The 2016-17 year was a busy one for Transfer Engagement! We welcomed 1,350 new transfers in the fall semester and 500 in the spring, all with unique experiences and needs. This is an overview of our current transfer experience, how we engage transfer students at UAlbany, how our programs and services are impacting transfer retention and academic success, and finally, how we are increasing transfer support across campus.
Who are our transfers?

- 41% entered in with an Associate’s Degree
- 13% are nontraditional students (24 years or older)
- Average entering GPA: 3.1
- Top 3 reasons for transferring to UAlbany were:
  1. To save money
  2. To be closer to family
  3. For a particular major we offer
- Top 4 challenges transfers reported experiencing their first semester:
  1. Making friends
  2. Adjusting to UAlbany’s academic rigor
  3. Managing their schedule
  4. Getting involved outside of the classroom
Over 150 incoming transfers welcomed at our annual Transfer Day that Undergraduate Education, Student Engagement, Advising Services Center and Undergraduate Admissions plans for admitted and prospective students.

Welcome emails sent by transfer coordinator as soon as new students deposit and continuing until classes begin (welcome emails sent in the winter for spring transfers as well)

Biweekly welcome and informational emails sent by a Transfer Transition Leaders (TTLs) as soon as new students deposit and continuing throughout their first year

3 Transfer Coffee Connection events held in the summer for new students to meet each other and ask questions about transfer and programs we offer (1 transfer coffee connection event during winter break for incoming spring transfers)

Transfer Living-Learning Community Kick-Off in the fall for transfers in L-LCs

⇒ 111 transfers in L-LCs

Transfer Orientation Sessions: “Day in the Life of a Transfer” led by transfer coordinator and TTLs, Tau Sigma Informational led by transfer coordinator, and Non-Traditional Student Experience led by Transfer Coordinator. Transfer Coordinator also assists with the commuter experience session led by The Driving Force.

Welcome Barbecue before classes start on Alumni Quad for ALL new transfers

⇒ Over 500 in attendance

2 Meet and Mingle Events in the Transfer Commuter Lounge the first two days of classes each semester

⇒ Approximately 20 students in attendance for each event

3 days of welcome tents around commuter parking lots at the start of each semester

⇒ We welcomed nearly 5,000 students each semester

1 Community College Luncheon for new transfers from community colleges during the first week of classes to get to know key resources on campus and to become familiar with our commuter student club, the Driving Force.

⇒ Average of 20+ students each semester

1 Transfer Connections mixer for transfers who requested either faculty or peer mentors to meet each other the first week of classes

⇒ 45 in attendance in the fall, 15 in the spring
An Overview of Student Engagement Programs From 2016-17

Transfer Transition Leaders (TTLs)

TTLs are peer educators and receive class credit and training through the School of Education’s peer educator course. TTLs are involved in orientation and summer programming. They reach out to incoming transfers as early as May (for students starting in the fall) or October (for those beginning in January) and continue to connect with them via Facebook and email. During the time before students attend classes (and in most cases, before they are advised), Darlene Poirier and the TTLs plan informational events at a local coffee shop to provide incoming transfers with opportunities to meet students and ask the Transfer Experience Coordinator questions about the transfer process. TTLs are trained extensively on campus resources, how to create and implement a program, and how to help students in need. TTLs hold social, academic, and service programs throughout the semester that help transfers become familiar with academic and student affairs resources on campus, meet and connect with transfers and student leaders, and get them involved in community service. Each TTL is assigned a group of approximately 150 students (based largely on their intended major) and communicate with them regarding important dates, events on campus, and reminders of where our academic support services are located. Once the academic semester begins, every new transfer is assigned a TTL who communicates with them via email and social media throughout their first year at UAlbany.

Peer and Faculty Mentors

Since TTLs reach out to a large number of students, peer and faculty mentors meet one-on-one with current transfer students and get to know them on a more personal level. Incoming students submit information about their major, hobbies, goals, hometown and whether they would like a peer or faculty mentor. The Transfer Coordinator then pairs them with a mentor. The pair meets within the first week of classes and throughout their first semester.

Transfer Living-Learning Communities

Living-Learning Communities (L-LCs) are places where students live with other new transfers who share similar interests or an intended major. We had 5 L-LCs for transfers last year, three of them being major-specific. All L-LCs are paired with a professor or staff member, ensuring that students have the ability to connect with key faculty and staff on campus along with making friends on their floor. Transfers in these communities also experienced opportunities for community service and professional development.

Due to the way housing sign-up occurs at UAlbany, much of the residential life space left on our main campus is full before transfers can sign up for housing. As such, many transfers are housed on our downtown campus (3 miles away from the main campus). The downtown campus has all the same amenities as the living areas on the main campus, but because of the commute, transfers living there reported feelings of isolation from the rest of the campus community. Because of this feedback, TTLs do targeted programming on the downtown campus for new transfers as well.
General Education Classes

Most transfers do not bring in credits that will fulfill the “Challenges for the 21st Century” general education requirement. This past year we set aside sections of these classes (or in some cases, discussion sections) exclusively for new transfers so they have a small classroom experience with other new students. We also provide assistance by meeting with students after class ends. Our Transfer Experience Coordinator often attends class during the last few minutes, and then takes students out for coffee to answer questions and make connections.

