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TRANSFER STUDENT EXPERIENCE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026

TRANSFER STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026

DEVELOPED BY THE TRANSFER SERVICES TEAM

The Transfer Services Team works collaboratively across campus, disciplines, and divisions to:
- Use current available data to identify transfer student needs - both academically and socially - and where Appalachian is meeting or not meeting those needs.
- Identify units across campus that can provide transfer student-specific programs or integrate transfer students into existing programs, and assist in executing these programs.
- Raise awareness of transfer student issues among faculty and staff.

The Transfer Services Team was charged in February 2015 by then Interim Provost Stan Aeschleman to meet the purposes described above. Representatives of the Team include faculty representation from each degree-granting college or school and the Library; staff representation from many offices that support student success; and student representation when possible. The team meets monthly during the academic year and has accomplished:
- Creation of the Transfer Champion Award;
- Enhanced support of Early College students including the creation of an Early College Residential Learning Community;
- Advising by certain Colleges during Orientation of students with General Education completed;
- Research and proposals of other topics including a centrally located Transfer Center, Transfer Seminar, and transfer scholarship policies.

Context and Rationale:
The Transfer Services Team has spent the past 16 months analyzing data from transfer student surveys, New Mountaineer surveys, a SWOT analysis from both the Faculty Transfer Mentors and the Transfer Services Team, and direct experience with Appalachian's transfer population. This work has revealed a clear need for a strategic plan for the transfer student experience - one which could be used to provide meaningful input into the larger University Strategic Plan.

The purpose of the remainder of this document is to outline the key areas where potential gaps in service for transfer students are evident and to offer possible ways that the Transfer Services Team believes these gaps could be addressed. Addressing these gaps serves as a critical step toward ensuring that transfer students persist and succeed at Appalachian for years to come.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy: Degree progression
- Increase course availability for incoming transfer students across all the Colleges.
- Establish best practices for communicating about flexibility for over-enrollment of transfer students in courses needed early in the major
- Strengthen the application of transfer credits (General Education, departmental approval of electives, military credits, prior learning assessment, etc.)

Advocacy: Dissemination of transfer-specific information
- Increase communication and visibility around transfer student successes, challenges, and opportunities.
- Increase transfer inclusive language (versus first-year centric language) in campus events and communications.

Advocacy: Scholarships
- Increase the number and dollar amount of scholarships and identify potential donors for transfer-specific scholarships.
- Create more pathways for transfer students in already established campus scholarship programs.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement: Access to departmental faculty
- Increase opportunities for new transfer students to engage with faculty at Appalachian through mentoring, departmental events, etc.

Engagement: Social opportunities & community building through the Engage platform
- Increase co-curricular and social opportunities for new transfer students through Engage.

Engagement: Students starting in the spring term
- Increase co-curricular and social engagement for spring transfers through interactions with departmental faculty and other students.

COMMUNICATION

Communication: Resources
- Increase transfer student understanding of campus and community resources and services before they arrive on campus with support of Transfer Student Mentors.

Communication: Pre-arrival
Housing:
  - Increase transfer students' engagement with appropriate websites and resources to secure appropriate housing either on campus or off campus.

With community colleges:
  - Improve relations and information exchange with advisors at community colleges in hopes of making the transition smoother for students (OTS website, equivalency search, crosswalks, etc.).
  - Educate Community College Counselors and Appalachian staff on App State terminology (e.g. First Year vs Freshman vs Transfer) and transfer processes.

Infrastructure: Additional resources and personnel
- Determine gaps in services students need to ensure staff responsibilities align & cover necessary services, specifically related to special populations like previously enrolled students, denied first-year students for 30 credit transfer programs, non-traditional, etc.

Infrastructure: Transfer residence hall
- Build community and develop programming, support, and resources for not only the residents of the new transfer hall, but the entire transfer population.

Infrastructure: Transfer Student Center
- Analyze the survey/focus group data to determine specific needs of a centrally located space (size, resources, staff) and advocate to administration/donors to make this space a reality.

Infrastructure: Expand App State Online programs & main-campus online classes
- Research market needs to grow the number of App State Online programs as well as non-program online course offerings.
- Allow App State Online students access to main campus courses offered online to complete general education and progress towards graduation in a timely manner.

