



Supporting Transfer Students Series

PART 2: Strategies for Supporting Social Engagement with Transfer Students

Recent research suggests that transfer students considered social engagement to be important to their success in college (e.g., Lester, Leonard, & Mathias, 2013). Lester et al (2013) defined social engagement as “interacting with others broadly both inside and outside the university” (p. 211). However, researchers have also found that due to a variety of curricular and extracurricular factors, transfer students tend to be less socially engaged in their 4-year institutions than their traditionally enrolled peers, especially if they transfer late into their college careers (as juniors or seniors; Ishitani & McKittrick, 2010). Although, transfer students may primarily rely on social engagement outside of school for support, instructors can still play an important role in helping transfer students feel more socially connected to campus.

Strategies	Teaching Suggestions
Implement active and collaborative activities, and encourage students to work with a variety of their peers in class	Consider incorporating collaborative, active learning activities so that students can become acculturated to their peers and establish new study connections and friendships. Francis & Miller (2007) found that community college students may experience apprehension or anxiety communicating with others (including their peers). Consider using small group discussion activities in class to help students become more comfortable communicating and collaborating with others. For examples of active and collaborative learning activities, see our resource series titled “ Activating Your Lecture ” and “ Strategies for Covering Content ”
Encourage networking and professional development on and off campus	Show interest in your students’ extracurricular activities and professional networking efforts. This could include building an experiential or service learning component into your course, having an expert as a guest speaker (in-person or video conference), or offering extra credit for attending networking events or meeting with professionals in the field. Also, engage with students with on campus, outside-of-class activities, such as poster days, presentation opportunities, competitions, professional organizations (local, national, international), and independent study.
Help students build networks of support	Encourage all students to create networks of support (i.e., to “shrink” a larger campus into a more manageable community). Highlight various cultural, ethnic, religious, hobby, interest, or discipline-oriented clubs on campus that can offer social and academic support. Research has shown that engagement in these activities can have a positive effect on their educational outcomes (Ishitani & McKittrick, 2010; Lester, Leonard, & Mathias, 2013). For students with off-campus commitments, the UC Davis All Events calendar contains a links to video streams of campus activities. Also, see Additional Resources for more campus partners.

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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Francis, T. A., & Miller, M. T. (2007). Communication apprehension: levels of first-generation college students at 2-year institutions. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 32(1), 38-55.

Ishitani, T. T., & McKittrick, S. A. (2010). After transfer: The engagement of community college students at a four-year collegiate institution. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 34, 576-594.

Lester, J., Leonard, J. B., & Mathias, D. (2013). Transfer student engagement: Blurring of social and academic engagement. *Community College Review*, 41(3), 202-222.