

2017

# Satisfaction of Community College Students Transferring to a Public Research Institution in Southern California

Patricia Danylyshyn-Adams  
*Walden University*

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Patricia Danylyshyn-Adams

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Walden University  
2017

Abstract

Satisfaction of Community College Students Transferring to a Public

Research Institution in Southern California

by

Patricia Danylyshyn-Adams

MS, University of Southern California, 1976

BA, Gettysburg College, 1974

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2017

## Abstract

At a large public research university in Southern California, community college transfer students reported dissatisfaction with their undergraduate college experience. Dissatisfied students may not graduate, may not network with undergraduates at their alma mater, and may not contribute financially to their alma mater. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore why students were dissatisfied with their college experience. Data collection included semi structured interviews with 11 community college transfer students enrolled at the university. The conceptual framework was based on Astin's student involvement theories. The data were analyzed by looking for codes that emerged from the student interviews. From these codes, 12 categories were condensed in to seven themes. These seven themes were: academic reputation, transfer student issues, misinformation, apprehensions and fears, relationships and support, benefits, and ideas for a better college experience. Findings were used to design a 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff. Goals were to provide staff with a better understanding of the issues community college transfer students faced. Social change implications include student affairs staff advocating for changes in processes, procedures, and programs to benefit transfer students.

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## Section 1: The Problem

Universities have several student populations including students who enter the university from high school and graduate from the same university. These students are commonly referred to as native students. The student population also consists of students who transfer to the university from another university or from a community college. Community college transfer students at the study site university reported lower levels of satisfaction with aspects of their undergraduate experience compared to native students. In the 2015 Your First College Year Survey, this study site reported 33% of the transfer students at the university reported being isolated from campus life compared to 25% of the freshmen students who reported being isolated at the university.

Transfer students relied on their motivation to be successful in transferring to and graduating from a 4-year university (Ellis, 2013). Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2005) found that most universities gave less attention to transfer students than native students. Kuh et al. found that many transfer students did not have much in common with native students at the universities in which they were enrolled. Many transfer students reported having difficulty making friends and social connections with other students because friendships among native students were established when they met as first-year students (Townsend & Wilson, 2006). For these reasons, many transfer students reported being disconnected from their new university and found it difficult to connect with other

transfer students, other than those they may have met in their classes (Deil-Amen, 2011; Ellis, 2013).

Townsend and Wilson (2006) found similar results. They reported transfer students feeling awkward at their new universities. Roberts and McNeese (2010) reported that transfer students are different from native students because they are not involved in opportunities and experiences outside the classroom to the same level as native students. D'Amico, Dika, Elling, Algozzine, and Ginn (2014) and Townley et al. (2013) reported that transfer students who had an emotional connection, defined by Townley et al. as a sense of community and being supported at the new campus, made a smoother transition to the new university. For these students both of these factors were indicators of academic and social success at the university.

Moore, Shulock, Ceja, and Lang (2007) found that persistence to a degree, and the connection transfer students had to their alma mater upon graduating, was dependent upon their satisfaction with their college experience. Universities benefit from alumni who are satisfied with their undergraduate experience. Satisfied alumni volunteered their time to their alma mater, networked with currently enrolled students, and contributed their experience and expertise to their alma mater (Weerts & Ronca, 2007a, 2007b). Moreover, satisfied alumni also made greater financial contributions to their alma mater (Freeland, Spenner, & McCalmon, 2015; Monks, 2003; Stephenson & Yerger, 2015).

### **Definition of the Problem**

Administrators and faculty at 4-year universities of higher education want their students to have a satisfying college experience for reasons that affect the university and

the state's economy. The United States Department of Labor (2007) reported that college graduates were central to maintaining high living standards. The economy of the United States depends upon the education of its citizens (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008; Laird, Chen, & Kuh, 2008; Seidman, 2005). Moore et al. (2007) reported that the state of California realized it needed an educated population to promote the state's economic growth. Moore et al. also reported that the state's economic growth depended on the number of California residents who successfully completed a baccalaureate degree and became contributing members in the state's workforce.

Universities have an obligation to assist their transfer students to graduation (Tinto, 2012). Undergraduate students who are engaged and are socially and academically connected at the university have a greater likelihood to graduate (Astin, 1984; Deil-Amen, 2011; Kuh, 2009; Townley et al., 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2006). Stephenson and Yerger (2015) found that alumni based the satisfaction of their undergraduate experience on their cocurricular experiences, such as attending events, programs and activities, and on using campus resources, such as libraries, student health and career services, and resource centers. Between the two determinants of alumni satisfaction, cocurricular experiences and campus resources, cocurricular experiences were more important (Stephenson & Yerger, 2015).

Graduates who are satisfied with their undergraduate experience are also more likely to be connected to their alma mater. Alumni who had a positive and strong connection to their alma mater became mentors and provided professional and personal networking opportunities to current students at their alma mater (Monks, 2003). Satisfied

alums also tended to make greater financial contributions to their alma mater than alums who left the university with an unsatisfactory undergraduate experience (McDearmon & Shirley, 2009; Monks, 2003; Weerts & Ronca, 2007a, 2007b). Schlesinger, Cervera, and Pérez-Cabañero (2016) found the loyalty of alumni at two public universities in Spain was linked to their satisfactory undergraduate experience.

Assisting students with their education after high school is important for many reasons. Students who persist to baccalaureate degrees become strong members of society; they are better able to care for themselves, and add to the national and state economies. Universities who enroll students also want to see their students successful in obtaining a baccalaureate degree. These educational institutions also want to see their students have satisfying undergraduate college experiences. Students who are satisfied with their undergraduate college experiences have a better chance to graduate and become contributing alumni to their alma mater (Baade & Sundberg, 1996; Gaier, 2005; Weerts & Ronca, 2009).

## **Rationale**

### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

Campus administrators at the study site want to identify why community college transfer students are not satisfied with their cocurricular experiences at the university. Students and administrators at this site may benefit from reducing dissatisfaction expressed by transfer students. Once the factors causing the dissatisfaction are identified, the university administrators can make institutional changes to benefit community college transfer students. Baron and Corbin (2012) reported that changing institutional processes

and procedures to benefit transfer students allowed these students to be more engaged in cocurricular activities. Changes also allowed these students to better utilize resources offered by the university. These students reported positive feelings about their college experience when they graduated from the university (Baron & Corbin, 2012).

In fall quarter of 2015, 2,678 students transferred to the large public university in California. Ninety percent of these students transferred from a community college. In a local site survey, students from community colleges who transferred to this university expressed their dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their college experience at the university.

The Office of Student Research and Information administered the 2012 College Senior Survey to native and transfer students at the study site. The study indicated transfer students were less satisfied with the overall sense of community, did not feel a sense of belonging to the university, and did not see themselves as part of the campus community as strongly as native students did. The results of the 2012 College Senior Survey indicated that transfer students were more dissatisfied with their undergraduate experience than native students.

Transfer students also described cocurricular experiences as less satisfying than described by native students. Community college transfer students surveyed at the university have been asked about their undergraduate college experience, but no survey has addressed why they are dissatisfied with their college experience. Data from the 2012 College Senior Survey administered to transfer students at the university, and the 2010 Your First College Year (YFCY) survey administered to transfer students at the end

of their first year showed transfer students having favorable academic experiences. This positive academic experience was different from what they reported about other aspects of their undergraduate experience. Data from these surveys indicated that transfer students had fewer friends, took less advantage of institutional resources, were not involved in extracurricular activities, and generally did not feel included or part of the university community. A qualitative case study was needed to determine the reasons why community college transfer students were dissatisfied with their undergraduate college experience at the university.

As mandated by state legislators, public state institutions, such as this university, must assist transfer students in achieving their goal of completing a baccalaureate degree in a timely manner. The cost of public education is carried by the California taxpayers. Assisting students to graduation improves the standard of living for residents who contribute to the state as financially independent and educated adults (Moore et al., 2007).

Delays in the time to graduation by a transfer student become a financial burden to the university. At all public institutions in the state of California, the tuition students pay is less than the total cost of their education. The taxpayers, through financial allocations by the legislature of California, supplement the cost of a student's education. All state universities are allocated an amount of money for the education of their students, so all state educational institutions are concerned about the time it takes for students to graduate. The allocation of money to the public universities is a finite amount



of money and for the specific period of time it takes for a student to graduate. The state of California will not allocate additional money to the university because they accept additional students or because a student takes longer to graduate, so the number of students a public university can graduate decreases the longer a student stays enrolled at the university. Public universities also want their transfer students to graduate with a satisfactory college experience so as alumni they remain involved with their alma mater by donating financially and assisting undergraduates in reaching their educational and professional goals (Freeland et al., 2015; Monks, 2003; Stephenson & Yerger, 2015).

### **Evidence of the Problem in the Professional Literature**

The university benefits by having alumni who are engaged with the university and alumni who contribute more financially. More alums were professionally and personally engaged with their alma mater, and involved with the current undergraduates at their alma mater when they were satisfied with their undergraduate college experience (Freeland et al., 2015; McDearmon & Shirley, 2009; Monks, 2003; Stephenson & Yerger, 2015). Data from several studies indicated that students who were satisfied with their undergraduate experiences were more likely to meet their academic goals (Astin, 1984; Deil-Amen, 2011; Grant-Vallone, Reid, Umali, & Pohlert, 2003; Kuh, 2009; Townsend & Wilson, 2006).

There are two steps for any student transferring from a community college. The student must first maneuver through the community college academic program, and then move through the process to transfer to the 4-year university. Once transferred to the university, students must be persistent academically to the completion of their

baccalaureate degree (Laanan, 2001). Ellis (2013), Gard, Paton, and Gosselin (2012), Moore et al. (2007), and Chin-Newman and Shaw (2013) reported many transfer students had difficulty completing these steps to transfer because they received misinformation about the process from either their community college or the university to which they were transferring. California is concerned about the time to degree at public universities because of the economic impact that would be experienced by the state by not introducing graduated students into the state's workforce (Moore et al., 2007).

The 2010 University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) and the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) indicated that transfer students were not as engaged with the campus community as their native peers. Students in these studies also reported spending less time in cocurricular and social activities, and they perceived the relationships they had with their peers as not being supportive and friendly. Elliott and Healy (2001) found three factors that influenced students' satisfaction with their undergraduate college experience: the student reported feeling important at the institution, the student felt a sense of campus pride and belonging at the institution, and the student recognized a strong academic environment at the institution.

Wang and Wharton (2010) found that transfer students were a proportionally larger population of the overall student body at many 4-year universities. Attendance at a community college by students graduating from high school had become a formidable choice for students seeking a baccalaureate degree (Ellis, 2013). For these reasons, Wang and Wharton recommended more research be conducted to understand the unique needs of transfer students and to ensure that 4-year universities provided the appropriate means

to meet those needs. If the university identified and made changes to provide community college transfer students with a more positive college experience, these students benefited by graduating with a baccalaureate degree (Moore et al., 2007). With a more positive college experience, undergraduates were better connected to the university, and the university benefited from having them return to their alma mater as alumni to assist undergraduates in their academic pursuits (Monks, 2003; Weerts & Ronca, 2007a, 2007b). Students with baccalaureate degrees became productive citizens who contributed financially to the state of California (Moore et al., 2007).

In this case study, I explored whether students at the university were satisfied with their undergraduate college experience. Students who reported not being satisfied were asked to provide specific reasons why they were dissatisfied, what they thought would help them better navigate this large university, and what might make their experience outside the classroom more positive.

### **Definition of Terms**

The definitions of terms below allow the reader to understand what these words meant in the context of this study.

*Adjustment:* Chartrand (1992) described this behavior by a student who positively integrated into the institution with no psychological stress. Smedley, Myers, and Harrell (1993) added that adjustment also included strategies that students used to alleviate the stressors they experienced.

*Alums/alumni/alumnus:* A graduate from an educational institution (Gaier, 2005).

*Community college:* Two names were used to refer educational institutions providing two years of college level education: junior and community colleges. By the 1970s, community college became the general term used to describe these educational institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 1989).

*Native student:* A student who entered a 4-year university as a first-year student directly from high school (Laanan, 2001).

*Student engagement:* Interaction by students with the institution they attend as active participants in their learning, administrative, and extra-curricular experiences (Axelson & Flick, 2010; Deneen, 2010).

*Student involvement:* Astin (1999) defined student involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 518).

*Student satisfaction:* When a student’s performance meets or exceeds the student's expectations (Elliott & Healy, 2001).

*Student success:* Ewell and Wellman (as cited in Moore et al., 2007), and Zumeta and Frankle (2007) defined student success as students succeeding in college and attaining a degree, certificate, or employment objective.

*Transfer process:* How a student proceeds to enter a 4-year university from a community college (Lester, 2006).

*Transfer shock:* D’Amico et al. (2014) and Laanan (2001) described this as a decline in the grade point average (GPA) that a community college student experiences after transferring to a 4-year university.

*Transfer student*: A student who attended one educational institution and then attends another educational institution (Lester, 2006).

*Transfer Student Capital (TSC)*: The information a student has about the transfer process to a 4-year university (Laanan, Starobin, and Eggleston, 2010).

### **Significance of the Study**

The foundation of the 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education was to offer an education through the California community college system to anyone wanting to continue their education after high school (Zumeta & Frankle, 2007). Attending a California community college is often less expensive and offers more flexibility in class scheduling than a 4-year university. After attending a community college, students have an opportunity to completing a baccalaureate degree at a 4-year university that was otherwise unavailable to them.

The pressure to produce more college graduates does not only exist in the state of California (Handel, 2013). Handel (2013) reported that in a 2009 speech to Congress, President Obama challenged all Americans with the goal of continuing their education. The United States ranks near the bottom of the developed nations in the percentage of students who entered college and persisted to a degree (Handel, 2013). Reindl (2007) reported that by 2025, the United States must produce 25% more associate degree graduates and 19.6% more baccalaureate degree graduates to meet the nation's workforce needs. The United States Department of Labor (2007) stated that the United States is in need of more college graduates to maintain the country's growth and economic competitiveness.

California cannot depend on college-educated workers from outside the state to maintain a healthy and stable economy. Therefore it is in the economic interest of California to assist students in completing their baccalaureate degrees (Moore et al., 2007). Lester (2006) predicted that within the next decade, the demographics of the student population in California would change so that families would not be able to support their students' education after high school. These students, who would come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and would be students of color, would attend a community college (Lester, 2006).

A greater share of the undergraduate student population who pursued their higher education started their education at a community college (Handel, 2013; Labov, 2012). Wang (2009) and Rouse (2005) found that students who continued their education after high school lived a higher quality of life, commanded a higher salary after completing a higher education degree, and were contributing individuals to the workforce. The financial responsibility to assist students with their continued education once they transferred to a 4-year university from a community college predominately fell on the university and the state of California (Berger & Malaney, 2003; Moore et al., 2007; Townsend & Wilson, 2006).

Research by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), Tinto (1993, 1997), and Townley et al. indicated that students who were more involved and integrated in the university had a better chance of staying at the university and reaching their academic goal. Townsend and Wilson (2006) investigated what factors affected the academic and social integration of community college transfer students in 4-year universities. Townsend and Wilson

interviewed 19 community college transfer students and learned that their transition to the university was difficult. The comments from these students about their undergraduate college experiences at the university were generally negative, including a less than satisfactory orientation to the university and an unsatisfactory social and academic integration into the campus community. These students reported how difficult it was to make friends because their classes were so large, and that the same students were never in the same seat in class the next time the class met. These students wanted the university to provide more opportunities so they could socially integrate in the campus community. These students wanted more collaboration between their community college and their new university to assist them in their transfer process (Townsend & Wilson, 2006).

