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Stephanie Castro

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Transfer Student Success: Enrich the Lives of Students Who Transfer to a University

Stephanie Castro

California State University Monterey Bay

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Dr. Patty Whang

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Abstract

The focus of this Capstone Project is on improving the experiences of students who transfer from a community college to a university. Students need support before, during, and after they transfer to a university because transfer students make up a significant portion of the student population. Also, it is argued that a lack of support can negatively impact engagement and interest in the school. The primary stakeholder perspective chosen were first-generation transfer students, first-semester transfer students, and graduated transfer students because they have lived and gone through the process of transferring to a university. Three action options emerged from an analysis of the data and were explored to address the issue presented. Having the transfer center on the university's main campus is argued to be the most effective way to help prospective, new, and continuing transfer students learn about transfer services provided by the university.

Transfer Student Success: Enrich the Lives of Students who Transfer to a University

In high school, all my teachers and counselors wanted students to go to a four-year university right after we graduated. They took us on a few tours to different CSU campuses, we went to tour CSU Northern Ocean, and I fell in love. I loved the atmosphere and the vibe of the whole campus. Coming from an underserved community, living near the ocean seemed unattainable for someone like me, a first-generation Latina college student. My family did not have the means to send me to a four-year university, so I went to my local community college after high school. This community college was tough and had a lack of guidance for its students. In today's society, it is instilled in minds that gaining a four-year degree will get you farther in life, and it will set you up for a successful and healthy life. But society does not discuss or mention how hard college is for students, nor do they begin to discuss the struggle and the amount of effort it takes for transfer students.

As an 18-year-old, I did not know what I wanted to do in life, but I knew I was going to a community college. In my first two years of college, I went to San Joaquin Delta College (SJDC) in Stockton, California. The only knowledge I had about this school was I had to get my general education done, and then I would have the opportunity to transfer to a CSU. During my first semester, I took classes blindly and with friends because we did not know what classes to take precisely. There was no communication with any academic advisors on what classes were transferable and what classes we needed. I could not get an appointment with an advisor until several weeks within the semester. When I finally met with my academic advisor at SJDC, he made me aware that two classes I was taking were nontransferable. One of the classes was working with kindergarteners in a classroom, and that's when it clicked that I wanted to be a teacher. Within the rest of the semester, I had about three more appointments with different advisors because none of them had offered to set up a learning plan for me and rushed me out of their offices. Finally, I met with Jackie, and she was what you call a good advisor because she set me up with a learning plan to transfer me out within the next academic year. She explained to me the "golden four" classes that are non-negotiable to transfer to any CSU. Since I had failed one of the golden four classes, English, I had to take summer classes to make up credits.

My second year of community college was better than the first. My grades started to increase, and I would attend classes regularly. I was completing the correct courses and understood the systems they were using, such as Canvas and MyDelta, the portal where we

found transcripts, academic records, etc. With the support of my parents, I thrived even when there was no real help from SJDC. When I looked around at my friends with whom I took classes blindly my first semester, they were still doing so. They would take random classes and be behind in transferable credits. I tried to guide them in the right direction and advise which advisor to visit and who to avoid; some of them took my advice while others did not. Others had taken on full-time jobs and started to attend school half-time even though I knew they wanted to transfer.

As my time at SJDC was coming to an end, I still had to apply to transfer. I was completely lost on how to transfer to any school. We had a “transfer center” on-campus, and I thought they would help me with my application, but I was wrong. I told them I wanted and was ready to apply to CSU Northern Ocean, and the workers at this center told me I should apply to Sacramento State because I would “for sure” get into the school. As Sacramento State and CSU Stanislaus were feeder schools, they were the main focus, and if a student did not go there, they were left to fend for themselves. It took weeks to fill out applications when the application should have taken a few days because I was doing it alone. I could not ask for my parents for help since they also had no clue what to do, and I did not feel welcomed or wanted at the school’s center. When I finally turned it in, I was filled with anxiety and doubted that I had somehow messed up on the application. There was no reassurance from an academic advisor, any staff member, and not even my professors. Still, my parents were my biggest cheerleaders because I was the first one in my family to move away from college in my family. I ended applying at CSU Northern Ocean, CSU East Bay, and Sacramento State because of the negativity from the center, and I wanted to have a backup plan just in case I was denied at CSU Northern Ocean.

