

Provost's Transfer Admissions Advisory Group Report

04/05/2016

Members of the Advisory Group

- Cyrus Grant (chair), Associate Dean RCAS
- Matthew Hlinak, Assistant Provost for Continuing Studies & Special Initiatives
- Mike Morsovillo, Director of Transfer Admissions
- Chad Rohman, Director of the Core Curriculum
- Josephine Sarvis, SOE
- Tracy Jennings, Apparel/RCAS
- Rose Ann Mathai, Nutrition/RCAS
- Debra Gurney, Nursing/RCAS
- Alyssa Braun, Biology/RCAS
- Kathleen Odell, Associate Dean BSB
- Douglas Keberlein Gutierrez, History/RCAS

1) Why More Transfer Students

a) In recent years, our retention rate for transfer students is better than our retention rate for freshmen.

Comparing Freshmen and Transfer Retention Rates			
% That Returned Next Fall			
Starting Year	Freshmen	Transfers	Difference
2009	81.2%	78.2%	-3.0%
2010	81.7%	77.2%	-4.5%
2011	80.0%	77.9%	-2.1%
2012	82.5%	86.5%	4.0%
2013	80.7%	88.3%	7.6%
2014	78.6%	87.0%	8.3%

b) Transfer students have a better 6 year graduation rate than freshmen.

2007-2011 Entry - Graduation Rates			
	% of Original Class Graduating in		
	<= 4 Years	<= 5 Years	<= 6 Years
Freshmen	49%	60%	62%
Transfer	71%	73%	75%

c) Academically, transfer students do as well as freshmen at DU. They have a marginally better DU GPA at graduation than students who started as freshmen.

2013-2015 Graduates by Entry Type & Local GPA				
Entry Type	Year of Graduation			Average
	2013	2014	2015	
Freshmen	3.27	3.30	3.30	3.29
Transfer	3.30	3.32	3.31	3.31
Local GPA is the grade point average earned at DU.				

d) Transfer students have a considerably lower tuition discount rate than freshmen.

2015 Fall - Tuition Discount Rates	
Freshmen	48.9%
Transfer	39.3%

The Freshmen rate has normally been 10% to 12% above the transfer rate.

e) We have a far lower percentage of market share for transfer students than we have for freshmen.

West Suburban Universities Fall 2015 Enrollment

Institution	New Freshmen	New Transfer students	Total Undergrads	Ratio TR/FR
Aurora	640	491	3580	77%
Benedictine	445	471	3347	106%
Concordia	294	178	1509	61%
Dominican	484	151	2272	31%
Elmhurst	478	311	2840	65%
Judson	148	64	1118	43%
Lewis	702	478	4678	68%
North Central	599	251	2733	42%
Saint Xavier	621	343	3002	55%
Trinity Christian	191	105	1237	55%
St. Francis	181	174	1667	96%
Wheaton	605	60	2463	10%
Overall				57%
DU market share	9.0%	4.9%	7.8%	

f) The pool of transfer students is large.

g) Enrolling more transfer students could facilitate limiting/decreasing the number of marginal/high risk freshmen admitted.

2) What transfer students are looking for

- a) Shortest time to complete their degree
 - i) Least additional credits required
 - ii) Most credits accepted in transfer
 - iii) Those with an Associate's degree want to graduate in two years
- b) Least cost to complete their degree
- c) Major they are interested in. Majors are far more critical to transfers than freshmen
- d) Easiest path to entrance and graduation with the fewest hurdles
- e) Some students are looking for a richer collegiate experience than they have had so far

3) Reasons stated for lower transfer numbers at DU along with some possible proposed solutions:

a) Curricular Reasons

- i) Transferability of courses/ how many more courses they have to take
 - (1) Core curriculum
 - (a) Introductory American History courses do not fulfill the core requirement. They are the most common history courses taken by community college students.
 - (b) Computer Application courses at community colleges do not count as the equivalent of CIS 120¹.
 - (c) Students who have taken the equivalent of ENGL 102 at another college may still have to take ENGL 190 at DU².
 - (d) Other:
 - (i) Most World Religions courses do not meet DU's Theology requirement. DU only accepts one course from one community college to satisfy the Theology area studies requirement.
 - (ii) Some Math courses do not meet our foundational Math requirement, but do at other schools.
 - (iii) Students who have been waived from the MFL requirement at their previous school, may yet have to take it at DU (or their previous school did not have a language requirement).
 - (iv) The core at DU is larger in size than the core curriculum at our competitors and may result in a transfer student taking longer to graduate from DU.
 - (v) Students who have completed their Associates degree and have carefully chosen their courses so that they will transfer to DU, still may have at least a semester worth of the core to take at DU (Junior Seminar, Senior Seminar, Theology, CIS 120, ENGL 190)
 - (2) Majors
 - (a) Some majors do not accept a lot of courses from community colleges.
 - (i) The timing of the changes in what courses are accepted can be problematic, as they are sometimes made in the middle of a recruitment cycle.
 - (ii) Transfer students could be allowed to be "grandfathered" into transfer credits that were acceptable when the student applied to DU, but are no longer acceptable.