Most native students already had their friends from arriving to campus together after high school, and these students saw no need to add another friend to their established circle. The transfer students saw many firmly established groups, and called these students at their campus cliquish. Grites (2013) also found students who lacked a peer group described themselves as less connected to the university community.

According to Ellis (2013), community college transfer students reported that they received misinformation from their advisors at both their community colleges and their new 4-year university. None of their universities regularly updated their websites or reported important information to them (Ellis, 2013). The students referred to the university as being a very large institution. These students described how they were on their own to figure out the logistics of the university. Because these students brought experience from another educational institution, they received marginal information from

their new institution because the new institution assumed these students had already figured out things on their own. The administration, faculty, and staff often mistakenly assumed the transition from a community college to a 4-year university was easy for these students to negotiate (Grites, 2013).

Adding to the dissatisfaction of community college transfer students, transfer students reported to Townsend and Wilson (2006) that on the academic side, they saw themselves as numbers in a classroom, and they did not exist to their professors because the classes were so large. Students believed their professors did not know who they were, and did not they think their professors knew their names. These students found the course syllabi of a research or analytical paper, a mid-term exam, and a final over the course of a quarter intimidating. This added more pressure to their already stressed lives. Some students commented on the lack of motivation and enthusiasm some of their professors had for teaching. The professor's attitude made the class uninteresting and boring, and negatively affected the personal motivation of the students to do well in class.

This anecdotal summary about the dissatisfaction of this student's undergraduate college experience was told to me by a recent graduate of this university. This student told me many of the same comments reported by Townsend and Wilson (2006) and Ellis (2013). It took longer than anticipated for this student to complete a degree because of the difficulties encountered as a transfer student. While attending this university, this student was not involved on campus and refused to be involved with her alma mater after graduation because of the dissatisfaction she experienced at the university. When this student received correspondence or emails from the university, alumni office, or



academic department, she immediately deleted them. This student's opinion was that this university only contacted graduates to solicit money. Not having a positive experience at this university, this student had no interest in contributing financially or being involved in any way with her alma mater.

This student expressed her unhappiness at this university because she did not feel integrated into the campus community. This student heard about campus resources but never used them because they were difficult to find. The student described college experiences as going to class and then going home to her off campus residence to do homework. This student had no connection with any professors or staff, and reported having only a few friends. This student described being alone to figure out what was needed to graduate, and reported this lack of institutional assistance and guidance delayed her graduation. Unfortunately, this student found no assistance from the university to improve her college experience (Personal communication, April 2012). This story is similar to other stories told to me by community college transfer students about the dissatisfaction of their college experience at this university.

Wang (2009) reported that community college transfer students who possessed a positive self-concept were likely to have better coping mechanisms and be more successful at the university level. The community college and the 4-year university were both responsible to teach students the skills they needed to have a positive undergraduate experience that contributed to their success at the university (Wang, 2009). Laanan et al. (2010) described this phenomenon as students needing to have transfer student capital

(TSC) to take with them to the university so they could experience a successful adjustment to the new institution.

The completion of the baccalaureate degree benefited students by allowing them to care for themselves and their families and to function socially and knowledgeably in a democratic society (Feldman & Newcomb, 1994). In addition to personal benefits, students who had a satisfactory college experience contributed to their alma mater after they graduated as involved alumni. Students left after graduation with a connection to their alma mater, positively networked with currently enrolled students, and contributed both financially and professionally to the institution (Baade & Sundberg, 1996; Gaier, 2005). Students who were not happy with their undergraduate college experiences left the university as less supportive alumni. They also spread negative opinions about the institution to potential students and the community. These opinions damaged both the reputation of the institution and the recruitment efforts by the university (Butler, 2011).

Moore, Shulock, and Jensen (2009), and Moore et al. (2007) reported that Californians with college degrees were necessary for the future of the state's economy. The Public Policy Institute of California (as cited in Moore et al, 2009) reported that over the next 15 years, Californians with baccalaureate degrees would fall short of the number of workers California had projected to maintain its economy. To accomplish the goals of the state, the national economy, and 4-year universities, students must persist to graduation at their institutions of higher learning. Undergraduate students who were engaged and connected with the institution, both inside and outside of the classroom, persisted at the institution and met their academic goals (Astin, 1984; Grant-Vallone et

al., 2003; Kuh, 2009; Townsend & Wilson, 2006). These graduates also remained involved with their alma mater in ways that benefited both the current undergraduate students and the university (Gaier, 2005; Monks, 2003; McDearmon & Shirley, 2009; Weerts & Ronca, 2009).

The study was significant because the study site university is obligated by lawmakers to graduate community college transfer students with a baccalaureate degree. Students who graduate make significant contributions to the economy of the state of California, which is the reason the taxpayers in the state of California support the state higher education system. Research has shown that students who are satisfied with their undergraduate college experiences are more likely to reach their academic goal of graduating with a baccalaureate degree (Astin, 1984; Deil-Amen, 2011; Grant-Vallone et al., 2003; Kuh, 2009; Townsend & Wilson, 2006).

Community college transfer students enrolled at this university have indicated they are dissatisfied with their undergraduate college experiences at this institution (Undergraduate Experience Survey, 2010). This university is at risk of insufficient numbers of students persisting to graduation. This study was important to the administration of this university because findings may increase the awareness of staff regarding differences between community college transfer students and native students, and how staff can do a better job meeting the needs of transfer students.

Currently, many faculty and staff think that community college transfer students have the same needs as native students (Townsend & Wilson, 2009). Because of this thinking, faculty and staff at many academic institutions, including this university, treat

these two different populations of students the same way, rather than treating them as unique. A change in thinking by the staff at this university may enable community college transfer students to have a more satisfactory undergraduate college experience and more persistence to graduate.

### **Research Questions**

According to the 2012 College Senior Survey, students who transferred from community colleges to the large public 4-year universities in Southern California reported a less than satisfactory college experience. There was no indication in any of the surveys administered by this university that these students were asked to identify what caused them to feel dissatisfied with their college experience. Students were also not asked what they would suggest to improve their undergraduate college experience. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What factors do community college transfer students report to explain their positive and negative college experiences at the university?
2. What expectations do community college transfer students have of the university that are being met, and what expectations do they have that have not been met?
3. What changes would community college transfer students like to see at this university that would have enhanced their undergraduate experience?

The data from this study were used to answer these research questions and to design a professional development program for the student affairs staff to learn about the needs of community college transfer students. Being more aware of the issues and

concerns community college transfer students have may allow the student affairs staff to develop programs to benefit this student population.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework used for this study included elements from Astin's 1984 and 1999 student development theories. The theories by Astin (1984, 1999) are related to the involvement and engagement of students at their universities. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) defined student engagement as the time, effort, and energy students contribute to their experiences as undergraduate students, and is linked to the academic goals of the students.

Astin's student involvement theories are pertinent to research on student development because they continued to be cited in the literature. Astin's 1984 student involvement theory continues to be an important theoretical model because it describes the education of a student at an institution of higher learning (Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, & Person, 2006). Many contemporary educators agreed that Astin's formulation of his theory of involvement in the 1980s became his 1999 theory of engagement (Axelson & Flick, 2010).

Astin (1999) reviewed his literature and realized that the area of student development research was complex. He found that the data reviewed was neither meaningful nor useful. Astin found that previous research only described students based on their GPAs and test scores, and did not give a complete picture of the student. Astin knew there was something missing by only describing students in this way, and that there

was something else that contributed to the well-being of students and their development while they were students.

Astin's (1999) theory of student engagement is a simple conceptual framework used by faculty and administrators to create meaningful learning environments for their students. Engagement is both the psychological and physical energy that students contribute to their experience at their universities (Astin, 1999). Astin's theory of engagement focuses on extracurricular involvement, which he describes as involvement outside the classroom. Wolf-Wendel, Ward, and Kinzie (2009) described involvement to be academic or social.

Involved students were those who spent considerable time studying, actively participating on campus in extracurricular activities, and regularly interacting with professors, staff, and other students (Astin, 1999). An uninvolved student was just the opposite of an involved student; he or she reported being lonely, isolated, and not a member of the campus community. An involved student at the university experienced personal development and more learning (Astin, 1999).

Astin's (1999) theory of engagement describes three pedagogical theories: subject matter, campus resources, and individualized student theories. Astin explained how each of these theories is tied to the development of students at their universities. The individualized student theory is the most flexible of the three. Astin asserted that this theory best met the needs of the individual student. His theory went beyond the fixed academic curriculum to include areas identified as student affairs. Astin identified these

areas as student advising and counseling, and emphasized it was the responsibility of the university to give more attention to develop the less involved student.

Undergraduate students who were engaged and connected both inside and outside of the classroom at their universities had a greater likelihood to persist at the institution and meet their academic goals (Astin, 1984; Grant-Vallone et al., 2003; Kuh, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993, 1997; Townley et al., 2013; Townsend & Wilson, 2006). Following graduation, alumni who were satisfied with their undergraduate college experience also remained involved with their alma mater in ways that benefited both the current undergraduate students and their alma maters (Gaier, 2005; Monks, 2003; McDearmon & Shirley, 2009; Weerts & Ronca, 2009).

### **Literature Review**

Reviewing the literature included an extensive search of databases in the Walden University library. These search engines included ERIC, Education from SAGE, and Education Research Complete. I also used the Google Scholar search engine, and the site study's university library provided journal articles through the system wide UC-eLinks search engine. The UCSD Library, the interlibrary loan program with other university libraries in the San Diego area, and the University of California library system gave me access to the books and journal articles for this study. .

The literature was searched until I reached saturation. I used the following search terms to guide my research: *community college transfer students, successful transfer of community college students to a 4-year university, community college student development at a 4-year university, community college student transfer process, satisfied*

*alums and alumni*, and *higher education in California*. The review of the literature is divided into the areas that are pertinent to this study: community college transfer students, transfer and native students, student engagement, transfer adjustment process, academic persistence, and alumni involvement.

The review of the literature confirmed the pertinence of the study topic, including gaps in the research that warranted this study. Ishitani and McKittrick (2010) reported that previous research on the experiences of community college transfer students focused only their grade point average (GPA). Ishitani and McKittrick did not find studies on how well community college transfer students did at their transfer institutions in ways other than looking at their GPAs.

The review of the literature reported information that initially explained what made community college transfer students satisfied or dissatisfied with their undergraduate college experience. Research shows that students who are satisfied with their undergraduate college experience have a better chance of staying at the university to reach their academic goals and becoming strong alumni (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Schlesinger et al., 2016; Tinto, 1993, 1997; Townley et al., 2013).

Laanan (2001) and Pascarella (1997) reported that studies about the social and psychological success of community college students who transferred to 4-year universities was limited. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) found that research on the impact of universities on students was extensive but found the research on students who transferred from community colleges to the universities was minimal until the community colleges experienced an increase in growth in the 1990s.



Feldman and Newcomb (1994) and Rouse (2005) found that attending college is important because college prepared students for adulthood and taught them how to be socially and successfully employed individuals. Over the past 40 years, attending college was perceived as significant because a higher level of learning was necessary for the personal growth of an individual and his or her economic success (Feldman & Newcomb, 1994). Adults with a higher level of education also had an impact on the economic success and growth of California and the United States (Kuh, Cruce, et al., 2008; Laird et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2007; Seidman, 2005; Zumeta & Frankle, 2007).

Ishitani and McKitrick (2010) reported that previous research on community college transfer students focused only on their GPAs and compared their GPAs to their native student counterparts at 4-year universities. Not all community college transfer students are going to have stellar GPAs as they transition to the university. Therefore, it is important to look at factors other than GPAs when describing the transition of community college transfer students at the university (Ishitani & McKitrick, 2010).

### **Community College Transfer Students**

California community colleges provided many students with pathways to the completion of a baccalaureate degree at a 4-year university once they completed the transfer process from the community college (Laanan et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2007). Unlike other states that use community colleges as remedial institutions of education or education for only nontraditional students, California used community colleges as a starting point for students to access continued education at 4-year institutions (Long & Kurlaender, 2009). For over 100 years, community colleges in California served the

primary role of transferring their students to 4-year institutions. Even with the evolution of occupational and certificate programs, transferring students to 4-year universities remained the primary role of the community college in California (Helm & Cohen, 2001). In addition to this primary function of community colleges, these institutions enrolled older, nontraditional students who were looking at education to enrich their lives rather than solely to attain a degree (Long & Kurlaender, 2009).

Zumeta and Frankle (2007) reported that community colleges were an important pathway to institutions of higher education for the more than two-thirds of the college students who attended a community college in California. The National Center for Education Statistics (2000) reported that low-income students, students of color, and first-generation students were more likely to attend a community college directly from high school. Townsend and Wilson (2009) found that students attended community colleges for a variety of reasons that were rational, legitimate, and unique for each student. The decision to attend and enroll in a community college was a decision each student made for personal reasons.

Reasons to attend a community college included not being academically or emotionally ready to attend a 4-year university directly from high school, the geographic proximity of the community college to home necessary for familial responsibilities, and the need to investigate whether higher education was something they wanted and were motivated to pursue. Other reasons students chose to attend a community college included wanting to attend an institution with a comfortable environment where the faculty were primarily focused on teaching and student learning, the lower cost of

attending a community college compared to a 4-year institution, and obtaining a certificate or associates degree. Barreno and Traut (2012) conducted a study consisting of 80 students who attended a community college in West Texas and found that these students reported similar reasons for attending a community college.

### **Transfer and Native Students**

Transferring from a community college to a 4-year institution was essential for students to continue moving forward with their educational goals (Laanan, 2007). Wang (2009, 2012b) and Wang and Wharton (2010) stated that transfer students were an important part of the university community. Understanding the needs of transfer students as a distinctive student population at the university was something previous research neglected (Wang, 2009, 2012b; Wang & Wharton, 2010). The issues of transfer and transition were complicated for community college students who transferred to a 4-year university, and there were additional challenges for these students to solve (Wang, 2012a). Laanan (as cited in Wang & Wharton, 2010) reported that previous comparative research between native and transfer students had focused on academic grades, retention, and persistence to degree. Wang and Wharton found studying the behavioral components of transfer student involvement on campus enhanced understanding of this student population.

Wang and Wharton (2010) explained the differences between native and transfer students. Transfer students had less time to spend transitioning to the campus before they graduated because they arrived later than native students. Campus administrators made a misinformed assumption that transfer students did not need additional assistance in their

transition to a new university and adjustment to a new campus because they came in with college experiences from another institution. Wang and Wharton found that both native and transfer students were similarly involved academically. The findings showed that when compared to native students, transfer students reported having less social involvement, less involvement extracurricular activities, and less use of campus resources (Armstrong & Carty, 2005; Campus Senior Survey, 2012; Wang & Wharton, 2010).

Community college transfer students come to their 4-year universities with expectations that are different from the expectations of other student populations. Community college transfer students arrive at their universities from a different type of educational institution compared to native students who entered the 4-year university from high school, and other transfer students who transferred from other universities. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) called on university administrators to recognize and address the needs of community college transfer students transitioning to their 4-year institutions because the needs of community college transfer students are different from other student populations at the university. It is important that faculty and staff at any 4-year university understand the differences between student populations so the needs of each population can be addressed.

### **Student Engagement**

Kuh, Kinzie, et al. (2005) found that participation by the students at the university was more important to their learning and to their persistence to graduation than how they identified themselves or which university they attended. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) and Tinto (1993, 1997) supported administrators integrating students into a campus

community that encouraged faculty and students to build stronger relationships with each other. Pascarella and Terenzini found students who were involved at the university had a greater chance to achieve their educational goal of attaining a baccalaureate degree.

