Exploring Community College Students' Transfer Experiences and Perceptions and What They Believe Administration Can Do to Improve Their Experiences

Kimberly Young Walker & Comfort Okpala

Exploring Community College Students' Transfer Experiences and Perceptions and What They Believe Administration Can Do to Improve Their Experiences

Kimberly Young Walker
Comfort Okpala

Abstract. This study explored the interconnectedness of the transfer student experience and used it as a foundational framework to inform the administrative leadership on a North Carolina, midsized, historically Black college of the existing transfer students' experiences. This study focused on (a) how transfer students at a midsized historically Black college and university (HBCU) describe their experiences, (b) how transfer students described the factors that affected their retention, and (c) what transfer students believed that university administrative leadership could do to ensure their retention. Twelve transferred students participated in the study. The findings from the qualitative analysis show that (a) students are aware of the differences that exist between themselves and native students and desire for administration to recognize those differences, (b) they desire more resources tailored to their needs as transfer students, and (c) they have substantial academic and non-academic barriers that need to be recognized by those who regularly come into contact with the transfer population.

Keywords. community college transfer students; nontraditional student barriers; transfer student retention; leadership; transfer student experience

Introduction

In the community college, instructors witness firsthand the difficulties faced by dedicated, well-meaning students who encounter unexpected setbacks when trying to transfer into the four-year institution. A real-life example is the story of student "A." Student "A" attended a local community college before transferring to a local historically Black university approximately 30 from his home. Upon arriving he encountered unforeseen issues regarding course registration, financial aid, and housing. He was unaware of how to seek help and was considered a freshman; thus, provided inaccurate and unhelpful information. In addition, he was funneled into an advisement system that was not designed for students who had transferred into the university. This student, ultimately, transferred back into the community college.

The lack of transfer student support programs and initiatives at the university level can be difficult for some transfer students (Blaylock & Bresciani, 2011). There are a number of reasons that there are few types of support available to the transfer student population, including budgetary issues for the university (Webster & Showers, 2011), lack of understanding as to how the transfer student population

Kimberly Young Walker, PhD, is Program Manager, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, Columbia, SC. **Comfort Okpala,** EdD, is Chair and Professor, Department of Leadership Studies, School of Education, North Carolina A & T State University, Greensboro, NC. Address correspondence to Kimberly Young Walker, PhD, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, 1122 Lady Street, Suite 300, Columbia, SC 29201, USA (E-mail:youngkb@mailbox.sc.edu).
Color versions of one or more of the figures in this article can be found online at www.tandfonline.com/ujch.

can be assisted (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2012), and misguided mandates and laws that seek to increase the transfer student population but do not necessarily provide the correct, research-based guidelines (Poch & Wolverton, 2006).

Transfer students are not receiving the types of support that they need and oftentimes university resources are diverted toward first-time, full-time freshman students (Townsend & Wilson, 2006). Given that transfer students tend to be more diverse and nontraditional in a number of ways that include age, familial status, and work status (Lester, Leonard, & Mathias, 2013; Tobolowsky & Cox, 2012), they are in need of unique types of programs and assistance that may not adhere to the traditional application of established retention models (Monroe, 2006).

Given the aforementioned findings, the richest information regarding assistance for transfer students tends to come from the voices of transfer students (Blaylock & Bresciani, 2011; Jackson, 2013; Lester et al., 2013; Monroe, 2006; Reyes, 2011; Tipton & Bender, 2006; Townsend & Wilson, 2006). Because administrators express the desire to assist the population, but do not necessarily know how (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2012), there may be some benefit to university administrative leadership if transfer students were able to inform them of what best practices, programs, and initiatives they believe could contribute to their retention and persistence from semester to semester.

Research Questions

The questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. How do transfer students at a midsized historically Black college and university (HBCU) describe their experiences?
2. How do transfer students describe what they believe are the factors affecting their retention?
3. What do transfer students' believe university administrative leadership can do to ensure their retention?

Theoretical Framework and Background Literature

Tinto's Model of Student Retention

Traditional models of student retention have not been capable of helping to retain the transfer student population to a degree that is considered acceptable. The argument has been that transfer students do not fit the traditional student expectations and cannot be retained using traditional schools of thought; thus, models of nontraditional student

retention have been formulated to address the perceived weaknesses of existing student retention models (Bean & Metzner, 1985; MacKinnon-Slaney, 1994; Naretto, 1995). However, the issue may not be the models themselves as much as how they are being applied. Arguably, however, the answer is not to create more exclusive theoretical models but to use the models in existence through a more inclusive lens.

