

Transfer Symposium 2013: A Campus Conversation about Transfer Student Success: Paper of Proceedings

Introduction

Appalachian's first annual Transfer Symposium was held on Friday, 13th September, 2013, in the Plemmons Student Union. The aim of the symposium was to raise awareness about transfer students and the issues they face, so enabling faculty and staff to better understand the students with whom they work. Particular Symposium goals and objectives were:

- To engage in a conversation about creating an institution-wide vision for transfer students
- To understand why transfer students are important to Appalachian
- To learn who Appalachian's transfer students are
- To learn how to best serve transfer students in and out of the classroom

There were 215 attendees at the Symposium, representing 74 departments from across campus.

Presentations can be found by following this link: <http://transfersymposium.appstate.edu/tool-kit>

Papers and Presentations

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Transfer Student Initiatives at Appalachian

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- Georgia Rhoades, Writing Across the Curriculum

- Owen Sutkowski, Central Piedmont Community College

Brainstorming Activity

Contributions to the Brainstorming session can be seen at <http://transfersymposium.appstate.edu/tool-kit>

Transfer Students: Why they matter at Appalachian

Lori Gonzalez, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

The Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, Lori Gonzalez, began her speech by saying that transfer students will be increasingly important for Appalachian in the years ahead if the university is to maintain its current levels of enrollment. More and more students are choosing non-traditional pathways for their college educations, with many starting out at community college straight from high school with the plan to transfer to a four-year institution at some later time. To meet this demand, Appalachian plans to increase the enrollment of transfer students in the coming years.

The UNC Strategic Plan calls for institutions to develop a seamless transfer process for community college students. This means students are able to transfer without loss of credits. The Strategic Plan also calls for institutions to create a Transfer and Adult Student Success Office on each system campus. This focus on transfer students is the right thing to do. Additionally, one of the measures used in the performance-based funding of the university is the four-year graduation rate for transfer students. As a result of all of these things, services and resources for transfer students at Appalachian will be an important focus in the future. The aim of the Transfer Symposium is to begin a campus conversation about what we as an institution can do to better serve these students so that they are successful in their academic endeavors here.

The Provost acknowledged that Appalachian is already doing a great deal to support transfer students. As an example, she mentioned the Office of Transfer Articulation, which is the only office of its kind in the state, dedicated to improving the transfer experience for students. She noted that Symposium attendees would be able to learn more about some of the great things Appalachian is doing to help transfer students during the afternoon break out sessions.

The Provost concluded by articulating her vision for the future. She noted the need for more articulation agreements between Appalachian and the state's community colleges, with the aim of creating a more seamless transfer for students, and improving graduation rates. The Provost said that to achieve this aim, it was not enough simply to have transfer students enroll at Appalachian, but that the university had to be intentional about providing the support services and engagement activities transfer students needed to be successful here. She also advocated for the creation of Memoranda of Understanding with community college honors programs to ensure that students transferring to Appalachian were recognized.

The Provost thanked the people attending the Transfer Symposium for their commitment to supporting transfer students. 235 faculty, staff and students registered for the event, she said, noting that this was a great response and demonstrated a willingness to collaborate across campus to focus on transfer student success.

Today's Transfer Students: Building a Foundation of Success

Mark Allen Poisel, Vice President for Student Affairs, Georgia Regents University, Augusta

Mark Poisel began the session by posing the question: Are we speaking the same language? Transfer students arrive at the new campus with a range of educational experiences. Poisel, quoting from the work of Handel, made the point that faculty and staff at four-year institutions sometimes assume that transfer students do not need as much assistance as freshmen since they already have some college experience. However, faculty and staff should be aware that transfer students lack the college knowledge that applies specifically to their new institution. An example would be referring to the Schaeffer Center as the Farthing Auditorium: New students would not know that the Center was once called Farthing. Poisel illustrated his point by showing a video clip of two men in a fruit shop. The men were carrying out a conversation using the same words – the names of fruit in the shop – but taking quite different meanings from the exchange.