¹ The Computer Science department now does accept equivalent courses from some community colleges.

² The English Department is piloting writing intensive sophomore and junior seminars for transfer students next year. Students who take these seminars would not have to take ENGL 190.

- (b) Some courses are allowed to transfer in as generic elective credit, but others do not transfer in at all. This increases the number of credits a transfer student has to take to graduate.
- (3) Illinois Articulation Initiative (itransfer.org)
 - (a) Currently Dominican University is listed as a full member of the IAI. A full membership requires:
 - (i) The institution to waive the core curriculum for students who have completed an Associate of Arts degree. Mission courses can yet be required.
 - (ii) All courses that are part of the Illinois Articulation Initiative (itransfer.org) should be accepted as transfer credit (some may transfer in as general elective credit and not credit for a particular requirement).
 - (b) Even though we are listed as a full member, DU currently does not follow either guideline. Ethically, this is not something we should be doing. We have three options:
 - (i) Completely drop out of the IAI (not recommended)
 - (ii) Drop down to a “partial” membership, where we accept all IAI listed courses, but still require students to complete our core curriculum.
 - (iii) Follow the requirements of full participation in IAI and waive the non-mission related core curriculum for students who have completed an AA degree.
 - (c) The group did not reach agreement on this issue.
 - (i) Some members of the group strongly believed that the core curriculum is what differentiates a Dominican education from an education at other universities and should be required of all students.
 - (ii) Other members of the group believed that to stay competitive³ in attracting transfer students who have completed an AA degree, we need to waive the non-mission related core.
 - (iii) There was also disagreement about what part of the core is mission related. All agreed that the junior seminar, senior seminar and theology area requirement were mission related courses. Other suggestions were the language, history and multi-cultural requirements.
- (4) Appeals process – have a process via which students can appeal departmental decisions about transfer courses (similar to the grade appeal process).

b) Financial Reasons

- i) The amount of financial aid for transfer students is a lot lower than that for freshmen of equal academic levels. The gap is especially large for those who have no need. Our transfer scholarships are lower than what our competitors offer⁴.
 - (1) The merit scholarship awards for transfer students should be increased every year by an amount similar to the increase in freshmen awards.
 - (2) We should create a new award for high achieving transfer students (GPA >= 3.75).

³ All state universities are full members of the IAI and waive their core curriculum. Elmhurst, Aurora, Benedictine and Lewis also follow this process. Concordia, DePaul, St Xavier, North Central are also listed as full members, but we have not confirmed if they follow the process or are listed erroneously like DU is.

⁴ Transfer Scholarships Comparison document

- ii) No scholarships are currently available for students with a transfer GPA under 3, even though all freshmen receive merit scholarships. All our competitors give these students academic scholarships and we should too.
- iii) No scholarships are currently available for part time transfer students.
 - (1) Create a policy of prorated scholarships for part time transfer students.
- iv) Have an additional stackable scholarship for students who have completed their AA degree⁵.
- v) Have an additional stackable award for out-of-state transfer students or have a housing grant for all transfer students.
- vi) We have “Catholic High School Scholarships” for freshmen. We should have them for transfer students as well.
- vii) Remove the statement from our web site that states that transfer scholarships are based on “availability of funds” after June 1st⁶.
- viii) Name the transfer scholarship levels, just as we do with freshmen. Students like receiving a “Presidents Scholarship”, rather than an unnamed scholarship.
- ix) Have stackable scholarships/grants available for more majors (this applies to freshmen and transfer students)
- x) There has been a lot of good work done recently to clearly explain costs and scholarships/grants/loans. This needs to be further expanded on the web and in person. The web site could include informational videos on these topics.
 - (a) In the focus groups with current transfer students, financial aid literacy was a significant issue that was raised. Students need more help in answering their questions.
- xi) In the survey sent to transfer students who were admitted to DU, but did not join, the primary reason given for not choosing DU was financial. However, in the focus groups of our current transfer students, a good financial aid package was often mentioned as their reason for joining DU.

c) Orientation & Registration (SOAR)