Laanan (2007) found that students who were involved in extracurricular activities were better adjusted socially. Berger and Malaney (2003) and Laanan found that students who were more involved in social activities with their friends were more satisfied with their experiences on campus. Bean and Eaton (2001) added that service learning was a form of student engagement that relied on social interaction with others. Greenberg (1997) reported finding that after participating in a service learning project, students benefited socially from their experience, shared a mutually beneficial experience, and reported feeling less isolated on campus.

Samkian and Richlin-Klonsky (2006) studied transfer students at the University of California, Los Angeles and found they prioritized their academics over extracurricular activities. These transfer students reported either being uninterested in becoming involved with anything outside their academics, or not having time to commit to other activities because of other personal obligations. Most of these transfer students told Samkian and Richlin-Klonsky they experienced difficulty making friends, but these students also admitted they were not involved in extracurricular activities. These transfer students recognized that native students put more effort into bonding with their friends because they had been at the university longer and had more time to develop these friendships. Native students had already developed their circle of friends by the time the

transfer students entered the university (Ishitani & McKittrick, 2010; Samkian & Richlin-Klonsky, 2006).

Kuh (2009) reported that educationally oriented college experiences had the most meaning to transfer students. Flaga (2006) also found that student engagement in academically related organizations not only gave students information about their academic field, career opportunities, and internships, but also allowed these students to meet other students who had similar academic interests. Meeting students outside the classroom was important to establish quality relationships. These relationships provided learning resources and opportunities for transfer students to have college experiences with other students who went through similar experiences (Flaga, 2006; Laanan, 2007). Rather than focusing only on grades and GPAs, Flaga and Laanan (2007) analyzed the experiences of community college transfer students at a 4-year university.

Bean and Eaton (2001) suggested service learning as a meaningful student engagement experience. Kuh (2009) noted that student employment was another opportunity for student engagement. Employment was particularly meaningful if the job was on campus and allowed supervisors to use job responsibilities as learning opportunities for their students. Learning took place in discussions at staff meetings where students were challenged to identify the skills they used to solve the problems they experienced on the job. Supervisors challenged their student employees to think about how these on-the-job experiences related to their work in the classroom (Kuh, 2009).

Research by Kuh (2009) found that both students and institutions collaborated to define student engagement, and institutions offered student engagement opportunities that

met the needs of community college transfer students. Laanan (2004) reported that students must share the responsibility for their personal learning and development with the university, and that the university was not solely responsible for taking on these tasks. Universities must continually evaluate the student engagement opportunities they offered to determine the benefit of those experiences to community college transfer students (Kuh, 2003, 2009).

### **Transfer Adjustment Process and Academic Persistence**

California community colleges serve a diverse population. The task of transferring their students to 4-year institutions is not an easy one (Moore et al., 2007). Community college students who transferred to a 4-year university experienced a complex adjustment process that encompassed academic, social, and psychological factors (Chrystal, 2001, 2007; Laanan et al., 2010; Urso & Sygielski, 2007). Of all the transitions students experience, transferring from a community college to a 4-year institution was one of the most difficult transitions but also one of their most important experiences (Lester, 2006).

Community college transfer students experienced difficulties as a result of receiving misinformation or not receiving any information about the transfer and enrollment processes at either the community colleges or at this university. The difficulties the students reported having were similarly reported in the research conducted by Chin-Newman and Shaw (2013), Chrystal, Gansemer-Topf, and Laanan (2013), Gard et al. (2012), and Laanan et al. (2010). Community college transfer students at this university realized they did not know what classes they took at their community colleges

would transfer to this university, what requirements they needed to graduate from this university, or even what requirements were required for their major. This was all confirmed in research conducted with transfer students by Chin-Newman and Shaw and Goldrick-Rab (2010). The community college transfer students at this university also experienced the lack of collaboration and communication between their community colleges and this university. These opinions were corroborated in research conducted with community college transfer students by Handel (2011), and Laanan, et al. (2010).

Fann (2013) reported that at many institutions students were prohibited to meet with advisors at the receiving institution if they were not officially enrolled. In those cases, students made uninformed and incorrect decisions that were detrimental to their academic situation. Students did not enroll in classes at the community colleges that were necessary to transfer to the university. Students found that course credits that should have transferred did not and these students had to re-take classes at the community college to complete their transfer requirements. Re-taking classes lengthened the time they spent at the community colleges before they were permitted to transfer to the university.

Chin-Newman and Shaw (2013), Grubb (as cited in Goldrick-Rab, 2010), Handel (2013), and Rosenbaum et al. (2006) reported that because of academic misinformation these transfer students registered for classes at the university that were not necessary for their major or to graduate. These issues could be corrected, but they must be addressed in an integrated manner involving the students, both academic institutions, the staff at both



institutions, and the departments on each campus that work with these students (Goldrick-Rab, 2010; Handel & Williams, 2012).

Goldrick-Rab (2010) reported that if any one institution, either the university or the community college, worked without the collaboration of the other and thought the issues community college students faced would be automatically resolved had incorrect thinking. As an example of a positive relationship between institutions on both sides of the transfer process, the University of South Alabama worked with the community colleges in the same geographic area and addressed the needs and issues of community college transfer students (Jefferson, Steadman & Laier, 2014). At one community college in that area, triads of one student, one faculty member, and one community college transfer student mentor met and assisted the student in the transfer process (Jefferson et al., 2014).

Grites (2013) and Handel (2011) made clear that both the university and the community college needed communication between them to identify the issues of the community college transfer students correctly. These institutions recognized that the needs of community college transfer students were different from native students. These institutions had different views regarding education: community colleges generally accepted all students, while the universities were highly selective in the students they accepted (Handel & Williams, 2012). Handel and Williams (2012) suggested that the faculty at the community colleges understood the curriculum at the university so they could better assist their students in the transfer process. Handel and Williams also

recommended that joint meetings between the faculties at both institutions occurred on a regular basis to maintain that open communication.

Research by Handel (2011) and Mullin (2011) offered a number of recommendations for both institutions to assist community college transfer students. These recommendations included increased communication with the transfer students, that the information students received always be current and accurate, and assisting these students to find programs that were best suited for them (Handel, 2011; Mullin, 2011). Other ideas included establishing learning communities in residential housing, providing a transfer success course, seminars, and workshops for transfer students, coordinating and facilitating orientation programs, and establishing peer mentoring programs (Chin-Newman & Shaw, 2013; Cuseo, 2010a, 2010b; Grites, 2013; Grites & Farina, 2012; Jefferson et al., 2014; Miller, 2013; Stinard, 2012).

Of these suggested program options, Participants 5, 6, and 9 thought it was helpful if there were currently enrolled transfer students at this university with whom they could have connected. Participant 10 described an outreach program with currently enrolled transfer students at another local university that that helped many community college students. Participant 10 wished that this university would sponsor a similar program. Participant 10 also commented that knowing other students living on or close to campus would eliminate the need to sleep in the library or in the car, or go to the gym to shower. Once student affairs staff attend the professional development program they would know what programs and services to implement, and how to address the concerns of community college transfer students. Learning to design, implement, and evaluate

programs after attending the professional development program was confirmed as a learning outcome by Lane et al. (2015).

Research by Laanan et al. (2010) focused on how community college transfer students acquire transfer student capital (TSC) at their community college. Laanan et al. (2010) defined TSC as the information a student had about the transfer process to a 4-year university. The more TSC community college transfer students possessed, the more successful they were in transferring to a 4-year university (Laanan et al., 2010). Research by Ellis (2013) and Gard et al. (2012) reported that community college transfer students received misinformation from both institutions, complicating their already difficult transfer process. Inaccurate advising information resulted in a longer enrollment period at the university (Gard et al., 2012).

Townsend and Wilson (2006) and Miller (2013) suggested that community college transfer students needed assistance in transitioning from a community college to a 4-year university. What community college transfer students experienced with faculty and student interaction at the 4-year university was very different compared to their experiences at the community college. After interviewing community college transfer students, Townsend and Wilson found the students felt awkward, they reported not fitting into their new environment very well, and that it was not easy for them to establish friendships with other students. Community college transfer students found that native students were not interested in adding new friends to their already established group of friends.

Bean and Eaton (2001) identified personality characteristics transfer students needed to possess to meet their goal of graduating. Transfer students must have coping skills so they can successfully navigate social and academic challenges, they must have confidence in their new social environment, and they must be in control of their academics so they can be educationally successful (Bean & Eaton, 2001). Students who possessed these characteristics had a positive attitude, they were comfortable in the university community, they were motivated to achieve good grades, and they worked hard toward their academic goals (Bean & Eaton, 2001). Laanan (2004) added that students involved in campus activities positively affected their satisfactory experiences with the university.

Bean and Eaton (2001) reported that faculty, staff, and student mentors needed to give transfer students the guidance they needed to transition to the university. Assisting community college transfer students contributed to the retention of these students at the university. Grant-Vallone et al. (2003) reported that transfer students adjusted to their new lives at the university better when they received support from the institution. Townsend and Wilson (2006) reported that student affairs staff must take the lead in assisting community college transfer students with their transition to the university.

Most research about transfer students at 4-year institutions focused on their academic grades (Kozeracki, 2001; Laanan, 2001, 2007). Transfer shock refers to the drop in grades many transfer students experience upon transferring to a 4-year institution from a community college. Transfer shock may result from the difficult transition transfer students had to make into their new institution (Kozeracki, 2001; Laanan, 2001).

Laanan (2001) identified factors contributing to transfer shock and to transfer students who felt alone and isolated at their new institution. These factors included the increased difficulty of academic classes and changes in the new academic environment.

Transfer students from different cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds often reported finding the demographically different university environment as unfriendly and unwelcoming (Lester, 2006). Townsend and Wilson (2006) expanded the definition of transfer shock to include the diversity of people that community college transfer students encountered at their new university and referred to this new experience as culture shock. Kuh (2003) referred to this same phenomenon as transfer tremor. Students who had more past experiences with diversity in their lives reported being more satisfied with their college experience (Kuh, 2009).

Tinto (2002) offered five conditions necessary for a student to persist to graduation. Tinto described these conditions as expectations by the institution and the faculty for the student to perform academically: correct and consistent information from advisors; academic, social, and personal support in an environment where the student feels safe; institutional involvement of students as valued members of the campus community; and an environment fostered by the university that is conducive to learning. Kuh, Kinzie, et al. (2005) added a sixth factor that contributed to the success of college students: a willingness by universities to continually evaluate, change, and improve institutional policies that affect their students.

Wang (2012a) found self-esteem an equally important factor that contributed to the adjustment of community college transfer students. The personal development of

these students to their academic goal was also important to their academic success (Wang, 2012a). Grant-Vallone et al. (2003) and Wang agreed that students possessing self-esteem contributed to their success at the 4-year university, and added that peer and social support, utilizing campus resources, and well-trained advisors also resulted in their social adjustment at the university.

Research investigating the emotional and psychological factors of adjustment and success by community college transfer students at a 4-year university was very limited (Kozeracki, 2001; Laanan, 2001). Berger and Malaney (2003) reported almost no research about students who had attended both a community college and a 4-year university, and that there was a need to learn more about the experiences of these students. According to Laanan (2004) and Townsend and Wilson (2006) efforts by 4-year universities that assisted community college transfer students in their transition to the university were limited. Townsend and Wilson found that university efforts toward assisting community college transfer students was less compared to assisting the adjustment of native students. Lester (2006) concurred that 4-year universities made only minimal efforts to address the needs of transfer students, and Kuh, Kinzie, et al. (2005) reported that universities often ignored transfer students in their retention efforts.

### **Alumni Involvement**

Four-year universities need the involvement of alumni for their service to the institution, the involvement they have in alumni activities and events, and for their financial contributions to their alma maters (Freeland et al., 2015; Monks, 2003; Stephenson & Yerger, 2015; Weerts & Ronca, 2007a, 2007b, 2009). Weerts and Ronca

(2007a, 2007b) also found that alumni are instrumental in assisting 4-year universities advance their institutional goals. Weerts and Ronca (2007a) and Gaier (2005) reported that alumni served their alma mater in other than just financial ways. Alumni serve in leadership positions, they connected and networked with undergraduate students as mentors and role models, and worked as volunteer recruiters for the institution. Involvement by alumni benefited the institution because of the professional and personal connections they held in positions of high esteem (Weerts & Ronca, 2007b).

Alumni donations and endowments are an important source of non-tuition revenue for their alma maters (Monks, 2003; McDearmon & Shirley, 2009; Weerts & Ronca, 2009). The relationship a 4-year institution had with recently graduated alumni determined the level of future alumni giving. It is important for 4-year institutions to look at how they nurtured the relationships they have with their alumni when they were undergraduate students (Drezner, 2009). Monks (2003) found that alumni contributed more to their alma mater when they were satisfied with their college experience. Alumni who were satisfied with their college experience more than doubled their financial contributions to their alma mater compared to other alumni not expressing the same level of satisfaction (Monks, 2003).

Studies by McDearmon and Shirley (2009), Monks (2003), Weerts and Ronca (2007a, 2007b), and Schlesinger, et al. (2016) all reported that students who are satisfied with their undergraduate college experiences become alumni who make financial contributions and remain connected with their alma maters. Students who persisted to graduation but did not express satisfaction with their college experiences were alumni

who were uninvolved with their alma maters. These dissatisfied alumni also had the inclination to spread their opinions about their alma mater to others who considered enrolling at that university. With the wide reach of the internet and social media, such negative messages have immediate far-reaching effects, and could damage both the institution's reputation and recruiting efforts (Butler, 2011).

One economic model of alumni engagement suggested that alumni support to their alma mater was calculated by the value of their experiences with their alma mater (Weerts & Ronca, 2007a, 2007b). Gaier (2005) defined college experience as a combination of the student's academic interactions and educational activities with faculty and staff, the social interactions with peers, and the involvement in extracurricular activities. Gaier found that alumni who described these experiences positively were alumni who served their alma maters.

Community college transfer students who were interviewed in this study found that the administration, faculty, and staff identified them as older students because they had attended another educational institution. Instead of recognizing these students as a separate population, they were grouped together and were treated the same as the native students were treated. Jain, Herrera, Bernal, and Solorzano (2011) recommended that the university have a culture that was accepting and receptive of transfer students.

In order for this to occur, the administration and staff at this university needed to have a better idea of the needs, concerns, and issues of community college transfer students. The campus culture must be one that does not see transfer students as a liability to their institution. Grites (2013), Handel (2011), and Lester, Brown Leonard, and



Mathias (2013) recommended that universities adjust their thinking to recognize that the issues of transfer students were different from the native students at their institutions. A 3-day professional development program would be valuable in increasing the awareness of the student affairs staff who specifically work with community college transfer students.

### **Implications**

The state of California encourages high school graduates who did not enroll in a 4-year university immediately following graduation to attend a community college (Zumeta & Frankle, 2007). The lawmakers in California's legislature understood that educated citizens were important to the economy and to the future of the state (Moore et al., 2007). Fortunately, the lawmakers in California's legislature made admission to a community college an easy process for all high school graduates. Following their time at the community college, many students continued their education at a 4-year university to attain a baccalaureate degree (Moore et al., 2007). One of the primary roles charged to the community college system by the state of California was to transfer their students to 4-year universities for exactly that reason (Helm & Cohen, 2001).

The process from attending from a community college to the goal of a baccalaureate degree was challenging for students who wanted to continue their education at a 4-year university (Moore et al., 2007). Students found the transfer process discouraging and difficult. If students were successful and enrolled at the university, community college transfer students often found their transition to the university difficult because the new university did not always offer them institutional guidance or assistance

(Townsend & Wilson, 2006). This lack of involvement in the student's life led to isolation, alienation, academic failure, a delay in time to graduation, and a dissatisfied undergraduate experience at the university (Laanan, 2001, 2007; Laanan et al., 2010; Urso & Sygielski, 2007).

