

**CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
EXECUTIVE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
APRIL 2019**

**DEVELOPING A TRANSFER AND TRANSITION CENTER**

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## **I. ABSTRACT**

As part of the Division of Academic and Student Life Work Plan, the Office of the Provost convened a Transfer Students Work Group in fall 2017; this group recommended the development of a transfer center in their report submitted on June 1, 2018. This draft report summarizes significant findings of an on-campus study conducted from January 7, 2019 through February 8, 2019, to determine how to establish a successful Transfer & Transition Center at Central Washington University.

Proposal: develop coordinated university-wide efforts supporting student success through all stages of the transfer student experience: from preparation before admission, through transition into the university, progressing to graduation and beyond. The development of a Transfer & Transition Center will support the best undergraduate experience for students through collaborative partnerships, offering quality programs, services, and resources that foster students' academic preparation, smooth transition, and progress toward graduation.

## **II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Establishing a Transfer and Transition Center at CWU will address the three primary issues affecting transfer student success:

- Preparation: help for students before they transfer,
- Transition: support and services during their first term(s) at CWU, and
- Progression: provide support, a solid foundation, and timely interventions.

A five-week study of current practices at CWU, through meetings and interviews with internal and external stakeholders whose responsibilities involve the broad spectrum of transfer issues (from admissions, through enrollment, to graduation), identified significant roadblocks and processes that threaten or reduce CWU's ability to recruit, retain, and graduate transfer students. While many of the issues are being addressed in new and recent efforts, this study has highlighted those of specific relevance to creating a Transfer & Transition Center.

The CWU Transfer & Transition Center will support the best undergraduate experience for students through collaborative partnerships, offering quality programs, services, and resources that foster students' academic preparation, smooth transition, and progress toward graduation.

The center director and staff will coordinate university-wide efforts supporting student success by improving communications relating to transfer processes, partnering with internal and external stakeholders to identify and rectify roadblocks faced by various constituencies, and proposing collaborative solutions to promote transfer student success. Efforts to recruit, enroll, and retain transfer students should begin with establishing strong working relationships with partner/feeder colleges, bolstering CWU's position as a prime transfer-receiving institution. The critical pre-admission advising and personal connections with CWU staff are essential elements in transfer student success and will augment CWU's enrollment efforts, enhancing the university's reputation as a transfer friendly and supportive institution, while assuring that all CWU's transfer efforts are coordinated.

One-, three-, and five-year plans present both an action plan and flexibility in implementing and shaping the development of the center. All efforts are grounded in collaboration with internal (all CWU stakeholders in transfer student success) and external (community college and high school) partners. Enhancing communications and relationship building are the Transfer & Transition Center's first year priorities. Early developments should include:

- developing a CWU transfer website to serve as a hub for CWU resources, a one-stop guide for information relating to transferring to CWU
- establishing a Transfer Experience Committee to assure that coordinated, ongoing, university-wide communication and collaboration to enhance transfer student success proceed according to the broadest concerns and needs of the university
- establishing effective working relationships with colleagues at CWU's primary sending institutions

Immediate renewed attention to establishing and fostering relationships at the highest institutional levels (president to president, provost to provost, vice-president to vice-president), is critical to developing new strategies for collaboration to improve transfer pathways.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **REVIEW: CURRENT PRACTICES AT CWU**

Interviews and meetings with significant university and university partner stakeholders to review model transfer programs and the current status of transfer processes at CWU are the foundation for many of the recommendations contained in this report. There is significant agreement that a Transfer & Transition Center, collaborating across the university and with community college partners will enhance internal and external working relationships as well as the transfer student experience at CWU, leading to improved student success and progress to graduation.

Appendix 1: Current CWU Practices, Background Reports

#### **BEST PRACTICES RESEARCH**

Best practices models and current research indicate that the most successful transfer and transition programs are built on the model presented to CWU stakeholders, initiated in 1999 at the University of Central Florida, nationally recognized and widely implemented in universities and colleges across the United States.