The waiting for an acceptance or denial letter was horrible, I just wanted to know if I was accepted or not. Of course, I was waiting for the results from CSU Northern Ocean since this was my first choice. I dived into my course work, I want to get good grades to boost my GPA for my final transcripts. One day during a family dinner, I got *the* email from CSU Northern Ocean. I lost my appetite because I was so nervous. I did not tell anyone that the decision was here because I wanted to look at it alone if I was denied, I did not want to disappoint my parents. But to my surprise, I got in! I was ecstatic and was so happy. In ways, I was in disbelief but felt grateful, a first-gen Latina student was going to CSU Northern Ocean, a place that seemed so

unreachable for a girl like me. Although getting into the school was amazing, the transfer process was not an enjoyable time for me.

While transitioning from SJDC to CSU Northern Ocean, it was definitely a challenge. Again, there was no guidance in all of it. When I tried to get help from SJDC, they would tell me that they did not know what CSU Northern Ocean wanted, and when I would call CSU Northern Ocean, the links were always busy for hours. The dates and deadlines were unclear, and I had almost missed a deadline for financial aid as I was confused about what papers were accepted for a dependent verification worksheet. I ended up driving to Monterey, California, three times until the right paperwork was turned in. Also, when it came down to paying tuition, I did not have a housing placement until four days before tuition was due, and my family and I were freaking out because I did not have a backup place for housing. It should have been a great and enjoyable experience during this transition, but instead, there was little communication between myself and CSU Northern Ocean.

When I finally arrived at CSU Northern Ocean I was unaware of the services, completely lost on campus, and simply overwhelmed by everything around me. My first semester was rough; the only way I survived was by “living” in the library and studying because I wanted to be in good academic standing. When I needed help, I did not know where to go, the school used a lot of acronyms, my professors would announce the CLC could help you, but I had no clue what it was, but I would ask my peers if they understood, but surprisingly the student next to me was first semester students as well. Furthermore, I was not involved in campus life and did not know how to join clubs and associations, but I wanted to get into some things. At this time, the Transfer Student Success Center was not open yet, and I did not get help from the CSU staff. Now that I am in my last semester at CSU Northern Ocean, I work at the Transfer Student Success Center as a peer mentor and am president of two clubs on campus. I often see how stressed out students are when they are transitioning into our school. They are worried about missing deadlines and not knowing what we have to offer transfer students. It is crucial that I validate these transfer students’ feelings and let them know that I understand what they are going through and pass the knowledge that I have learned throughout my time at CSU Northern Ocean. We need a better system to ease the transition for transfer students. We need to make transferring to CSU Northern Ocean more accessible for all students.

Literature Synthesis & Integration

Transfer students are people who have 60 units or more and have finished their lower division classes at a community college (Macmillan Dictionary, n.d.). Students transfer to a four-year university, but this is not the easiest thing to do. Transfer students make up about half of the CSU graduates each year (Expanding College Access, 2019). More specifically, according to the Transfer Center coordinator at CSU Northern Oceanside, Jesus Solis, he records that half of the student population at CSUNO are transfer students (2021).

Students report that CSUs are not supporting transfer students in transferring and when they get to the university (Lewis et. al., 2016). Some students do not feel comfortable within a new institution, even though they are academically a junior when they transfer; they feel like they are freshmen on campus because they know nothing about the campus and are lost. This can cause students to participate in fewer educational, enriching events, activities, and opportunities. Furthermore, it may lead to fewer interactions with professors, staff, and other students (Indiana University, 2005). With fewer interactions with professional staff, transfer students may not thrive within the school system, and students often need recommendations from staff for scholarships, internships, jobs, and much more.

Lewis et. al.,(2016) state that only 24% of transfer students graduate within four years, while 38% of transfer students graduate after six years. This is not enough transfer students graduating, finishing their degrees, and moving on to their careers. Students may get stuck within the four-year college system, take more classes, spend more money, get into more debt, or even worse, drop out of college.

Why is it an Issue?

The state of California recognizes transfer students. The Master Plan of 1960 was developed to help transfer students get their education at a community college. This plan targets all people over the age of 18 to reach for higher education. Students can take lower-division classes that are transferable to a four-year university (Legislative Analyst's, 2010). The state has recognized transfer students, yet they still have a problem transferring and completing their degrees.

Students often find themselves going through this transition alone. They end up making important decisions by themselves versus getting advice and information from an academic advisor or a staff member (Jabbar et. al., 2021). Jabbar et. al. (2021) also state that when a

transfer student runs into a problem with their application, misses a deadline, or even receives a rejection letter, it can cause a student to give up. First-generation college students tend to lose confidence through the transfer process because they do not have their parents to ask for help (Stebbleton & Soria, 2012). With no help, students can make the wrong decision and prolong their time at school. Having a support system when dealing with new things can help reduce stress and build better coping skills (Portis, n.d.). Most transfer students neither have support from their community college nor do they get help from the four-year university when transferring.