At the university, community college transfer students contended with a different environment from their previous institutions. They found less time to establish friendships, interacted less with their professors, and found less time to acclimate to an intense academic atmosphere (Lester, 2006; Wang & Wharton, 2010). Faced with these challenges, many students did not feel valued by the university nor did they feel the institution assisted in integrating them into the university community. Many students were discouraged and were unable to persist to graduation (Tinto, 2002).

Administrators at the university began to understand that students were at their institution with the academic goal to attain their baccalaureate degree. These administrators also realized that the undergraduate college experiences students had made a difference to whether they became valuable and involved alums to their alma mater (Baade & Sundberg, 1996; Gaier, 2005; Monks, 2003; Weerts & Ronca, 2007a, 2007b).

Administrators, faculty, and staff at universities mistakenly assume that community college transfer students should have no difficulty transitioning to the university. These students have experience from another educational institution and should naturally fit in as all the other students at this university do. Community college transfer students are seen as just older students. University administrators did not recognize the difference in the needs community college transfer students have as

compared to transfer students from other 4-year universities and their native student counterparts who enrolled from high school (Wang & Wharton, 2010). There has been limited research that recognized the needs of community college transfer students once they transferred to the university, and the responsibilities the administrators at the new 4-year university had to assist community college students to reach graduation (Lester, 2006; Wang & Wharton, 2010).

The findings from this study could significantly improve the experiences that community college transfer students report having at this university. Based on the analysis of the data that were collected and analyzed from the individual student interviews, I developed and implemented a 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff (Appendix A). The implications of having student affairs staff attend this workshop can be significant in increasing the awareness of the student affairs staff in how community college transfer students can be better assisted at this university.

Once the student affairs staff learns about the issues community college students contend with, administrators and staff can look at changing procedures and policies making the processes of transferring, enrolling, and transitioning to this university easier for these students. This professional development program will provide the attending staff members with the tools to provide a positive transition for community college transfer students before and after they arrive.

### **Summary**

Community college transfer students are an important student population at a 4-year university in Southern California. Of the 2,678 students who transferred to this

university in fall 2015, 90% of these students transferred from a community college (The Office of Student Research & Information, 2016; College Portrait, 2016). Through surveys conducted by the Office of Student Research & Information, many community college transfer students reported being dissatisfied with their undergraduate college experience student at the university. A positive and satisfying undergraduate experience affected a student's persistence to graduation, which was important to them personally, important to the federal government, and important to the taxpayers of California (Moore et al., 2007; Roberts & McNeese, 2010). Universities also saw the value of satisfied community college transfer students who generally then became strong and involved alumni at their alma maters (Monks, 2003; Weerts & Ronca, 2009).

In this section, I explained the significance and rationale of the problem, defined terms used throughout this paper, formulated research questions, and identified a conceptual framework, based on Astin's two student development theories. By reviewing the literature, researchers identified the problems of community college transfer students who were dissatisfied with their undergraduate college experience when they transferred to a university. The next section is Section 2: The Methodology, which describes the research design of this study, and the analysis and discussion of the data I collected from the study.

## Section 2: The Methodology

This section includes the methodology of this study and the rationale for choosing a qualitative case study. I explain how this study was designed, conducted, and how the participants for the study were selected. I discuss the plan, method, and schedule for data collection; the handling and storage of data; and how data were analyzed and reported.

According to Creswell (2008) and Glesne (2011), researchers conduct research to answer a question or solve a problem by collecting and analyzing data. Data are collected in a variety of ways from many different individuals, groups, and institutions, and are always collected in a systematic manner (Merriam, 2009). The design of the study depends on the research question or the problem being addressed (Creswell, 2009).

### **Research Design and Approach**

#### **Description of Qualitative Research Design**

I used a qualitative case study design. A case study is richly descriptive and written in detail so the reader can have the virtual experience of being there (Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2007) summarized five qualitative designs that he found to be most often used: phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative research, and case study. Creswell and Merriam (2009) described qualitative research as a study that addresses how people interpret their experiences, and what personal meaning those experiences had to the individuals who described them. Researchers ask relevant interview questions to gather information about how people explain their experiences, and then look for common themes by analyzing the data collected from the interview responses. Creswell added that qualitative research is conducted where the issue

originated, which is defined as a natural setting compared to an artificial setting such as a laboratory that may be used in quantitative research.

### **Justification to Conduct Qualitative Research**

Research methodology can be divided into two major paradigms: quantitative and qualitative (Creswell, 2014). Researchers using a quantitative approach examine relationships among variables to test hypotheses (Creswell, 2014). In quantitative research, researchers often have participants complete a survey or a questionnaire, or have participants involved in an experimental study. The data are used to measure variables identified by the researcher prior to conducting the study. Researchers who conduct quantitative research formulate ideas to answer the research question from the data collected from the participants, and then use deductive reasoning to answer the research question(s).

Merriam (2009) described qualitative research as inductive. This approach gathers data from individuals, builds theories, and understands reasons rather than testing hypotheses. A quantitative approach was not appropriate for my study because I wanted to explore students' descriptions of their undergraduate experiences at a university. In qualitative studies, researchers draw conclusions from the descriptions offered by participants. Creswell (2014) described the purpose of qualitative research as learning about the issue directly from the participants. Therefore, a qualitative approach was appropriate for answering my research questions.

The researcher is the primary instrument in collecting data in qualitative research. The researcher identifies common themes, codes the data for review, and performs the

analysis of the data. In qualitative research, the researcher interacts with individuals who have experienced the same issue. Data collected during a qualitative study are not reported as numbers and statistics, but are reported in a rich descriptive form (Glesne, 2011). I was the researcher in this qualitative study. Interviewing students individually and interpreting how they described their experiences was the best way to capture the data to answer the research questions.

Of the five qualitative designs described by Creswell (2007), the one that answered my research questions best was the case study. Case study research focuses on a small group of individuals and on a situation to which they all relate. Creswell described the researcher making decisions about what was investigated, which is called a case. Any case is bounded, meaning there are definite limitations to the situation, and is related to the research questions (Merriam, 2009). The primary research tools in qualitative case study research are interviews, observations, and analysis of documents (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtler, 2010).

Glesne (2011) described grounded theory as a design used to build a theory from the data. Narrative researchers study individuals from the stories they tell about themselves and their lives. The resulting report becomes a chronological story of their life experiences (Creswell, 2014). Merriam (2009) defined ethnography as research focused on human society and culture, which are the beliefs, values, and attitudes of a specific group of people. Phenomenological researchers study human experiences related to a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). These other qualitative designs were not

appropriate to answer the research questions addressing the undergraduate experiences of community college transfer students.

### **Participants**

The sample in this qualitative study was 11 community college transfer students currently enrolled at this university. According to Merriam (2009), the size of the sample is an estimate of the number of individuals needed to answer the research questions until the responses become redundant. Merriam stated that there was no definitive answer to the question of how many participants is appropriate in any qualitative study.

Each student volunteered to be part of this study. Copies of the flyer (Appendix B) were posted and distributed around campus in the area where transfer students lived and at the student center where transfer students congregated. Students interested in participating were asked to respond to this flyer. Students who responded gave me permission to contact them. Students told me what community college they transferred from, what year they enrolled at study site, and if they were living on campus. The 11 community college transfer students were of mixed gender, seven females and four males, they lived on and off campus, and all were third or fourth-year students.

### **Criteria and Justification for Selecting Participants**

For this study, the 11 participants were transfer students from local community colleges. The seven females and four male students were third or fourth-year students enrolled at this study site. The determination of who met the criteria to participate in this study was based on self-reported information.



### **Process for Gaining Access to Participants**

I asked permission from the dean of student affairs at one of the six undergraduate colleges and the vice-chancellor of the student affairs division to conduct this study. Both of these individuals granted their permission. These two individuals knew that community college transfer students would be individually interviewed. They also knew that until approval to conduct this study came from the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) at Walden University and this study site no work on this project could begin.

### **Gaining Access to Participants**

Gaining access to select participants did not begin until IRB approval (#04-01-14-0136878) was obtained from Walden University and from the IRB at this study site (#140104SX). After the IRB approvals were received, I posted the recruitment flyers in two areas that transfer students were regularly found: the residential complex that houses primarily transfer students and the student center on campus. I also distributed these flyers to transfer students at transfer activities and programs. The criteria to participate in this study were listed on the recruiting flyer. Interested students emailed me expressing their interest to participate in this study. I returned an email to them stating I would be contacting them (Appendix C).

When I contacted each student, I explained the study, the way the research would be conducted, and how long participation in the study would take. I explained the expectations for each participant including filling out the required informed consent form prior to the interview and completing the scheduled interview. All participants agreed to

be audio recorded. If the student remained interested in the study, I emailed the interview protocol (Appendix D) and the informed consent form.

Creswell (2007, 2009, 2014), Glesne (2011), Lodico et al. (2010), and Merriam (2009) were very specific about the ethical obligations researchers have to their participants. Students were informed of the IRB approvals from both Walden University and the study site. These approvals ensured the students that no harm or negative effect would come from participating in this study. Each student signed the informed consent form prior to coming to the interview. The informed consent form stated the student could withdraw at any time. The students were also assured that if they left the study, there would be no negative consequences. I informed the students that my priority was to keep them safe throughout the study and to protect their privacy by maintaining confidentiality.

### **Researcher-Participant Working Relationship**

Creswell (2007) emphasized the importance of building support, trust, and rapport with participants and establishing a positive researcher-participant relationship. A working relationship with the research site and with the participants began once there was approval by the IRBs at Walden University and the study site. It was important that research participants were comfortable throughout the process. Participants who experienced stress may not have been interested in completing the study, or stress may have affected how they responded to the interview questions they were asked. The interview was conducted in a peaceful, comfortable, nonthreatening room where the

interview would not be interrupted. Agreed upon time limitations were followed to minimize stress to the participants (Glesne, 2011).

### **Ethical Protection of Participants**

Lipson (as cited in Creswell, 2007) warned researchers about a number of ethical challenges. If these issues are not addressed and managed correctly, they may quickly become problems. Negligence of any of these ethical issues could harm the participants in the study and have a negative impact on the study site. The safety of the participants in the study was my highest priority. I avoided any deceptive activity that undermined the integrity of the study, including reporting falsified data or breaching the confidentiality of participants. I participated in ethical research training at this study site and in the training to protect human research participants offered by the National Institute of Health's Office of Extramural Research. Completing these requirements showed the participants the importance of ethical practices in research (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2011).

To maintain this relationship beyond the formal training required by both universities, an open line of communication with the participants was a priority. The communication with each participant was honest, open, and documented in detail. My personal integrity was maintained with each participant to ensure that each individual was treated with respect throughout the study. Maintaining the confidentiality of participants was extremely important. Each participant knew that both universities had a priority to maintain their safety and confidentiality, and that they would be protected from harm.

Other points in establishing a good working relationship with the participants included being open to and honestly answering their questions, not hiding any information related to the study, and expressing clear expectations of the study to the participants. Being flexible in working with the personal schedules of the participants helped them complete the study. Participants also knew that withdrawing from the study at any time would not cause them any harm nor have any negative impact on them. Three days before the scheduled interview, each participant received a reminder email (Appendix E) which helped maintain open communication lines.

### **Data Collection Strategy**

Researchers who perform quantitative research use surveys, questionnaires, or experiments as their primary research tools (Creswell, 2014). In doing qualitative research, the primary tool for research is the researcher (Creswell, 2011; Merriam, 2009). I took an active role in collecting the data produced in the study. Glesne (2011) described three forms of data collection in qualitative research that included observations made of the participants in the study, data collected from individual and focus group interviews, and documents collected from the participants.

The best method to gather the most complete and richest data for this study was conducting individual interviews with the 11 community college transfer students. Glesne (2011) and Lodico et al. (2010) described this type of interview as a face-to-face interaction between at least two people. DeMarrais (as cited in Merriam, 2009) added that the conversation between those two individuals was focused on responses to interview questions relevant to the study.

Merriam (2009) reported that writing good interview questions was essential to generating good data from an interview. Glesne (2011) suggested that there were good interview questions and interview questions to avoid, and that the best interview questions were dependent on the wording of the question. Interview questions must remain fluid to allow for flexibility during the interview should the interview take a different direction (Glesne, 2011).

Creswell (2007, 2014) recommended that a panel of other professionals validate the interview questions. Two professional colleagues were consulted to validate the interview questions. Both of these individuals have doctoral degrees so they were quite familiar with conducting research. They each reviewed every question that would be asked in the interview. These individuals gave me suggestions for refining the questions they thought were ambiguous or not clear. Soliciting this feedback allowed me to revise the questions so they would be clear to the participant being interviewed in order to produce better data. Validating the interview questions was necessary to receive the best information from the participant (Glesne, 2011).

Creswell (2007, 2014) also recommended that the interviewer remain in control of the study by providing the participant with an interview protocol consisting of an introduction to the interview, what the actual interview would entail, and how long the interview would last. I told each participant where and when the interview would take place, that the interview would last approximately 30-40 minutes, and a reminder that the interview would be audio recorded. I began all the interviews with a question that was familiar to the participants so they would feel comfortable as they transitioned into the

deeper questions of the interview (Appendix F). I audio recorded each interview and verified it by the handwritten notes I took.

### **Plan and Timeline for Data Collection**

The timeline collecting data for this study took approximately four weeks. Once the IRB approvals from Walden University and the study site were received, collecting data for this study was initiated. When students inquired about participating in the study, they received an email from me saying that I would contact them (Appendix C). When I contacted each student, I explained how the study would proceed. The students who responded positively to participating in the study received another email with the criteria to participate in the study (Appendix D). Those students who met the criteria and were still interested to participate in the study were scheduled for an individual interview. If the student reported they were no longer interested in the study, the student was not contacted again and the email from that student was deleted.

Once the participants were selected, I followed an interview protocol. Each participant were emailed the protocol and the informed consent form. Three days prior to the scheduled interview date, each participant received an email to confirm the date, time, and location of the interview, and that I had received the informed consent form from them.

The timeline for collecting data started during week 1 of the process. During the first week, the recruiting flyer was posted and distributed. During the next three weeks individual interviews were conducted with the 11 community college transfer students.

Each of these interviews was audio recorded as agreed to by each participant and took approximately 30 to 40 minutes.

### **Procedures for Data Collection**

Eleven individual interviews were conducted with the students who met the stated criteria for the study. These interviews followed an interview protocol. Merriam (2009) recommended some of the interview questions be structured to capture very specific information, to ask some questions that were less structured, which allowed the participant to answer these questions personally, and then having some non-structured questions to allow each participant to express his or her individual personal opinions. Each participant was asked 10 questions that had appropriate follow-up and probing questions (Appendix F).

The list of questions was a combination of structured, semi-structured, and non-structured questions to capture the full scope of information from each participant. I took handwritten notes during the interview. The interviews were held in an office conference room. Upon arriving at the interview, I gave the student an explanation of what would transpire during the interview, and that they would be asked 10 questions. The interview session concluded by allowing the students to ask questions they had about the study and the interview process.

### **Plan to Generate, Collect, and Record Data**

I began the interview by asking the participants about their particular academic journeys, which included the decision they made to attend this university, and how they arrived here. Asking this type of question allowed the participant to become comfortable

with the location of the interview and the format of the interview process. The interview then continued with nine additional questions. The interview protocol was flexible to allow for follow-up questions and questions of inquiry for clarification purposes based on the information the student presented. While conducting the interview, I made sure the interview did not run over the allotted time. A lengthy interview could have burned out the participant or the interviewer.