- i) There can be a long delay in registering, even after students have made a tuition deposit
 - (1) Students who have registered feel more committed and are less likely to go to another institution.
 - (2) Delay in registration also often results in fewer choices for classes for transfer students.
 - (3) Recommendations:
 - (a) Have the first transfer SOAR in April (after our current students have registered)
 - (i) The second SOAR will be in late June and the third in August
 - (b) In the summer, between SOARS, have a series of mini Registration Days
 - (i) These registration days will be held every two or three weeks. If the SOARs are two months apart, we could have three mini registration days between them.
 - (ii) Students would take Math & MFL placement exams (if needed) in the mornings.
 - (iii) They will be held on a weekday.
 - (iv) For a student to participate, student transcripts and tuition deposits would have to be submitted at least a week before these days.
 - (v) These students would still have to attend the upcoming SOAR for the orientation part.
 - (vi) If needed, students could be limited to paper registration at these events.

⁵ These students tend to succeed and get their bachelor’s degree.

⁶ This statement has now been removed

- (vii) Use staff advisors or other faculty to initially register transfer students if major advisors are not available on these days.
- (viii) Faculty could be present at Orientation (SOAR) to meet the students who they did not advise during registration.
- (c) Parts of orientation could be done electronically by watching videos.
- (d) Consider doing all placement exams online, so that they can be taken and graded before SOARs.
- (e) Consider incentives to attend SOAR and/or register early.
- (f) Add a session to the SOAR program about how to transition to a university from a community college.
- (g) Invite transfer students to all the welcome weekend events.
 - (i) Don't require them to attend, but invite them.
- ii) Transfer students are requesting more data on job placement during orientation and recruitment.
- iii) Consider having an Accepted Student Day for transfers, just as we do for freshmen.
- iv) The focus groups showed that there is no one perfect duration for transfer orientation. Some students believed that the orientation was a waste of time while others wanted a two day orientation like the freshmen have.

d) Relationships with Community Colleges

- i) Develop faculty-to-faculty relationships with community colleges
 - (1) Community college faculty are more likely to recommend DU if they know the faculty at DU
 - (2) Community college faculty are looking for respect and being treated as equals
 - (3) This recommendation and the following one should take into account the limited time DU faculty have. Faculty should be compensated for doing this or it should be treated as service/committee work that faculty are required to do.
- ii) Develop more articulation agreements with community colleges
 - (1) University wide articulation agreements
 - (2) Department specific articulation agreements
 - (a) Currently these are primarily with departments that have a lot of students.
 - (b) This may be a great recruitment tool for disciplines that have a low number of majors.
- iii) Be more visible in community colleges
 - (1) Guest lectures from DU faculty
 - (2) Visits to corresponding departments by DU faculty
 - (3) More visits by admissions staff
 - (4) More advertising
 - (5) More use of social media
 - (6) Alumni going back to the community colleges to talk to current students (student ambassadors)
 - (7) Offer programming to PTK chapters
- iv) Some colleges to consider
 - (1) Triton
 - (2) Wright
 - (3) College of DuPage
 - (4) College of Lake County
 - (5) Morton

- (6) Moraine Valley
- (7) Harper
- (8) City Colleges of Chicago (should all be considered?)
- v) Explore further a Dual Admission Program at DU
 - (1) Students would be admitted after high school into both a community college and DU.
 - (2) Students would have some perks of being a DU student, even though they may not be taking any courses at DU.
 - (3) Students could possibly take one or two courses at DU while being full time at a community college.
 - (4) Initially consider doing this with Triton, our primary feeder school.
 - (5) Consider the impact on advising, admissions, ...
- vi) Consider implementing more reverse articulation agreements with community colleges allowing students to complete their Associates degrees after they start taking courses at DU. Though this does not directly benefit DU, it benefits the community colleges and could make them more enthusiastic about their students attending DU.
- vii) Have a reception with a community college to build better relationships.
 - (1) We should invite department chairs, appropriate administrators and advising staff from a community college to campus for lunch or a reception.
 - (2) The corresponding DU faculty and staff would also be invited.
 - (3) We should also invite adjunct faculty who also teach at the specified community college.
 - (4) Triton College would be a good starting point for this.
- viii) DU should organize specialized visits to community colleges to visit particular departments that are unique to DU and a few community colleges.
 - (1) Example, visit the Nutrition department and talk to those students.
 - (2) Would work well for Nursing, Nutrition, Apparel, Informatics ...
 - (3) We should have more “active” visits instead of having only “table” visits

e) Other

- i) Honors Program
 - (1) The process for transfers who are recommended to the Honors program needs to be clearer and more cohesive.⁷
- ii) Staffing
 - (1) Hire additional full-time or part-time staff to handle a larger number of transfer students.
 - (a) DU has fewer transfer admissions staff than our peers.
 - (b) However, DU’s number of transfer students per transfer admission staff is lower than our peers.
 - (2) We need additional “touches” with students who have applied
 - (a) Possibly use students or other support staff to do this
 - (b) Additional technology may be helpful
 - (c) More effective use of faculty in the relevant major
 - (3) More professional development opportunities for transfer staff

⁷ Enrollment Management and Honors had a meeting and are moving towards resolving these issues.