Furthermore, this issue can also hurt students academically. Moore & Shulock (2004) give us insight that transfer students earn many credits at their community college, but some of the credits do not count for the required credits at a CSU or UC. This leaves students with either not enough credits to transfer, or when they transfer, students will take classes at a four-year university that they could have taken at their community college for a lower price. Community college students often take courses that are counted towards their Associates's Degree or courses that are prerequisites for a class that they need, yet the class is not transferrable nor will the class counts towards their Bachelor's Degree (Townsend 2008). Thus, transfer students may not graduate within the two years that are expected. Studies have shown that 80% of community college transfers are placed into remediation classes, with 39% placed into pre-college level math and English classes (Bustillos & Campaign for College Opportunity, 2017).

Transfer students can also financially struggle during this process. According to the Federal Student Aid (n.d), students receive financial aid for roughly six years. More specifically, students only receive Cal Grants for four years (CSAC, 2015). But if students take a while to transfer or a while to graduate, their funding from the government is cut short. Bustillos & Campaign for College Opportunity (2017) reported that transfer students are estimated to pay around an additional 30,000 dollars to gain their bachelor's degree versus students who started at college at a four-year university.

What Should Be Done?

Four-year institutions should create an environment of belonging for transfer students. More specifically, CSUs should establish a strong community that would allow students to feel stimulated within the institution (Serban et., al., 2008). This would require giving transfer

students assistance with new systems and the college in general. Students already have experience within a college but need help getting acclimated to their transfer school (Serban et., al., 2008). This can be done through transfer centers and or transfer clubs. In 2019, CSUNO opened its transfer center to all transfer students (Solis, 2021), but it got little recognition from its president.

Something else that could be done is sending out recruiters to community colleges. Reports show that 22% of transfer students were recruited by a four-year institution representative (LaViolet et., al., 2008). Thus 22% is a low number, and if recruiters were to go out to school, this number could be much higher. Recruiters at community colleges give the opportunity for students to hear and get information about the school straight from someone who works there. As students leave their contact information with their desired school, LaViolet et., al, (2008) advises that these recruiters follow up with students to keep them informed and engaged. She also states that if a school cannot send recruiters to community colleges, then record and or host a webinar for prospective transfer students to attend. Many schools have been familiar with doing so since the last year and a half have been entirely virtual for schools.

Furthermore, at four-year institutions, the president of the school's chancellor needs to promote transfer community and culture. Moore & Shulock (2010) discuss that the chancellor's office should be more involved with the transfer community by coordinating a systemwide and systematic effort for their college. Presidents should be advocating for students and helping validate all students. They also stated that colleges should identify various barriers that are hurdles for students (Moore & Shulock, 2010). California State Universities and the Universities of California go through the same thing and with similar barriers; presidents from all over the state should get together to see how they can help students.

In dealing with financial aid, there needs to be a better way for students to receive money for school. Students should not have to pay out of pocket or get heavy loads. In the graduating class of 2019, almost 70% of students took out loans, and around 15% of students' parents took out loans for their children (Student Loan Hero, 2021). Students have to pay back loans over time with interest; the Federal Student Aid (n.d.) shows us that the interest rates can range from 4% to 7%. California can create a bill for students to get financial aid both at the community college level and at a four-year university. These grants could be specifically for transfer students

and more specifically for students to end up going to a California State University or a University of California. California needs a public agenda for its transfer students to succeed within their school systems (Moore & Shulock, 2010); this will close the gap and help all transfer students.

Conclusion

With all things considered, there are multiple ways transfer students can get better help when transferring. The College Board (n.d) believes in strengthening transfers by active leadership and commitment, recruitment and preparation, and student and academic affairs. It is essential to give transfer students the support they need to be successful at a new institution. This would help students emotionally, mentally and help them graduate faster.

Method

College students who transfer to a four-year university struggle to find their way in a new university. For this Capstone Project, the researcher has investigated different transfer students' transition from community college to California State University-Northern Oceanside¹, by reviewing what resources they were aware of and what resources they were or were not using on campus. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature, the researcher used what they have learned to formulate an action that has responded to the focus issue in a way that inspires, informs, or involves a particular audience.

