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## *Educational Session*

### **2395 - Improving The Perceptions of Transfers as Researchers**

Diversity and Inclusion, Leadership and Strategic Planning

Faculty often exclude transfer students from taking part in undergraduate research because they are afraid that these students' late entry into the university system will make it difficult to integrate them into research groups. Educating faculty about the benefits of working with transfer students can help integrate transfer students into the broader university community.

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# Improving The Perceptions of Transfers as Researchers

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## DISCUSSION

- Transfer experience is extremely important as it provides access to higher education.
- Transfer Students take a while to adapt to 4 year institutions and providing support to students is essential.
- Transfer Students still suffer from prejudice and bias at 4- year institutions.
- Many transfer students are used to the semester system and smaller class sizes that allowed them to make deeper connections and going to a 4-year institution can be challenging.
- Navigating resources that are offered to transfer students and research opportunities can be daunting.

## BACKGROUND

### Justification

- Educating faculty about the benefits of working with transfer students can help integrate transfer students into the broader university community.
- Transfer students are looked at as unmotivated, aged out, unprepared, and are seen as students who are not as ambitious as their 'native' peers.
- This misconception is highly problematic as it allows faculty to excuse their bias towards traditional students who are seemingly more prepared and motivated to work in research environments.
- We hypothesized that higher positive outcomes of Transfer Students will be associated with higher endorsement of utilizing mental health support

## MATERIALS & METHODS

### Sample Characteristics

- ◆ 3147 Participants
- ◆ Gender
  - 58.4% women, 41.6% men
- ◆ Age
  - 18-44 years ( $M = 19.61$ ,  $SD = 3.74$ )
- ◆ Ethnicity
  - 42.7% Latino, 10.1% Asian / Pacific Islander, 7.9% Black or African American, 23.6% White or Caucasian, 9.0% Mixed
- ◆ Classification
  - 50.6% freshmen, 25.8% sophomores, 21.1% juniors, 2.2% seniors
- ◆ Student Profile
  - 96.6% Full-Time, 3.4% Part-Time

### Procedures

- ◆ Approved by a university review board
- ◆ Part of a larger study on perceptions and use of substances across the university
- ◆ Survey
  - Administered online
  - Open-ended questions
  - 30 minutes
- ◆ Students that participated were entered into a raffle to win a gift card

### Measurement

- ◆ Bias Perception Question 4
  - BPQ4 - "How often have you received unfair treatment from faculty or administrators?"
- ◆ Belonging Question 1
  - "I feel a sense of acceptance and belonging at UCSB"
- ◆ Mental Health Coping Question 1
  - If I were experiencing a serious challenge with my mental health, I would be confident that I could find relief in talking to a professional.

## RESULTS

### Significant Correlations

	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Bias Perception Question 4 & Belonging	-.285	.007
Mental Health Coping & Anxiety	-.469	.000

### Linear Regression

	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>p</i> -value
Bias Perception Question 4 & Belonging	-.261	.283	.014
Mental Health Coping & Anxiety	-.434	.505	.017

## DISCUSSION

### Conclusion

- Universities should focus to improve sense of belonging to diminish the negative consequences of transfer bias experienced by transfer students
- Steps should be taken to ensure that transfer students are equipped with the necessary coping skills to combat anxiety that is present during their undergraduate careers

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