

UMBC Transfer Seminars: The Future of Transfer Student Success

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Today's Session

- Setting the Context
 - Transfer Students Nationally
 - Transfer Students at UMBC
- Transfer Student Seminar at UMBC
 - History
 - Successes
 - Challenges
 - Future
- Questions to Ponder

Getting to Know the Audience

- Public vs. Private Institution
- Stages of Transfer Seminars
- Top 3 Words about Transfers that come to mind



Session Terminology



- Transfer Seminar (TRS)
- Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UGC)
- First Year Experience (FYE) – includes freshman and transfer year

UMBC Fast Facts

- Mid-sized, public research university
- Between two large urban centers – Baltimore, MD and Washington, DC
- More than one third of total enrollment composed of minority (37%) and foreign (6%) students
- Approx. 12,000 students: 9,500 undergraduates
- More than 96 countries represented
- Undergraduate population:
 - 18% Asian
 - 15% African American
 - 4% Hispanic and Native American

Transfer Student Capital

“The aggregate of our synthesis of the forms of capital guides our understanding that Cultural and Social capital are not finitely possessed by some and not by others. Namely, we aim to draw attention away from deficit models of thought surrounding transfer students and focus on the rich forms of capital on which they might draw upon to successfully navigate the community college pathway to a baccalaureate degree. We see that forms of capital are broad ranging and serve to facilitate action...” (Laanan, F.S. & Hernandez, I, 2011)



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Laanan, F.S. & Hernandez, I. (12 September, 2011). Transfer student capital: Agency, knowledge and action along the community college pathway [PowerPoint slide 15].

Retrieved from

<http://transferinstitute.unt.edu/content/creating-pathways-stem-transfer-student-success->

2011



Transfer Students in Higher Education

Range of MYTHS about transfer students

- follow the same path to college and university.
- will not attend orientation.
- do not wish to be involved on campus, or live with other students.
- are academically inferior, lacking goals and aspirations.
- started at a community college due to grades, financial situation or immaturity.
- are of older, non-traditional age.
- are from the U.S. (Jacobs, 2011).



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Jacobs, B. (2011, September). The college transfer student in America [PowerPoint presentation]. National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students, 2011 Conference. Retrieved from <http://transferinstitute.unt.edu/content/creating-pathways-stem-transfer-student-success-2011>



Institutional Responsibilities

- Recognize the **heterogeneity** of the transfer student population
- create a **“transfer-going culture”**
- engage in **early, consistent and pro-active** advising
- develop a **network of support** for students
- use **technology to enhance** rather than replace face-to-face interactions
- look at **multiple factors** for transfer success
- build **strong partnerships** between 2 and 4 year institutions



Transfer Population at UMBC

- Transfer students account for about 50% of new UMBC students
- Most transfer students are from two -year institutions in Maryland
 - Four primary feeders: Anne Arundel Community College, Howard Community College, Community College of Greater Baltimore, and Montgomery College



Putting TRS in UMBC Context

- In 2007, the Chancellor of the USM convened a conference including all USM colleges and universities with a focus on "Closing the Achievement Gap"
- Transfer students were identified as the least likely to graduate within six years
- Within that group, African American transfer students have a six year graduation rate 10 percentage points lower than White transfer students

UMBC Context: Achievement Gap

- Achievement gap between transfer and freshman UMBC students as identified by the six-year graduation rate (2008)
 - Transfer students (53%); Freshman students (59%)
- African American transfer students had a six year graduation rate 13 percentage points lower than did White transfer students (48% vs. 61%)
- African American male transfer students had a six-year graduation rate of 44% as compared to 61% for White male transfer students

Engagement Matters: The Role of First-year Experiences

For *new freshmen*, first semester engagement in an FYE is positively related to retention—semester, one-year and two-year—after controlling for other factors.

For *new transfer students*, first semester engagement in an FYE is positively related to semester retention, after controlling for other factors.¹

¹ Given that few new transfer students participate in an FYE, there is limited statistical power in modeling the longer term impact of FYE engagement on retention.



Developing the Transfer Student Seminar at UMBC

- Transfer students have always been invited to participate in a First-Year Experience
- Feedback from our Introduction to an Honors University, one-credit “success” seminar, indicated a need for a transfer-specific course
- Transfer students experience a very different type of transition than that of our first-year students
- Piloted two sections and assessed outcomes
- Presented a transition course to the UG Council at the 300-level but it was denied

TRS Revamped

- Considered feedback from UGC, that of our students, and the goals outlined in our strategic planning documents, and the Achievement Gap Report
- Looked at our OIR data
- Revamped the course and changed the number (TRS 201)
- Course approved with a change in format that increased the academic content
- Core transition components also focused on academic issues
- Set up as a co-requisite with another academic course

Transfer Student Seminars: What are they?

- TRS 201 is a one or two credit seminar designed to aid in the transition and to integrate students into their major and the University
- They are linked to courses in the major typically taken by transfers in their first semester/year
- 60% of the content is related to lecture material and 40% focuses on advising (degree completion), internships and careers, and meeting faculty in the major. Through collaborative discussions with Departments two models have evolved
 - Major specific
 - Interdisciplinary-Often connected to a course that meets a needed general education requirement

Successes

- Expansion
 - FY 2012 – 5 TRS courses serving 44 students
 - Beginning of FY 2013 (fall 2012 semester)
 - 7 TRS courses serving 68 students
- Growth reported by students (fall, 2011, N=23):
 - Knowledge of career exploration, academic assistance resources, and leading a study group.
 - Skill in structuring a research paper, searching academic sources, citation, annotated bibliography

Successes

95% of students:

- believe the TRS added to their ability to handle academic responsibilities
- recommend the TRS for all new transfer students entering UMBC



Students specify how the TRS has helped them to be successful

- *“...ability to write better and more knowledge of resources available”*
- *“...learning what I need to prioritize to be successful”*
- *“...learned study tactics ”*
- *“I’m much more comfortable asking professors for help if needed.”*
- [TRS] *“...should be 2 days instead of one”*



Challenges

- Enrollment:
 - Some departments “requiring” and others leaving it voluntary
 - Convincing students to add an additional credit
- Funding:
 - One-time money vs. base funding



Challenges

- Staffing:
 - Finding someone with specialized skills to teach
 - Balancing staffing needs with need of IHU courses
 - Peer Mentor Availability
- Consistency



Transfer Student Peers

- Work with UMBC staff and faculty to create a supportive, inclusive environment for new transfer students
- Maintain 2 consistent hours of time per week when available to students in the Transfer Seminar course
- Function as a positive role model at all times, including activities that occur on University property and in the local community
- Prepare and deliver course content in an effective manner as asked by the instructor

Next Steps: Transfer Seminars at the Community College



- Developing a two-part Transfer Seminar
- Part one to be offered at community college
- Part of a larger Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grant

Questions we are still thinking about

- How do we meet the specific needs of transfer students without making them feel marginalized?
- How do we best assess TRS courses?
- How do we better assess the 60% content?
- How do we ensure quality experiences, teaching quality, and congruent outcomes in a complex model?

Questions or Further Information

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