Context

California State University, Northern Oceanside (CSUNO) is a public university in Oceanside, California. It is also formerly known as East Oceanside and is a beach-side community in Oceans County. The university is one mile away from a beach, and its location is in one of the largest marine protected areas in the world (California State University Northern Oceanside, 2020). Other cities located around CSUNO are Pacific Side, Caravelle, and the Salida Valley. According to the President of CSUNO (California State University Northern Oceanside, 2020), the university was first created in 1994 on the site of Fort Ort, a former US Army post. The school was inaugurated into the California State University System on September 4, 1995,

¹ All names, places, and cities are pseudonyms to protect anonymity.

with President Bill Clinton in attendance along with local, state, and federal officials (California State University Northern Oceanside, 2020). Different students enroll in the school, such as first-time freshman and transfer students. In Fall 2020, the Chancellor's Office at State census records, 52% of students were first-time freshmen while 47% were transfer students (California State University Northern Oceanside, 2020). Furthermore, 59% of transfer students identify as first-generation college students, 42% of students are low income, and 55% of transfer students are under represented minorities (California State University-Northern Oceanside, 2020). In 2021, CSUNO opened the new Otter Student Union, which had cost around 62 million dollars to construct, with most of its funds coming from Student Union fees. This building was created to be the heart of CSUNO and is located on the main campus (Reyes, 2018). There are various resources for students within this building, such as the Otter Cross-Cultural Center, First Year Experience, Associated Students, and more. Additionally, the Transfer Student Success Center first opened its doors to transfer students in Fall 2019. The Transfer Student Success Center (TSSC) facility location is in Forest Hall at the end of the CSUNO campus. It is a five to ten-minute walk from the main campus. Due to the pandemic, students have not been able to visit the physical space, but services are still offered online. Students can connect with peer mentors almost every day of the week during the virtual drop-in hours and the TSSC has held virtual events throughout the covid years (Salazar, 2019).

Participants and Participant Selection

The Transfer Center, my community partner, allowed me to email ten students and six students responded. Anyone willing to participate, no matter what age, race, gender identity, etc., had the opportunity to participate in this research project. This group of prospective participants has been invited because they understand what it is like to transfer to CSUNO and have knowledge of the transition process.

Lauren Villas is a white young woman second-generation college student, from a suburban community.

Mark Acosta is an African American man, who served as an army veteran and is a first-generation college student.

Andres Luis is a Filipino young man, who identifies as a first-generation college student and comes from an underrepresented minority community.

Sarah Serena is a Hispanic woman who is a student parent to two toddler girls and is a first-generation college student.

Molly Jones is a white first-generation college student who lives in a suburban community.

Karina Young is a young Hispanic woman who is a first-generation college student and is a recent college graduate from CSUNO.

Researcher

Transitioning from a community college to CSUNO is something I have gone through personally. The process was not enjoyable, and I had a terrible time. I transferred to CSUNO as a first-generation college student who had no idea what I was doing. Transferring should be enjoyable and light-hearted because a student made it, they graduated community college! As a transfer student, I was really lost my first semester at the university because I had no idea of the various resources offered on campus. I was somewhat lonely, had trouble in my classes, and did not engage in campus life. I want future transfer students to have a better time while transferring and utilize all the resources on campus that we pay over seven thousand dollars for as part of our tuition.

I am similar to the project participants because we are all transfer students. We transferred from a community college to CSUNO, and they have also all been through their first semester here. We navigated the different systems from our community colleges and adjusted to CSUNO. We possibly can have similar experiences at CSU Northern Oceanside, but we can also have different experiences within our time at CSUNO. Something different about the participants and me is our backgrounds. I want to interview a student parent, a veteran student, a first-generation college student, an alumni, and a second-generation college student; I do not relate to these students and the stories that they may have. Some students, like second-generation college students, can help their parents navigate the college system, while I can not because my parents did not go to college. I would not relate to a student parent because I do not have any kids. I would also have a different experience than a veteran student because they may have issues from service in the military. It is essential to understand what other students go through when transferring with all of these different demographics of students.

One thing I should be mindful of is keeping my own assumptions of what should be fixed within the school systems. I need to remember, I am not a participant in this study, so I can not

put my own experience into the data collected. I also need to set aside my roles as a peer mentor at the Transfer Student Success Center and just listen to the participants' experiences; I can feel empathy for them but not interrupt them and try to fix their problems.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

The following questions have been asked by the interviewer and answered by the interviewees.