Vincent Tinto's "Model of Institutional Departure" (1993) provides comprehensive information that explores the various interwoven factors that impact whether or not students persist in the university. Tinto's dimensions of institutional action (1993) maintain that the persistence of the student is influenced by the university; specifically, the commitment to students—overall, the educational commitment to students, and the integration of all students into the social and intellectual communities. Depending upon the university and the student type, other aspects of student retention have to be taken into consideration, including whether or not the student is a part of underrepresented groups (Tinto, 1988), the non-academic factors that can impact student retention (Tinto, Russo, & Kadel, 1994), and how multiple levels of individuals in the institution can improve persistence (Tinto, 2006). Tinto's theory (2006) suggests that institutions can understand what works for their students and take specific actions to contribute to their persistence. Tinto's model provides a theoretical lens for understanding how the needs and marginalization of the transfer student at the four-year university can be acknowledged and addressed utilizing a well-established model for retention.

Transfer Student Diversity

In *Rationalizing Neglect: An Institutional Response to Transfer Students*, Tobolowsky and Cox (2012) specifically address how the transfer student is so varied that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach that can meet the needs of such a diverse group. The literature considers the diversity of the transfer population in a multitude of ways that include race, gender, program of study, and engagement. The broad range of students encompassed in the transfer population tends to be a source of conversation in the literature—specifically, what that diversity looks like at specific institutions and eventually what that diversity means for each institution's ability to accommodate, assist, and retain the population.

Contributing to Transfer Student Success

Transfer student success is a broad term that can describe any number of achievements on the part of the university or the student. For these purposes it is used to

guide the conversation regarding how to assist transfer students in becoming acclimated to their new surroundings and the number of ways that transfer students can be helped to persist from semester to semester. Transfer students tend to be an extremely diverse group of individuals that require unique assistance once they arrive at the four-year university (Jackson, 2013; Kodama, 2002; Lester et al., 2013; Tobolowsky & Cox, 2012). In addition, transfer students express that the programs, initiatives, and experiences that contribute to their success include having peer mentors (Blaylock & Bresciani, 2011; Tipton & Bender, 2006); having university mentors (Reyes, 2011); and having access to appropriate information, tools, and instructors (Monroe, 2006).

Non-academic Barriers to Transfer Student Success

Duggan and Pickering (2008) found that the true barriers for transfer student academic success and retention are most often non-academic factors. Barriers to transfer student success include the cost of attending a university and the required financial commitment (Palmer, 2013), the resources available to them while they were high school students (McGlynn, 2013), the number of course credits that a university accepts from the student's community college, family obligations, and work obligations (Doyle, 2006). Goldrick-Rab and Pfeffer (2009) and Wang (2009) state that non-cognitive factors are more likely to be barriers to student success. Transfer students also experience a lack of engagement, issues with financial aid due to retaking courses, and the amount of aid used prior to transfer (Miller, 2013).

Best Practices for Administrative Leadership and University Officials

According to Tobolowsky and Cox (2012) university administrators and staff are fully aware of the transfer student population, the issues that they face, and that their needs are not being met by the university. However, those same individuals expressed that they were unsure how to help the transfer student population due to its diversity; thus, they opted to do very little or nothing at all. This sentiment was echoed in the findings of Poch and Wolverton (2006). Administrators expressed that the traditional freshman population was extremely predictable; thus, most initiatives are aimed at that particular population.

There also needs to be an established partnership between community colleges and four-year universities in order to ensure that transfer students are able to have their needs met both academically and socially (Kisker, 2007). These partnerships are influenced by a number of factors, including having presidential support, adequate funding, previously established relationships, and university presence on community college campuses. The governance and management of a partnership program must be a collaborative effort with administrators from the community college and university as well as multiple levels of staff and faculty. The university should be proactive and creative in developing retention programs that benefit the transfer student population (Luo, Williams, & Vieweg, 2007). The success of such a partnership can be seen in the course created by Tipton and Bender (2006). The students in their study benefited greatly from a partnership that transcended the traditional notion of collaboration. The students received tremendous support from mentors, librarians, faculty, as well as administration.

