Busting the Myth: Transfer Students Don’t Need a FYE
Who We Are

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**Goals**

- Better understand the characteristics and needs of transfer students
- Learn how one university is positively influencing the transfer experience
- Learn a model for a transfer transition strategies course
- Discuss lessons learned and network with others who have a common interest in strengthening the transfer experience
“Transfer students must learn to navigate barriers most college students experience that make degree persistence and completing a challenge at least twice, once at their first institution and again when they transfer (Hatton, Homer, Park, 2009).”
Barriers to Transfers

- The admissions process
- Evaluation of transfer credits-time to degree
- Academic preparedness
- Culture change/transfer shock
- Connecting with the campus community
- Financial issues
Common Stereotypes/Assumptions

- Less qualified for university work and more likely to drop-out
- Non-traditional students
- Know more than they know because they have been in college
- Do not need first year transitional assistance
Community College: A Popular On-Ramp to Higher Education

More than one-third of all entering U.S. college students attend community college.

Community Colleges at a Glance:

- ~1,000 Public 2-Year Colleges
- 5,700,000 Total Fall Student Enrollment
- $3,156 Average Tuition

Proportion of total fall enrollment of entering, degree-seeking students by destination, 3-year average (2014-16)^3

American Talent Initiative (ATI), 2019
VT’s Transfer Students
Summer/Fall 2019

- Applied: 2970
- Offered: 1806
- Enrolled (as of 6/4): 1243
- Offered Rate %: 61%
- Yield %: 69%
- Census (10/15): 1116
Who are our transfer students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfer Students: Age Distribution</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Younger than 17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 to 19 years old</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>23.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 25 years old</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 30 years old</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older than 30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshmen (0-29 credits)</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore (30-59 credits)</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior (60-89 credits)</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Programmatic Goals for VT Transfer Students

CONNECT with other transfer students

CULTIVATE a sense of community and support

CREATE enthusiasm and involvement in campus life
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCES

FYE@VT
It Takes a Village to Raise a Child

African Proverb
FYE@VT . . .

. . . is the foundational course on the journey of a first-year student. It is a “value added” component of their Virginia Tech education.
The courses are anchored by four foundational cornerstones:

**Academic Transition** - introduce the discipline, the practice of learning from experience, and the resources for successful academic transition to Virginia Tech.

**Holistic Education** - integrate experiences inside and outside of the classroom for a meaningful, holistic student experience.

**Integrity** - develop academic and personal integrity.

**Community** - foster a connection to the discipline and the Virginia Tech community.
These five FYE@VT essential practices demonstrate meaningful integration of practice to support a VT-shaped learning experience.
First-Year Experiences at Virginia Tech

5363 freshmen & 445 transfers
102 faculty & 302 peer mentors

34 academic units

Courses that use research-based learning to foster the engagement and the development of students.

24 collaborators

Collaborators, partners, and programs within the Community of Practice who help support FYE and incoming students.
Total Transfers 1033, transfers in FYE@VT 445, percentage 43.1%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colleges</th>
<th>No. of Student</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture &amp; Life Sciences</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>13.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture &amp; Urban Studies</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business (Pamplin)</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>18.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>29.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterCollege</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts &amp; Human Sciences</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>18.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources &amp; Environment</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>13.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1033</strong></td>
<td><strong>43.1%</strong></td>
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</table>
Why transfer FYEs?

“STREAMLINING AND CLARIFYING THE PATHWAY TO A BACHELOR’S DEGREE can go a long way toward helping students transfer and graduate. To successfully transfer and obtain a bachelor’s degree, however, students often need more than a clear map. They need guidance—to help decide which pathway to follow, to help identify resources and plan how to use them, to navigate the inevitable obstacles they encounter along the way, and, in many cases, to reassure them that they really are capable of succeeding (The Transfer Playbook).”
UNIV 2984

UNLEASHING YOUR HOKIE POTENTIAL

Who am I?
Where am I going?
What are my goals?

1 credit course; various offerings

transitional class for all new transfer students
**Implementation Of the Course**

Spring 2019 pilot section:
- 10 students: (1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} semester transfers)

Fall 2019 3 sections:
- 48 enrolled-all brand new to VT

Spring 2020 1 section:
- 8 enrolled: (1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} semester transfers)
How are students aware of this course?

- Campus partners: advertised through admission packets
- Meetings with prospective transfer students
- Welcome email at time of matriculation
- Postcards at orientation
- College advisors
- Transfer.advising.vt.edu
Students learn to:
• identify their strengths,
• be alert to opportunities,
• take measured risks,
• set goals and think strategically, and
• practice the art of reflection and renewal.

*These skills will help students better align their core identity with their professional and personal goals, especially in the context of their remaining time at Virginia Tech.*
What is distinctive about this course?

- Holistic developmental course that emphasizes self-awareness through assessment and reflection
- Uses group coaching techniques
- Creates a safe space for students to build and engage in a transfer student community
- Transitional elements of a FYE with an emphasis on transfer students’ transitional needs
Benefits of Unleash Your HokiePotential

- Helping students address their individual transfer barriers
- Early interventions
- Developing relationships with peers and connecting transfer students with campus resources and the campus community
- Creating academic plans early to map out degree requirements and EL
- Identifying major fit and career goals
What We Have Learned

- Length of class and scheduling the class sections to meet the demand of our student
- Timing of the retreat in the semester
- Quality vs. quantity at the retreat - SOCIAL TIME
- More emphasis on self, academic, and career exploration
- Students do not want another text book
- Students take this class to meet other transfer students
Evaluation highlights . . .

- 93% of students reported that after taking this course, they can recognize and pursue opportunities that will help them reach their goals.

- After taking this course, 88% of students said they have developed a deep sense of connection with people who share similar passions or interests.

- 93% of students reported that after taking this course, they can succeed at things they put their mind to.

- After taking this course, 87% of students said that they have gained a deeper understanding of their strengths.

- 88% of students reported that they are better able to identify and overcome obstacles, after taking this course.
What they said . . .

- “Very happy I took this course. The information about resources at VT was very helpful. The professor and the TAs were a blessing.”

- “It felt like a very welcoming class. After knowing a lot of my peers, I can say that VT is my second home.”

- “Meeting other people from different sections and getting to know the people in my class better. It is really helpful to know other transfer students who are going through the same thing.”

- “Everyone has a unique background but usually share a common trait or interest that can unite us together. Instead of alienating ourselves, being unafraid to put yourself out there with new people can lead to something unexpectedly good. We can learn so much from each other and when we communicate.”
Future Direction of Unleash Your HokiePotential

- Reducing content at the retreat
- Fewer guest speakers
- Re-designing curriculum to include more personal, academic, and career self-assessments from Life Design Catalyst
- Integrating in-class activities to debrief self-assessment results
- Heavier emphasis on group coaching/discussions with TAs and peers
- Increase number of sections for Fall 2020


Thank you!
Questions? Feedback? Conversations?

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