Reconceptualizing the “First-Year Experience” to include Campus Change and Transfer Students

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Session’s Goals

Understand campus change and transfer students’ experiences at OSU-Columbus.

Identify challenges campus change and transfer students experience.

Reflect on the ways we can support campus change and transfer students in our own roles on campus.
Community colleges provide a key point of access to postsecondary education for low-income and racially minoritized students (Jenkins & Fink, 2016; Xu, Jaggars, Fletcher, & Fink, 2018).
When students enroll in a new institution, they face social and logistical challenges that may affect their educational attainment (Ortagus & Hu, 2019; Wyner, Deane, Jenkins, & Fink, 2018).
Students at a new campus need support, programs, mentors, and initiatives to help them acclimate into a new environment (Walker & Okpala, 2017).
Table 1. Number of campus change and transfer students enrolling into OSU-Columbus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Campus Change</th>
<th>Transfer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn 2019</td>
<td>1,372</td>
<td>2,415</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autumn 2018</td>
<td>1,422</td>
<td>2,388</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autumn 2017</td>
<td>1,348</td>
<td>2,634</td>
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What types of programs and initiatives are you aware of that are available for campus change and transfer students’ first-year experience at OSU-Columbus?
OSAS Research and Program Assessment

Joyce Foundation Project
Joyce Foundation Project

Three studies in connection with one another on campus change and transfer students at OSU:

- GPA change study
- Credit articulation study
- Student perspective study
The student perspective study, specifically, focuses on the campus change and transfer process from the experiences of students who have already changed/transfered or are considering changing/transferring.

- What are current barriers or challenges students are facing?
- How do students perceive the support services they receive?
- What resources do students perceive they need to be successful?
Data Collection

- One-on-one, semi-structured interviews

- Interviews with students who:
  - Campus changed or transferred
  - Will potentially change or transfer
  - Were accepted to change or transfer but did not enroll
Data Collection

- Interview goal: 80 student interviews
- Interviews conducted thus far: 20 student interviews
What We’ve Heard So Far…

Support with campus change/transfer preparation and process
Campus Change/Transfer Preparation and Process

- Different levels of understanding on transfer/change requirements and the application process
- Varied support for the preparation and application process
  - Academic advisors, family members, and/or friends
- Use of online tools such as OSU website, Reddit, or Transferology to better understand the application process
“There were 5 or 6 classes that didn’t count to graduate [and receive Associate’s degree]… I had a delay in graduating [and transferring]… I had to take an extra six classes.”

On preparing and understanding degree pathways
On receiving support from faculty and staff during the transfer process

“I received little to none… It was definitely me going in there to get stuff done.”
What We’ve Heard So Far…

Transitioning into Campus
Transitioning into campus

- Feeling like a “glorified freshman”
- Communication challenges
- Non-academic logistics
Transitioning into campus

- Feeling “lost” on a bigger campus
- Cost of attendance outside of tuition and fees
- Balancing work, school, and family
“I wish it was like a set of certain set of resources they make known to transfer students...like how to use the OSU app...or how to use the bus...the dining options you can get on campus...how to access clubs and gyms.”
Practical Implications

- Adjusting language in e-mails, flyers, and events to include campus change/transfer students in opportunities for first-year students
- Explaining Carmen as a university tool and providing steps on how to use it at the beginning of each semester
Practical Implications

- Creating a campus change/transfer student organization
- Posting signs at the bus stops with directions on how to use the COTA/school bus systems
- Providing additional logistical information beyond a one-time orientation
When thinking about your position on campus...

How can you support campus change and transfer students throughout their first-year experience transition into campus?

- With your individual role?
- Within your department?
- Across departments?
- Within your classroom?
Thank You!

Any questions?

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References