1. What community college did you attend and when did you transfer to CSUNO? Why did you choose CSUNO?
2. What is your transfer story? Was it your first choice to go to a CC?
4. What was the process like when you were transferring from your community college to CSUNO? What challenges or successes did you face? Was it hard or easy?
5. What do you see as the problem with the transition from a community college to CSUNO?
6. To your knowledge what is being done to improve the transition for transfer students - by whom - and do you think this is good, bad? Why?
7. What do you think should be done about transfer students' process of transitioning? What could help them?
8. What do you think are the obstacles or disadvantages in providing support to students who transfer from a community college to CSUNO?
9. What is something you wished you had known about during the transition process?
10. How do you think we can help the improvement of transferring students into CSUNO?
11. Is there anything else that you would like to say about students transitioning to colleges?

Procedure

All interviews have been one on one on Zoom. If participants were not able to meet over Zoom, they were invited to complete a phone interview. This interview took around 20 to 40 minutes depending on the interviewee's answers, with the permission of the participant, I recorded the audio. With the questions above, the participant had the opportunity to share their

experiences and ideas for this research project. All interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participant. I had a semi-structured interview format that was used during the Zoom interview. I provided the list of questions to the interviewee before the interview so they felt comfortable and prepared, participants were not forced to answer any questions. The structure of these questions were open-ended and participants had the opportunity to explain and give their insights. If things were unclear, I was able to ask them follow-up questions for clarification.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

Results

For this Capstone Project, transfer students at CSUNO were interviewed to see what they thought could be done to improve the transition for transfer students at CSUNO. This is important because half of the student body at CSUNO are transfer students and it can be hard to transfer to colleges from a community college. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature, three themes emerged (see Table 1). Evidence-based decision-making required evaluating each potential Action Option by the following criteria: effectiveness, access, and reach. These are important because we need to ensure that the effectiveness of the action options will be reliable and if they are necessary for the school. Along with the access and reach of these options, if they are not accessible for the school, then the reach would not be high and not help transfer students. Based on the evaluation of each Action Option an action will be recommended and justified.

Table 1

Evaluation of Action Options

	Effectiveness	Access	Reach
Recruiter go to Community Colleges for outreach and recruitment	High	Medium	Medium
Transfer Center on the main campus: Campus	High	Medium	Low

Connection and Community for transfers			
Brochures of transfer resources at different centers on campus	Medium	Medium	High

Recruiters at Community Colleges

As students transfer from a community college to a four-year university it can be a confusing time for students. At most community colleges, there is little to no recruitment or presence from four-year university staff members. Most students go through this process alone. Students at CSU Northern Ocean stated that they wished that they had someone that was from CSUNO to get some guidance, as well as answer questions they had about the school. Mark, a first-generation college student, and a veteran emphasized that he hopes that colleges could speak at high schools and community colleges to recruit and tell people about their school just as the army does. As he stated, “this would help students have more options on what to do after high school or help students transfer smoother” (M. Acosta, personal communication, October 13, 2021). Sarah, a parenting student, had a little bit of help since she went to a community college close to CSUNO. Still, she expressed, “Most students who go to a school out of the county probably get little to no help, I think it would be great if CSUNO reaches out to students in different counties at some capacity” (S. Serena, personal communication, October 14, 2021). Within research, we can see that 22% of students were recruited to their four-year university by a college representative (LaViolet et al., 2008).

Having a recruiter at a community college can be highly effective for students. Community college students can have the opportunity to discuss their questions and concerns with a person who is present in the moment. Students feel open to communicating with the representative from the four-year university. Being able to access this for students is not super easy, but it is also not hard. It will be doable if admission counselors choose one or two people to go to various community colleges within a month or two around the end of the semester. This would also include having open communication with local community colleges and community colleges that are out of the county to correlate when they are available for recruiters to come on campus. This can be done with multiple CSU and even UC, having a college fair day for a community college. The reach for this option is at a medium level because not all schools may be

corporative. It can be some work to get all schools correlating to a particular day or two along with other schools. The access can be medium for this action option because of the amount of people it could take to get this idea moving. As well as, if a community college is out of the county, then it would take time and gas from a representative to get out to the community college. Although this may be a problem a school can run into, it is doable and would be beneficial to the students at the school.

