

Transfer Student Ad Hoc Committee Report

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The following brief report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the Transfer Student Ad Hoc Committee that met to evaluate IU Northwest's current and suggested practices regarding transfer student services and recruitment. Appendix A contains a table of current and suggested practices regarding transfer student services and recruitment, organized thematically. The status of each of these practices is indicated as in process; as needing further research or resources; or as needing a review of current practice and policy. Additionally, practices recommended by the committee are indicated in this Appendix along with our recommendations as to which units might take ownership or collaborate to move the process forward.

Four specific recommendations were considered to be of high importance and we call your attention to these items in the bullets below. Further details on these items and other items discussed are provided in the narrative that follows.

- **Developing Recruiting/Marketing targeted to the transfer student population**
- **Enrichment/Intensification of relationship with Ivy Tech Community College (ITCC)**
- **Increase Military/Veteran Support Services**
- **Develop a central admission process for returning students**

Recruitment and Marketing

Recruitment

A recruitment plan directed specifically toward transfer students will best meet the needs of this market and lead us forward in achieving enrollment goals. Prospective transfer students search for academic degree programs that meet their career goals and ascertain how many credits will be accepted toward achieving that degree. IU Northwest needs to increase the accessibility to that information via web pages designed specifically to transfer students, including links to online unofficial credit evaluation tools. Marketing messages and recruitment methods/events can capitalize on how we can meet these needs. To kick off our new initiative, a Transfer Open House, with Chancellor Lowe, representatives from Admissions, Financial Aid and academic colleges and schools, will be held on Saturday, November 5.

Ivy Tech Community College is our largest provider of transfer students, and our academic relationship and recruitment presence should be further developed. Subscribing to *Phi Theta Kappa*, the community college honorary would provide us with a greater web presence and an opportunity to access names of community college students, including those at ITCC, who are achieving their associate degrees. Developing a stronger working relationship with the eight *Work One* sites in northwest Indiana could also provide a conduit to transfer students. Many unemployed workers have associate or bachelor degrees but want to change careers.

In order to avoid the appearance of targeting specifically the students at other campuses, IU Northwest should develop materials that focus on those individuals who have existing college credits and who wish to complete their degrees at IU Northwest. This tactic allows us to reach more broadly to those students who may have earned credit years ago but who are not currently enrolled in college, as well as those who may be attending college elsewhere. We should also develop materials focused specifically on students who are pursuing associate degrees at local two-year institutions. The Office of Marketing and Communication (OMC) is developing marketing materials in support of the Transfer Student Open House on Nov. 5 as part of the campus's initial push to attract prospective transfer students in a more purposeful manner.

Focus Groups and Marketing Plan

Recruitment-focused marketing is an essential piece of the university's effort to increase its number of transfer students, and Marketing and Communications will develop a marketing plan specifically tailored to reach that market. As part of our development of this plan, OMC is working with Admissions to conduct several focus groups with current transfer students to determine why they chose to transfer to IU Northwest, where they transferred from, what they liked about their experience, and what could have been improved. We will also ask them to fill out a formal survey that will gather additional demographic information about them, and which may be sent to all other transfer students at our campus (See Appendix B for survey draft). Once this information has been analyzed, OMC will draft a formal marketing plan for transfer recruitment. The focus group meetings are scheduled for the week of Oct. 24.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

It is the Committee's opinion that developing scholarship and/or book voucher opportunities for transfer students will play a major role in attracting a transfer student population. It is also the Committee's recommendation that those scholarships and or vouchers be tied to a GPA Requirement.

In determining the viability of financing transfer students, several factors will need to be considered. How much is the university willing to invest in each student? The average transfer scholarship offered to students at comparable universities ranges between \$2000-\$4000 per academic year. This is based on a GPA of 2.5 or above with admission into a degree-seeking program. Also to consider is assuming the debt the students will bring with them. Federal Regulations state that the last school the student attends assumes the loan debt that the student has accumulated. This could negatively affect our default rate if the student does not complete their degree program and or repay their student loans.

Administrative/Personnel

To provide better and faster official evaluation of transfer credits, the Office of Admissions should develop a transfer specialist position, fully implement technology available for our SIS and utilize the Indiana Higher Education Commission's transfer initiatives including the recently adopted College Source Transfer Evaluation System which is both student- and institution- friendly. Transfer credit

guides should be published on the web and in paper form and provided to transfer centers or transfer advisors at local community colleges. The majority of these items are in process or being researched.

Currently, students who stopped out of IU Northwest and want to return must contact their previous academic department for re-entry. If they want to change their major, they are directed to complete paperwork and are then sent to the new academic unit. There is no centralized policy on asking about requiring transcripts from other institutions, sometimes resulting in transfer students enrolling in courses for which they would have been awarded transfer credit had Admissions been given an opportunity to evaluate the credit in a timely fashion. The working Committee is recommending development of a centralized re-entry process and location for returning students to prevent the office bounce and to provide efficient and effective conversion of credit. This could follow the IUPUI model for returning students.

