

Fostering Pedagogies that Engage and Support Transfer Students

This group began in 2021 as an interdisciplinary Faculty Learning Community (FLC) seeking to explore the pedagogical practices and implications of framing transfer as a social justice and equity issue in higher education. Though transfer issues are often considered to be the domain of admissions, advising or student affairs, we reflected on and analyzed our roles and responsibilities as instructors to engage and support transfer students in the classroom. Recognizing the heterogeneity of transfer students, we considered how we could best leverage their strengths and support their areas of growth. During our pilot year, we read selected transfer articles, and collected survey data from students in our classes about those faculty level practices that fostered transfer student inclusion and self-efficacy in our classrooms. We hope to further this exploration by planning and executing scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) projects that can contribute to the gap in literature about how high impact practices in the classroom shape the ways in which transfer students engage as members of the scholarly community (and under what circumstances those practices are most impactful). Our preliminary list of practices to explore more deeply are:

- Building community and connection both inside and outside the classroom are essential practices for creating a sense of inclusion/belonging for all students, but particularly for transfer students.
- Community building within the classroom may benefit transfer students even more since they tend to be on campus for less time than direct entry students and academic spaces may be their key touch point with the campus.
- Campus and classroom spaces can work together to facilitate transfer belonging/success.
- Acknowledging transfer as a common route to the university normalizes and validates the experience.
- Connecting new transfer students to previous transfer cohorts and to key faculty/staff advocates on campus may help students to broaden options and reevaluate goals, including graduate school, that they had not previously considered as attainable.
- Using language and terminology related to community colleges, transfer and transfer students in ways that promote productive engagement and connection to the campus community can contribute to the sense of inclusivity. [Examples of disconnecting words include: feeder school (limiting role of community college), transfer shock/coma (foregrounds negative/pathological response), swirling (assumes lack of purpose for students who have multiple enrollment histories), native students vs transfer students (connotes levels of belonging)]

As we continue into our second year, we will function as a Faculty Working Group under the auspices of the Center for Social Science Scholarship.

2021 FLC

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