Methodology

A specific type of qualitative research—phenomenology—was used to explore the perceptions and experiences of transfer students regarding their retention and what the transfer students believe university administrators should do in order to improve their retention at a four-year, midsized, historically Black university in the state of North Carolina. The goal of the phenomenological strategy is to understand the essence of a lived experienced shared by a group of individuals in an effort to articulate what the individuals have in common in regards to the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology focuses on shared meanings between individuals. These perceptions influence their lives and, effectively, represent their realities (Blummer, 1969).

The non-probability technique of snowball sampling was used in order to ensure that the selected participants were an accurate representation of the transfer student population that existed on the university's campus. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, the transfer population at this institution would be considered "nontraditional" in both age

Figure 1. Participant demographics: Age.

Participant Age

42%	18-25
34%	26-33
8%	34-41
8%	42-49
8%	50+
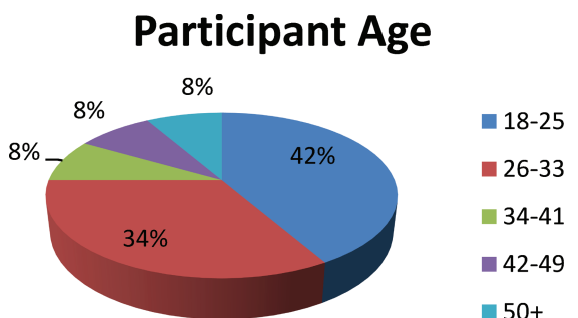
Although the sample was relatively small, it was important that the sample be as diverse as possible in order to properly represent the possible types of transfer students in attendance at the institution.

**Figure 2.** Participant demographics: Marital status.
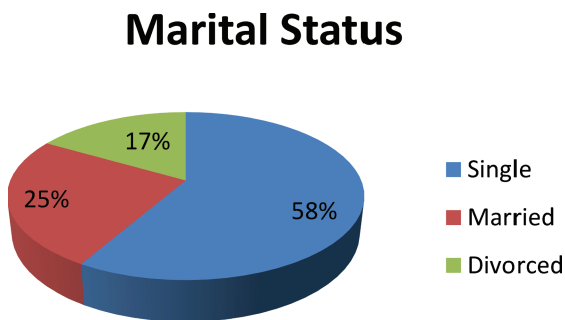
Marital Status

and marital status. In addition—as shown in Figure 3— a significant number of the participants were enrolled at this university beyond the standard two additional years that have been historically associated with transferring into a four-year university from a two-year college.

Each of the 12 participants engaged in at least one semi-structured interview guided by previously established research questions. The specific interview questions were broad; thus, allowing the interviewees to guide the discussion and additional questions based on their experiences. These interviews consisted of 30-minute to 60-minute (or more) telephone conversations that were recorded. Using Moustakas' (1994) horizonalization method, the recorded—and ultimately transcribed—semi-structured interviews were reviewed in order to highlight important statements, language, or participant quotes. This information was arranged into thematic clusters with significant meaning in order to write a description of the participants' experiences.

The trustworthiness of this study included triangulation, thick and rich description, allowing participants to review transcribed interviews for accuracy, and adherence to the Institutional Review Board process. Triangulation occurred by using both the semi-structured in-depth one-on-one interviews in addition to follow-up interviews

Figure 3. Participant demographics: Years enrolled in current institution.

