

#NISTS2019 CONFERENCE

WORKING TOGETHER TO SIMPLIFY TRANSFER

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Providing Academic and Social Pathways through Transfer Orientation Programs and Seminars

Transition Programs & Services, Matriculation Trends & Issues - Research Spotlight

While orientation programs and seminars for transfer students have become increasingly common in American higher education, the extent to which these programs are crafted with consideration to the academic and social needs of this student population varies. This session will highlight research for a forthcoming book that makes a case for developing and/or enhancing transitional programs for transfer students.

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Providing Academic and Social Pathways through Transfer Orientation Programs and Seminars

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Learning Outcomes

As a result of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe factors to consider in the development (or refinement) of transfer orientation programs and seminars;
- Evaluate current and promising practices related to transfer orientation programs and seminars as a vehicle for student transition and success;
- Discuss characteristics of successful transfer student orientation programs and seminars and ways in which these programs can be assessed.

Presentation Outline

- I. Introduction
- II. Factors to Consider in the Development of Intentional Transfer Orientation Programs and Seminars
- III. Models, Institutional Examples, and Common Components of Transfer Orientation and Seminars
- IV. Assessment of Transfer Orientation Programs
- V. Conclusion and Next Steps

Introduction

Making the case for specialized transfer orientation programs and seminars

- Often neglected/overlooked (graduation and retention rates)
- Tendency to view transfers as a “monolithic” category, ignoring the nuances that exist in types of transfer, transfer pathways, and transfer student identities
- Misconceptions about who transfer students are and what they need

Factors to Consider

Factors that are essential to the development and implementation of transfer orientation programs and seminars to ensure they are intentionally tailored to the unique needs of this population of students:

- Academic and social needs of transfer students
- Transfer student pathways and types of transfer
- Common transfer barriers
- Developing a culture of transfer

Academic and Social Needs

- Transfer students are diverse (Hoover, 2010)
 - Number of credit hours transferred
 - Age
 - Number and type of institutions attended
 - Academic preparation
 - Personal commitments
 - Social identities
- Often institutions have “categorize[d] transfer based on credit and degree attainment at the point of entry” (Aiken-Wisniewski, 2012, p. 50) and do not take these factors into consideration.

Transfer Paths and Types of Transfer

- Aiken-Wisniewski (2012) identified several categories of transfer, which are still relevant given the current transfer paths and pathways:
 - Vertical or transfer up
 - Lateral
 - Reverse transfer
 - Swirler
 - Thwarted transfers
- Students returning after stopping out, being readmitted or reinstated, concurrently/dually enrolled, and internal transfers

Common Transfer Barriers

1. Credit leakage (Bradley, 2014) and portability (outdated articulation agreements)
2. Limited programs/services dedicated to help transfer students navigate the transition (Foote, Kranzow, & Hinkle, 2015)
3. Transfer shock (Townsend & Wilson, 2006)
4. Struggle for meaningful interactions with faculty or other “trusted” individuals (Lee, 2001); absence of “strategic guidance” (Deil-Amen, 2011)
5. Absence of transfer culture and capital

Models, Institutional Examples, & Components

Transfer Orientation Programs

- These programs should be customized, in content and delivery, well timed given the transfer transition experience, and inclusive of the myriad identities transfer students claim.
 - University at Albany (multi-day transfer orientation)
 - University of Iowa (Orientation)

Models, Institutional Examples, & Components

Transfer Student Seminars

- University of Iowa (Success Course)
- Stockton University
- Kennesaw State University
- Rutgers University

KSU 2000: Transfer Student Seminar

- 2-credit hour course first offered in fall 2014
- Assignments included a Student Engagement Plan and a culminating portfolio
- Students in the class were exposed to information and resources related to engagement/involvement, undergraduate research, and academic majors/success skills and strategies

Kennesaw State University
KSU 2290: Transfer Student Seminar
Section 05/C55
Fall 2014

CLASS MEETINGS: MW 2:00-3:15 p.m. in UC, Room 122

INSTRUCTORS:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION
First-year seminars at KSU are designed to develop college-level skills for academic success by focusing on life skills, strategies for academic success, connecting with campus and community, and foundations for global learning. This course emphasizes strategies for academic success by engaging students in a systematic, intentional approach to inquiry, problem solving, investigation and discovery. This course satisfies the first-year curriculum requirement by meeting the four learning outcomes of first-year seminars.