A survey of the current literature and best practices in the field of transfer services and a review of current State of Washington transfer rules, regulations, and practices provided additional insight. The most significant and relevant new research emphasizes institutional partnerships: collaboration fostered by university and college presidents, who commit staff and resources to support shared efforts on behalf of transfer student success. CWU's partnerships with community colleges are critical to successfully recruiting and retaining transfer students, to maintaining collaboration at the University Center sites, and to moving forward with the state's bachelor's degree completion efforts.

Appendix 2: Best Practices Research, Resources

## IV. PROPOSAL OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

The proposal's objectives and goals, as defined in *Transfer and Transition Center: Development, Design & Implementation, Provost update December 4, 2018*:

**Objectives:** provide recommendations that will improve the transfer student experience in three specific stages:

- **Preparation:** help for students before they transfer: Collaborating with university and community college partners, the Transfer & Transition Center will create and deliver comprehensive, quality programming and services to assure that students are academically prepared to transfer to CWU.
- **Transition:** support and services during their first term(s) CWU: The Transfer & Transition Center will partner across the university community, providing comprehensive advising and quality programs, services, and resources to assure that students experience a smooth and seamless transition to CWU, their department, and their major.
- **Progression:** provide support, a solid foundation, and timely interventions: The Transfer & Transition Center will build partnerships and create collaborative programming to assure that transfer students are academically successful, retained, and graduate.

**Preferred measurable program outcomes:**

- Retention: Increase first year persistence of entering transfer students from 82% in fall 2017 (2016 cohort) to 85% in Fall 2024 (fall 2023 cohort).
- Progression & Graduation Goal: Increase the institutional graduation rates of transfer students by 2-3% percentage points by Fall 2024.

## V. FINDINGS

**Washington State trends:** Implementation of Guided Pathways will require strong institutional relationships between CWU and community college partners for the university to be competitive in recruiting transfer students. Intensifying competition for transfer student and online enrollment and increasing state pressure to foster degree completion avenues will require institutional commitment and coordinated attention to resolve specific recruitment and retention threats identified by stakeholders.

### **Threats Identified by CWU Stakeholders**

Internal and external stakeholders, involved across the broad spectrum of transfer issues, identified significant roadblocks and processes that threaten or reduce CWU's ability to recruit, retain, and graduate transfer students, including

- inadequate institutional relationships at all levels to foster internal communication and information-sharing
- inadequate partnerships to promote and support transfer academic readiness
- the paucity of clear inter-institutional pathways to degree completion and processes related to the evaluation of transfer credit
- access to consistent, reliable data resources
- limited attention to policy regarding the assessment of prior learning

**Communications:** Major communications problems include inconsistent internal information and gaps in information-sharing, inadequate staff training, inadequate advising resources, and limited online resources to address difficulties finding information relevant to transfer. An example of inter-institutional communications difficulties was raised in a meeting with Yakima Valley Community College (dean, faculty member, and staff). Working relationships function well at the “front line” level, but minimal communication among top administrators and the lack of data related to shared endeavors hamper collaboration on a grant project.

**Transfer Credit:** Constituents (students, faculty, and staff) identified process problems associated with articulation, and transfer credit evaluation that include confusion about transfer pathways, delays in determining course equivalencies, and delays in the application of transfer credit to degree specific programs. Poor timing of transfer credit evaluation due to process difficulties (including timing expectations, limited technologies, need for faculty assessment of course work, competitor universities) delay transfer student registration in first term classes, negatively impacting students’ decisions to enroll or increasing time to degree completion. Inadequate planning to address issues related to transfer and credit for prior learning.