Years Enrolled in Current Institution
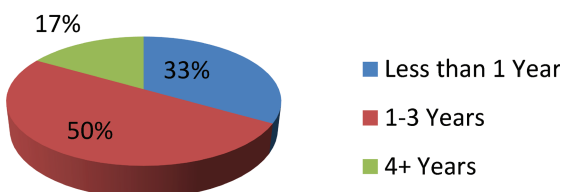
with the participants who chose to have a second conversation or needed a continuation of the first conversation in addition to the follow-up interview.
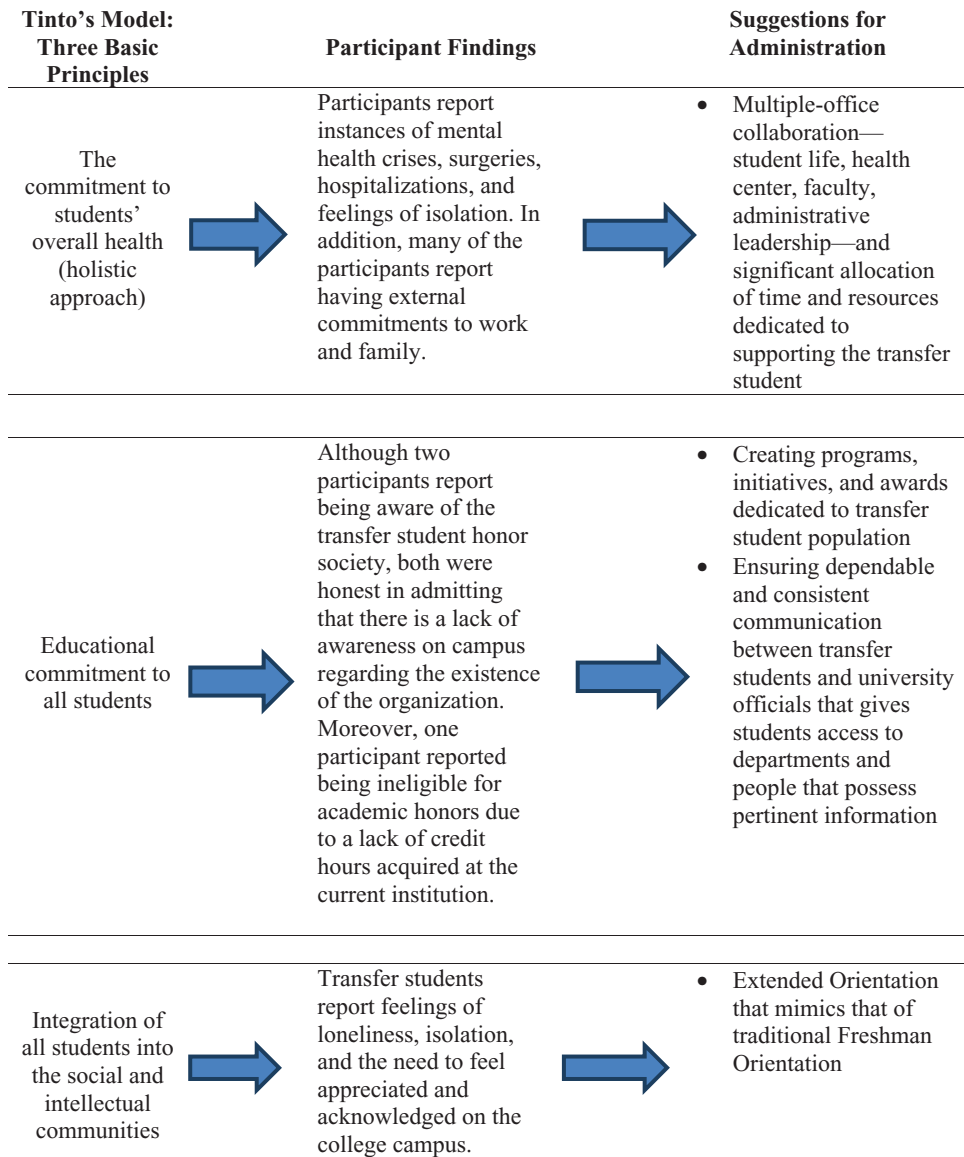
Major Findings

After interviewing the participants and conversing with them regarding their individual experiences and what they believed administrators needed to know about those experiences, several themes emerged. Three of the themes mentioned in the literature were repeatedly addressed by the transfer students. Participants referred to the themes either directly or indirectly in relation to their own experiences at the university. The themes that were mentioned by students were their *diversity*, their need for more *resources*, and the a*cademic and non-academic barriers*. The final theme that is addressed is the *suggestions for administrators*, and this was a direct question posed in order to have the students explicitly state what they needed in regards to their overall experiences and their challenges. As seen in Figure 4, the major findings were then aligned with the three basic principles of Tinto's Model of Institutional Departure (Tinto et al., 1994).

Transfer Student Diversity

As noted by Tobolowsky and Cox (2012), there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach that universities can implement for the transfer student. The diversity that exists within the population is highly varied and must be addressed based on the institutions' individual population. The students in this sample ranged in age from 18 to mid-fifties and had attended both universities and community colleges across the state and in one other state. In addition, the participants were asked how they differed from traditional and native students and several of the participants immediately mentioned more than one way that they differed from the traditional or native student in tangible ways that impacted their academic experience. The different experiences impacted how they perceived the university community and their academic experiences.

The students are fully aware of how they differ from the traditional students and can identify specific ways in which they differ; however, the transfer students are seemingly unaware of the extent to which they differ between one another. These differences were only revealed as students began to detail their lives, families, and outside experiences. Their differences demonstrate the concerns espoused in the literature regarding the sheer number of variables that impact the transfer population—age, gender, dependents, marital status, level of engagement— and demonstrate the

Figure 4. Theoretical orientation and results alignment.