Poisel observed that more and more students are coming to four-year institutions with college credit, although not all of these students would be considered transfer students. Additionally, students transfer more than once during their higher education experience. Meeting the unique needs of this very diverse group of students is the greatest challenge for institutions. Even students who successfully navigate the transfer process have difficulty with the transition to the new campus. Four-year institutions are increasingly being held accountable for transfer students, with funding based on transfer student retention and graduation rates.

Poisel emphasized the importance of being intentional about support for transfer students. He called on the audience to think in terms of a vision for transfer students. Poisel noted that Appalachian has already implemented a number of programs and initiatives to support transfer students on campus.

In the next section of his presentation, Poisel introduced the four core values he believes are essential for transfer student success: collaboration, advocacy, engagement, and success. Collaboration involves building partnerships between community colleges and Appalachian. These partnerships should involve faculty, staff and students. Faculty at the four-year and two-year institutions should work together to ensure curriculum is aligned. Poisel gave the example of Math classes at a community college that used the same textbook as Math classes at the four-year institution. However, students transferring from the community college were struggling in the next level Math classes when compared to native students. What was the problem? The community college instructors stopped teaching four chapters earlier than their colleagues at the university, leaving a gap in students' Math experience which was very difficult to make up. The best way to overcome barriers like these is to have faculty and staff from both institutions working together on curricula, Poisel said. Quoting from Handel once more, Poisel noted that the transfer pathway is an inter-institutional enterprise. It involves both the community colleges from which students are transferring and the four-year institution to which they are transferring.

In terms of advocacy, Poisel said it was important to establish a transfer-friendly environment at the four-year institution. To achieve this goal, it was important to develop good policies and procedures.

In particular, when creating a new policy, policy makers should think through the potential implications for transfer students, and assess whether there are any unintended consequences of the new policy. The university should have feedback mechanisms in place to make sure any inadvertent consequences that arise from the implementation of new policies are quickly identified and addressed. It is also important to identify the unique concerns that transfer students have. Appalachian should conduct an audit of the transfer culture on campus. For example, Poisel asked whether the university had identified the classes that transfer students tend to struggle with. What could Appalachian do to support students in those classes? Poisel emphasized the importance of telling the transfer story. In particular, he recommended highlighting the successes of transfer students at Appalachian, and asked how that might be achieved here.

Engagement is key to transfer student success. Appalachian needs to engage transfer students as soon as they come here. How can this be achieved? Transfer students are not on the campus as long as native students. They don't have the connections with faculty and staff that their classmates, who came here as freshmen, have. How can the university be more intentional about engaging transfer students? Poisel stressed the importance of first-year programming as a way of engaging transfer students. He also referenced the QEP, with its focus on global learning: For example, what is Appalachian doing to get transfer students involved in study abroad programs? How can the university encourage transfer students to get involved in undergraduate research? Poisel noted the effectiveness of peer mentoring programs in engaging new students. He recommended getting transfer students involved in creating clubs and organizations with a focus on transfer students.

Poisel identified three key, interlinked components to transfer student success: preparation, transition, and progression. Reaching out to students before they transfer is essential if they are to be successful. One way of doing this is to offer transfer fairs for students and their families. Fairs provide opportunities for future students to gain some familiarity with the four-year institution, which will help them when it comes to transition. Transfer student success seminars at the community college level would better prepare students for the four-year institution. Workshops on financial aid and career development are important features of such success seminars. Faculty, staff and students from the four-year institution can join these seminars as guest speakers and so become familiar faces for the community college students once they transfer.

Students require considerable support during their transition to the new campus. Support should go beyond engagement activities in Welcome Week to encompass an assessment of where students are academically. Students can be then helped academically through tutoring programs, or, if necessary, provided with remediation.

In terms of progression, Poisel recommended a careful analysis of the data to determine factors that affect transfer student achievement. Factors to examine include how well students who transfer with a low GPA progress towards graduation, whether attending a late orientation has an impact on progression, or whether attending orientation with parents influences achievement and graduation.