The Working Group recommends additional research into grants to fund transition/support programs for transfer students. Possibilities may include Lumina or Gates Foundation grants.

Online Learning

Increasing online learning opportunities for all IU Northwest students is a significant effort for the 2011-12 academic year. A new training and grant program, available through CISTL, should increase the number and quality of courses available for the 2012-13 academic year. The Committee believes that transfer students would certainly be interested in and benefit from this increase in online course availability. Additionally there may be an opportunity to develop transfer student grants/scholarships, where online offerings play a significant role. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the Committee recommends that the campus consider developing an online orientation program (for transfer and other students) as an option for those who cannot attend in person and as an additional resource for students who can attend. Beginning in the fall of 2012, orientation will become mandatory for first-year students, and the addition of an online option would be of great benefit. Transfer students especially should appreciate this option as they have likely already been through first year orientation elsewhere and have different needs than the general student cohort.

Military Veterans

IU Northwest would do well to become known as a “military-friendly” campus, for the practical reason that veteran students are a growing population, who have access to GI Bill educational funding. Evaluating military credit toward a degree can be challenging and complex, but IU Northwest should commit the time and effort needed to create military-friendly policies and practices, so that reasonable earned credit can be conveyed to students who are veterans.

In order to assist with the above process, we recommend hiring a veteran consultant (preferably a current student veteran) in the Registrar’s Office. Funding such a position can be done through the VA, but IU Northwest previously did not pursue that opportunity. We now recommend that it be pursued. To clearly demonstrate military-friendliness, we recommend that the campus create a webpage focused on veterans. That webpage needs to address the questions that veterans have and provide answers that veterans want and need to hear. Another way that military-friendliness might be

conveyed is for the campus to integrate veteran students into the ROTC program to make that program stronger and to involve veteran students more directly in campus life. In addition, Student Services might consider establishing a Veteran Students Group/Club and offering transition counseling/support programs.

	Status:	In Process	Request Resources	Recommend	Research Further	Review Practices & Policies	Events	Responsible Unit
Category:								
<u>Recruitment/Marketing</u>								
Develop a recruitment plan for transfer students including special events and a CRM campaign		X		X	X			Adms & OMC
Develop a marketing plan for transfer students based, in part, on focus group results		X		X	X			OMC & Adms
Hold separate focus groups with new transfer students and faculty		X		X			X	OMC & Adms
Adopt new College Source Transfer Evaluation System (TES):better info for faculty, prospects, advisors, Admissions		X		X				Adms
Subscribe to Phi Theta Kappa (CC honorary): purchase names, increase presence on web			X	X	X			Adms
Offer a transfer/adult student open house		X		X			X	Adms
Explore transfer agreements with ITCC					X	X		AA
Have a greater presence at ITCC campuses		X		X				AA & Adms
Consider dual admission at ITCC and IUN					X	X		Executive
Develop/have transfer equivalency guides available at community college visits		X		X				Adms
Develop transfer friendly webpages with transfer equivalency links		X		X				Adms & IT
Enhance relationship with Work One sites		X		X				Adms
<u>Financial Aid/Scholarships</u>								
Investigate grants to help offset tuition, books			X	X	X			Grant Office
Offer scholarships: for individual programs, associate degree holders, high GPA's			X	X	X	X		Scholarship WG & Exec

	Status:	In Process	Request Resources	Recommend	Research Further	Review Practices & Policies	Events	Responsible Unit
Category:								
<u>Administrative/Personnel</u>								
Fully automate SIS transfer credit evaluation to include all top feeder schools		X		X		X		Adms
Develop a transfer specialist position in Office of Admissions			X	X	X			Adms
Re-admit (centrally) returning students who have not enrolled for more than 2 years to better assess credit and ease transfer among academic units				X		X		Exec & AA
Investigate grants to fund transition/support programs transfer students				X	X			Grant Office
<u>Online Learning</u>								
Explore benefits of online learning for transfer students				X	X			AA
Investigate grants/funding for transfer students taking courses online only					X			Exec & Grant Office
<u>Military Related</u>								
Revisit military credit evaluation policy/practice				X	X	X		AA & Adms
Develop transition programs/organizations for veterans and their families; apply for grants			X	X	X			SS, Grant Office
Develop a webpage for veterans with info on military services, counseling, credit eval, clubs				X	X	X		Adms, SS, IT, Registrar
Provide a veteran consultant (current student Veteran) in Registrar's Office-VA funded		X		X	X			Registrar
Key: AA=Academic Affairs; Adms=Admissions; Exec=Executive level; IT=UITS/Webmaster; OMC=Marketing & Communications; SS=Student Services								



INDIANA UNIVERSITY
NORTHWEST

Transfer Student Survey

Date _____

Session # _____

1. Name: _____

2. Student ID # or IU Network Username: _____

3. Age: _____

4. Address: _____

5. High School Attended: _____

6. College Major(s): _____

7. Prior Colleges or Universities: (If more than one, please list in order attended, starting with the most recent. Include dates attended and degrees earned.)

8. Reason for Transferring to IU Northwest: _____

9. Estimated graduation date: _____