Tinto's Model: Three Basic Principles	Participant Findings	Suggestions for Administration
The commitment to students' overall health (holistic approach)	Participants report instances of mental health crises, surgeries, hospitalizations, and feelings of isolation. In addition, many of the participants report having external commitments to work and family.	• Multiple-office collaboration—student life, health center, faculty, administrative leadership—and significant allocation of time and resources dedicated to supporting the transfer student
Educational commitment to all students	Although two participants report being aware of the transfer student honor society, both were honest in admitting that there is a lack of awareness on campus regarding the existence of the organization. Moreover, one participant reported being ineligible for academic honors due to a lack of credit hours acquired at the current institution.	• Creating programs, initiatives, and awards dedicated to transfer student population • Ensuring dependable and consistent communication between transfer students and university officials that gives students access to departments and people that possess pertinent information
Integration of all students into the social and intellectual communities	Transfer students report feelings of loneliness, isolation, and the need to feel appreciated and acknowledged on the college campus.	• Extended Orientation that mimics that of traditional Freshman Orientation

level of difficulty associated with administrators accommodating these students (Fann, 2013; Kisker, 2007; Miller, 2013; Poch & Wolverton, 2006; Roach, 2009; Strempel, 2013; Tobolowsky & Cox, 2012; Townsend, 2008).

One participant described her differences from native students as a source of frustration that left her feeling behind some of her peers and classmates:

Traditional students have a head start. They know the lingo that pertains and is used regarding their majors. They are already using the technological aspects, some to their fullest potential. As a transfer student, I find myself playing catch-up. A large portion of my classmates since my enrollment are well-advanced when it comes to the technological side of my major, journalism. I feel like an outsider. Though I will be graduating next year, I don't feel as if I am getting the full experience of what is offered. I feel somewhat cheated and left out. (Individual Interview, April 24, 2015)

Another participant focused on feelings of isolation and invisibility as a transfer as opposed to a native student.

… because it's like you come in with your group of people when you first come in as a freshman.

You know everybody that you came in with, you all go to almost the same classes. So as a transfer student you're just kind of, like, thrown in there. You know, thrown into the number. (Individual Interview, March 26, 2015)

Several participants—like the two students just quoted—reported feeling implicitly different and separate from their native counterparts. This perspective lends itself to Tinto's (1993) focus on integrating a student into the entire university both socially and academically. The aforementioned participants expressed that the university had failed to successfully integrate them for both categories.

Resources Available to Transfer Students

Transfer students will frequently have different needs from their native counterparts; however, those needs are seemingly being unmet in ways that may be substantially impacting some transfer students. Several of the participants discussed issues addressed in the literature, including the university's inability to appropriately orient them to their new academic environment (Townsend & Wilson, 2006); quality of advisement (Allen, Smith, & Muehleck, 2013); accessibility of departments and people when problems arise (Monroe, 2006); and transfer students' desires to be treated as experienced students with a need for additional orientation on the new campus as opposed to first-year students (Townsend, 2008).

One participant explained that the resources that were available were lacking and she felt there needed to be more attention given to the transfer student population overall.

> Like I said before with the transfer orientation they could have… they could have done it more. They could have a… I don't know if they do but if they do have a department just for transfer students they need to be more open with keeping up with transfer students. I don't think [the university] does. I may be wrong but if they don't they need to create one to make sure transfer students have everything they need to stay on track and to graduate. (Individual Interview, April 14, 2015)

While describing discrepancies in advisement, another student articulated her frustration by detailing her experiences when attempting to enroll in courses that should have been transferred in from her associate's degree.

> … I'm going to see what [another university within the same city] will accept. I said if they will accept more of my courses, I said [this university] can kiss me goodbye for the fall because it don't make no sense to me to have to take it over. I have gotten student loans that I got to pay back…. (Individual Interview, April 3, 2015)

Tinto (1993) suggests that educational institutions should have an educational commitment to all of its students; however, the aforementioned students felt that the commitment was lacking both academically and financially. Moreover, the lack of resources dedicated solely to the needs of transfer students was notable in that it impacted several aspects of their retention and persistence.