In conclusion, Poisel reiterated the importance of establishing a transfer friendly environment at the university. He stated the need to assess the culture of the campus and what programs were offered for transfer students. He emphasized the imperative of finding out more about transfer students at Appalachian by careful analysis of data and, on the basis of these findings, developing policies and procedures which help transfer students progress towards completion of their degrees. Enhancing student engagement with the campus was also critical. A key factor in transfer student success was the fostering of partnerships between community colleges and the university, with the aim of better preparing students for transfer.

“It takes a university to graduate a student,” Poisel concluded.

Transfer Student Demographics

Heather Langdon, IRAP

Phil Lewis, Jump Start Appalachian

This presentation focused on transfer students at the main Appalachian campus in Boone, using mostly data from Fall 2012. The aim of the presentation was to raise campus awareness of both the numbers of transfer students at Appalachian and of some of the issues they face.

Langdon began by posing the question, What does a transfer student look like? A common perception is that they are older and easy to spot in the classroom. The reality is somewhat different. The only time we can recognize transfer students in a group is at Transfer Orientation. Otherwise, they blend into our classes, and graduate, not as a *transfer* student, but as an *Appalachian* student. However, in the beginning, they are transfer students and, like all new students, have some transitional issues.

As a result of consistent and intentional recruitment efforts, transfer student enrollment at Appalachian has been growing over the years, and is projected to continue growing in the future, although the rate of growth is slowing. In Fall 2013, there were 1,118 new main campus transfer students, the largest number ever. This figure translates to 28% of all new undergraduate students at the main Appalachian campus.

In 2012, 60% of new transfer students transferred from community colleges, with another 39% transferring from four-year institutions. The other 1% of students transferred from institutions with an indiscernible type, such as overseas institutions. There were 22 institutions with 10 or more students transferring to Appalachian, 14 community colleges, and 8 four-year institutions. The list of four-year institutions includes six UNC system schools. Caldwell Community College accounted for almost 10% of new transfers to Appalachian in Fall 2012.

The transfer student population is more diverse than the freshman population. This is important because one of the key goals of Appalachian's strategic plan is to increase the diversity of the student body and the campus as a whole. A common perception is that transfer students are older. However, in Fall 2012, the average age of new transfer students was 21.5, with 58% of new transfers falling in the 18~20 age bracket.

In Fall 2012, 20% of new transfer students enrolled at Appalachian having met the General Education core requirements. 22% of new transfer students had completed their Associate's degree.

Most new transfers come here as sophomores, with the next largest group being juniors. Smaller numbers enter Appalachian as freshmen and seniors. However, if we look at the make-up of the entire Appalachian senior class, we see that 32% of the class began at Appalachian having transferred from another institution. Similarly, 30% of juniors and 20% of sophomores arrived at Appalachian as transfer students.

The top 10 departments in terms of transfer student majors are:

- Art
- Biology
- Communication
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Government and Justice Studies
- HLES
- Management
- Nursing
- Psychology
- Technology and Environmental Design

However, this disguises the fact that there are many transfer students in classes in other disciplines. For example, there were 333 transfer students in Math classes last year, even though Math is not one of the top 10 departments in terms of majors.

Over the years, consistently around 30% of the graduating class is made up of students who arrived here as transfer students. In a graduating class of 3400 students, that means 1021 students. The average time to degree for transfer students is 2.6 years, very similar to the freshman cohorts, who take an average 4.5 years to graduate.

One of Appalachian's Performance Funding goals for transfer students is a four-year graduation rate of 68%. The current rate is 68.8%, so this goal has been met. The equivalent goal for freshman cohorts, the six-year graduation rate, is also 68%. The current freshman rate is 66.1%.

The MAP-Works survey is administered to all new main campus students in Fall and Spring each year. Students' survey responses generate an individualized report the student may view at any time. The student report includes information about Appalachian resources to assist them in resolving potential stumbling blocks. Once a student has completed the survey, a report is also generated for faculty and staff directly connected to that student. This report offers insight into a student's particular struggles, allowing Appalachian professionals to provide timely and targeted support to the student during her or his transition to Appalachian. The survey also allows Appalachian to include institution-specific questions.

