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 polices
- 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- Colleges and universities holding outdated assumptions of the needs of transfer students.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

1. Get Them Involved (Strategically)
2. Connect Them with Faculty
3. Keep Them Major and Career Focused
4. Encourage Self-Care
5. Connect Them with Your Other Transfer Students

Negotiating
- Details
- Definitions
- Accountability

Support, Challenge, & Vision

Enabling
- Learning
- Feedback
- Growth

Building Transfer Capital

Increasing Self-Efficacy

Making Connections

Facilitating Learning

Preparation
- Exploration
- Self-Assessment
- Discovery

Closing
- Evaluation
- Vision
- Completion

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

Building Transfer Capital