Barriers to Successful Matriculation

The feelings of exacerbation, however, are not solely based on a lack of access to resources and guidance. The participants mentioned a number of barriers that impacted their experiences at the university. As found in the literature, transfer student barriers to success tend to be almost entirely non-academic factors (Duggan & Pickering, 2008). This finding tended to be supported by the participants; however, many mentioned having barriers that were related to the university in general or specifically concerns in the classroom.

Even though the participants' specific barriers varied tremendously, the majority of the barriers faced by the students fell into several broad categories—working, familial requirements, illness, social isolation—that are, arguably, not faced by their native counterparts to the same extent. These non-academic factors that are barriers for transfer students support the findings of the literature (Doyle, 2006; Goldrick-Rab & Pfeffer, 2009; Palmer, 2013; Wang, 2009).

One participant expressed extreme frustration when it came to work requirements interfering with academic requirements.

> … I work third shift. My hours are from 9:00 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. Some days, I found myself up for 24 to 36 hours without any sleep attempting to meet deadlines. One professor would not accept my work because it was one hour late. I attempted to explain to him that my hours are not normal working hours. He refused to accept my work. He stated, "I don't care if it's a minute late. I don't want it." (Individual Interview, April 24, 2015)

While describing the necessary time management and multitasking that was required for an average day's successful operation, another participant revealed why the familial obligations would sometimes usurp the academic requirements.

> … Being that I already purchased a house, I live in a different city, I can't live, I have a family, I have bills, I commute 45 minutes a day each way back and forth to school. So those are serious external factors. If I just lived on campus and went to class it would be a piece of cake, but I have bills to pay and I have to try to get loans and manage all of that… everybody depends on me…. (Individual Interview, March 26, 2015)

Holistic student focus includes students' mental and physical health. Tinto's Model of Institutional Departure (1993) ascertains that students need institutions to take them into consideration as a whole person and not just the student aspect. As demonstrated by the participants just quoted, familial and work obligations can sometimes obscure the educational goals. When that happens, the university could have programs in place to assist these students if there is awareness regarding the potential for the aforementioned concerns.

Suggestions for University Administrators

After sharing the details of their transfer experience at their current university, 11 out of the 12 participants offered suggestions or comments to administrative leadership for improving the transfer experience. There were a wide range of responses from the participants, most of which suggested the students were interested in being better understood and accommodated accordingly.

One participant's statement—though brief—gave a detailed summation of her experiences.

> Overall, there is work to be done in making sure that transfer students feel a part of the student body. I feel as if I am dangling out here on my own. (Individual Interview, April 24, 2015)

A simple plea for awareness was the only concern that another participant wanted to share with her university administrators.

> … I guess, like, the challenges… they need to be aware of the challenges so they can help. (Individual Interview, April 6, 2015)

Another participant thought that her experience could be improved although she, generally, viewed the school positively.

> I mean, I'm enjoying the college. I love it. It's a great experience for me personally so what I would love for them to know is that… we need a little bit more, like I said, recognition, a little bit more acknowledgment that we are actually here and we're doing just as much work as the other kids. (Individual Interview, April 6, 2015)

Implications

Policy

As noted by Poch and Wolverton (2006), the issues regarding transfer students cannot be mandated into success. If this were the case, North Carolina's current articulation agreement should effectively solve all issues related to credit-hour transfer. The transfer students dispelled this notion when they referenced the unfair acceptance of credit hours and having to retake several courses that were similar to previous courses from the community college in content, title, and academic requirements. In addition, one participant noted how a colleague was able to transfer in more credit hours although they had come into the same major and from the same community college. These types of discrepancies cannot be legislatively handled. They must be addressed at the university level with consistent communication among the university officials, the administration, the schools and colleges, the departments, and the faculty. Essentially, a communication "superhighway" must be built to effectively ensure that the mandates outlined in the articulation agreement are adhered to by those who complete the day-to-day task of transcript evaluation and transfer-credit acceptance decisions.

Moreover, there are state policy implications for this study. As Fann (2013) noted, there needs to be incentive for both the community colleges and the universities to graduate transfer students. Regarding fiscal credits, the only students who are counted as completions (those who obtain the bachelor's degree) at the university are students who began as first-time, full-time freshmen at the same institution (Fann, 2013). Essentially, transfer students are not financially motivating for community colleges if they transfer prior to completing the associate's degree and they are not financially motivating for the university if they do not begin and end their educational endeavors at the same institution. This indicates that neither community colleges nor universities are rewarded for the efforts that

are put into the transfer population. There may be a greater willingness to assist the population in more tangible ways if the institutional evaluation and accountability measures included the success of transfer students (Fann, 2013).