Transfer Center on Main Campus

The transfer center at CSUNO has been open since Fall 2019 (J. Solis, personal communication, 2020). It is located at Forest Hall, which is at the end of the campus. Karina, recent alumni from CSUNO who transferred in Fall 2019, expressed that there was little communication that there was a transfer center opening when she transferred. She stated that “I wish the transfer center were closer to campus, there is the first-year experience that mostly targets freshman students, but I feel like the transfer community on the main campus is not there” (K. Young, personal communication, October 13, 2021). Having the transfer center on the main campus of CSUNO would promote the transfer community. Serban et al. (2008) suggest that all CSUs should build a strong sense of community to build the confidence of new and continuing transfer students. Molly, a first-semester transfer, is in the peer mentor program that is a component of the transfer center at CSUNO. While being interviewed, she claimed that she never realized how many transfer students were in her classes. Furthermore, when she would tell people she was part of the transfer peer mentor program, no one would know about it, or they express surprise that we have a transfer center (M. Jones, personal communication, October 13, 2021). Having the transfer center on the main campus would allow transfers to meet one another in a group setting that is not far away from housing and campus in general.

When considering how effective moving the transfer center to the main campus at CSUNO would be, it is important to consider how it would help improve transfer students' life on campus. It would help new students find resources quicker, and current students find a community to be a part of. Transfer students would not have to feel like they are the outcast of the school since their center is at the end of campus. Students would also have a place just to hang out and wait for the classes to start or hang out with their friends. Reaching this could be low because CSUNO has opened its new student building and did not incorporate the transfer center. It still could be possible to move the transfer center into the student building, which is on

the main campus, but there would have to be a few changes within the building. In order to access this, there would need to be a space within the building and the willingness of the transfer center coordinator and the chancellor to move into the student building. This would most likely be an intermediate level of access because people would have to be open to fixing a room in the building along with the peer mentors and transfer center coordinator to leave their current building.

Brochure of Transfer Resources

There is so much information that a new transfer student should know about and many resources that all transfer students can access at CSUNO. Students who go to a new school need to learn quickly about the new systems that are used, opportunities that can enrich them academically or socially, the different programs they can get involved in, and much more! Yet, many transfer students are unaware of these types of things. A first-semester transfer student, Lauren has said she wished there was somewhere to find all the information in one place (L. Villas, personal communication, October 11, 2021). For new transfer students, a brochure can be created by orientation on what dates and deadlines need to be met. Molly recalls almost missing some deadlines because she was unaware of them (M. Jones, personal communication, October 13, 2021). The brochure could be sent with their acceptance letter, so students can know ahead of time when CSUNO is expecting them to turn things in. Furthermore, transfer students who are continuing students need to know about the resources available for them offered by the transfer center along with other departments on campus. Some students do not know about transfer services until a year after they transfer, so a second brochure can be made and be available for students within other departments' buildings. Andres, a first-generation student who is from Southern California, had no idea CSUNO had a transfer center; he states that he has used other services that were in the student building but barely found out about the transfer center through a friend (A. Luis, personal communication, October 13, 2021). He had no idea that the transfer center had a peer mentor program that helps the first semester and continuing transfer students, but once he found out about it he signed up for the program.

Thinking about how the reach for students and brochures is high. These two different brochures can be made by the orientation leaders and the transfer peer mentors during their working hours. Each department would be able to put what is important for a new or continuing transfer student. When made, they can be distributed to different departments buildings within

the campus at CSUNO. It would be most effective to put them all over campus, so when a transfer student is on campus they would be able to pick up the brochure and see what there is to offer. Using brochures as an action option would be at an intermediate level because it could be easy to make and display them around campus but sometimes students may not pick things off the walls or tables of various departments. Therefore the accessibility of making the brochures are also at an intermediate level because it could take a lot of paper to make these brochures but they would be worth it because it has various information and resources for transfer students that would be beneficial. Having a handheld map of what services are offered would help transfer students navigate CSUNO easier.

Recommendation. Within the three action options listed, I would recommend CSUNO move the Transfer Center to the main campus in the student union building. Having a sense of transfer community on the main campus can help promote the well-being of transfer students. We see other groups and resources within this building, so why not move transfer students within this building? With students visiting CSUNO, there will be a clear representation of the transfer community as being uplifted within the main campus. While interviewing the students from CSUNO, it was clear across the board that all six interviewees wished that the transfer center was more centrally located on campus. Some of the interviewees that toured the campus did not even know that there was a transfer center. This would be beneficial to prospective students along with students who are currently enrolled. The section below will explore and discuss the concessions, limitations, and possible negative outcomes associated with this action option.

Concessions. As I have recommended for CSUNO to move the transfer center to the main campus does not invalidate the other action options that were discussed earlier. The other options are still important for transfer students, as research has shown. Such as creating a brochure for new and continuing students, it would be beneficial to have the brochures at a table for the prospective students to take home and look at what could be their lives at CSUNO. It would promote transfer services and a transfer community. A transfer community is essential for students stimulated to be within the campus (Serban et al., 2008). Sending recruiters to community colleges would still be a viable option for CSUNO because having a representative at community colleges would help students with questions or concerns they may have before transferring. As shown in research, students have transferred because they have talked to a college representative at their community college, but the number is less than 50%. To get it

higher, CSUNO should send people to speak and inform students about their resources when they get to CSUNO.