The response rate among transfer students to last Fall's survey was 52%. Respondents reported a commitment to and a satisfaction with Appalachian. Most students' self-assessment of their academic behaviors were positive, and most students reported they were happy with their living environment. However, many transfer students reported they were suffering from homesickness and were worried about their families back home. They felt they needed to be there to help out. Many students reported they were worried about their ability to pay for next semester's tuition. Transfer students also gave negative ratings for peer connection and social integration items.

One of the questions on the MW survey asked students: What is the most difficult aspect of being a transfer student at this institution? 48% of comments received referred to the difficulty of meeting people, making friends and getting involved. A frequent comment was that when transfer students join classes, other students already have friendship groups, and it's very difficult to mix in. The literature documents the link between student engagement on campus and persistence: What can we do to help our transfer students integrate socially on campus? Many of the engagement activities offered at Appalachian focus on freshmen; transfer students feel they do not belong at these activities. However, when a transfer student-specific activity is organized, they do show up. During Welcome Weekend this year, Orientation organized a transfer student welcome lunch. 120 students turned up, shared phone numbers, and got connected.

Appalachian State University administers a variety of assessment instruments, for which we are able to identify responses of those who first enrolled as transfer students.

The Graduating Senior Survey is required by the UNC General Administration, and it is administered each spring to all undergraduates who have applied for spring or summer graduation. Transfer student responses on this survey indicate a high satisfaction with the education they receive at Appalachian, as well as their interactions with faculty.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is administered every three to four years to Seniors in the spring term of their last year. On the last administration of NSSE, 49% of transfer students taking the survey reported that they did not work with faculty on activities other than coursework, for example on committees. This compares to 30% for native students. Transfer students tend to be here for a shorter time, so it's harder for them to develop the meaningful relationships with faculty which will help them be successful.

Finish in Four: Academics

Sue Edwards, Biology

Calvin Hall, Communication

Blair Hancock, Wilkes Community College

Paulette Marty, General Education

Initiatives in General Education positively affecting transfer students

Paulette Marty, Director of General Education, outlined four initiatives in General Education that have positively affected transfer students. The first of these, the Wildcard, was instituted when the new General Education Program was first established. Students transferring in with three general education classes in the same perspective, but with one class in a different theme from the others, can use the Wildcard to meet General Education requirements for that perspective.

The second initiative Marty mentioned concerned elective credit. Any student or advisor can petition the Office of General Education to review transfer courses that have transferred in with elective credit. The Office of General Education assigns appropriate credit to these courses to fulfill General Education requirements. When the Office of General Education sees the same course repeatedly, they add the course and general education credit to the transfer articulation tables. They have also gone through the North Carolina Community College course catalog and course catalogs of all UNC system institutions and articulated hundreds of courses for general education credit that previously transferred in as electives. This has impacted students transferring from community colleges and UNC system schools.

Marty also mentioned a policy that was instituted two years ago to grant credit for completion of all General Education requirements to students who hold out-of-state Associates degrees. The Office of General Education compares the coursework that comprises the out-of-state degree with the North Carolina 44 Hour Core. If the degree is equivalent, the student's General Education requirements at Appalachian are deemed complete.

Finally, Marty described a policy instituted last year in which General Education reviews the coursework of students transferring from UNC system schools. If the student completed the general education requirements of their previous UNC institution, their General Education requirements at Appalachian are deemed complete.

Revisions to the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement

Blair Hancock introduced the new Comprehensive Articulation Agreement that will be implemented in North Carolina starting Fall 2014. Instead of the 44-hour Transfer Diploma, the state has decided to create a "Universal 30". All UNC system schools have agreed to these 30 hours of general education classes. Students with the Universal 30 can transfer these as general education to any UNC system institution.

As well as the Universal 30 of general education classes, community college students will take a further 30 hours of pre-major courses to complete an Associate's degree.