Practice

One of the most important practices that needs to be addressed is the quality of advisement (Allen et al., 2013) for students transferring from the community college into the university. Several participants mentioned being ill-advised regarding what courses to take at both the community college and the university. One participant mentioned that she had been advised to both enroll and to not enroll in the same course in order to complete her major. She found this especially frustrating as she had communicated with the university prior to transferring and still received conflicting information from her community college advisors and the university advisors. This miscommunication contributed to the participant being transferred into the university as a sophomore despite having graduated from her community college with an associate's degree.

The issue of communication and miscommunication was a recurring theme throughout the interview process. Participants expressed extreme frustrations in relation to the lack of communication that occurred between them and advisors, between the community college and the university, and between individual departments regarding the transfer students. For instance, one participant mentioned arriving to orientation and the transfer advisor being unable to register the students because the advisor was provided inaccurate information regarding the number of transfer students that would be in attendance for this major. What appears to be a slight miscommunication for departments can become frustrating academic barriers for students. Administrative leaders should be aware of the miscommunications that take place and make a concerted effort to ensure that not only are lines of communication open, but that communication be as accurate as possible to reduce the amount of confusion that students encounter within their university.

According to Harper-Marinick and Swarhout (2012), transfer students in Arizona are more successful due to the collaboration of public university systems, community colleges, and tribal colleges. This would suggest that effective communication extends beyond the university itself. The transfer students need for the community colleges and universities to be in consistent communication and agreement regarding what is acceptable for credit transfer, what the current needs are for the students, and how each unit can do their part to ensure a smooth transition into the

university (Kisker, 2007). The system should be structured in ways that are beneficial to transfers, accessible, and understood by students. However, in order for a system to work in a way that is beneficial and easily understandable, there must be significant and consistent communication that demonstrates a collaborative effort to improve the existing transfer process.

Leadership

Currently, on this particular university campus, there is a need for leadership who is willing to listen to the needs of the transfer students in regards to how the students can be successful long-term in their university. It is imperative that these students are able to reach their full potential while pursuing their bachelor's degrees. In order to achieve the aforementioned success, I recommend that leaders enact a leadership style known as transformational leadership (Northouse, 2010). The term *transformational leadership* tends to invoke the symbolism of "larger than life" figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King Jr.; however, the administrative leaders do not need to be historical martyr figures in order to assist the transfer students. They simply need to follow the four basic principles of this leadership style, which are being inspirational and motivational, intellectual, considerate, and being a role model.

Inspiration and motivation are necessary for the transfer students to feel important on the university campus. One manner in which these students can feel inspired and motivated is by allowing them to interact with faculty and staff who were once transfer students themselves. Reyes (2011) refers to this assistive tactic as providing students with university mentors. Allowing this level of interaction can act as encouragement to students who may be experiencing what is known as "transfer shock" (Fann, 2013). It is the initial adjustment period for transfer students as they learn to become familiar with the campus culture and academic rigor of their new institution. Having a mature university guide who is familiar with the students' current predicament can ease the potentially overwhelming adjustment period. The provision of mentors—both peer and university representatives—can also fulfill the necessity of the role modeling component of transformational leadership.

The intellectual component of transformational leadership does not refer to intellect in terms of one's IQ. This leadership style refers to the ability to think (Northouse, 2010). This is especially important as administrative leadership strategizes ideas about improving the success of the transfer population on the campus. Coupled with the necessity of improving communication practices

across institutional barriers, this ability to think—perhaps creatively—could allow administrative leaders to implement this aspect of transformational leadership in a manner that has implications for both the community college and the university in their efforts to assist transfer students. The intellectual component cannot be effectively applied without the consideration for the transfer population itself. The consideration for the transfer student, arguably, is the most important factor when applying the transformational style of leadership to addressing the transfer students' issues. It is possible, but not probable, that the afore-mentioned implications can be successfully implemented without considering the issues, barriers, needs, and desires of the transfer student population.

References

Allen, J., Smith, C., Muehleck, J. (2013). What kinds of advising are important to community college pre and post-transfer students? *Community College Review, 41*(4), 330–345.

Bean, J. P., & Metzner, B. S. (1985). A conceptual model of nontraditional student attrition. *Review of Educational Research, 55*, 485–540.