- iii) Have a dedicated transcript evaluator, moving that role from the transfer admissions staff to the Registrar's Office. This would allow for official evaluations to be done from the beginning and not have students receiving a variety of unofficial transcript evaluations.
- iv) Cross train all admissions counselors, so that freshmen counselors can meet with transfer students when needed.
- v) Consider admitting students with a GPA above 2.25 instead of the current 2.5⁸.
- vi) Consider provisional admission to some students with a GPA under 2.25, but over 2.0. A student may have had a bad first semester, but then done well. Admit these students, who after a poor start have shown considerable improvement in their last semester or two.
 - (1) If a student is transferring from a four year college after one semester or one year, admit them even if they have a GPA below 2.25, if they would have been admitted as freshmen.
 - (a) Students sometimes have a bad first semester for a variety of reasons.
 - (b) These students would be admitted on a provisional basis.
 - (2) If transfer students have shown evidence of improved grades over their first three semesters, consider giving them provisional acceptance (they currently are put on hold and are more likely to choose another university that gives them admission)
 - (a) Allow them to register for classes, let them know what their financial aid is...
 - (b) If their cumulative GPA reaches 2.25 by the end of their fourth semester at the community college, they are admitted. If not, they are denied.
 - (c) Have a committee that makes quick decisions about provisional admission.
 - (d) Have the process for provisional admission clearly stated on the DU web site.
- vii) Start an alumni chapter of Phi Theta Kappa at DU.
- viii) Class time offerings are a problem for some transfer students.
 - (1) Some want more night classes
 - (2) Some want classes only on particular days of the week
 - (3) Some want more on-line classes
 - (4) Some want traditional class times
 - (5) There is no agreement among the transfer students about what type of schedule would work best.
- ix) Career statistics are often requested by transfer students and are not available.
 - (1) They request job placement, starting salary and internship statistics.
 - (2) These statistics are often requested by major.
- x) Have student mentors for all new transfer students.
 - (1) This should be a student within their major/department who they can relate to.
 - (2) These mentors are probably only needed for the first month.
- xi) Have a website with relevant information for transfer students after they have joined DU. The current web site is more admissions oriented.

4) Adult Students

- a) Though they have come up in conversation often, this advisory group is not going into the details of the adult degree completion student market.
- b) Though these students are normally transfer students, they have different needs than traditional aged transfer students.
- c) This is a growing market, which DU has ignored except for SPCS.

⁸ This might require approval from the Undergraduate Academic Council.

- d) Besides SPCS, we currently do not have majors that can be completed at night/on-line. To succeed in this market we will need some evening/on-line majors
- e) For DU to have an adult friendly program, we probably will need a different core curriculum for these students.

**West Suburban Universities
Fall 2015 Enrollment**

Institution	Total Adult Degree Completion
Aurora	610
Benedictine	692
Concordia	188
Dominican	6
Elmhurst	176
Judson	333
Lewis	632
North Central	NA
Saint Xavier	396
Trinity Christian	284
St. Francis	318
Wheaton	NA

DU market share	0.2%
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5) Input to the Process

- a) Enrollment Management
- b) Faculty
- c) Athletics
- d) Financial Aid
- e) Academic Advising
- f) Dean of Students
- g) Focus groups of currently enrolled transfer students were also organized
 - (1) Of the four focus groups, one was for Nursing majors, one for Nutrition majors and the other two were for all other majors
 - ii) Each focus group was organized for 10 students. Dan Domin ran the focus groups along with two representatives of the working group
 - iii) Students answered some questions on paper and then participated in an open ended discussion
 - iv) \$10 Amazon gift cards were used as an incentive to participate
- h) An electronic survey was used for to gather information from 40 transfer students who were admitted but did not attend DU
 - i) Of the 40 students who responded to the survey, 10 transferred to UIC, 3 each to Lewis and Elmhurst, and 2 each to NIU and North Park. 6 of the students stayed on at community colleges.