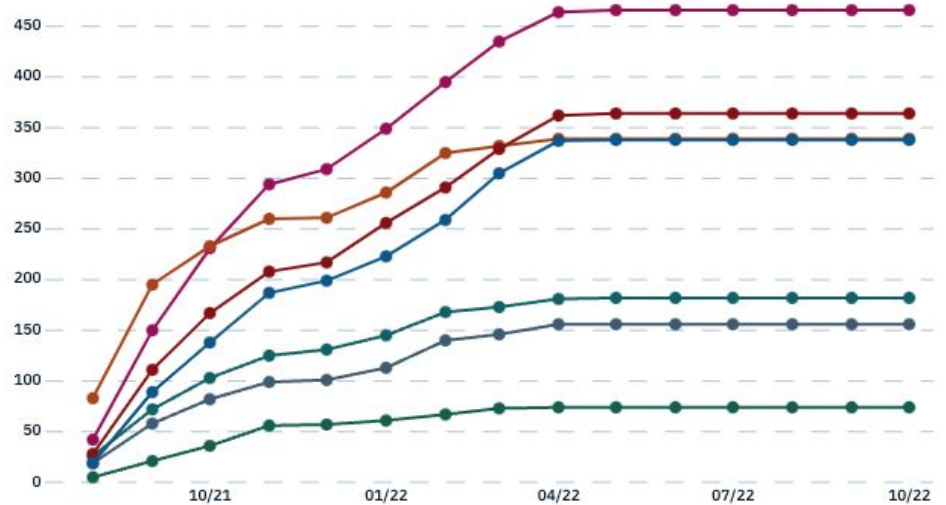
**How do student insights
inform your transfer
strategy or programs?**



Conversations

Top Conversation Topics

- Academics
- School Life
- Getting to Know Each Other



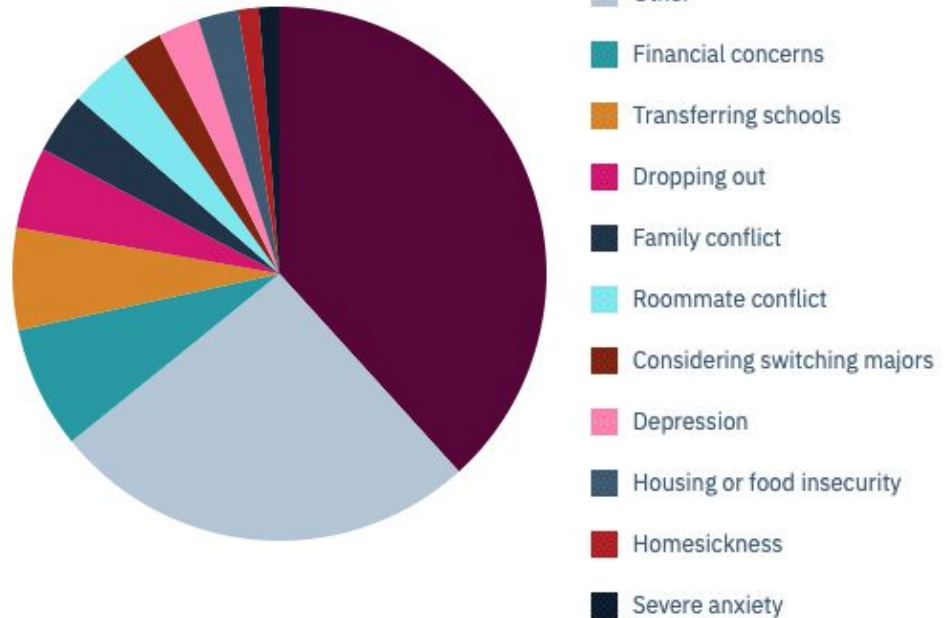
- ✓ Academics (classes, instructors, grades, studying)
- ✓ Activities (sports, clubs, being a leader on campus)
- ✓ Career (jobs, internships, what to do after graduation)
- ✓ Getting to know each other
- ✓ Person selected "Other"
- ✓ School life (eating, weather, culture)
- ✓ Staying balanced (wellness, anxiety, stress, self-care)



Early Alert Flags

Top Flags Reported

- Academic Struggles
- Other
- Financial Concerns



**When have Flags allowed
UNCG to impact an
individual student's trajectory?**



How does mentorship ensure transfer students know the resources available to them?

Enable Help-Seeking Behavior

MENTEE

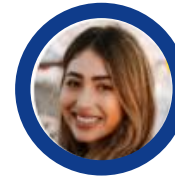


Hi Sara - With finals coming up and working at the dining hall part time, I'm feeling really overwhelmed and I'm not sure who to talk to about it.



Hi Josh - I'm sorry you're feeling this way, finals can be a stressful time. Would you want to meet for lunch tomorrow? I could also show you where the Wellness Center is on campus.

MENTOR



What Campus Resources Were Accessed More Frequently?

Campus Resource	Mentored	Non-Mentored
University Library	46.9%	38.75%
Kaplan Center for Recreation & Wellness	24.49%	16.25%
Career & Professional Development	10.2%	2.5%
Academic Achievement Center	14.29%	5%
Student Health Services	12.24%	7.5%
Writing Center	10.2%	6.25%
Office of Accessibility Resource Services	10.2%	7.75%
Math Help Center	4.08%	1.25%

What Campus Resources Were Accessed More Frequently?

Comparison group students

Campus Resource	Non-Mentored	Mentored
Financial Aid/Registrar	18.75%	10.2%
6Tech	10%	4.08%
Counseling Center	5%	4.08%

**What's top of mind
for you regarding
transfer success now?**



THE CHRONICLE

of MENTORING & COACHING



Why Your Transfer Retention Strategy is Failing: Making a Shift to an Active Support System

Raynor, S., Baker, K., & Ford, V.
University of North Carolina—Greensboro, Mentor Collective

...more mentees reported utilization of academic support and co-curricular resources like the Writing Center, Career & Professional Development Services, Office of Accessibility Resources Services, Counseling Center, Academic Achievement Center, Students First Office, and Digital ACT Studios..."





Samantha Raynor, Ph.D.

Assistant Vice Provost for Strategic Student Success Initiatives

slraynor@uncg.edu / slraynor@mcraynorconsulting.com

Available for speaking and educational strategy consultation inquiries





Trina Gabriel

Assistant Director of Transfer Initiatives

tgabriel@uncg.edu

Available for transfer related inquiries



Q&A



Learn more at:

mentorcollective.org

go.uncg.edu/transfementors