Limitations. When thinking about moving the center to a new building, there may be some limitations. For example, it could cost the school too much money to rebuild a room within the building. This could not be good since the transfer center already had a zero-dollar budget. Furthermore, the transfer center coordinator would also have to approve it to see if they even wanted to move buildings. The transfer center has been open since Fall 2019, the center is in a building at the back of the campus and only has been opened in person for one semester due to the pandemic. This building is secluded in the back of campus, but the student union building is the heart of campus. Another limitation is that the university president does not want to move the transfer center, or does not think it is beneficial for the student body. This would limit and possibly even remove any possibility of this happening. This would be the ultimate limitation for this action item.

Potential negative outcomes. With any sort of action option, there are always possible negative outcomes that could happen. With CSUNO moving the transfer center, there may not be too many transfer students visiting the department. Therefore it may not be helpful. Students may not like the setup of the transfer center and may not want it to be part of the main campus. Also, there could be a limited amount of space which would not be good for the transfer center since they meet with students one on one. Moving the transfer center to the main campus could be risky, but it can also be a reward.

Conclusion.

Although there may be limitations, concessions, and even negative outcomes, I would still recommend the school to move the transfer center to the main campus at CSUNO. It would promote transfer student life, and prospective students would vividly see that transfer student are prioritized just as much as freshman students. Many students are lost their first week of school, and having the transfer center on the main campus can give students a little bit more ease and comfort at their new school. It would be helpful for both prospective and enrolled students that transfer to CSUNO. I am confident that this would be the best decision for CSUNO to make to help transfer students.

Action Documentation and Critical Reflection

Transfer students are half the student population at CSUNO. Some students struggle when they transfer to CSUNO and have a hard time adjusting to school life within their first year. Within this research project, different transfer students were interviewed such as first-generation students, first-semester students, a parenting student, a veteran, and an alumni. After the interviews, the data were analyzed for emerging themes that turned into action options. I found that CSUNO should send representatives to all different types of community colleges, whether they are in the local area or far away. Also, students wished that the transfer center was closer to the main campus on school grounds, this would allow all transfer students new or continuing to engage within the transfer community. Lastly, having brochures ready for students to help guide them in their transfer journey, could be sent out with acceptance letters with dates and deadlines along with having one on campus that shares transfer support systems. I chose to advocate for moving the transfer center onto the main campus at CSUNO because it can promote an enriching experience and environment for all transfer students. Transfer students would be represented within the main campus and have access to the transfer center within a few steps.



This is a layout of CSUNO campus. The red circle on the right over building 49, is where the transfer center is currently located. The second circle over building 552, is where the newly opened student union is located. We can also see where the main campus is within this map, which is the heart of the campus.

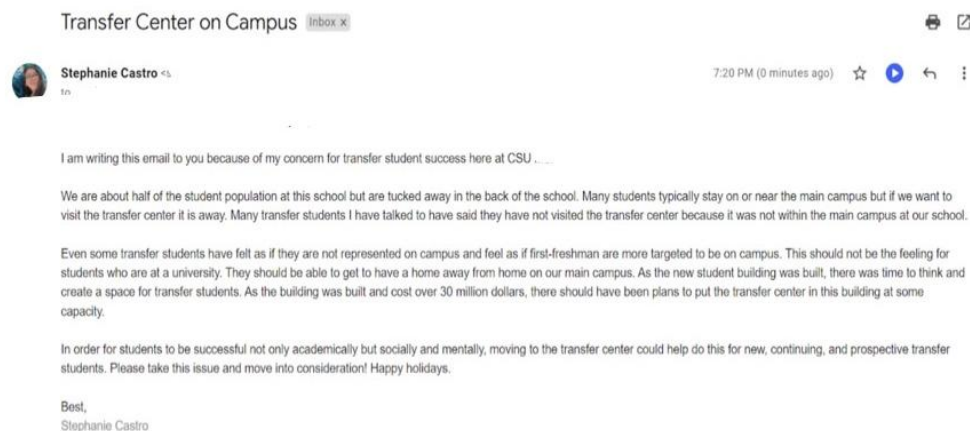
Critical Reflection

When doing research, it can be a tough but exciting process. As this is one of my first experiences doing research, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Throughout this year, I learned that I have a strong passion for college-age students along with advocating for transfer students. I realized in my lifetime, I hope to work with college-level students because I understand the struggle that