Blaylock, R., & Bresciani, M. (2011). Exploring the success of transfer programs for community college students. *Research and Practice in Assessment, 5*(2), 43–61.

Blummer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Doyle, W. (2006). Community college transfers and college graduation: Whose choices matter most? *Change, 38*(3), 56–58.

Duggan, M., & Pickering, J. (2008). Barriers to transfer student academic success and retention. *College Student Retention, 9*(4), 437–459.

Fann, A. (2013). Campus administrator and student perspectives for improving transfer policy and practice. *New Directions for Higher Education, 162*, 27–38. doi:10.1002/he.20054

Goldrick-Rab, S., & Pfeffer, F. (2009). Beyond access: Explaining socio-economic differences in college transfer. *Sociology of Education, 82*(2), 101–125.

Harper-Marinick, M., & Swarhout, J. (2012). Developing a culture of transfer and student success in Arizona. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 160*, 79–89. doi:10.1002/cc

Jackson, L. (2013). A balancing act: Impacting and initiating the success of African-American female community college transfer students in STEM into the HBCU environment. *The Journal of Negro Education, 82*(3), 255–271.

Kisker, C. (2007). Creating and sustaining community college-university partnerships. *Community College Review, 34*(4), 282–301.

Kodama, C. (2002). Marginality of transfer commuter students. *NASPA Journal, 39*(3), 233–250.

Lester, J., Leonard, J., & Mathias, D. (2013). Transfer student engagement: Blurring of social and academic engagement. *Community College Review, 41*(3), 202–222.

Luo, M., Williams, J., & Vieweg, B. (2007). Transitioning transfer students: Interactive factors that influence first-year retention. *College and University, 83*(2), 8–19.

MacKinnon-Slaney, F. (1994). The adult persistence in learning model. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 72*(3), 268–275.

McGlynn, A. (2013). Creating better pathways for minority student transfer. *The Education Digest, 78*(7), 60–64.

Miller, A. (2013). Institutional practices that facilitate bachelor's degree completion for transfer students. *New Directions for Higher Education, 162*, 39–50. doi:10.1002/he.20055

Monroe, A. (2006). Non-traditional transfer student attrition. *The Community College Enterprise, 12*(2), 33–54.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Naretto, J. (1995). Adult student retention: The influence of internal and external communities. *NASPA Journal, 32*(2), 90–97.

Northouse, P. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Palmer, D. (2013). College administrators as public servants. *Public Administration Review, 73*(3), 441–451. doi:10.1111/puar.12037

Poch, S., & Wolverton, M. (2006). Transfer student graduation efficiency and university administrators: New bedfellows. *Innovative Higher Education, 30*(4), 233–250.

Reyes, M. (2011). Unique challenges for women of color in STEM transferring from community colleges to universities. *Harvard Educational Review, 81*(2), 241–262.

Roach, R. (2009). The community college transfer challenge: Boosting student transfers from community

colleges to four-year institutions is a matter of getting all the right policies and programs in place. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education, 26*(7), 14–15.

Strempel, E. (2013). Fostering a transfer student receptive ecosystem. *Planning for Higher Education Journal, 41*(4), 12–17.

Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of student departure: Reflections on the longitudinal character of student leaving. *Journal of Higher Education, 59*, 438–455.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (2006). Researcher and practice of student retention: What next? *College Student Retention, 8*(1), 1–19.

Tinto, V., Russo, P., & Kadel, S. (1994). Constructing educational communities: Increasing retention in challenging circumstances. *Community College Journal, 64*(4), 26–30.

Tipton, R., & Bender, P. (2006). From failure to success: Working with under-prepared transfer students. *Reference Services Review, 34*(3), 389–404.

Tobolowsky, B., & Cox, B. (2012). Rationalizing neglect: An institutional response to transfer students. *The Journal of Higher Education, 83*(3), 389–410.

Townsend, B. (2008). "Feeling like a freshman again": The transfer student transition. *New Directions for Higher Education, 144*, 69–77. doi:10.1002/he.327

Townsend, B., & Wilson, K. (2006). "A hand hold for a little bit": Factors facilitating the success of community college transfer students to a large research university. *Journal of College Student Development, 47*(4), 439–456.

Wang, X. (2009). Baccalaureate attainment and college persistence of community college transfer students at four-year institutions. *Research in Higher Education, 50*, 570–588.

Webster, A., & Showers, V. (2011). Measuring predictors of student retention rates. *American Journal of Economics and Business Administration, 3*(2), 301–311.