These changes to the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement will create challenges for community colleges. A reorientation of many classes will be needed, which will impact faculty staffing. The Universal Transfer Components of the new agreement offer a much-reduced variety of courses. At the community college level, this will result in more sections of fewer classes. For example, Wilkes will have to offer more music and art appreciation sections to meet the humanities/fine arts requirement because other standard humanities courses, such as world religions, foreign language and drama are not included in the new agreement.

Hancock concluded her presentation by stating that some current Appalachian services, such as the Office of Transfer Articulation and Jump Start, had improved the transfer experience for Wilkes students. She said that the ease of communication as a result of these services was enabling both students and community college advisors to get clear, prompt and appropriate responses to questions where, in the past, the students just got “lost”.

The Comprehensive Articulation Agreement from a departmental perspective

Sue Edwards spoke about the meeting held in Raleigh regarding the upcoming changes to the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement. Representatives from each discipline from each of the UNC four-year institutions were invited to join a discussion about General Education and pre-major courses taught at the North Carolina Community Colleges. The group was asked to agree upon which courses each UNC four-year institution would accept. The group managed to agree upon over thirty hours for Biology. However, the final draft of the new changes to the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement has not been approved.

Initiatives in the Communication Department

Calvin Hall told the group how the Communication Department had streamlined things for transfer students, making it easier for students to quickly progress towards completing their major. Firstly, the requirement that students apply to join the department has been removed, enabling students to proceed with classes in their major as soon as they have transferred. Secondly, the Communication Department has created additional sections of the required COM 1200 course, which has been a bottleneck in the past. The additional classes were created online and offered during the summer. The original assumption was that only transfer students would register for these online classes, but in reality, the classes were open to anyone. In summer 2014, these online classes will be restricted to new transfer students.

Social Integration

JJ Brown, Dean of Students

Shannon Brown, Director, Counseling and Advisement Services, Caldwell Community College

Cathy Clark, College Student Development

Shannon Brown opened the discussion by talking about some of the fears and concerns students transferring from two-year institutions have about coming to a four-year institution. Brown noted that many of these fears are the same general ones expressed by freshmen when they first come to the institution: Where can I park? Who am I going to sit with? Where are my classes? Who do I contact if I have a question?

Many of the fears transfer students have are more particular. Advisors at Caldwell Community College conducted a survey of intending transfers to find out what some of these concerns were. Many students worry about the cost of tuition at the four-year institution and how long it will take them to complete their degree. These two are related – the longer it takes to complete a degree, the more it costs. Students also worry about how to balance the demands of work and study.

Another concern for some students is that they lack the information they need to transfer and transition successfully. Many of Appalachian's resources are online and navigating these resources can be a challenge for some, particularly if they do not have access to the internet. They are not sure when applications open, for example, and how much information they should include when asked to complete a criminal background check. Additionally, students worry that they may not be academically prepared for "real" college, and would like to see more pre-advising before transferring so that they are more aware of the steps they will have to take to register for classes. Coupled to this concern is the worry about how their courses will transfer. Students also worry that they do not know how to register for classes.

For some students, the size of the four-year institution is daunting. They worry that they will not get the same support and personal attention as they do at the community college.

Some developmental theories make the link between fear and social integration, arguing that there needs to be a balance between challenge and support for growth to occur. The key is to make sure there is enough support, but also allow for growth and development. How do we achieve this balance? What are the challenges? And what sort of support should we offer?

Cathy Clark gave a student development perspective. Clark observed that transfer students have much broader developmental and social ranges than native students, so a key question is how to get transfer students to feel they belong at the institution. Another question is whether transfer students' fears are different from those of native students. Clark noted that Appalachian has a structure for addressing the common fears that native students have when they come to Appalachian, but that there is no equivalent structure for addressing the fears of transfer students. Another concern is that transfer students have taken different classes in their path to their present courses, classes that, though equivalent, are not exactly the same as those offered at Appalachian. Faculty need to be

aware of this and know how to work with students to overcome obstacles that may arise as a result of this different experience.