Transfer Seminar Courses

Transfer Seminars are one credit discipline-based classes that meet once per week for 55 minutes. Seminars are an intimate learning experience designed to help new transfer students adjust to the academic challenges of the University at Albany. The two transfer seminars we held in the fall allowed new transfers to take a class with other new students. The transfer coordinator visited the class throughout the semester to inform students of important events. Due to low participation rates the office of Student Engagement decided to move toward growing the General Education strategy mentioned above.

Tau Sigma – The National Honor Society for Transfers

Tau Sigma is the National Honor Society for transfers and the Transfer Coordinator advises this group. Transfer students must complete at least 12 credits at UAlbany and obtain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher to join Tau Sigma. We had 146 students who were admitted at our induction ceremony that both the Provost and the President attended. Because UAlbany has one of the largest chapters, we are awarded 2 scholarships to be given out to two members each year ranging between $1000 – $2500. Tau Sigma also provided 6 programs last year for new transfers to assist them in their transition.

The Driving Force

Through research we know our commuter population tends to be less involved on campus than our students who live on-campus and is largely comprised of transfer students. We also know that the more that students are involved on campus, the better these students tend to do academically. For these reasons, the commuter student club – The Driving Force – was created. It is advised by the Transfer Experience Coordinator (Darlene Poirier), Luke Rumsey from our Neighborhood Life department, and Sari Khatib from the Office of Orientation and Transition Programs. Together, they support the club which, in turn, provides academic and social support for commuting transfers.

Munch With Your Major and Food For Thought

Munch With Your Major was held for the first time last year and brought every academic department together with undergraduate students. Students were invited to attend and engage with faculty from any major that interested them. Students discussed their major or minor, ways to get involved in the department, careers they could pursue with the major, research being done in the field and much more.

Food for Thought is another program where students are encouraged to invite a faculty member to a meal. We make special outreach to transfers for both these programs.
Quick View of How Our Programs Compare

- Current campus retention rate for transfer students returning for a 3rd semester is 82.2%.
- Our transfer retention rate from the fall of 2016 to spring 2017 was 90.5%.
- Average first semester GPA for the fall 2016 transfer cohort was 2.69

Retention and GPA Data for New Transfers in Student Engagement Programs

Students in Challenges of the 21st Century transfer sections:
- Retained fall-to-spring rate of 98.1% - significantly higher than the overall retention rate of 90.5%.
- Average first semester GPA for students in transfer Challenges sections was 3.06 versus the cohort GPA of 2.69.
- This is our first year for this engagement program and given the success we have seen so far we plan to continue and expand the program.

Transfers in our Living-Learning Communities:
- Retained fall-to-spring rate of 97.2% compared to the average of 90.5%
- Average GPA of 3.05 compared to the current average 2.69.

We are excited about these data and will continue to monitor and assess these programs.
UAlbany Transfer Advisory Group

With the leadership of our Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education, Student Engagement has been able to create a Transfer Advisory Group that includes members of the faculty, staff and students from all around our campus. The Board looks at transfer student needs, develops ways to support our transfers and builds best practices across campus. Most recently, the group developed a Transfer Liaison role in each academic department and in select student support departments. The goal of the Transfer Liaison is to be a point of contact for students who have questions regarding transfer-specific issues and opportunities in the department during and after their transition. The liaisons also serve as a network of campus colleagues sensitive to the unique needs of transfer students. Our office, in conjunction with Advisement Services, educates liaisons on specific transfer challenges.

Articulation Agreements

The Office of Undergraduate Education has completed 8 articulation agreements, 260 program-to-program agreements and has evaluated over 200 courses. Articulation Agreements done with HVCC, SUNY Cobleskill and SCCC even generated positive media coverage from the Daily Gazette, Time Union, the Troy Record, the Albany Business Review and News Channel 13.

New York State Transfer Articulation Association

Staff within Undergraduate Education and Student Engagement have earned leadership roles within NYSTAA (the New York State Transfer Articulation Association). Recently, the offices of Undergraduate Education, Advisement Services and Undergraduate Admissions collaborated in purchasing an institutional membership so anyone at the University can attend conferences and receive updates regarding NY State transfer issues and support.
# 2017 Transfer Engagement Preview

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<td>8/26: Transfer Luau</td>
<td>Date TBD: Tau Sigma Informational</td>
<td><strong>November</strong></td>
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<td>8/28-29: Transfer Meet ‘n’ Mingles</td>
<td>Date TBD: The Driving Force Kick-Off</td>
<td>Date TBD: Final Fest - Academic Resource Fair on Alumni Quad</td>
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<td>8/30: Community College Luncheon</td>
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