The interviews were audio recorded by a digital recorder. Creswell (2014) advised that in addition to audio recording the interview, handwritten notes be taken. I followed Creswell's recommendation and took notes during each interview. Creswell made that recommendation in case there was a recorder malfunction, or if the information on the recorder could not be accurately transcribed. If the student being interviewed reported anything that was unclear to me, I stopped the interview. I did not stop the audio recorder but I did ask for clarification from the student. Before the data were analyzed, I transcribed all the data from an audio to a written format. I completed the transcription of each interview as quickly as possible so that every aspect of the interview could be recalled and accurately reported.

The recorder connected directly into a computer and I downloaded the interview to the computer using Windows. No other computer program was necessary. Downloading the audio recording of the interview directly to the computer made the transcription process easier and more efficient. The transcription of the interview showed how the interview proceeded. Reviewing the transcribed interview allowed me to make any adjustments to the interview process before the next scheduled interview.



### **Sorting, Handling, and Storing Data**

Glesne (2011) reported that if the researcher did not remain organized, methodical, and working to sort the data that were collected at the time of the interview, the task of analyzing the data at the end of the process would be daunting. There would be more data collected than would be needed to report on the study. Before the data were sorted, the data are defined as fat data (Glesne, 2011). In order to keep the data organized, each of the interviews was transcribed from audio to written form. After reading each interview transcription, key words and phrases from each interview were identified. I compared these key words and phrases from interview to interview to see if there were recurring patterns. These recurring patterns became themes. Themes were identified by the similarity in code words and phrases that were taken from the students' answers to the interview questions.

Since the students self-reported their information and the data collected from the interviews were not anonymous, it was important to keep all the information confidential. Students were told that their names would not be used in the report. Students were assured that this was a priority so they would not be concerned that their personal information would be shared. Information and data that were collected is securely guarded on my computer. No one else has access to this computer because I live alone. This computer is also password protected. Once this study is fully accepted, the data will be transferred to a USB drive and secured in a locked file cabinet in my personal file cabinet at home. This information will be kept for five years. After that period of time, all of the stored information will be destroyed.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher of this study, I work in residential life at one of the six undergraduate colleges. My position is a live-in position in the division of student affairs. I have no teaching or faculty responsibilities. I oversee all aspects of one college residential area that houses approximately 1500 undergraduate students in one residential complex. My job responsibilities include making room assignments for students, adjudicating conduct matters, providing conflict mediation between and among roommates, and advising student organizations. I also supervise 26 residential paraprofessional staff members, two professional and two clerical staff members.

The students who live at this residential college are first and second year students. This residential area houses only native students; transfer students live in another residential area. I do not have any formal contact with community college transfer students at this university. Because I do not interact with transfer students, I had no personal bias nor did I have any conflict of interest with the students who were interviewed.

Community college transfer students enrolled at this university either commute or live in a university housing complex approximately one mile from my residential area. Because the students who live at this college are traditional first and second year students, it would be unusual to see any transfer student visiting this residential area. I do not make decisions regarding transfer students that would affect their status on campus nor do I have any conduct responsibilities that would affect any transfer student.

### **Data Analysis Summary**

After the interviews were completed, I had an abundant amount of information available to me. Once the data were collected and transcribed into a written form, the data were analyzed. Glesne (2011) explained that data analysis was the process of taking the information the researcher collected and organizing it in a way that the information made sense. The analyzed data was used to answer the research questions guiding the study.

In reviewing ways to analyze data, I decided that using a thematic analysis approach would be the best method to analyze the data I collected. Glesne (2011) described thematic analysis as looking for words in patterns, called codes, in the data. The identified codes are combined to make broader themes (Creswell, 2007). Merriam (2009) recommended analyzing data simultaneously with the on-going collection of the data. With the amount of data the interviews produced, waiting until the end of the data collection process to begin analyzing the data would be overwhelming. I found that a 30-40 minute interview took six or seven hours to transcribe to a written format. Glesne suggested to transcribe and analyze data as it was collected, which I did. Using this procedure allowed me to modify and re-focus the study as it proceeded. According to Creswell (2007), the data analysis process followed a general outline that is customized by the researcher doing the analysis.

#### **Procedures for Data Analysis**

I analyzed the data that were collected from the 11 student interviews using a thematic analysis process. Thematic analysis is identifying and reporting themes from

identifying codes that are found in the data that were collected (Braun & Clark, 2006). Developing codes is the start of analyzing the collected data (Creswell, 2007; Saldana, 2009). Prior to starting the interviews, Creswell (2007) suggested developing a list of approximately 25 to 30 codes. He said that any longer list would be difficult to narrow down to five or six themes. Saldana (2009) described a code as a word or a short phrase that captured an aspect found within the data that were collected in a study.

Prior to the interviews, I formulated a list of codes I expected to find in the data. I identified 26 codes. These codes were: *fears, apprehensions, time to graduation, relationships, emotional support, financial support, expectations, friends, academic difficulty, academic reputation, campus resources, balance, sacrifices, independence, misinformation, issues, opportunities, academic rigor, differences, hardships, resources, improvements needed, academic persistence, campus involvement, student development, and student engagement.*

Creswell (2014) recommended using a qualitative computer data analysis program as an efficient way to identify, organize, and store the data. I manually transcribed the audio recordings of the data collected from the interviews into a written format. Each interview took approximately 6 to 7 hours to transcribe, and each interview was transcribed following the interview. After each interview was transcribed into a written format, I reviewed each transcription and made notes of codes I found in the transcription that was on my list. The notes I took included the codes that appeared on my list of codes from all 11 transcribed interviews.

Lodico et al. (2010) noted that qualitative data must be continually read and re-read throughout the entire data analysis process. In addition to reviewing the data for analysis, as I read and re-read each transcription, I made notes about ideas, issues, suggestions, future research, limitations of this research, and any general thoughts that came to me from reading and reviewing the data. I found this information useful in reporting parts of this study.

In summary, I followed the procedures that Creswell (2014) recommended in conducting the interview and to follow upon the completion of each interview.

1. I took handwritten notes during each interview in case the audio recorder malfunctioned or the recording could not be transcribed for any reason.
2. Once the audio recording of the interview was transcribed into a written format, I reviewed the interview and found words and phrases that were contained on my code list. This was the first round of reading all of the individual interviews. I put words and phrases I identified on a spreadsheet so I could compare them from interview to interview. If there were recurring words or phrases that surfaced from interview to interview, I included them on the code list.
3. On the pages of the transcribed interview, I highlighted individual words and I made additional comments in the margins. I underlined relevant and important phrases in the text of the transcribed interview. I put possible quotes to use in the analysis of the data on notes I attached to transcription of the interview.

4. I then wrote detailed descriptions, described as thick descriptions, of a variety of components that were verbalized in the interviews, such as people, programs, activities, events, and places. These narrative descriptions are essential to good qualitative research because they allow readers to feel like they experienced what was being described (Lodico et al., 2010).

5. From these descriptions, I identified themes from the coded data. Although described by only a few words, themes represented major concepts. Lodico et al., (2010) described themes as ideas the researcher used to interpret and explain what had been learned from the data that were collected.

6. I read the analyzed data from each interview. I reviewed the analyzed data from each interview to ensure that the analyzed data related to the research questions:

- a. What factors do community college transfer students report to explain their positive and negative college experiences at the university?
- b. What expectations do community college transfer students have of the university that are being met, and what expectations do they have that have not been met?
- c. What changes would community college transfer students like to see at this university that would have enhanced their undergraduate experience?

7. In the second round of reviewing the data, I identified recurring words and phrases the students used in answering the questions they were asked. Saldana (2009) describes this process as manually coding the data in a descriptive way.

When I found a similar word or phrase in any of the interviews, I added the word or phrase to the original list.

### **Procedures to Guarantee Validity and Reliability**

Criteria for guaranteeing the validity and reliability of a qualitative study differ from what is used to guarantee the same in a quantitative study (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009). To achieve a level of validity and reliability, qualitative researchers must be ethical in conducting the study, show that the research was conducted in an ethical manner, thoroughly explain how the outcomes from the research were achieved, and then how the outcomes were presented (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009). All parts of the study must be thoroughly examined to guarantee validity and reliability of each part of the research being conducted.

To address my personal bias, I did not know any of the students who were interviewed. I also did not interact with them in any manner other than following the protocol for scheduling the interviews, and then conducting the interviews. I did not sit on any committee that made decisions regarding the welfare of any of these students. Outside of the actual interview, my interaction with each student was limited to email: explaining the study, scheduling the interview, and then confirming the interview. There was no interaction with any of the students following the interview.

I contacted two professional colleagues to examine parts of my study as an additional method to check the validity of the data. In their professional opinions, each assured me that my conclusions were reported accurately and in a non-biased manner. These two colleagues separately reviewed the data I analyzed from this study in a process

called peer review (Merriam, 2009). They separately agreed that the data analysis they read was logical, and that the conclusions they read were accurate, according to Firestone (as cited in Merriam, 2009). In a process called triangulation analysis, they independently analyzed some of the same data and came up with similar conclusions (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) suggested that the number of interviews in a research project is complete when there is information saturation. This phenomenon is described as hearing the same comments and ideas repeated from interview to interview, and that there is no new information being presented (Merriam, 2009). The saturation point for this research project was reached after 11 interviews.

### **Discrepant Case Analysis**

An ethical researcher must be careful not to bias any of the data that was collected, analyzed, and reported, and the researcher must be honest in looking for data showed possible alternative explanations (Merriam, 2009). An ethical researcher must not tamper with the data that were collected nor tamper with how it was reported. The researcher must also look for data that supported variances in the expectations of the researcher, and determine and report the reasons for the differences (Creswell, 2007). I adhered to all aspects about ethically conducting and reporting the collected data. I did not find any variances in the data that were collected and what I reported.

### **Assumptions**

It is important that the answers the students gave to the questions they were asked were reported honestly. I assumed that the students who were interviewed were forthright in describing their undergraduate college experiences to me. With honest



information from answering the interview question, it is possible that the information resulting from this study will benefit the experiences of future community college transfer students, both as they go through the transfer process to attend this university and once they actually enroll at this university.

### **Limitations**

Creswell (2008) referred to a limitation as a weakness in a study that affected the results of the study. Limitations are also not under control of the researcher. Stake (2008) referred to the qualitative case study as related to one single case. This is definitely a limitation in this study because the research I conducted focused on only one university. The undergraduate college system at this university is also a limitation because it complicates matters at this university in many ways. This type of education system can either be detrimental or an enhancement of an undergraduate student's education. Students benefit from the college system because it breaks down the numbers of staff students interact with, giving them more personal experiences. However, community college transfer students do not have the same experiences that other students registered at their particular college of registration have. This university does not house any transfer student at his/her college of registration; all transfer students live in a separate residential facility that is separate from their colleges of registration. Another limitation of this study could be the small number of participants who were interviewed (Merriam, 2009).

After an extended period of time soliciting students to participate in this study, 11 students expressed an interest to me to participate in the study. Fortunately, I saw

saturation of the data that was collected in this number of interviews. However, if this was not the case, interviewing 11 students could have been a limitation because having more participants in this study could have expanded the breath of the information the students reported about their undergraduate experiences. I see this as a possible limitation, however, I began to see the information students told me duplicated after only three or four interviews, so interviewing more students may not have produced new information.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are variables that the researcher decides to use for the study that are under the control of the researcher. I chose the following variables for this study: that all participating students in the study must be community college transfer students, and they must be registered as 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year students. All of these students had some college experience at another educational institution before they transferred to this university. The gender of the students and whether or not the students lived on campus or commuted were not significant factors in this study

### **Results**

The data collected in the study allowed 11 participants to express their opinions through individual interviews about their college experiences as community college transfer students at this study site. In the interviews, the participants expressed their positive and negative experiences as undergraduate students. These participants were offered the opportunity to suggest what either institution they attended could have

changed to make their undergraduate experience more satisfactory than they reported.

The data helped to answer the three research questions.

The data analysis process resulted in the identification of 12 categories from groups of code words. I found overlapping information in the 12 categories that allowed me to formulate seven themes. Four of the categories remained the same and became four themes: misinformation, suggestions for improvement, apprehensions and fears, and relationships and support. The other seven categories: academic issues, academic reputation, balance, independence, sacrifices, stress, and resources were combined to form three themes, academic reputation, transfer student issues, and benefits. In summary, the final seven themes I used to analyze the data were: *academic reputation, misinformation, apprehensions and fears, transfer student issues, relationships and support, benefits, and suggestions for improvement.*

These themes are described and defined in Table 1. The data in Table 1 show how the 12 categories were grouped into seven themes.

Table 1

*Categories Forming Themes*

Category	Theme
Academic issues and academic reputation. The students knew the faculty had high academic standards, and were not always sensitive to the workload they assigned. This university has an excellent academic reputation and is known for its excellent departments and programs.	Academic Reputation
Misinformation. Information received by community college transfer students about transferring credits and the transfer process was incorrect.	Misinformation
Apprehensions and fears. Students expressed concerns about the academic rigor they heard about, and how they would successfully survive as students in this environment that was very competitive, and at a university on the quarter system.	Apprehensions and Fears
Balance, independence, sacrifices & stress. Students expressed their worry of what they would have to sacrifice to remain academically successful at this university. They thought their lives would revert to only attending class and studying.	Transfer Student Issues
Relationships and support. Who would these students turn to when they needed support if they found making friends at this university difficult? Whom did they rely on outside this university for support?	Relationships and Support
Campus resources used by students at the community colleges and at this university	Benefits
Suggestions for improvement. Suggestions included talking with currently enrolled community college transfer students at the university, and increasing the awareness of faculty, staff, and administrators of the needs, concerns, and issues of community college transfer students.	Suggestions for Improvement

The data, now in a themed format, were analyzed in the following manner. I took each theme in an order that was chronological in the students' undergraduate experience, starting with how and why they chose to transfer to this university and ending with the suggestions they felt would give them an improved undergraduate experience. Each of the seven themes was analyzed and each theme is described in Tables 2 through 8. Each table is introduced by what it explains. Comments from the participant interviews are included in the explanation of the theme. This combined information formulated an idea for the project, a 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff that is described in the following two sections, project direction and summary, and then detailed in Section 3 and Appendix A.

**Academic reputation.** The answers to Interview Questions 1 and 2 indicated that these participants did their research when looking for a university to transfer to from their community colleges. They all had different paths getting to this university but they all had this university if not the first on their transfer list, very high on their transfer list. They all questioned their own academic intelligence in succeeding at a university of this caliber, but gave themselves the credit they deserved after they were accepted to this university.

All the participant who were interviewed were interested in a university with a strong academic reputation, and strong academic programs; many knew the reputation of individual departments, programs, and majors and made their decisions to transfer based on that information. Participants 1 and 2 were both interested in biology and knew this university had a prominent biology department. Participant 1 reported, "I'm really

interested in biology and (this university) has a very prominent biology department, really well-known,” which was very similar to the comment made by Participant 2, “I know that (this university) has one of the top biology programs so that’s another reason why I chose (this university).”

Participants 3, 6, and 7 commented that they could gain better employment after graduating from a university of this academic reputation, and that they would have an edge in the job market over other students who graduated from other universities. Participant 7 referred to the caliber of this university’s Career Services Center, which would be used for the upcoming job search. Participants 3, 6, and 7 all chose to attend this university because of its academic reputation, and how prestigious and well known it was in the academic community. Participant 3 reported, “When I started researching universities, I realized that this was the school I really wanted to go to because of the quality of its academic programs.”

Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 made comments comparing the academic reputation of this university to other academic universities in the geographic area. These participants concluded that this institution was the type of university with which they wanted an affiliation. Participant 3 specifically said, “This (university) is a pretty prestigious school.” Participant 6 commented, “This (university) had the best reputation of any university in this geographic area.”