Following these presentations, the audience broke into smaller groups to consider how best social integration of transfer students might be facilitated at Appalachian. Discussion points have been grouped into a number of themes for clarity.

Getting connected

Transfer students are more likely than native students to feel isolated at Appalachian because they tend to live off campus, making it more difficult for them to find their place in the university community. This is particularly the case for older students who don't feel connected with the campus. The first semester is especially hard: Students have a lot to do to get organized. Further, there are fewer opportunities for students to make connections when transferring in Spring.

Suggestions for helping transfer students get connected include:

- Creating a Transfer Services Center. The Center would serve as a first point of contact and a place to socialize.
- Texting students, rather than emailing them, may be a more effective means of communication.
- Increasing the number of housing spaces reserved for transfers
- Creating an RA position with responsibilities for students living off-campus
- Holding a transfer student symposium to bring students together and work out strategies to help transfer students get connected on campus

Department level initiatives

Several department-level and in-class initiatives that might help transfer students get connected more quickly were discussed:

- Holding department-level workshops for incoming transfer students, and linking this to the major's club as a way of meeting people in the major
- Having individual meetings between department administrators and new transfer students
- Having program-specific transfer student mentors
- Have small-group activities in class so students quickly get to know each other

Orientation and Advising

It is important to offer a range of orientation experiences to cater to the different needs of students. Some students attending Orientation do not value the experience, believing the day is just something they have to get through. For some students, the one-day orientation is too short. Options include offering:

- A pre-orientation program
- A second chance or refresher orientation
- An extended orientation, occurring in the first two weeks of the semester, and hosted by each college

- A longer day, with more time for students to visit the college and department of their intended major
- Reaching out to students who did not attend Orientation to answer any questions they might have
- Referring students who are still undecided about their major to the Peer Career Center

At the advising level, the need for specific transfer advising was recognized. This need could be met by having a University College advisor who works specifically with transfer students. Students need advice on the GPA requirements of specific colleges. Degree Works is now being made available to transfer students once they are admitted, enabling students to investigate “what if” scenarios.

Online Services

An online one-stop shop would help students living on or off campus find the resources and services they need. It was acknowledged that some students find such websites intimidating. These students need a point person on campus. An alternative suggestion was that these students could attend library workshops to help them get orientated with the technology used on campus.

Transfer Student Initiatives at Appalachian

Phil Lewis, Jump Start Appalachian

Jane Rex, Office of Transfer Articulation

Georgia Rhoades, Writing Across the Curriculum

Owen Sutkowski, Central Piedmont Community College

The key initiatives discussed in this session were: the Office of Transfer Articulation (Jane Rex), Jump Start Appalachian, the Transfer Pre-Orientation Program, the Transfer Services Team (Phil Lewis), and Writing Across the Curriculum (Georgia Rhoades). Owen Sutkowski then assessed the impact of these initiatives on Appalachian's community college partners.

Office of Transfer Articulation (OTA)

The introduction of the new General Education program in 2009 had the unanticipated effect of compromising the seamless transfer that had been available for students transferring from other institutions in North Carolina. Consequently, the Provost at the time convened a task force to identify how Appalachian could better serve transfer students. One of the recommendations of the task force was to create an Office of Transfer Articulation. The Office is the only one of its kind in the UNC system.

As the name suggests, the role of OTA was initially to articulate credit for students transferring to Appalachian. That role has evolved with time as broader needs became apparent. OTA currently works in the following areas:

- The Transfer Advisory Board
The Director of OTA is the chair of the Transfer Advisory Board, a group of Appalachian faculty, staff, and students, as well as representatives from Appalachian's community college partners. The Board addresses issues and concerns relating to transfer students, and recommends initiatives that promote seamless transfer.
- Visiting coursework
- General Education articulation
- The petition process
- Reverse transfer
- Orientation
- Catalog review
- Articulation agreements
- Jump Start Appalachian

To meet the needs of students in the future, OTA is and will be active in the following areas:

- The Transfer Symposium
- The Transfer Services Center, one of the recommendations of the Transfer Services Team
- Discussions about housing of transfer students on campus and in RLCs

- Collaboration with community colleges
- Developing a communication plan for transfer students applying to Appalachian
- Discussions about staff needs, roles and space

Many of the areas OTA is involved with are areas of key interest for the university and it is hoped this will be reflected in the strategic plan.