**Pre-admission Advising:** Inadequate pre-admission academic and transfer advising at both the community colleges and at CWU result in poor academic preparation for transfer: lacking early guidance, students make poor choices in general education and prerequisite courses and late decisions in choosing their major. Lack of staffing, inadequate training, fragmented assignment of advising responsibilities, and inconsistent information resources contribute to poor preparation for transfer, resulting in extended time to degree completion or students’ decision not to enroll at CWU. Students expressed many common concerns. Currently enrolled transfers indicated that more readily accessible information and people to assist as they were preparing to transfer would have eased their process; more staff help with information on majors, how to prepare for admission and the transition, transferring financial aid, and estimating the overall cost to graduation were other common complaints. Prospective transfer students, in interviews expressed similar worries: how to get more information about the transfer process, how to arrange meeting/talking with someone who could answer their questions, how to transfer credits, how many credits will transfer, and how their credits apply to their chosen degree program, what they should be doing to prepare for transfer and the transition to a new school, how to pay for the next two years, housing concerns, and other similar transfer issues.

**Data Resources:** A paucity of transfer data resources and related issues impose significant restrictions on CWU stakeholders’ reporting and decision making abilities: problematics include structural issues involving the collection, storage, analysis, and dissemination of transfer data; the inconsistent definition of “transfer” affecting the kinds of data collected, for what purposes, and by whom; uncertain availability of data for internal and external needs, information critical to support advising and retention programming; and inconsistent information sharing.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

*The development of the Transfer & Transition Center will support the best undergraduate experience for transfer students through enhanced communications and collaborative partnerships, offering quality programs, services, and resources that foster students’ academic preparation, smooth transition, and progress toward graduation.*

**Recommendation:** Establish the **Transfer & Transition Center**, whose director is responsible for coordinating aspects of transfer-related processes, partnering with internal and external stakeholders to identify roadblocks faced by various constituencies, and proposing collaborative solutions. In year one, the director should develop a long-term strategic transfer plan aligned with CWU's goals. One-, three-, and five-year plans are proposed here, recognizing that establishing fully coordinated, university-wide efforts to enhance transfer student success will take time and significant planning and implementation adjustments. Position descriptions are also attached. In addition to the immediate hire of an experienced transfer specialist professional, it is strongly recommended that first year hiring include peer mentor transfer student(s) as part-time support staff; experienced in the transfer process, trained in front line duties, they connect well with prospective and enrolled students, especially those new to CWU who are looking for information and a connection.

#### Appendix 3: Roles, Responsibilities, Plans

**Recommendation:** Immediate renewed **attention to establishing and fostering relationships** at the highest institutional levels (president to president, provost to provost, vice president to vice president), developing new strategies for collaboration to improve transfer pathways. Research and model transfer programs throughout the US emphasize strong partnerships between sending and receiving institutions as the foundation for successful transfer pathways. Internal and external partnerships are essential to a transfer center's success, and should be the director's first focus.

#### Appendix 4: Best Practices - Collaboration

**Recommendation:** Create a **new comprehensive transfer web site** to serve as an information hub for transfer issues, serving as a resource for potential transfer students, advisors at community colleges, parents, and CWU staff and faculty. Collaboration with relevant stakeholders is crucial to assure relevant, reliable, and accessible information. The T&TC director would be responsible for coordinating information and assuring the website is always up to date.

#### Addendum 5: Best Practices Web Resources

**Recommendation:** Establish a **university-wide Transfer Experience Committee**, charged by the Provost; membership to include all relevant CWU stakeholders; organized and coordinated through the Transfer & Transition Center to assure that transfer student success remains a primary CWU focus and progress continues toward meeting the university's strategic goals. Development in year one would assure that coordinated, ongoing, university-wide communication and collaboration to enhance transfer student success proceed according to the broadest concerns and needs of the university and students. Agendas for meetings, proposed by any members, could include currently relevant transfer issues, concerns, problems, policies, academic and administrative updates, etc.

#### Appendix 6: Transfer Experience Committee Rationale

**Recommendation:** In year one, organize the first of an **annual series of mini-conferences/symposia** for purposes of information sharing and networking among partners on behalf of transfer student success and to improve communications.

