

Transfer and Degree Partnership Program

Student Experience

Executive Summary • Fall 2017

Charge and membership

Kate Peterson, Associate Provost for Enrollment Management and Susanna Rivera-Mills, Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Learning Innovations charged the taskforce to look at issues facing prospective and admitted transfer students and suggest recommendations to address these issues.

Specifically:

- Recommend ways to close communication gaps for transfer students
- Suggest ways to improve and enhance the Transfer/DPP Student Experience
- Provide a list of barriers and recommendations
- Create a current versus ideal road map

The Transfer taskforce is comprised of the following individuals

- Rick DeBellis, Associate Director of Enrollment Management
- Jeff Malone, Cross Campus Strategic Initiatives
- Erin Mulvey, Transfer Transitions
- Erin Rau, Associate Director for Admissions
- Jane Reynolds, Director of Enrollment Services, OSU Cascades

The Transfer taskforce met five times over the course of fall term 2017 to discuss issues, develop a plan for gaining input from the campus community and develop the following report.

Methods

Representatives of the Transfer/DPP Student Taskforce met with partners across Corvallis, Cascades, and Extended campus to gather insight into current student experiences. Listening sessions were held with representatives from undergraduate colleges (Advising and Associate Deans), Admissions, Business Affairs, Enrollment Management, Financial Aid, New Student Family & Programs Outreach, Office of the Registrar, OSU Open Campus, Student Accounts as well as the OSU/LBCC Degree Partnership workgroup. Questions surrounding what is currently being done for transfer/DPP students, what is not currently being done, and an opportunity for colleagues to offer suggestions on what they would like to see implemented were discussed. Conversations covered both prospective and matriculated student experiences.

Additional conversations with smaller subsets of these campus partners further enhanced and clarified suggestions for impact. Matriculated transfer student voices were taken into consideration through conversations within transitional curricula (UEXP 399: *Transfer Transitions* and BA 280: *Business Insights* classes) and through the Transfer Student Living Room.

Barriers for transfer student success were identified and outlined within the Current Experience map, with solutions summarized and mapped onto the Ideal Experience Map. Next Steps & Recommendations outlines the top 5 suggestions for impact.

Current Experience



In order to understand the ideal experience we want Transfer and DPP students to go through, we attempted to capture elements of their current process. Considering that both Transfer and DPP students usually do not share a common path, and that each population of students has many individualized nuances, we were able to identify some commonalities across both. In addition to the individualization of their experience, it was easy to see that there are many unknowns that students encounter throughout their entire experience into and through OSU.

Thinking of Transferring to OSU

- Inconsistent access to university faculty and staff.
 - Availability to meet with prospective student varies across Colleges.
 - Most expressed willingness, but highlighted capacity challenges.

Apply to OSU

- Process can be complicated by submission and evaluation of transfer record.

Attend START

- Non-DPP Transfer student: Attends START meets with advisor and enrolls in classes.
- DPP Transfer student: Pays Advanced Tuition Deposit (ATD), may attend START. If they do not attend initial START, many may repay ATD prior to signing up for another START session.

Enroll and attend classes

- In conversations, it became clear that following application and START/enrollment, this population ceases to be viewed as a distinct subpopulation.

Progress through to Graduation

- Anecdotally, this population seems at elevated risk of running out of financial aid eligibility prior to degree completion.

Barriers to Transfer and DPP Student Success and Experience at OSU

The TR Taskforce collated topics and ordered responses based on frequency *and* perceived magnitude of impact expressed by collective campus partners.

- Pre-enrollment access to major advising, MyDegrees, Admissions, and Finances
- Delayed articulations of transfer credits
- Consistency and transparency during prospective student phase
- Transfer status only available through admit type
 - Hinders addressing unique needs
 - Lack of access to available data and reporting
- Finances: Awareness of cost, and remaining financial aid eligibility
- Navigation: Understanding culture and physical campus locations, and how to utilize various technology specific to OSU
- Transfer shock and adjusted expectations
 - Experienced as a lack of belonging and/or difficulty integrating into the new community
 - Transfer shock can be caused by barriers listed here, and is seen as “...problem of adjustment which actually affects their academic effectiveness during the semester just after transfer.” (Thurmond, 2007)
- Current campus transitions framework heavily first-year focused
- Under-engagement with High Impact Practices (HIP)

Ideal Experience Map



1 Begin thinking of Transferring to OSU

Increase website usability:

- Easy to identify majors and degree requirements
- Access as prospective student to OSU's degree audit system (MyDegrees) to understand how credits could transfer and fulfill degree requirements
 - Chatbot "Ask Admissions" availability to seek further clarity on self-evaluation of transfer credits
 - Finance Worksheet to determine cost of attendance based on self-evaluation
- Video guide to transferring to OSU
- Readily available contact information
 - Academic advisors, Admissions, Financial Aid, and Scholarships

