

Office of Academic Advising NEWSLETTER

April 2023



Student Resources

Supplemental Instruction

by Sarah Cotner

Messiah University offers many great academic resources to help with student success. For “high-risk courses,” or subjects considered to be notoriously hard for students like BIOL185, CHEM103, CHEM204, CHEM309, MATH211, and NURS310, a helpful resource called supplemental instruction (SI) is offered to students.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is offered to any student enrolled in a “high-risk course,” whether they are struggling or not. SI sessions are collaborative and use many different learning techniques to help students master the course content. SI leaders are specially trained students who have already successfully completed the course. These leaders attend selected class lectures, take notes, read course material, then plan and conduct two review sessions out of class each week. SI leaders can also help students prepare for upcoming assessments by providing mock exams. These mock exams help students prepare by giving them practice questions that are similar to something they might see on the actual exam. The rationale is then given for each question to help students understand the best answer.

While these sessions are not required, it is highly recommended for students. SI is extremely beneficial and will give students the chance to review and gain a better understanding of the material learned in class. Statistical data suggests that students who regularly attend SI sessions earn ½ to a full letter grade higher compared to students who do not. If you are a professor of a “high-risk course, encourage your students to attend and participate in these helpful supplemental instruction sessions.

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Supporting Community
College Transfer Students
at Four-Year Institutions



Important dates

- April 7-10: Easter Break**
- April 9: Easter**
- April 13: Service Day**
- April 22: Earth Day**
- April 28: Last Day of Classes**

Article Review

Supporting Community College Transfer Students at Four-Year Institutions

Author: Anna Peace | Article link [here](#)

Reviewed by Samie Tan

“Supporting transfer students must be a commitment across higher education” according to Anna Peace (2022) from Ball State University. Based on research done back in 2016, almost half of the students who completed their baccalaureate degree in a four-year institution were transfer students and had been enrolled in a community college at some point before completing their four-year degree program. In this article, Peace talks about the importance of fostering a “transfer receptive culture”, a theoretical framework by Jain et al. (2011) that “encourages a commitment by four-year universities to support transfer students from community college through graduation with a baccalaureate degree” (Peace, 2022) to ensure student success.

There are five elements central to this framework, (a) establish transferring students as high priority, (b) create resources regarding transfer-specific needs, (c) provide financial and academic support, (d) recognize students’ unique experiences and intersectional identities, and (e) assess transfer programs and student outcomes frequently. Peace talks about what four-year institutions should consider, like barriers, academic advising, course articulation, campus partnership, campus resources, and advocacies that would allow their programs to incorporate these elements in their processes to reduce barriers, promote student success, and center equity.

Some of the barriers transfer students face are “Advising, credit loss, financial aid, and stigma” (Peace, 2022). Therefore, it is important that both transfer-sending and transfer-receptive institutions work together to guide and support students making the transition. In relation to this is academic advising; “Advisors are well-positioned to learn students’ needs, refer individuals to resources, and advocate for meaningful change” (Peace, 2022). Advisors in these four-year institutions are expected to provide accurate information to transfer students regarding transfer policies, timelines, registration procedures, program expectations, and even campus resources. Students left to self-advice or to figure out campus resources on their own can miss critical information that could lead to longer pathways to graduation. Beyond providing information, academic advisors should also act as emotional support to transfer students and make sure they feel “welcome, heard, and valued” in their new university (Peace, 2022).

Course articulation is also another important factor to consider in making sure institutions foster a “transfer receptive culture”. According to Peace (2022) “Students who transferred almost all their community college credits were 2.5 times more likely to attain a baccalaureate degree than those who transferred fewer than half of their credits”. Thus, institutions should consider building systems that have centralized transfer advisors who work with academic departments on course articulations to support equity and success for these transfer students.

Creating connections between transfer-sending and transfer-receiving institutions and advisors results in a smoother transfer experience for students. Advisors from both sides should share admissions processes, tuition costs, scholarship opportunities, and course requirements to clarify and bolster transfer pathways.

Lastly, since advisors are uniquely positioned to individually connect with students, they could also play a role in advocating for policy changes that could better support student success. That is why advising, according to Peace, should be “relational” as students rely on the advisors’ help in navigating through the complex systems of higher education. In those complex systems could be policies that unintentionally harm students, and advisors can be advocates to change those policies.

When institutions let the “transfer receptive culture” foster and flourish: diversity, equity, and inclusion are realized.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Monaghan and Attewell (2014) found fewer than 60% of community college students were able to transfer most of their credits and approximately 15% of students transferred almost no credits.

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Office of Academic Advising

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Important Updates

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Verse of the Month

1 Peter 1:3

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

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