Jump Start Appalachian

Jump Start Appalachian began as a pilot program in February 2012, and became a permanent program in October 2012. The aim of the program is to assist students from three partner community colleges with the transition to the main Appalachian campus in Boone, so enhancing retention. The program provides opportunities for students to familiarize themselves with the Appalachian campus, and to meet Appalachian faculty, staff and students before they transfer here so that there are some familiar faces when they first come here. Jump Start partners with Caldwell, Central Piedmont and Wilkes Community Colleges. These three colleges provide the largest number of transfer students to Appalachian.

What does Jump Start do? The coordinator and mentors have a presence on partner community college campuses, visiting every two weeks or, in the case of the Watauga campus of Caldwell Community College, every week. The Jump Start coordinator or a Transfer Student Mentor set up a table and answer questions, show students some of the resources available to them at Appalachian, and generally help them navigate Appalachian's website. Jump Start staff also encourage students to friend Jump Start on Facebook so that they can get in touch with existing students who are studying in the same area. The Jump Start Facebook group currently has 220 members, half of them already at Appalachian, and the other half planning to transfer here.

Jump Start is also building relationships with community college faculty and staff. Jump Start staff have presented to faculty and staff meetings, and visited classes to talk about the program. Increasingly, community college counselors and teachers are referring students to the Jump Start table on visit days, or reaching out via email with questions.

Jump Start also offers students tours of the Appalachian campus, focusing on departments in which students have an interest, and providing opportunities for them to meet other students and faculty in that department.

Jump Start maintains regular contact with students once they are admitted, via email and facebook. Staff email out reminders and information about upcoming events, and find answers to any questions students might have. Staff also maintain contact with students once they transfer here, offering on-going support, helping students find the resources they need to be successful at Appalachian.

The Transfer Student Mentors are the heart of the Jump Start program. These are all students who have transferred from the partner community colleges. The mentors reach out to admitted students

with regular emails and via facebook. They meet students for coffee when needed. They arrange visits to games and, last year, organized a Thanksgiving potluck lunch. They are also the guides for campus tours. The mentors also play a role at Orientation, and during the Transfer Pre-Orientation Program.

Transfer Pre-Orientation Program (T-POP)

T-POP was a trial program in April 2013. It is a collaboration between Orientation and Jump Start, with help from Advising, OTA, Student Development, Financial Aid and Student Accounts. The aim of the program was to prepare transfer students admitted for Summer and Fall 2013 for registration and orientation. The day was scheduled just before registration for classes opened.

There was some skepticism that transfer students would want to attend an extra day in addition to the required Orientation. For this reason, Nikki Crees (Orientation) negotiated some incentives for attending with the Office of Admissions and the Registrar's Office. Students who attended the day had their \$200 deposit waived, and were allowed to register for classes a few days in advance of other transfer students. The two days were oversubscribed within two weeks of registration for the event opening. In the end, 120 students attended, from a range of community colleges and four-year institutions.

The schedule for the day included presentations from student accounts, financial aid and the Counseling Center. There was a rotation of workshops on how students' credit would transfer, how to register for classes, Degree Works, and the importance of getting involved on campus. There was also a Q&A panel with the transfer student mentors, a campus tour, and an opportunity to get Appcards.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 97% of respondents saying the day was helpful and informative.

Transfer Services Team

The Transfer Services Team was charged by the Provost in March 2013 with identifying the services and resources that should be available to transfer students at Appalachian. The team researched 45 institutions across the country to find out what they were doing to support transfer students. These 45 institutions were selected because they were UNC system schools, or Appalachian's peer or aspirational peer institutions, or were recognized by the College Board as institutions of best practice for transfer student services.