Infrastructure: Parking - park & ride lots
- Research the current state of parking availability for students (spaces & lots), any long-term goals of campus parking as a whole, and the feasibility of allocating dedicated park and ride space for commuter students to ensure that student parking needs have been addressed.

Outreach: Enhanced mentoring

- Enhance Faculty Transfer Mentors' expectations through recruitment and training to include informal advising and transfer student population awareness within departments.
- Increase representation of Transfer Student Mentors and Faculty Transfer Mentors from every academic department on campus so that all incoming transfer students are given opportunity to have a student or faculty mentor in their major.

Outreach: Transfer alumni

- Partner with the Appalachian State University Alumni Association Development and Donor Relations team to cultivate alumni support and engagement.

Outreach: Early College student support

- Educate campus partners (undergraduate admissions counselors, academic advisors, orientation leaders) on the nuances of Early College students to aid in making them feel understood and comfortable in their transition process.

Outreach: Aspire Appalachian

- Increase enrollment from community college partner schools by growing the Aspire pathway program.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Diversity & Inclusion: Collaboration
- Create collaboration within campus departments to connect students to inclusion and engagement activities already present on campus.
- Provide programming opportunities for marginalized identities in collaboration with appropriate campus resources (Intercultural Student Affairs, Counseling & Psychological Services, Wellness & Prevention Services, etc.)
- Draft an Inclusive Excellence statement for Online and Transfer Services and align programming and services with that commitment.

Diversity & Inclusion: Strengthen mentoring
- Add identifying information (i.e. first-generation, former transfer student, etc.) and headshots to Faculty Transfer Mentors' profiles.
- Encourage Faculty Transfer Mentors to share their role as a part of their biography when shared with students (i.e. on syllabi, websites, email signature, etc.)
- Create campus-wide call to recruit potential diversity mentors for transfer students and develop a process for mentor-student matching based on identifying information.
- Create leadership position(s) within Transfer Student Mentors to encourage representation and advocacy of non-majority transfer populations.

Diversity & Inclusion: Improve recruitment & retention
- Assess the unique needs of transfer students with marginalized identities to ensure resources are available for their success and safety on campus.
- Strengthen relationships with Community Colleges with higher diverse populations.
- Provide opportunities and resources for transfer students with marginalized identities to ask questions regarding the App State experience (ie. prospective student event for transfer students with marginalized identities).
- Track demographics of Transfer Student Mentors and improve recruitment of underrepresented populations as needed.

Diversity & Inclusion: Increase scholarships
- Seek funding for diversity transfer scholarships.

Diversity & Inclusion: Increase training of faculty, staff, and students
- Encourage Faculty Transfer Mentors to participate in on-campus inclusive excellence and culturally responsive training.
- Incorporate culturally responsive training topics into Faculty Transfer Mentors training.
- Require culturally responsive training for transfer student leaders, Transfer Services Team members, and Online & Transfer Services staff .
- Provide an equity, diversity, and inclusion session at transfer student orientation events.

Diversity & Inclusion: Strengthen awareness of non-majority transfer population needs
- Conduct or review needs assessment.
- Create a sub-committee of Transfer Services Team to provide recommendations for support to non-majority populations.

Transfer Services Team: 2021 Strategic Planning Members

- Carol Babyak, Chemistry and Fermentation Sciences
- Brittany Bolick, Academic Services for Student Athletes
- Michelle Brown, Career Development
- Daniel Byrd, Office of Student Success
- Clarinda Choice, Campus Activities
- Lee Cope, Student Learning Center
- Sarah Davis Cagle, Admissions
- Nikki Crees, Orientation
- Alison Davis-Waddle, Counseling
- Angela Daugherty, Financial Aid
- Amanda Harper, IRAP
- Kristin Hyle, General Education
- Megan Kasper, James Center/College of Education
- Christy Lewis, Online & Transfer Services
- Kelly McCallister, University Libraries
- Kim Morton, Online & Transfer Services
- Laura Newmark, University College Advising
- Katrina Palmer, Mathematics
- Susan Poorman, Communications
- Robin Romanus, Accounting
- Karla Rusch, Off-Campus Student Services
- Stephen Salazar, Housing
- Colleen Tarantino, Health & Exercise Science
- Tyrel Wineberger, Mathematics