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES
This course is designed to broaden your skills and knowledge in four major areas:

- I. Life Skills:** Students will acquire knowledge of the life skills necessary to succeed in college and their post graduate life.
Students will be able to:
 - Differentiate between personal and career goals
 - Apply time management strategies
 - Develop a goal-setting plan with action steps
 - Analyze spending habits and construct a budget
 - Apply communication and leadership skills within a group setting
- II. Strategies for Academic Success:** Students will acquire a knowledge of the strategies necessary for academic success.
Students will be able to:
 - Implement critical thinking skills
 - Utilize study skills and test preparation strategies
 - Implement research and library skills
 - Apply presentation skills and explain different types of speech delivery
 - Create a presentation

KSU 2000: Transfer Student Seminar

KSU 2290: TRANSFER STUDENTS SEMINAR PORTFOLIO

This section of KSU 2290 has been designed specifically for students who have transferred to the university. In addition to the learning outcomes associated with other first-year seminars, students in this course will complete assignments that become part of a personal portfolio. Each portfolio will include evidence of all of the following:

- A personal plan of study connected with an academic major, and personal career exploration and/or goals;
- Participation in undergraduate research, community service, or campus activities;
- Interview with professional or academic mentor;
- Personal reflection (follow guidelines posted in D2L)



The Context

- Stockton's General Studies Curriculum
- Interdisciplinary
- Does NOT include "Intro" courses
- Stockton's Freshman Seminars (required)
- Courses already in the GS curriculum
- Limited to 25 students
- Most are (traditional) first-year students
- *Stockton's Transfer Seminars (not required)*
- Courses can be from any part of the curriculum
- c. 7-10 courses (fall); c. 5-8 courses (spring)

Examples of Courses Taught as Transfer Seminars

- Contemporary American Education
- Marketing Principles
- Legal/Social/Ethical Environment of Business
- Health Psychology
- Perceptions and Perspectives
- The Global Community
- Financial Accounting
- Cognitive Psychology
- Families, Schools, and Communities

Examples of Courses Taught as Transfer Seminars

- Memoirs of Mental Illness
- World Perspectives on Health
- Research Design and Methods in Criminal Justice
- Writing in the Movies
- Perspectives on Women
- Leadership Strategy and Change
- Developmental Psychology: Childhood and Adolescence
- History's Mysteries
- Yosemite: Nature and Culture
- Unlocking Creativity
- Business and the Arts

Seminar Anecdotes

- “I felt intimidated in my other classes.”
- “I would never have attended anything if it had not been for this class.”
- “Our group stopped being just classmates and started to become friends.”
- “I thought I was just going to sit in class, learn, and leave just as I did at my community college. I never thought I would actually become involved in school.”
- “I really liked the seminar because I learned about Stockton from inside a classroom.”

Seminar Anecdotes

- “When I went to register for classes at Orientation a nice girl sat next to me and we ended up adding this course. On the first day of class it was a relief to walk in and see a familiar face.”
- “Meeting new people is a struggle when you’re commuting 40 minutes each way twice a week...this transfer seminar class was one place where I did meet people...I’m hoping to move on campus with Justine whom I met in your class.”
- “This was my favorite semester in my entire life. I never thought I could enjoy school the way I did this fall.”

Assessment of These Programs

- The Standards for Orientation Programs are intended for all types of students and include the essential elements of: student learning and development across the six CAS domains; employ collaboration from all areas of the campus that contribute to these learning outcomes; recognize and be inclusive of the wide diversity of new students that enter the institution at each new entry point (semester or quarter and fall, winter or spring); and adequately assess all aspects of the process (CAS, 2015).
- The CAS Standards for Transfer Student Programs and Services (TSPS) also advocate the same six domains of student learning, as well as more specific aspects that are specific or unique to transfer students. The [TSPS] Standards acknowledge the importance of curricular alignment for an effective transfer process, especially for those students transferring from community colleges, as well as equitable application of institutional policies and procedures that apply to all students (not just first-years).

Assessment of These Programs

- A variety of quantitative measures can also be used to determine the effectiveness of the seminars and whether specific goals and objectives have been met. The standard retention and graduation rates of transfer students are measures likely to be in place already. Other measures that are readily available in an institutional student records data base might include first-term GPAs, whether students tend to change majors after transferring, and/or are there specific courses that appear to have especially high DFWI rates for transfer students.
- Where articulation agreements exist with certain institutions, all assessment data should be shared (in the aggregate) in order to assess the effectiveness of those agreements as well. If inadequacies or inaccuracies are identified, revisions may be in order.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- Examine transfer policies, procedures, practices, and protocols
- Revise student success success metrics
- Require participation in orientation programs
- Offer multiple, different types of orientation experiences and transfer student seminars
- Craft transfer student seminars to help students develop the psycho-social and cognitive behaviors and skills necessary to successfully transition to and through their sending institution
- Expose and engage students in High-Impact Practices (HIPs), academic and career planning, and identity exploration.
- Evaluate programs and courses.

Thank You!



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