Such meetings provide opportunities for networking; identifying inter-institutional areas of concern and relevance to staff, transferring students, and faculty (e.g., curriculum alignment issues); and highlighting statewide policies and practices (e.g., Guided Pathways progress).

Modeled loosely on the successful 2018 Finish Grant Symposium, a collaboration between CWU-Yakima Center and Yakima Valley Community College, the 2019 workshop could be a conduit for introducing the new Transfer & Transition Center and director, and for sharing information on the implementation of CWU General Education program changes and the implications for advising students at CWU's partnering community colleges.

#### Addendum 7: Year One Transfer Symposium

**Recommendation:** Consider **reconfiguration of transfer orientations** to enhance the transfer experience: making it mandatory; enhancing alternative modes of delivery (web, video, telephone advising, more personal contacts, etc.), and providing more opportunities for transfer students to attend on-campus sessions. While the current transfer orientation process meets the needs of many students, particularly those attending the University Centers, those attending the Ellensburg campus identified many areas of concern. Current timing has been identified by many (currently enrolled and alumni transfers) as inadequate to meet transfer students transition needs: many who attend later sessions cannot register for classes (in the major) because seats are no longer available. Transfers also identified other areas they would improve: wanting more information about building locations, services and resources, connections, and opportunities for engagement, among others.

An assessment of orientation for online students was not part of this project. Given the growing numbers of students attending and completing programs of study online, this is an arena that will need significant future review of policies and practices to assure that student support is equivalent to those attending a physical location.

In addition to orientation, pre-admission open house events for transfer students and their parents several times a year would ally many of these concerns. All day programming might include: campus tours designed for transfers; programming that addresses admission and credit transfer processes, financial aid, academics and preparing for majors, housing, and student clubs and organizations and internship potential.

#### Addendum 8: Transfer Orientation and Transfer Open House Program Options

**Recommendation: Data Resources:** Consistent high quality data, shared among relevant stakeholders, are essential to assess and develop programming that meets the needs of transfer and online students. CWU should develop consistent mechanisms and processes for coordinated transfer-related data gathering, analysis, and dissemination; identify university stakeholders to meet bi-quarterly, to identify and select the most pertinent transfer indicators relevant to various stakeholders' purposes; review current transfer data collection practices; and identify and fund CWU resources to collect, analyze, and disseminate relevant transfer data.

#### Appendix 9 – Issues Concerning Transfer Data Needs

## VII. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1– CURRENT CWU PRACTICES AND BACKGROUND REPORTS

Schedule of Interviews/Meetings with CWU and Partnering-institution Stakeholders

Model Program Presentation: “Transfer and Transition Services: A Model Program”

CWU Background Reports

CWU Extended Learning and Outreach Strategic Plan 2018

University Centers Work Group Report, Report to the Provost, May 2018

Transfer Students Work Group Progress Report, June 2018

Transfer and Transition Center: Development, Design & Implementation, Report to the Provost,  
Update: December 2018

Strategic Enrollment Steering Committee, January 24, 2019 Meeting Agenda

### APPENDIX 2 – BEST PRACTICES RESEARCH, RESOURCES, MODEL PROGRAMS

Publications

The Aspen Institute, Community College Research Center, (2018). The Transfer Playbook: Essential Practices for Two- and Four-Year Colleges. *Baccalaureate Institutions Guided Pathways Convening*, February 4, 2019.

Yeh, T.L., Wetzstein, L. (2019). The Dynamic Nature of Transfer Partnerships: Catalysts and Barriers to Collaboration. *Community College Research Initiatives: Transfer Partnership Series*, January 2019.

Yeh, T.L., Wetzstein, L. (2019). Transfer Partnerships: The Importance of a Culture of Collaboration. *Community College Research Initiatives: Transfer Partnership Series*, January 2019.

