

SHOCK & Awe: Mentoring Transfer Students Through the First Year

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Transfer Students at Our Institutions

- Half of all college students begin at a community college. Low-income students are three times more likely to do so than high-income students.
- Students who begin at a community college are less likely to earn a baccalaureate degree.
- Only 33% percent of community college students transfer to a four-year institution within six years.

Shocking Factors for Colleges & Universities

- Public institutions enroll four times as many community college transfer students as private institutions; transfer students also make up a larger percentage of public enrollment.
- Transfer students who perform well at the community college tend to perform well when they transfer in all areas except for business and STEM.
- Community college students who transfer to *selective four-year schools* perform as well as – or even better than – their peers who come directly from high school.
- Transfer students who transfer into fine arts, humanities, and social sciences experience “transfer ecstasy.” Overall, when transfer students persist

What is Transfer Shock? First-semester transfer students are **overwhelmed** with the pace of the four-year college life, are **stymied and confused** by unexpected bureaucratic hurdles, and feel varying levels of **alienation and isolation** when the norms, values, and expectations of the new institution are so different. This usually results in a **slight to significant GPA drop** in the first semester.

Shocking Factors for Transfer Students

- Larger campus with large class sizes
- Increased credit hour expectations (from 12 to 15)
- Unforgiving first semester schedules
- New procedures and advising systems
- Confusing institutional policies
- Faculty more focused on research than on student development
- Transfer credits that don't or won't transfer
- Higher tuition costs
- Limited/exhausted financial ability
- Feeling anonymous or “like a freshman.”
- From the nurturing of a community college environment to the pressured independence of a four-year institution.
- Colleges and universities holding outdated assumptions of the needs of transfer students.
- Students' “over-” and “under-” estimating of their own abilities to navigate the high-pressure environment.
- Transfer credit and tuition surprises.
- Drastic changes in demographics or sharp regional differences.

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Mentoring Transfer Students

Helping Students Avoid Transfer Shock

Preparing

- Exploration
- Self-Assessment
- Discovery

Closing

- Evaluation
- Vision
- Completion

Support, Challenge, & Vision

Negotiating

- Details
- Definitions
- Accountability

Enabling

- Learning
- Feedback
- Growth

Get Them Involved (Strategically)

Connect Them with Faculty

Keep Them Major and Career Focused

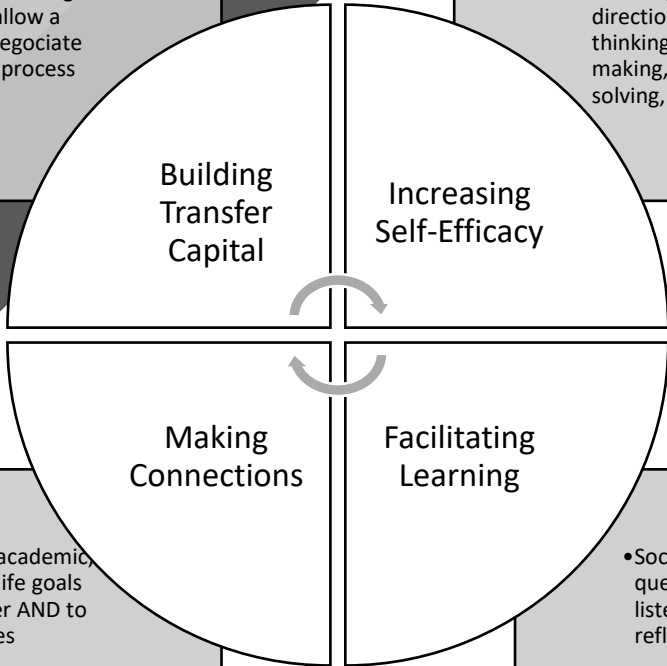
Encourage Self-Care

Connect Them with Your Other Transfer Students

Navigate Them Through Campus Resources

• Tools and knowledge that would allow a student to negotiate the transfer process

• Focusing on self-direction, critical-thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, and coping



• Connecting academic, career, and life goals to each other AND to major choices

• Socratic questioning, listening, reflecting

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