One of the key recommendations of the Team was to create a Transfer Services Center. The UNC Strategic Plan calls for all system schools to create a Transfer and Adult Student Success Center. The Team's vision for such a center is that it should serve as a welcoming first point of contact for transfer students. It should be a one-stop shop for transfer students, a place where they can go for mentoring and advice, and assistance in connecting with the resources they need to be successful at Appalachian. The Center should be a "home" for transfer students, a place where they can meet people, make friends and develop a sense of community.

Another key recommendation was to create an online one-stop services site for transfer students. There is a wide range of web-based resources available to students transferring to Appalachian. The resources are scattered, and their appearance as a hit in a search depends on the search term used. A one-stop services site for transfer students would enable students to quickly find the resources they need. Additionally, a one-stop site might prompt transfer students to investigate other available resources.

The Team also recommended expanding the Jump Start program to include the top 10 partner community colleges in terms of numbers of students transferring to Appalachian. Nine of these 10 colleges are relatively close to Appalachian, so Jump Start could continue to offer programming in the way it currently does.

Additionally, the Team recommended improving on-campus housing options for transfer students. This year, there are more on-campus housing places for transfer students than ever before. Transfer students are housed in two RLCs, on two transfer-themed floors, and in random assignments across campus. Research suggests that transfer students living in RLCs achieve better and have higher retention rates. This has implications for performance-based funding at Appalachian, with one of the measures being the transfer student retention and graduation rate.

The Team also recommended expanding the Transfer Pre-Orientation Program. There is a T-POP event planned for November for students admitted for Spring 2014.

The full report of the Transfer Services Team is available on the Tool Kit page of the Transfer Symposium website.

Writing Across the Curriculum

The Writing Across the Curriculum Program was formed in 2008, based on dialogue between faculty in Composition and the disciplines. The unified writing curriculum provided by the new Gen Ed curriculum requires undergraduates to enroll in a dedicated writing course each year, with the second Composition course, ENG 2001 Intro to Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), as a pivotal course in which students learn about writing in the university, writing in various academic genre with different documentation styles, and becoming rhetoricians who can adapt to new writing and reading contexts in all fields. WAC sponsors the first conversations about writing across the disciplines at Appalachian, with the goal of aiding transfer of skills and knowledge across the curriculum.

At the same time, Georgia Rhoades, the WAC director, was concerned that the new ENG 2001 course would pose difficulties for students transferring to Appalachian, especially those from community colleges. With Beth Carroll, the Writing Center director, and Kim Gunter, the Composition director, WAC began conversations with community college faculty about their teaching of ENG 113 and the possibility of adapting ENG 112 and 114 for WAC courses which could be accepted for ENG 2001 credit at Appalachian. As a result, we were able to accept

proposals from Caldwell, Wilkes, and Mitchell Community College, and eventually many other WAC-related courses.

In 2009, WAC began Writing Across Institutions, a conference designed specifically for community college writing faculty. In its 6th year, the conference has had faculty participating from 10 institutions and keynote speakers including John Zubizarreta, Dee James, Beth Carroll, Mary Anne Maier, and Kim Gunter. Community college writing faculty participate in panels on a variety of subjects and are enthusiastic about the community that has been created. This year WAC hopes to focus on STEM writing and has invited Patrick Bahls as the speaker.

For information about WAC, including workshops we can offer at community college campuses, please contact Georgia Rhoades (rhoadesgd@appstate.edu).

The impact of these initiatives on community college partners

Owen Sutsowski made four points regarding the impact of these initiatives on students at Central Piedmont Community College:

1. It is important that community college students applying to transfer to a four-year institution make a connection with someone at the four-year institution as soon as possible. Usually, contact is made with an admissions counselor. Jump Start allows students to make connections with both students and staff.
2. OTA and its website make it very easy for community college counselors and students to find equivalent courses.
3. A Transfer Services Center would be a useful one-stop resource for both students and staff at community colleges.
4. Some two-year transfer students do not finish their degree before transferring. Reverse transfer allows these students to complete their degree and meet Appalachian's General Education requirements.