Transfer Student Experience: New School Who Dis?

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Northwestern University
June 24, 2020
RESEARCH QUESTION

How are transfer students' transition to a private highly selective institution in Illinois facilitated?

And how do they experience belonging – academically and socially – at their receiving institution?
RATIONALE

30% of undergraduates will transfer at least once in a 6-year period.

Little is known about the experiences of lateral transfer students.

Increasing number of students transferring to private institutions.

TERMS

North Lake University (NLU): pseudonym for the institution of study.

Lateral Transfer: student who goes from one 4-year institution to another 4-year institution.
TRANSFER STUDENT ENROLLMENT DATA
FALL 2014-2019

2014-2015: 55
2015-2016: 111
2016-2017: 104
2017-2018: 150
2018-2019: 159
2019-2020: 210
WHAT MAKES THE TRANSFER STUDENT EXPERIENCE?

**Governing Bodies**
- Federal Government
- State Government
- Individual Institutions

**Social Frameworks**
- Nancy Schlossberg
- Jon Weidman
SCHLOSSBERG’S TRANSITION THEORY

TRANSITION
Event or nonevent resulting in change or assumption
Change of social networks
Resulting in growth or deterioration

PERCEPTION OF THE PARTICULAR TRANSITION
Role Change: gain or loss
Affect: positive or negative
Source: internal or external
Timing: on-time or off-time
Onset: gradual or sudden
Duration: permanent, temporary, or uncertain
Degree of Stress

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRETRANSITION AND POSTTRANSITION ENVIRONMENTS
Internal Support Systems:
- Intimate relationships
- Family unit
- Network of friends
- Institutional Supports
- Physical Setting

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INDIVIDUAL
- Psychosocial Competence
- Sex (and Sex-Role Identification)
- Age (and Life Stage)
- State of Health
- Race/Ethnicity
- Socioeconomic Status
- Value Orientation
- Previous Experience with a transition of a similar nature

ADAPTATION
Movement through phases following transition: pervasiveness through reorganization
Depends on:
1) Balance of individual’s resources and deficits.
2) Differences in pre- and post-transition environments
   re perception, supports, and individual
DATA METHODOLOGIES

Artifact Analysis
- Institutional Policies
- Institutional Data
- National Data

Interviews
- Students n=5
- Administrators n=3

Ethnographic Observation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT/ OFFICE</th>
<th>POLICY NAME</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Registrar Office</td>
<td>Transfer Credit Policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Registrar Office</td>
<td>Transfer Credit After Enrolling</td>
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<td>Academics</td>
<td>Registrar Office</td>
<td>Transfer Students</td>
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<td>Academics</td>
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<td>Transfer Students</td>
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<td>Academics</td>
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<td>Transfer Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Belonging/Housing</td>
<td>Residential Life</td>
<td>Residency Requirement</td>
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<td>Social Belonging/Housing</td>
<td>Student Organizations and Activities</td>
<td>Recruiting New Members</td>
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<td>Student Organizations and Activities</td>
<td>Organizations Website Portal</td>
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<td>Student Organizations and Activities</td>
<td>Transfer Student Organization</td>
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<td>Greek Life</td>
<td>Transfer Student Organization</td>
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<td>Orientation</td>
<td>New Student and Family Programs</td>
<td>Transfer Student Checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Career Advancement</td>
<td>Transfer Student Checklist</td>
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* Generic name for the College
# STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Starting Year/Class</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Anticipated Graduation</th>
<th>Previous Institution</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Fall 2018 Sophomore</td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>School of Communication</td>
<td>Spring 2021</td>
<td>Fordham – Lincoln Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camille</td>
<td>Fall 2018 Sophomore</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>College of Arts and Science</td>
<td>Spring 2021</td>
<td>University of IL – Urbana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Fall 2018 Sophomore</td>
<td>Learning &amp; Organizational Change</td>
<td>School of Education and Social Policy</td>
<td>Winter 2020</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin – Madison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue</td>
<td>Fall 2018 Sophomore</td>
<td>Psychology &amp; Biology</td>
<td>College of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>Spring 2021</td>
<td>Northeastern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Fall 2017 Sophomore</td>
<td>Industrial Engineering</td>
<td>College of Engineering</td>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>University of Texas – Austin</td>
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## ADMINISTRATOR DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th># of Years at North Lake University</th>
<th>Department</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>Advising – College of Arts and Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sean</td>
<td>2.5 years</td>
<td>Alumni Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>18.5 years</td>
<td>Office of the Registrar</td>
</tr>
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</table>
KEY FINDINGS

ADVISOR AVAILABILITY

HOUSING & COMMUNITY
I CAN TALK WITH MY ACADEMIC ADVISOR(S) WHEN I NEED TO

Transfer Students
- Strongly Disagree: 10.9%
- Disagree: 37.7%
- Agree: 45.7%
- Strongly Agree: 5.8%

Non-Transfer Students
- Strongly Disagree: 7.6%
- Disagree: 39.4%
- Agree: 51.0%
- Strongly Agree: 2.0%
“There is one more barrier that’s the **number of transfer students** that we have ... the **ethos here [is] making one on one contact with students**. And the **transfer students take more contact hours**, transfer students need more support at least through that first quarter if not through the whole first year ... **how do we provide that kind of support?** While still making students feel like **they belong and still helping students**, students feel well supported and seen and heard and known and get them into our office and all of that ... **we try and make that a barrier that students don't experience, but some are going to find that”** – Emily (Advisor)
HOUSING SATISFACTION

Transfer Students
- Very Dissatisfied: 14.0%
- Generally Dissatisfied: 23.8%
- Generally Satisfied: 42.7%
- Very Satisfied: 19.6%

Non-Transfer Students
- Very Dissatisfied: 6.9%
- Generally Dissatisfied: 20.8%
- Generally Satisfied: 42.5%
- Very Satisfied: 29.8%
HOUSING SATISFACTION

“When I came in my community was built, and I never felt like I was lacking friends, because I had a really strong like residential community, right, or whereas [Resident Hall 2] has like no sense of community, typically just like you know juniors or seniors and they just don't care about being involved” – Steve (Senior R.A)

“I guess it would be well dorm life I guess [...] more, more mature, in terms of social community like not like the maturity of the people but like there was a community that was well formed” – Brandon (First-year)
CONCLUSION

Decentralization helps and hinders the transfer student experience

Transfer students are not a homogenous group
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Hire more advisors in the undergraduate colleges with the most transfer students
- Integrate more staff & faculty in residential halls to increase transfer student touch-points with NLU personnel
LIMITATIONS

Number of participants interviewed

Diversity of participants

COVID-19

Access to participants
FUTURE RESEARCH

• How does the **selectivity** of an institution influence the **credit articulation** process?

• Deeper investigation of **housing** and the **transfer student** experience.
QUESTIONS?

Please email me
Alisha.Gomez@gmail.com


APPENDIX
NATIONAL DATA: NUMBER OF ENROLLED TRANSFER-IN STUDENTS (FALL)

Courtesy of the National Center for Education Statistics
NATIONAL DATA: ENROLLED TRANSFER STUDENTS BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE (FALL)

Thousands

- Public, 4-year or above
- Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above

Courtesy of the National Center for Education Statistics
NATIONAL DATA: TRANSFER STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION

Thousands


Great Lakes IL IN MI OH WI

153.94

Courtesy of the National Center for Education Statistics