



Supporting Transfer Students Series

PART 1: Understanding Students Who Transfer from 2-Year to 4-Year Institutions

Admission for transfer students at UCD has been steadily rising since 2009, with over 3,700 new transfer students enrolling in the 2016-2017 academic year (UC Davis Budget and Institutional Analysis, 2017). Transfer students represent a diverse collection of often nontraditional backgrounds and experiences; as such, these students have needs and expectations of their university educations that can be much different than their peers on more traditional pathways (Lester, Leonard, & Mathias, 2013).

Characteristics of Transfer Students

Given the lower costs of attending less expensive 2-year colleges, transferring is a popular option among students from a variety of underrepresented populations, including first-generation students, veteran students, and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds (CCCSE, 2012; Durosko, 2017; Fauria & Fuller, 2015, Mullin, 2012). 2-year colleges often offer much more flexibility in course scheduling, including night classes, which can make it easier for nontraditionally-aged students, students with dependents, and students working part- or full-time to attend. The Center for Community College Student Engagement [CCCSE] (2012) outlines the following major characteristics of community college students:

Status	Part-Time Students	Full-Time Students
Enrollment status	59% are part-time students	41% are full-time students
Work status	42% work at least 30 hrs/week	19% work at least 30 hrs/week
Dependents	37% care for dependents at least 11 hrs/week	29% care for dependents at least 11 hrs/week
Course flexibility	40% take evening or weekend classes	13% take evening or weekend classes

Additionally, CCCSE (2012) found that 73% of community college students reported that their goal in attending a 2-year institution was to transfer to a 4-year college or university, indicating that while not all community college students choose to go on to attend 4-year universities, the above characteristics remain largely representative of the students who do transfer.

The importance of recognizing your students' current life situations

Given that many transfer students face a variety of challenges outside of school that may have a significant impact on their success in school (e.g., CCCSE, 2012; Miller, 2013), one way instructors can help promote transfer students success is by being willing to work with transfer students if/when their extracurricular responsibilities interfere with their curricular ones. Below are a some additional extracurricular challenges transfer students may face, and some suggestions for how to respond supportively:

Challenges	Explanations	Teaching Suggestions
<i>May have extensive and diverse demands on their time outside of school</i>	Transfer students often commute, work many hours, and have unusual schedules. They may have part-time enrollment status, interruptions in their enrollment, and occasional impediments to their persistence due to a variety of factors.	Time management skills are important for the persistence of community college students. Help students with time management by designing assignments and timelines that allow for research or collaboration to be done outside of class or off-campus. Do not require the use of resources that are limited or only available



		at certain times. Consider time management resources provided by SASC .
<i>May have dependents or other family demands</i>	Transfer students may concurrently support dependents or may otherwise work through demanding family situations.	Be understanding when life or family gets in the way of a student attending class or completing an assignment on time. Consider offering partial credit for late assignments, or extra credit if appropriate. Encourage students to stop by office hours if they miss class or fall behind on coursework.
<i>May face serious financial hardships</i>	Financial issues persist for many students.	Unless students need to buy particular supplies or apps for your class, be cognizant of additional financial burdens. For example, consider using open source software (e.g., R , Textable), open source textbooks, and other free course materials if possible.
<i>May be a veteran student or a nontraditionally-aged student</i>	According to the US Department of Education, the average age for returning veteran students is 25 (cited in Durosko, 2017). Similarly, many transfer students may also be nontraditionally-aged students who have returned to school after a long absence. These students may feel out of place around their younger peers, or may have difficulty engaging socially on campus.	Try to vary your approach to working with students in a way that considers their age and life experiences. Encourage students to utilize their prior knowledge and experience in coursework, and to share their unique perspectives during class discussions. For example, you could build in time before major exams or projects for students to discuss study methods that have been helpful for them in similar classes, and develop problem-solving strategies for when they get stuck.

Additional Resources

- [Transfer and Reentry Center](#)
- [Student Academic Success Center \[SASC\]](#)
- [SASC's Writing Assistance Services](#)
- [Veteran Success Center](#)

In addition to this resource, we would also suggest referencing our "[Supporting First-Generation University Student Series](#)," as the experiences of transfer students often parallel those of first-generation students more broadly.

Citation

Center for Educational Effectiveness [CEE]. (2018). Supporting Transfer Students Series. *Just-in-Time Teaching Resources*. Retrieved from <https://cee.ucdavis.edu/JITT>

References

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