Each of the participants had the ultimate goal of graduating from this university. When the participants were asked what other universities they applied to transfer, they named other universities, but followed their list of universities with the general comment

that these other universities were not of the same caliber as this university. None of the students named a university outside of this state to which they applied. Participant 6 reported, “Everyone in my high school went to (another university in this geographic area) so I wanted to go to (this university) to take a different path, and just get a better education.”

Interview Questions 1 and 2 asked the participants how they decided to apply to this university, and if they found this institution to be academically suited for them.

Table 2 shows the five codes that emerged from their answers to Interview Questions 1 and 2. The theme resulting from the five codes was academic reputation.

Table 2

*Codes & Emerging Theme – Academic Reputation*

Interview Questions	Codes	Themes
1. Please describe how you academically arrived at this university?	Aware of the academic difficulty	Academic Reputation
	Good engineering program	
2. How did you decide this university was suited for you academically?	Good science program	
	Chances are better to secure a good job & be accepted to graduate school	
	More status graduating from this university	
	Academic reputation	

**Community college transfer student issues.** All participants who were interviewed identified four areas that gave them some difficulty in both their academic

and personal lives. The four areas the students identified were: balance between their personal and academic lives, sacrifices made in their personal lives, independence, and the stress they experienced. The participants described different reasons for the difficulties they were experiencing in each of these areas.

**Personal and academic balance.** These participants enrolled at this university with different ideas of how to balance the personal and academic parts of their lives while attending this university. Seven participants, 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 10, commented on the difficulty they had coordinating everything they had to do while trying to maintain their academics. The participants found themselves struggling with managing all the different parts of their lives, which included family obligations, work responsibilities, friends, social lives, and trying to be financially responsible so they could remain at this university.

Participant 3 commented “about the size of my academic workload, and the amount of reading I was required to do.” In regard to the concern about the size of the work load and amount of reading, participant 3 reported this was all related to the time management that would be required, and as a student could even the basics get done: attending class, doing homework, and commuting to a residence off-campus. Participant 3 also reported that any free time left after classes was used to study and do homework. Participant 2 admitted that, “Even being here for almost two years, I still find it really hard for me to manage my academic and social life, and that the difficulty of balancing social and academic life is much harder here than it was at community college.” Participant 1 reported, “There was one quarter I did very poorly in terms of my classes



because I was unable to juggle social life and juggle academics.” Participant 6 admitted that the first quarter was particularly rough trying to coordinate classes while working and playing field hockey. The quarter ended with this student having to drop some classes. Participant 7 reported that “The academics here are so intense there is no time for a social life. Any time I have after going to class is spent studying.” Participant 3 and 8 reported that involvement in anything outside of classes was impossible because after classes were done, any free time went to commuting off-campus. Participant 10 reported there was no time to be involved in anything outside of classes, especially because this student was put on academic probation after the first quarter.

While the participants thought they understood the rigor this university, they were all surprised at how academically difficult this university really was. Six participants, 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, and 10, were especially surprised at the level of academic difficulty they found at this university. Participant 1 reported, “The academics are definitely harder than I thought they would be,” participant 3 reported the academics were “intimidating,” and participant 10 said, “I was put on academic probation very quickly, which then transferred to subject to disqualification. I’ve never had such a low GPA.”

Many learned about the difficulty of this university during their first quarter. Five participants, 1, 2, 7, 8, and 10, experienced academic “transfer shock,” and were surprised at how their GPAs dropped with even more study time they put into their academics than they did at their community colleges. Participant 2 mentioned that academics went very poorly one quarter, and participants 1 and 10 were quickly put on academic probation. Participant 8 expressed how difficult the first quarter was at this

university, and participant 7 commented at how much easier the community college was academically. The participants realized that to remain at this university, they needed to readjust themselves by managing their time better, and to study differently than they did at their community colleges. The participants all spoke about having to adjust to the higher academic standards they found at this university.

Even though their community colleges warned them of the academic rigor at this university, six participants, 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, and 11, admitted they found the academic standards at this university to be much higher than what they expected and what experienced at their community colleges. Participant 7 said, “The faculty in my classes at this university is more interested in teaching theories in their area of expertise than being concerned whether their students were learning what they were teaching.” Participant 7 did not believe the professors were interested in the students that were in their classes. Participants 9 and 11 tried to prepare for the increased academic rigor of the quarter system at this university compared to the semester system at the community college.

**Personal sacrifices made by the students.** To remain at this university, these participants learned they needed to make sacrifices. Six participants 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, and 10 found these sacrifices to be very personal, but their decisions were made with the motivation to remain academically successful at this university. Remembering their goal of graduating from this university sometimes made the sacrifices they made easier to make. Some of the participants tried not to make these sacrifices, but after experiencing at least one difficult academic quarter, they knew they had to make some personal adjustments so they could stay enrolled at this university. Participant 7 said, “I lost a

number of my friends because I did not have time to spend with them socially.”

Participant 1 experienced difficulty making friends because any free time went to studying and doing homework. This participant also had to give up competing on the equestrian team and gave up reading for pleasure. Participant 1 said, “I don’t allow myself to read fiction novels, or leisure books during the quarter because I get really engrossed in them, and then I don’t study.” Participant 6 had to give up working and playing field hockey. Participant 9 wanted to be involved in this campus, but schoolwork took that free time away. Participant 10 sacrificed a preferred graduate school because of not achieving the grades that were needed to be accepted into this particular graduate school.

In some cases, family members who were supporting their student financially forced personal sacrifices upon the participant. Participant 1 was on the university’s equestrian team, and when one quarter did not go well academically, this student’s parents said because they were paying the college tuition bills, there would be no horseback riding the following quarter. Participant 1 said, “My dad informed me that since I did not have my academic priorities in order, there could be no more horses. I haven’t ridden all quarter.”

All the participants with the exception of participants 9 and 11 described one of their individual sacrifices as limiting their social life with friends. The participants reported having either none or a few friendships and social relationships because they had no time to maintain those relationships outside of their class and study time. Participant 7 said, “I have a few friends from my classes and some study buddies, but that’s about it.

Most of my time is spent studying.” Participant 8 found making friends difficult because of the commuting this student had to do to get to class because of living at home to save money. Participant 8 said, “Students here already have their friends.” Participant 6 described life as only “school, school, school.”

**Expressing personal independence.** Participants learned that to succeed at this university they needed to be responsible for themselves. Nine participants explained how they did that. The nine students, all but participants 6 and 8, realized it was unlikely anyone at the community colleges they attended would assist them with the transfer process to this university. Neither were they confident there would be institutional support at this university to assist them in transferring from their community colleges or transitioning to this university.

Some of the participants reported finding varying degrees of support from their community colleges and from this university although there was no consistency in what they experienced. Participant 2 admitted that neither institution did anything to help the transfer to this university. Participant 2 said, “This (university) is not helping me with anything.” Participants expressed they were lucky when they found someone who was helpful to them, but most did not rely on finding that support consistently. Participant 5 said, “I figured how to do things on my own because I was afraid to ask for help. I just figured out what I needed and learned how to get those things done, like looking on the campus website.” Participant 7 commented that academically, the engineering department was not helpful in helping this student figure out classes for the major or to

graduate, to stay in this major, this student had to figure out things without any assistance from this department.

Participants 4 and 6 reported saying they had decided to go to 4-year private universities outside this geographic area; participant 4 reported that there was pressured by the high school this student attended to do that. Both decided to leave those institutions and return to this geographic location to attend community colleges. This decision was difficult for both of them. Similarly, participant 10 moved from Florida. Attending a community college was fairly simple, but deciding where to transfer was very difficult, and a decision this student made on her own. Participant 10 never used campus resources but just figured out how to do things without any help. Participant 3 commented that networking with other transfer students from classes was very helpful, “We gave each other support and encouragement.” Participant 6 and 11 both decided to change their majors without the assistance of a counselor or anyone in their department. Participant 6 switched majors because, “the math classes just didn’t click”, and participant 11 reported saying that even though math was difficult in high school and in community college, mechanical engineering was this student’s new major after the math department would not take any new majors, “I decided to take the challenge.”

All of the participants were very hard on themselves, and blamed themselves if something went wrong or they did not accomplish what they set out to do. Many participants admitted they did not know the information about transferring to this university or about this institution they thought they should know, and that they did not know who to ask for the information they needed. Participant 5 said, “I really didn’t

know who to ask when I needed help.” Another participant reported that riding the campus shuttle was not an option because the recurring fare of riding the shuttle would be like paying to ride the public bus, and would be very expensive. One of the other apartment roommates said that riding the shuttle was a free service. When having some difficulties in a math class, participant 6 said, “My math advisor told me to go to a campus resource but that there would be no guarantee that office could help me with my classes.” After hearing that, this student never looked for assistance for anything from any of the services on campus again.” Participant 9 said, “I should have tried harder to get better grades, and have a better experience.” Participant 10 thought that being suspended from the university was the only option after failing a class.

The nine participants, all but participants 6 and 8, reported figuring out what to do to make things work for themselves. Some of these nine students admitted to how time consuming and frustrating this mode of operation was. Participant 5 said, “I just figured out how to do things myself.” They were asked why they did things the way they did, and most responded that they knew to be successful, they only had themselves on which to rely. Participant 5 also said, “I figured out how to do things on my own because I was afraid to ask for help.” Wanting to succeed at this university gave them personal motivation to figure out how to make things work.

**Experiencing personal stress.** Coming to this university of this size and reputation was intimidating to every participant on some level. Participant 2 said, “I find (this university) has difficulty reaching out to transfer students because they do not see transfer students differently than the university views freshmen students. They may see

us as a little older, but the university assumes that we know about university life because we were college students at community colleges. We were not given information about this (university) like freshmen were.” Participant 5 concurred saying, “I wish (this university) would do things for transfer students like they do for new freshmen.”

All of the participants were intimidated academically, and some doubted the decision they made to transfer to this university because they did not see themselves being academically successful. One of the biggest stressors for these participants was leaving their community colleges, which functioned academically on a semester system, and stepping into the quarter system at this university. None of the participants had experienced attending a university that was on such a fast-paced quarter academic schedule, and all were worried and concerned about whether they would be able to keep up with the pace.

The semester system at the community colleges operates with 16 weeks of instruction, which students reported gave them enough time to transition into their classes, buy their books, and do their work at a moderate pace. Quarters are only 10 weeks of academic instruction. Faculty at this university expects students will learn a semester’s worth of work in a quarter, which is a much shorter period of time than that of a semester. Participant 1 said, “My professors think the only classes I am taking are theirs.”

Participants doubted their ability to compete in such a competitive academic environment, as well as on many other levels. These participants had the perception that everyone else around them was smarter or more intelligent than they were. They

wondered how they could survive and could they compete in that type of environment, no matter how much or how long they studied. Participant 1 said, “The academics are definitely very rigorous.” Participant 2 said, “Classes were very intimidating because all the other students in the class were so smart and so brilliant. When I go to office hours to try to interact with my professor, these other students are asking amazing questions. That makes it very intimidating for me to talk with the professor.” Participant 10 said, “I feel like everybody else was a genius.”

Faculty members at this university set very high academic standards. The assumption by the participants is that professors are here to teach the material, and are not necessarily concerned whether their students learn the material. The responsibility lies solely on the students to learn the material. Students must then show their professors they learned the material on the one or two mid-terms in the quarter, or on the cumulative final. The participants were concerned that in the quarter system, there were few opportunities to demonstrate their learning to their professors.

Financial pressures were reported as another stressor that of almost all of these participants mentioned. Each student had different reports of how their personal financial pressure was evident and affected their personal lives. Most of the students tried to work so they could assist their families with paying the tuition and other school costs to remain at this university. After a short period of time, most had to drop their employment because of the negative impact working had on their academics. Working took away too much time from studying, which then put more financial pressure on the families of the



participants. This additional family pressure made Participant 7 feel guilty because there was no way to financially contribute to the education at this university.

While most of the participants expressed wanting to graduate as soon as possible, Participant 7 explained the difficulty delaying graduation was not knowing what classes were needed in this particular major to graduate. When Participant 7 finally met with the college academic advisor, the advisor told the participant that only the department academic advisor would know that specific information. The time to graduation for this participant took longer than anticipated it would for that reason.

In Interview Questions 3 and 4, the participants were asked what expectations they had about this university, and then once they were enrolled at this institution, were those expectations met. Table 3 shows the four codes that emerged from the student responses to these questions: balance, sacrifices, independence, and stress. The theme resulting from these four codes was community college student transfer issues.

Table 3

*Codes & Emerging Theme -- Community College Student Transfer Issues*

Interview Questions	Codes	Theme
3. What expectations did you have about transferring to this university?	Balance – educational costs, poor time management skills, academic burnout, panic attacks, too time consuming, less time to transition, feeling academically inadequate, uncomfortable and old.	Community College Student Transfer Issues
4. Have the expectations you expressed been met by this university? Why or why not?	Sacrifices - no friends, no social life on or off campus, not being able to work, no leisure time, always studying, not living on campus, being academically isolated	
	Independence - having to succeed alone, no institutional assistance or support, commuting, being hard on themselves, accepting blame for “causing” the problem, trying not to be needy, personally, academically motivated	
	Stress - What did I get myself into? Large lecture classes; quarter system and not semesters, feeling academically inadequate.	

## **Misinformation**

All the participants expected that any educational institution would give their students correct information so they could be efficient with their time. Instead, participants learned that both their community college and this university provided them with misinformation that created problems for them. In their interview responses, the participants provided examples of misinformation they received. Participant 5 said, “My (name of college) said they would contact me in the summer to give me more information, but no one ever did.” This participant also said that, “This (university) told me they were going to do things to help me that they never did.”

Participant 4 had a particularly difficult time transferring to this university. Participant 4 was told the transfer process to this university was complete. Upon receiving that information, participant 4 felt confident that this important process was complete. When enrollment for the second quarter came around, academic advising reported to this student that the community college had not sent this university correct transcripts so enrolling for classes for the next quarter was not possible. Rather than do any follow up earlier in the quarter about an incomplete academic file, this university just let her situation sit until second quarter enrollment time. It took a long time to resolve the situation. By the time it was resolved, priority enrollment period as an upper class student had passed so it was difficult to get the required courses to graduate on time.

Participant 4 expressed the frustration about this situation in this way, “I struggled with the requirements to transfer because (the name of the) community college was so overcrowded, they did not have time to give me a lot of individual attention. The

community college told me I was “good to go” so I thought I was fine until I realized my transcripts had never been sent. I was shocked when I tried to enroll in my writing class and was told I could not because I was missing everything. It really seemed like no one could help me and I really felt on my own.”

At this university, engineering majors have many required courses they must complete, which generally lengthens the time to graduation for all students. Participant 7 reported trying to work out an academic schedule for one of the engineering majors. It was all figured out only to have the department advisor say there were some prerequisites missing for the upper division courses required for this engineering major. Participant 7 said, “They would not let me take engineering 101 without first taking engineering 30, but I found that was not advertised in the catalogue.” Participant 7 did not find any information about the sequence of courses for this particular engineering major. The engineering advisor admitted that such information was not posted anywhere for students; only departmental academic advisors knew this information. Not having the correct academic information was very frustrating. Having to take the necessary prerequisite courses only lengthened the time to graduation, and cost more money.

In Interview Question 9, participants were asked to think about what would enhance their current experience at this university. Table 4 shows the seven codes that emerged from their answers. The emerging theme of misinformation resulted from these seven codes.

