

At NISTS, we believe it takes all of us working together, beyond silos, to effectively support transfer students' diverse identities, needs, and pathways. All conference sessions prioritize evidence-based and culturally relevant practices and align with at least one of the following broad session themes. These themes intentionally blur traditional boundaries between functional areas and across 2-year, 4-year, and blended institutional types.

Credits and Degree Pathways

Complicated credit policies and unclear academic plans too often delay transfer students' progress and persistence, causing excess credit accumulation, multiple major changes, and/or reduced personal momentum. Presentations in this category explore ways to improve credit transferability and applicability and may include topics such as awarding various forms of academic credit (i.e., prior-learning, competency-based, etc.), the credit articulation process, curriculum alignment, degree maps, guided pathways, and reverse transfer.

Diversity and Inclusion*

Transfer offers students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences the opportunity to pursue higher education, while simultaneously bringing rich diversity to our campuses. These presentations focus on creating an equitable and inclusive transfer culture for students from groups that often experience marginalization. Topics address issues that directly affect these students, including assisting them as they move between institutions, easing their personal, social, financial, and academic adjustment, and facilitating student belonging, motivation, and self-efficacy.

Leadership and Strategic Planning

The support of institution and system leaders is critical to the success of transfer initiatives. Presentations in this category explore how individuals and groups leverage their influence to ensure that planning efforts include transfer and reflect the transfer student perspective. Of particular interest are conversations about: galvanizing leadership—both appointed and grassroots—to prioritize transfer; specific examples of incorporating transfer into the mission and goals of institutions and departments; working across institutions to create a shared transfer vision; and empowering students to influence institutional transfer culture.

Matriculation Trends and Issues

As they contemplate and initiate transfer, students rely on timely, accurate, and clear information from a wide range of campus constituents, including academic departments, admissions, advising, financial aid, orientation, registrar, and even residence life. Presentations in this category

spotlight the planning and enrollment phases of the transfer student lifecycle, specifically the trends, issues, policies, and practices that transfer students may face from the initial point of interest through the first semester of attendance at their new institution.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Facilitating a holistic and inclusive transfer student experience requires identifying and involving key stakeholders that represent a variety of perspectives, disciplines, and functional areas. These sessions address the importance of forming intentional relationships within and between institutions, with an emphasis on relationship development and measurable outcomes. Of particular interest are projects that involve personnel at both sending and receiving institutions and/or collaborative efforts that combine academic and student affairs expertise.

Special Populations*

Transfer students hold a variety of intersecting identities with needs that extend beyond their student types and demographics. Presentations in this category discuss these [new majority learners](#) in more detail and/or highlight programs and services tailored to facilitate a smooth and equitable transfer experience. Special populations include, but are not limited to: adult learners, parent/caregivers, LGBTQ+, military-affiliated, online-only, part-time, formerly incarcerated, those with a disability, and students who have experienced trauma.

Transition Programs and Supports

Transfer students have a wealth of knowledge and experiences, and they deserve purposeful and tailored support as they navigate their new institutions, particularly during the first year. Presentations in this category concentrate on helping students acclimate and build relationships as they 'find their fit' in the campus community and discover ways to engage in high-value personal, social, and academic activities. Of particular interest are sessions that explain how these programs and services contribute to student persistence, retention, and completion.

**Conference evaluation data consistently indicates that attendees crave more content related to these themes. If you have expertise in these areas, please share!*