

Transferring our attention to transfer students

Just one of many changes in the United States higher education system, transfer rates between colleges and universities have increased so that as of 2015, over one-third of first-time college students transfer (Shapiro *et al.*, 2015). The act of transferring between schools has become normalized, accepted, and even encouraged as a viable college path. Some states, such as North Carolina, are even considering requiring community college for less-prepared high school students prior to admission to a four-year institution (Brown, 2016).

Yet, while students are transferring between colleges more than ever, completion of students' academic goals is still not where it should be:

Over 80 per cent of community college students intend to earn at least a bachelor's degree. However, only about a quarter end up transferring [...]. Only 17 per cent complete a bachelor's degree. (Jenkins and Fink, 2015)

The onus is on our institutions of higher education to both further increase the transfer rate (supporting the success of all students aspiring to a bachelor's degree) and also to increase the graduate rate of those students who do transfer.

Organizations such as the Community College Research Center, National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students, and National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition are supporting exciting new research and communication between higher educational professionals about transfer success. It will take a village for every college or university to improve transfer and graduate rates. Numerous departments, such as transition and orientation programs, advising, admissions, Dean of Students' offices, and more need to collaborate to form holistic, unified solutions. This includes academic libraries.

In this issue, there are three literature reviews ("Adult Transitional Theory and Transfer Shock in Higher Education", "International Students and Information Literacy", and "Information Literacy Needs of Community College Students in Transition") that provide the reader with a solid foundational awareness of transfer issues, both for transfer students in general and for specific transfer populations.

"Are Transfer Students Lagging Behind in Information Literacy?" examines the information literacy skills of both transfer and native students, providing insight into how these different populations compare. Meanwhile, "Understanding the Transfer Student Experience Using Design Thinking" provides a possible framework for assessing the needs of transfers at your particular institution.

One possible technological tool for addressing the information literacy needs of transfer students is presented in "Agoge: An Information Literacy Game for Transfer Students", whereas both "A Boutique Personal Librarian Program for Transfer Students" and "Personal Librarian Program for Transfer Students" leverage human resource potential to serve transfers.

All eight of these articles represent in-depth research in and creative responses to transfer student information literacy issues. The next issue of *Reference Services Review* (RSR), Volume 45 Issue 3, will be a continuation of this same theme, with even more



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References

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- Jenkins, D. and Fink, J. (2015), "What we know about transfer", Community College Research Center, available at: <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/what-we-know-about-transfer.html> (accessed 17 March 2017).
- Shapiro, D., Dundar, A., Wakhungu, P.K., Yuan, X. and Harrell, A. (2015), *Transfer and Mobility: A National View of Student Movement in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2008 Cohort (Signature Report No. 9)*, National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, Herndon, VA, available at: <http://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport9> (accessed 17 March 2017).

Further reading

- Clearinghouse Research Center (2017), available at: <http://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport9> (accessed 17 March 2017).
- Community College Research Center (2017), available at: <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu>
- National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students (2017), available at: <https://transferinstitute.org>
- National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (2017), available at: www.sc.edu/fye