they could be going through. Interviewing students who are like me, transfer students, can have totally different experiences and knowledge about transferring. Along with having different awareness of what resources are offered to them. It was interesting to listen and to analyze people's journey to CSUNO. I had to learn to listen and allow students to share their struggles of transferring without putting my own opinion of what should have happened or what should be done. Instead, I had to research and connect the student's experience with the academic data. Studying the lives of others shows that multiple transfer students have struggled to get to the university, and this proves that there needs to change. Working toward change can be something that people are afraid to do, even though I was intimidated by doing this research project but doing things one step at a time helps.

Action Research Project Documentation and Reflection

For my action items for this research project, I decided to email the president and the vice president of the university I am attending. This first email can bring awareness to these important people of the school, they can directly make this activity into a move. Below is the email I have sent, for privacy reasons I have covered the president and vice presidents' emails and names.



After sending the email out, unfortunately, I have not received any emails back from either of the recipients. But finding the email of the president and the vice president of the school was easy. I was able to look up a past email that the president has sent to the school along with looking up the last name of the vice president within Gmail. I did have some difficulties with my wording because I did not want to come across as cutthroat and demanding, but I wanted to come

off passionate and interested in this topic. Therefore I drafted my first draft and came back to it a day later, I then revised it and ended up sending the email.


I also decided to promote and bring awareness to all students that this is something that should be done. I have created a flyer to post on social media since many students use it. Below is the flyer that I have made and posted on my personal social media.




Furthermore creating the flyer was a good break, I enjoy making flyers and I did this one particularly in Canva. I wanted the colors to pop and catch the attention of someone scrolling on social media. When I posted the flyer on social media I received some impressions from it. Below is the impression from the Instagram post.


< **Post Insights**


Messaging-related insights, such as shares and replies, may be lower than expected due to privacy rules in some regions. [Learn More](#)




December 7 at 12:47 PM


43


0


16


10

Overview ⓘ

Accounts Reached	308
Content Interactions	69
Profile Activity	9

I had gotten 42 likes on the post, along with 16 people sharing the post with someone, 10 people saved the post, there are a total of 308 people who have seen the post, and 9 people who have visited my profile to take this post. As this has happened in the past three days, I could imagine there will be more impressions by the end of the month.

To successfully achieve this action, others must realize and validate that this is something worth moving. Having a whole center move its location can be work, but it is worth it because of how many transfer students there are. There will always be transfers in and out of the university, so why not put a focus on them? While meeting and listening to other students' stories, I appreciate how open and honest my interviewees were. Learning the experiences that a student parent goes through or what a veteran student had to do to get to where they are now is inspiring. As some of my interviewees were students of color and first-generation students, I could relate to them regarding how hard it was to even get through community college and attend a four-year

university. Learning about students' different backgrounds of their families and where they came from, was a humbling experience, something I will never forget.

Synthesis and Integration

Working on this project has helped me develop professional practices with other students and adults. Setting up one on one interviews with students and hearing them out is something that I will use once I am an educator. I will have one on ones with students and or their parents or guardians and will have to act in a professional manner. Learning the experiences that a student parent goes through or what a veteran student had to do to get to where they are now is inspiring. As some of my interviewees were students of color and first-generation students, I could relate to them how hard it was to even get through community college and attend a four-year university. Learning about students' different backgrounds of their families and where they came from, was a humbling experience, something I will never forget. Living in the virtual world due to the pandemic, using technology was something that was the only option to do to conduct the research. Effectively using Zoom during my interviews went well, although sometimes the internet lagged for a few of my interviewees I was patient and communicated that I did not hear what they said. This will aid me in the future because I will be able to effectively communicate and use online technology as the world is advancing.

Lastly, in order to become the professional that I want to be, I need to continue to work on my professionalism. This can be done by asking mentors for advice and wisdom. I have to not be afraid to ask and reach out because adults working in student services want their students to ask for assistance. Also, I can attain more professionalism through attending career-building workshops that will benefit my future career as a teacher. In order to become a teacher, I need to apply and get into a credential program that is fitting for me. The credential program will allow me to grow even more as an educator and help me understand what I will be expected to do. In this program, I will begin to student teach which will give me hands-on experience before I get to my own classroom. This project has helped me think on a deeper level, something that I will be doing in the future as a teacher. I want to be able to not have surface-level thinking with my students, I want to be able to think at a high level and to meet their emotional and mental needs.

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