Washington State Four Transfer Resources on Guided Pathways, Transfer

University of Central Florida Model Program Outline/History

University of Central Florida Transfer and Transition Services 2013 Program Summary

Foundations of Excellence, John Gardner Institute, <https://www.jngi.org/foundations-of-excellence/>

DirectConnect2UCF, <http://directconnecttoucf.com>

### APPENDIX 3 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, PLANS

CWU Transfer & Transition Center Director Roles and Responsibilities

CWU Transfer & Transition Center Position Description: Director, Transfer & Transition Center

CWU Transfer & Transition Center One-, Three-, and Five- Year Plans

Sample Strategic Plan, University of Central Florida Transfer and Transition Services

CWU Peer Mentor Sample Position Descriptions

University of Central Florida Peer Program Overview, Position Descriptions

## **APPENDIX 4 – BEST PRACTICES – COLLABORATION**

Publications (Hard copy in Appendix 2)

The Aspen Institute, Community College Research Center, (2018). *The Transfer Playbook: Essential Practices for Two- and Four-Year Colleges. Baccalaureate Institutions Guided Pathways Convening*, February 4, 2019.

Yeh, T.L., Wetzstein, L. (2019). *The Dynamic Nature of Transfer Partnerships: Catalysts and Barriers to Collaboration. Community College Research Initiatives: Transfer Partnership Series*, January 2019.

Yeh, T.L., Wetzstein, L. (2019). *Transfer Partnerships: The Importance of a Culture of Collaboration. Community College Research Initiatives: Transfer Partnership Series*, January 2019.

Washington State Partnering for Student Transfer Success

Sample University of Central Florida-Valencia College Collaboration Goals, Programming

Sample University of Central Florida-Valencia College UCF Advisor Synopsis

University of Central Florida-Valencia College Freshman Success Seminar

Sample University of Central Florida-Orange County Public Schools Articulation Agreement

## **APPENDIX 5 – BEST PRACTICES WEB RESOURCES**

Best practices websites

<http://www.everettcc.edu/enrollment/transfer/>

<https://transfer.sdes.ucf.edu/>

<https://admission.asu.edu/transfer>

<http://directconnectoucf.com/> <http://directconnectoucf.com/benefits>

<http://directconnectoucf.com/faq>

Foundations of Excellence, John Gardner Institute, <https://www.jngi.org/foundations-of-excellence/>

## **APPENDIX 6 – TRANSFER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**

Transfer Experience Committee Proposal

## **APPENDIX 7 – YEAR ONE TRANSFER SYMPOSIUM**

Proposed Symposium Agenda

Sample University of Central Florida Transfer Symposium Agenda

Sample University of Central Florida CC Counselor Workshop Agenda, Survey

## **APPENDIX 8 – TRANSFER ORIENTATION AND OPEN HOUSE OPTIONS**

University of Central Florida Sample Orientation Materials

Overview of Transfer and Transition Services Orientation Participation

How to Prepare for Orientation Handout

Orientation Dates  
Transfer Orientation Student Schedule, Parent Program  
Transfer Orientation Student Survey  
Transfer and Transition Services Orientation Presentation  
College of Sciences Orientation Handout  
University of Central Florida Sample Transfer Open House Presentation

#### **APPENDIX 9 – TRANSFER DATA NEEDS OUTLINE**

Issues Concerning Transfer Data Collection and Dissemination  
Transfer Students at CWU – Data Needs Outline  
Samples Excellence: CWU Transfer Data Analysis  
Sample Assessment: UCF Transfer and Transition Services Annual Program Assessment Plan and Results

#### **APPENDIX 10 – ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**

Sample Collaboration Program (University of Central Florida- Valencia College)  
SEE UCF Program Agenda  
SEE UCF Program Proposal  
Transfer and Transition Services (University of Central Florida)  
Transfer Success Seminar, Agenda  
What TTS Does Handout  
Transfer Tips Handouts  
Checklist for Transferring Students Handout  
How To: Make College Affordable Handout  
International Student Transfer Process (DirectConnect2UCF) Handout