Table 4

*Codes & Emerging Theme - Misinformation*

Interview Question	Codes	Theme
9. What would enhance your experience as an undergraduate student at this university?	<p>Receiving correct information</p> <p>Misinformation from both institutions about transferring from the community college to this university</p> <p>Misinformation about major &amp; transfer requirements</p> <p>Poor &amp; demeaning academic advice from both institutions</p> <p>What did I get myself into</p> <p>Poor communication</p> <p>Not delivering what was promised</p>	Misinformation

**Fears and Apprehensions**

Each participant who was interviewed had something to say about having some fears and being apprehensive about attending this university. These concerns by the participants were academically related, and related to the difficulties they would have with their academics. The participants had many opinions about the academic environment they experienced at their community colleges, and what they thought they

would experience at this university. They all knew the academic environment at this university would be different and more difficult from what they experienced at their community colleges. The participants admitted that many of those apprehensions became their reality once they finally arrived at this university. Before enrolling at this university, the students wondered how difficult the classes would be compared to the classes they took at their community colleges.

These are examples of their comments. Participant 10 said, “I was quickly put on academic probation. When I went to talk to my advisor, “I felt like the dumbest person in my department. This advisor told me to do something different than being a math major and that I should change my major to something else, like history. This advisor said that I was not good enough to be a math major. This advisor was just not helpful to me.” Participant 8 said, “It is difficult academically, the pace is very fast, and the classes are very hard.” Participant 1 said, “My professors think the only classes I am taking are theirs. They assign too much homework.” Participant 6 said, “I received better explanation about how to do my math problems at my community college than I received here from my professors.” Participant 10 reported that the academics were difficult. When asking for help, the academic advisor told the student to just change majors instead of helping this student get some academic help.

Two participants were concerned about their time to graduation after transferring to this university. Participant 4 said, “I learned quickly to be smart in deciding on my major. Choosing the wrong major, like a STEM major, could really lengthen the time to

graduation. Participant 7 reported that there were too many classes to take to be a chemical engineer so this student changed majors to reduce the time to graduation.

Five participants questioned the faculty's commitment to teaching and the teaching skills of the faculty. Participants 1, 2, 5, 10, and 11 guessed that professors were obligated to teach, not out of concern for the education of their students, but to maintain their labs and research positions at the university. Participant 1 reported that many professors commented they were there only to do research, and that they were obligated to occasionally teach. These professors also told their students not expect much teaching from them. Participant 2 reported that some of the professors told the class they were teaching to fulfill a requirement so they could remain on the faculty. Participant 11 commented that some of professors were never meant to teach; they were not interested in teaching, and that they were obligated to teach so they could conduct research. Participant 5 said, "I had never been in a class of 300 before so approaching my professors to talk with them was extremely difficult."

Participant 10 had the most to say about professors teaching, "You don't learn anything in class. My professor didn't really know what was going on so it wasn't worth going back and asking about my grade." This participant continued, "I skipped class a lot because it was a waste of time, but I did go to my discussions, which is where I learned what I needed to know for the mid-term." Participant 2 wondered if not having contact with any professor because of the size of classes, learning from only power point presentations in class, and the intimidation of approaching any professor would be a

concern in obtaining a faculty recommendation letter for admission to graduate or professional school, because they would barely know any professor for those reasons.

All the participants expressed their concerns about life on campus: would they have good time management skills, would they adjust to this new campus life – a university compared to a community college, would they make friends, would there be any kind of a social life, and could they succeed academically. These are some examples of their comments. Participant 8 said, “I experienced a tough first quarter and two quarters later, I am still not comfortable here.” The participants were concerned about the social life they thought they would not experience, or if they would feel included in the campus community, and most importantly, would they make friends. Participant 5 said, “I felt I would feel excluded from being part of the university when I came to campus because I wasn’t here for my freshman and sophomore years. I knew when I came here I would feel like an outsider. Participant 1 and 2 reported that the academics here were definitely harder than they thought they would be. For that reason, they both had difficulty making friends because any free time they had was spent studying and doing homework. Participant 4 said, “As a transfer student, it has been hard to make friends on campus.” Participant 7 said, “I felt more support at my community college than I feel here at this university.”

The participants were asked about the expectations they had of this university in Interview Question 3. Their answers resulted in 10 codes. Table 5 provides the codes that emerged from the student responses to Interview Question 3, and then the theme resulting from these codes, fears and apprehensions.



Table 5

*Codes & Emerging Theme - Fears and Apprehensions*

Interview Question	Codes	Theme
3. What expectations did you have about transferring to this university as an undergraduate student?	Extending time to graduation	Fears and Apprehensions
	Not graduating	
	Not getting required classes	
	No positive reinforcement	
	Fast-paced quarter system	
	Academically fast paced	
	Lack of communication	
	Changing majors	
	No place to park	
Feeling uncomfortable		

**Relationships and Support**

**Relationships and friendships with people.** Relationships with other people was extremely important to all of the participants. How they developed these relationships, their priority of relationships and friendship with others, and what these relationship meant to them varied widely. Some participants were disappointed to admit their difficulty in establishing friendships and meeting people at this university; some met friends through their classes who came together as study groups, but admitted that these friendships dissipated quickly following the completion of the class. Some students

commented that the people they met would never be considered life-long friends. Other participants met people through work and in extracurricular activities in which they participated, if they had the time to participate in any extracurricular activity at all. Six participants, 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 reported not making any friends at all because they were too busy with their academics and did not have time to meet people and establish friendships with them. Meeting people and establishing friendships was not a consistent pattern, nor was it the same priority for all participants. Participant 7 commented that making friends was not a priority.

The participants learned that native students made their friendships when they entered this university as freshmen. At this time in their college career, native students did not need to add to their circle of friends by adding a transfer student who entered the university long after they had. Participant 5 agreed by saying, “It was hard to meet teachers, it was hard to meet other students and join clubs. I think it's very different for an incoming freshman and an incoming transfer student. You don't really fit in.” The participants who felt most supported were those who maintained their established relationships with family and friends from home. Many of those relationships included family members and friends who had attended or were attending this university, and had an understanding of what these participants were experiencing. Participant 2 said, “It's hard for me to open up to people so if I'm going through struggles, I usually tend to open up to one or two people at home.”

The reports from participants regarding their academic relationships with their professors, lecturers, and teaching assistants varied, and differed from the experiences

they had at their community colleges where connecting with the faculty was much easier than they experienced at this university. There appears to be a relationship between large and small classes, and large and small departments. Participants who were in smaller classes and in the smaller departments reported having positive relationships with their professors, especially if they were able to take more than one class with the same professor. Participant 2 said, “Probably the one major issue is being able to approach to professors. It’s hard for me to approach the professors because of the large size of the lectures. It was just hard for me to approach them because I was intimidated.”

In smaller classes, participants had the opportunity to get to know their professors better, which made for a more positive relationship with them. Those participants who experienced this opportunity felt valued by their professors. Participant 3 said, “When I was with professors, I was able to form a couple of close bonds. I got really close to one or two professors because I was able to take multiple courses with them, talk with them, and ask them for help outside of the classroom.”

Participants in larger lectures and larger departments struggled with meeting and connecting with their professors because they were one of a large group of students in the lecture and in the large department. The participants also found it difficult to learn the academic material. If these large lecture classes had separate discussion groups, the participants found the teaching assistants facilitating these discussion groups helpful and valuable in assisting them in learning the material from the class. Participant 5 said, “I never had a class of 300 before so it was difficult to approach my professor, and I found it difficult to meet other students.” Participant 7 said, “I have 700 students in my class,

and that is intimidating to me. I was much more comfortable at my community college where it was much easier for me to make friends and talk to my professors.”

**Involvement with the campus.** Nine participants, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11, recognized the importance of being involved on campus. However, not all of these participants were able to be involved because of the demands their academic schedule placed on them. Those that were involved discussed the people they met, and how they were better balanced in their academic lives. Those who reported not being involved wished they could be involved but the time they put into studying did not allow any kind of extracurricular involvement. Participant 4 said, “Most of my transfer friends aren’t part of any clubs or anything. They just do their work and then go home.” Participants 1, 8, and 10 commented that they hoped to be more involved on campus at some time, but at the moment their academic work and commuting prohibited any involvement on campus.

Participants with better time management skills and a major that did not overwhelm them were able to involve themselves in one meaningful activity. Participant 11 was eventually able to join a Greek organization. Participant 11 said, “I grew a lot from being in that Greek organization. I learned leadership and communication skills.” Participant 2 benefited from being involved with the campus Alternative Break program. Participant 2 said, “Alternative Breaks has definitely paved the way of what I want to do in the future in terms of volunteering, and in terms of connecting with the community in general.” I did not hear any of the students say they had the time to be involved in more than one activity, so choosing the one activity they were involved in was a very important decision.

With the exception of participants 1, 10, and 11, all the other participants made at least one comment about benefiting from some of the activities and resources the university offered to transfer students. These participants commented on attending Transfer Triton Day, being a member of the Transfer Commuter Club or a college governing association, joining a sorority or a fraternity, participating in the Alternative Break program, and using resources on campus like the tutoring and writing centers, the library, the student health center, the counseling center, and the career services center. Participant 5 attended Transfer Admit Day before enrolling at this university and felt more positive about coming to this university. Participant 5 said, “Attending Transfer Admit Day changed my mind about being a transfer student because it felt like this was a big production. Are they really doing all of this for us?”

Participants 5 and 9 expressed wanting to assist new transfer students coming into this university so they stayed involved in these transfer organizations. They reflected on their experiences in transitioning into this university, and wanted to help new transfer students make a smoother transition than they experienced. These participants also found meeting other transfer students in these transfer student organizations was positive for them, and surmised it would be positive for all transfer students.

The participants’ answers to Interview Questions 5, 6, and 7 allowed them to expand on the relationships in their lives, why they considered them to be important, and to reflect on a memorable experience they had as an undergraduate at this university. The codes that came from the answers to these questions resulted were the people who were important in their lives, and how they were involved in the campus community as

undergraduate students. Relationships and support was the theme that emerged from these two codes.

Table 6

*Codes & Emerging Theme - Relationships and Support*

Interview Questions	Codes	Theme
5. Since you have been at this university, what has been your most memorable experience?	People: family, TAs, professors, friends from home, club members, Greek brothers and sisters, other transfer students, athletic teammates, resident assistants	Relationships and Support
6. What types of relationships have you formed at this university?	Campus Involvement: study groups, student organizations, academically oriented relationships, student groups, attending campus activities and programs	
7. Please describe these relationships, and describe why they are important to you.		

### **Benefits**

**At the community college.** All the participants reflected about their experiences at their community colleges in comparison to their experiences at this university. None of the students reported that the community colleges they attended were perfect, but they talked about the things at their community colleges they missed. While they appreciated being at this university for its academic merits, their community colleges offered them other things. The participants reported that their classes were easier; the environment felt smaller; and the semester system allowed them to study and attend classes at a more reasonable pace, which caused them less stress.

Here are comments expressed by some of the participants. Participant 7 said, “I felt more support at my community college. My professors there focused more on teaching and student learning.” They found professors at the community college easier to approach, and the participants heard from their professors that they were at the community college to teach their students. Research was not a priority for these professors because tenure was not awarded to a professor at the community college based on the professor’s research. Participant 7 said, “The classes at my community college were a lot easier. The professors wanted you to pass. The faculty also has more focus on teaching, and not research.” Participant 5 said, “I liked my community college because it was smaller. I also felt that it was easier to talk with teachers. I was never in a class with 300 students like I have here.” Participant 6 said, “I received better explanations about how to do my math problems at my community college than I receive from my professors at this university.”

**At this university.** Participants were extremely appreciative of any advising they received at this university because advising at their community colleges was sporadic and most of these students reported never receiving accurate information. Participants learned there were various places at this university where they received both academic and personal advising such as at their college of registration and in their academic department. They discovered was that not all the information they received was accurate. One participant defended the counselors and advisors around this university by saying that each student has such an individual situation that it would be impossible for any

individual counselor or advisor to know everything and correctly advise everyone who came to see them correctly.

All the participants used some of the more obvious resources on campus such as the library, computer labs, departmental advising, and the student center, where the food court and the bookstore are located. Many participants could list some of the other campus resources like career services, and some of the resource centers on campus like the LGBT Resource Center, the Black Student Union, and the Raza Center but reported rarely using them. Some of the participants recognized they needed what these resources offered, but finding the time to use them was difficult. After classes and labs, the participants reported they were busy studying, had family obligations, went to work, if they were working, and being a commuter. The participants who lived off campus reported that commuting took up much of their time and there was no time left in their schedules to use campus resources. The result of not using campus resources was that they were left to struggle on their own. Participant 6 said, “I don’t think I’ve really used any campus resource.”

In Interview Question 8, the participants were asked what resources on campus they used regularly. Two codes emerged from their answers: the resources they used at the community college, and the resources they used at this university. Table 7 shows the codes that were found in the answers to Interview Question 8, and the theme that emerged from them, benefits.



Table 7

*Codes & Emerging Theme - Benefits*

Interview Question	Codes	Theme
8. What campus resources do you regularly use on campus?	<p>At the community college: smaller classes, safe place, inexpensive, emphasis on teaching &amp; not on research, easier to make friends &amp; approach professors, support programs.</p> <p>At this university: Career services, libraries, college academic and departmental advisors, and tutoring centers, campus offices, transfer student support groups, TAs, resident advisors (RAs), friends, &amp; siblings attending this university.</p>	Benefits

**Suggestions for a Better Undergraduate Experience**

All 11 participants were asked if they had suggestions that would have enhanced their college experience. Every participant had an answer to this question. They had many suggestions to make their undergraduate college experience better and more positive for them. First, they all wanted to receive correct information. Receiving misinformation was time consuming and was detrimental to the decisions they had to make, especially regarding their academic plan to graduate. The participants realized they do not have the same amount of time native students have to make the corrections and adjustments to their schedules because of university errors, and still stay on track to

graduate in a timely manner. Participant 3 said, “The university should encourage transfer students to participate in campus programs because when you come in as a junior you feel that you’re arriving a little late in the game. As a junior, you just do not want to do something that someone who has been here for two years is doing. I would like to see more transitional programs for transfer students.”

Their other suggestions ranged from having smaller lecture classes to finding a way they could feel connected to their college of registration. They primarily wanted the university to be attentive to the different needs they have as transfer students and recognize that those needs are different from those of the native students who arrived as freshmen. Students who had connections with other transfer students were more comfortable asking questions of each other. Participant 4 said, “I would like to see a peer mentor program that is connected to my college.”

Many participants suggested implementing mentor and outreach programs not only after they were on campus, but prior to their arrival on campus. Building connections with other transfer students enrolled at the university prior to their arrival was an important point they made. Participant 5 said, “I would have liked an optional program where people can have the opportunity to meet students that are already at this university. I wished I could have met other students who were like me: a community college student transferring to this university as a junior. If they were transfer students themselves, you could be matched with someone with your same interests and ask them questions you need to know about at the university. Students who are matched could keep in touch through the summer by email.”

The participants were asked what they thought would enhance their experience at this university, which was Interview Question 9. Table 8 shows additional answers to Interview Question 9. There were seven codes that were developed from those answers, and the emerging theme became, suggestions for a better undergraduate experience.

Table 8

*Codes & Emerging Theme – Suggestions for a Better Undergraduate Experience*

Interview Question	Codes	Theme
9. What would enhance your experience as an undergraduate at this university?	Smaller classes	Suggestions for a Better Undergraduate Experience
	Faculty committed to teaching	
	Earlier outreach activities & pre-programs (pre-transfer & pre-enrollment)	
	Initiate faculty interaction	
	Studying differently	
	Being more involved on campus	
	Affordable on-campus housing	

### **Summary of Findings**

Eleven interviews with community college transfer students indicated that these students transferring to this university are in need of various types of assistance. The data that were collected and then analyzed from their individual interviews answered all three of the research questions:

1. What factors do community college transfer students report to explain their positive and negative college experiences at the university?