Increase interaction with university faculty and staff:

- Accurate, consistent, and available Transfer Guides
- Access to major-specific academic advisors prior to admission to OSU

2 Apply to OSU

Transfer admission application alignment with financial considerations

- Application timeline matches Financial Aid and Scholarship deadlines to award maximum funding opportunities

Post-Admission Communication Plan ("OSU 101")

- Overview of physical campus with important office locations
- Outlines OSU expectations
- Identifies engagement opportunities for students to form their community of support

Auto-articulations for transcripts

- Develop and implement of a system to import, index, and articulate transcripts into OSU information systems
- Provide timely reports prospective and matriculated transfer and DPP students of how course work is applied.

3 Attend START and enroll in classes

Focus of START is connection with:

- Advisors, College/Major, and the larger OSU Community to create sense of belonging on campus.

Post-START Canvas studio site

- Introduction to OSU's learning management system to provide access to materials presented at START

4 Attend classes

Development of transitional curricula:

- Curriculum designed within first term enrolled at OSU to assist assimilation into OSU and/or discipline

Focused Engagement

- Intentional outreach to increase transfer student participation in High Impact Practices (HIP)
- Required academic advising appointment during first term enrolled at OSU

5 Progress through to Graduation

Finish Line Communication Plan

- Timely outreach to inform and remind students on Academic Regulation requirements, Graduation information, and how to apply for Transfer Completion Scholarships

Next Steps & Recommendations

While many solutions and suggestions for impact were identified throughout this process and can be seen in the Ideal Experience Map, the Transfer and DPP Student Taskforce suggests:

1. Adopt prospective-facing DegreeWorks (MyDegrees).

The most common barrier that was identified across campus was the inability to provide prospective students an understanding of how their credits transfer into OSU and complete degree requirements. By providing a prospective-facing DegreeWorks Transfer Equivalence Self-Service (TESS), we enable students the ability to preliminarily evaluate how their credits transfer and complete intended degree requirements. Through this process, we also suggest implementing a Chatbot “Ask Admissions” to allow for next-level clarity or further understanding of TESS self-evaluations. Washburn University’s Transfer Equivalency Self-Service is a great example of how we would recommend OSU to format and offer this service to prospective students*.

2. Increase capacity (FTE) to support transfer students from prospective status through to graduation.

An increase in capacity (FTE) ideally will allow OSU to implement various solutions for impact, including but not limited to: targeted recruitment and engagement for prospective students; accurate, consistent, and available Transfer Guides; Canvas studio site post-START to engage students between attending START and term beginning; discipline-based transition curriculum to support students through matriculation into OSU; enforced check-in during first term enrolled in courses verify successful assimilation into and navigation of OSU; and coordination of a Finish Line Communication Plan to inform and remind students of Academic Regulation requirements as they near graduation.

3. Timely articulations.

Support for development and implementation of a system to import, index, and articulate transcripts into OSU information systems. This automatic and instantaneous process would provide timely reports to both prospective and matriculated transfer and DPP students of how course work is applied to OSU requirements.

4. Align transfer application deadlines to maximize funding opportunities.

Adjust deadlines for transfer applications to increase opportunity for students to obtain maximum federal and university funding. Additionally, provide allotted amount of funding specific for Transfer Completion Scholarships – awarding students funding that are nearing graduation but have run out of funding opportunities.

5. Increase awareness and access to transfer and DPP specific data.

One of the challenges of attaining transfer or degree partnership data is knowing that you have the correct information. Many times Transfer/DPP data is not called out or specifically recognized by the institution level or by college. Transfers students are tracked currently by application type but many times the ability to retrieve data about transfer or DPP students can be lost because of the ability to identify these attributes. Students may also fall into more than one category. First Year/First year DPP, Transfer/Transfer DPP, Post-Bac/Post Bac-DPP. Students can also add DPP at any point so students may change classification/attributes beyond the admission classification

Because DPP data is a challenge to access, many times individuals rely on anecdotal data which is much easier to attain. We would recommend that institutional and college data be made more available and identifiable for the categories of Transfer and DPP in the way that traditional first year data is viewed. Institutional Reports should include transfer data and impacts of the DPP program on a regular and consistent basis.

* Washburn University’s Transfer Equivalency Self-Service: <https://degapp-prod.washburn.edu:8444/#/>

Thurmond, K.C. (2007). Transfer Shock: Why is a Term Forty Years Old Still Relevant? Retrieved from *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources*: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Dealing-with-transfer-shock.aspx>