These participants identified needing information about the transfer process, needing correct information about what units would transfer to the university and to their majors, and needing information about how to transition and maneuver successfully around this university, both academically and socially. Rather than being assisted in these areas by either the community colleges they transferred from, or this university they enrolled in, students reported that neither institution helped them in any of these ways. The students reported that they were reluctant to ask for any assistance from the university, and managed to find ways to work out their issues themselves.

2. What expectations do community college transfer students have of the university that are being met, and what expectations do they have that have not been met?

Based on these findings, community college transfer students are in need of various kinds of information they have not been receiving from this university. Assisting these transfer students cannot occur until the administration, staff, and faculty have a better understanding and are better informed of the differences between transfer and native students. With a better awareness of these two different student populations, the administration, staff, and faculty will understand that the needs, issues, and problems of these two student populations are different from each other. If university personnel adjusts the assistance they give to community college transfer students in a way that addresses the specific needs of these students, it is very likely that these students will have a satisfactory undergraduate college experience.

3. What changes would community college transfer students like to see at this university that would have enhanced their undergraduate experience?

Based on the findings from this study, community college transfer students would like to receive more accurate information and support from this institution that would assist in their transition to their new university. These incoming students would like to see this university provide programs and activities that allow them to meet other students that would lead to friendships, connect with the students that are already enrolled here for support, and give them opportunities in which to participate to allow them to feel part of this university community. Administrators assume that incoming community college transfer students are just like the currently enrolled upper class students at this university and know how to become involved and adjust to this university community and that is not the case. Anything that this university can do to make the university community less intimidating to these incoming students would allow them have a better undergraduate college experience.

### **Summary**

Section 2 explained the methodology of this study, including why a case study was the most appropriate method to use for this qualitative study. This section also explained the processes of how the participants were recruited, the method used to collect the data, and how the data were analyzed. This study allowed community college students transferring to this university to express and explain their undergraduate experiences at this university. The data were collected from individual, face-to-face interviews, which were audio recorded while I took handwritten notes. The audio

recordings were manually transcribed into a written format, and the analysis of the data took information from both the transcribed interviews and my handwritten notes. My biases were noted and discussed, and the results of the data were checked for reliability, credibility, and validity by two of my professional colleagues at this university. The findings from the study answered all three research questions, and gave me a clear direction for a project that will be introduced and detailed in Section 3, and presented in its entirety in Appendix A.

### Section 3: The Project

The purpose of this study was to learn what local community college transfer students thought about their experiences as undergraduate students at the university to which they transferred, a 4-year public university in Southern California. Based on the findings from this study, I designed a project that would best satisfy the needs of community college transfer students to this university, a 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff. The outcomes of this study emphasized the need for this university to recognize and understand the needs, concerns, and issues community college students experienced while transferring to this university.

In this section I describe the project, which is detailed as a program in Appendix A, and include a review of the literature that indicates why this was an appropriate way to increase the satisfaction of community college students transferring to this university. This professional development program, attended by the student affairs staff, and facilitated and funded by the campus leadership, is designed to inform the student affairs staff of the needs, issues, and concerns of community college transfer students. The staff will discover that the needs of these students differ from those of the native students at this university. One goal of this 3-day professional development program is to have the student affairs staff begin developing new programs and changing processes and procedures to improve the experiences of community college transfer students at this university.

### **Project Direction**

This study provided community college transfer students an opportunity to discuss their experiences as undergraduate students at this university. These students reported that the administration, faculty, and staff were not aware of the differences between transfer and native students. In most instances, transfer and native students were treated similarly. The different issues of each population requires different forms of assistance and different types of information and advising. A professional development program for the student affairs staff at this university would be helpful in solving this problem.

Cohen, McLaughlin, and Talbert (as cited in Desimone, 2011) defined professional development as teachers or staff participating in activities and experiences that increase their teaching knowledge and skills, contribute to their personal growth, and help them meet the needs of their students. Desimone (2011) reported that professional development is one of the ways to improve the quality of education in the United States. Luciano (as cited in Malik, Nasim, & Tabassum, 2015) reported that professional development can improve the knowledge and skills of staff through educational activities, educational opportunities, and programs.

Although everyone employed at the university would benefit from a professional development program, it would be best to start with the student affairs staff. Student affairs staff work the closest with transfer and native students. The staff would benefit from learning to identify the differences between transfer and native students, and understanding the different needs of these populations. This university cannot treat these



populations similarly and expect that both will be socially and academically successful. The needs, issues, and problems of each of these student populations are unique and differed from each other. Each student population needs to be identified and respected for these differences. Student affairs staff could grow professionally by learning about the differences between native and transfer students, and why it is important to understand the differences between these groups. This staff also need to be part of developing new university programs to benefit community college transfer students at this university.

### **Description of the Project**

The structure of this 3-day professional development program for the student affairs staff include information relating to community college transfer students. Over a 3-day period, selected student affairs staff will learn about the goals, rationale, and learning outcomes of the program. All components of this program will be explained in detail.

Malik et al. (2015) defined four types of professional development: practitioner development, professional education, professional training, and professional support. This 3-day professional development program is a professional training program that includes workshops, programs, and courses that emphasize practical information and skills. The staff will learn about the differences between community college transfer students and native students at this university. The sessions will be facilitated by various departments within this university including academic affairs, psychological services, and the registrar's and admissions offices.

All of the participants described their experiences at this university as less satisfying than the experiences they had at their community colleges. They became stressed with the academic rigor at this university and moving from a semester system to a quarter system. The quarter system moves much faster than what the students were used to at their community colleges.

Many participants found keeping up with their classes to be very difficult. If the students made friends at all, they made transient friendships with other students in their classes, and many described their interactions with these friends as superficial, which aligned with Miller's (2013) findings. A social and a personal life outside of classes was almost nonexistent for many of these students, which was consistent with findings from Chrystal et al. (2013) and Miller (2013). Gard et al. (2012) research aligned with what these students expressed regarding their support systems being family and friends from home with whom they tried to remain in contact. The staff and professors at this university, not having a full understanding of the differences between community college transfer students and native students, complicated participants' experiences. These students reported being treated the same as native students. This lack of understanding of the needs, concerns, and issues of these participants by staff and professors compounded the struggles they had to contend with and resolve by themselves.

The participants also reported that both of their academic institutions left them to fend for themselves because of the incorrect information they received from both places, which made the use of their time very inefficient as they struggled to figure out institutional processes and procedures. Gard et al. (2012) and Grites (2013) reported that

universities make these errors because they assume community college transfer students come from an institution of higher learning and fail to recognize that the needs of this population of students are different from their needs while attending a community college. Their needs are also different from native students enrolled at this university.

The participants proposed ideas about what would make their experiences more positive at this university. Prior to arriving and enrolling on campus, community college transfer students wanted assistance with the transfer process. They wanted both staff and faculty to assist in their transfer process, and answer their questions with accurate information. Unfortunately, many staff and faculty at this university neglected the needs of these transfer students, not intentionally but because they were not aware of what these needs were. Faculty and staff assumed the needs of this student population were the same as the native students. Staff who advise and interact with transfer students need to increase their understanding of the needs of this specific population so they can be more helpful in assisting them.

The seven themes emerging from the clustered codes were: academic reputation, community college student transfer issues, misinformation, fears and apprehensions, relationships and support, benefits, and suggestions for a better undergraduate experience. Each of these themes aligned with the project. The staff attending this 3-day professional development program will learn about the needs, concerns, and issues faced by community college transfer students.

The needs, concerns, and issues of community college transfer students are related to the seven themes in the following ways:

- how these students see the academic reputation of this university and why they chose to attend this university;
- misinformation these students reported receiving from both their community colleges and this university;
- fears and apprehensions they have about attending this university;
- need for support while they are undergraduate students; and
- benefits they will receive from this university, and suggestions they have to improve the undergraduate experience for community college transfer students.

After attending the 3-day professional development program, the staff will be better informed about these concerns. Staff will learn how they can assist these students in having more satisfying and positive experiences while they are undergraduates at this university.

### **Project Goals**

The 3-day professional development program was developed to accomplish five goals:

1. to understand the difficulties college students experience in the transfer process;
2. to understand the stressors community college transfer students face;
3. to have a better understanding of the issues and concerns of community college transfer students;
4. to identify the differences between the issues and concerns of community college transfer students and native students; and

5. to identify ways to assist community college transfer students enrolled at this university.

### **Rationale**

Participants identified ways in which their undergraduate experience at this university could be enhanced. The analyzed data indicated a number of possible projects for improving transfer students' experiences. The students suggested a peer mentor outreach program, a series of weekly seminars throughout the fall quarter, a 1-day workshop during the first quarter the transfer student's enrollment to identify resources and how transfer students can be assisted at this university, or a program manual that included campus resources, important telephone numbers, and specifically addressed the issues of community college transfer students and how they could be resolved. A professional development program was considered the best idea to propose based on the analyzed data.

The decision to recommend a 3-day professional development program so student affairs staff could learn how to support community college transfer students was substantiated by Miller (2013), who conducted research at six community colleges in Texas. Miller found students who transferred to a university were successful when both institutions supported their students academically and socially. The success of transfer students in earning a baccalaureate degree depended on students receiving accurate information about the transfer process and the requirements they needed to graduate (Miller, 2013).

Community college transfer students interviewed in this study reported a lack of personal interaction with faculty and students, which aligned with the findings of Miller (2013). A professional development program for student affairs staff may help them learn how to better meet the needs of community college transfer students. During the 3-day professional development program, attendees will hear from a panel of community college transfer students who will explain what they experienced as transfer students enrolled at this university.

The currently enrolled community college transfer student has information about this campus that is invaluable to staff who are willing to learn about the needs and concerns these students have. Assisting in educating the student affairs staff in what their needs are will reduce the length of time students take to learn about the campus by themselves. This amount of time takes away the valuable time these students need to attend classes and study.

Following the 3-day professional development program, the student affairs staff may enlist the assistance of currently enrolled transfer students at this university who can provide the desired personal interaction and information to incoming community college transfer students. Interacting with currently enrolled community transfer students would provide these incoming students another opportunity to learn about the university to which they were transferring. Currently enrolled community college transfer students have information they could give to these incoming students to make the transition to this university easier than they would have otherwise experienced.

Using peers in educational programs is not unusual. Shook and Keup (2012) reported that the influence of peers upon peers, especially in education, has been extensively documented. Cuseo (2010a) gave a historical explanation of the word mentor. King Odysseus was fighting in the Trojan War for many years and left his son under the care of a very trusted friend whose name was, Mentor (Cuseo, 2010a). Lester and Johnson (as cited in Cuseo, 2010a) defined a mentor as an individual relationship over time between two people that is based on extensive dialogue.

Astin (1993), Pascarella and Terenzini (as cited in Shook & Keup, 2012), and Whitt, Nora, Edison, Terenzini, and Pascarella (1999) reported that as undergraduate students, peers have a strong influence on their peers in many areas of their personal growth including understanding oneself, intellectual, moral, and social development, and interpersonal skills. Cuseo (2010a) and Shook and Keup (2012) reported that peers can also be role models, social influences, support, resources, and referral agents. Whitt et al. (1999) reported this is not the same when friends go to friends with their academic questions because students are generally not professionally informed or professionally trained to assist their peers. Marchese and Murphy (as cited in Cuseo, 2010b) reported that alums are consistent in saying that their most significant learning took place outside the classroom and was heavily influenced by the interaction they had with their peers.

### **Literature Review**

A review of the literature will show the university leadership the importance of a professional development program, and why student affairs staff should attend this professional development program. The information these particular staff people will

learn by attending this professional development program will allow them to have a better understanding of the needs, issues, and concerns that community college transfer students have as they transition to this university. Having this information, awareness, and understanding will allow the staff to assist the community college transfer students at this university have a more satisfactory undergraduate experience.

### **Search Strategy**

A search of educational materials about professional development in education produced journal articles, books, reports, and conference proceedings. The following search engines used at both the Walden University and the University of California, San Diego and affiliated University of California and San Diego libraries included ERIC, Education Research Complete, SAGE, Education Research Starters, Google Scholar, and Pro Quest Central. This research was done online at each of the two main universities, Walden University and the University of California, San Diego. A combination of keywords made phrases that were used to search the educational databases at both universities. The phrases I used to find this literature included *community college transfer students*, *the transition of community college transfer students to the university*, and *professional development programs in education and in higher education*.

### **Community College Transfer Student Issues**

The data collected from this study expressed the opinions of local community college students who reported finding transferring from their community colleges to this university to be difficult and a frustrating experience. They also expressed that once enrolled at this university, their transition and experiences as undergraduate students were



not as positive as they hoped them to be. Once enrolled at this university most community college transfer students did not participate in activities outside of their academics because their time was spent in class and studying.

### **Professional Development in Education**

Antoniou and Kyriakides (2013), Bayar (2014), Eun (2008), Malik et al. (2015), and Starman, Larson, Proffitt, Guskey, and Ma (2013) reported that professional development was one of the best ways in education for educators to improve their teaching skills, and the learning by their students. Desimone (2011) also found that professional development was used to increase the quality of education in schools throughout the United States. The conceptual framework for successful professional development programs is grounded in the developmental theories of Vygotsky, who said that personal development must be planned with specific goals to accomplish, and not in just any social interaction or collaborative project (Eun, 2008). Vygotsky (as cited in Eun, 2008) specifically reported that the activities in professional development programs must be goal directed.

Following the conceptual framework of Vygotsky (as cited in Eun, 2008), Liu and Zhang (2014), and Malik et al. (2015) reported that a successful professional development program identified a problem, and then was planned to find solutions that solved the problem. Stewart (2014) identified that professional development programs moved away from individual and passive training methods and moved toward offering interactive learning opportunities to groups of educators. Desimone (2011) and Malik et al. (2015) described professional development as a series of goal-oriented experiences,

programs, activities, and discussions that increased the knowledge and skills of educators who used what they learned in their classrooms and in other educational environments. These professional development opportunities were found in the forms of workshops, in-service trainings, regional and national conferences, and with either on-line or traditional coursework (Desimone, 2011; Malik et al., 2015).

Shady, Luther, and Richman (2013) reported that educational institutions that did not offer professional development opportunities to their educators, or prohibited their educators from attending professional development programs, left educators frustrated with what they had been assigned to do, but not instructed in how to be successful in their assignment. Research conducted by Doren, Flannery, Lombardi, and Kato (2012) reported that teachers found the quality of their teaching improve after participating in a professional development program.

Lutrick and Szabo (2012) and Starman et al. (2013) recommended that the most effective professional development programs were the ones that were interactive and had participants collaborating together on projects. Educators who participated in a study conducted by Klieger and Yakobovitch (2012) said they learned more when they interacted with their colleagues, and when they worked together with their colleagues on projects during the professional development program. Lutrick and Szabo continued by saying that professional development was critical for anyone in an educational environment who worked with students.

Professional development had to be on going, with continued dialogue and discussion, and had an evaluation component (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012; Shady et al.,

2013). Brand and Moore (2011), Goe, Biggers, and Croft (2012), Lutrick and Szabo (2012), Malik et al. (2015), and Starman et al. (2013) reported that the activities in any professional development program had to be interactive, included the individuals attending the program, and had to allow the participants in the program to collaborate together as a group. The importance of educators attending professional development programs allowed these educators to continually improve their skills in education and kept them up-to-date so their students benefitted from their learning (Brand & Moore, 2011; Koellner & Jacobs, 2015; Lutrick & Szabo, 2012; Malik et al., 2015). Greytak, Kosciw, and Boesen (2013) found in their research that professional development programs did not have to be lengthy in time. Greytak et al. (2013) found that even a two-hour professional development program could effectively change the beliefs of teachers and educators.

As reported by researchers Antoniou and Kyriakides (2013), Bayar (2014), Eun (2008), Malik et al. (2015), and Starman et al. (2013), it is beneficial to educators that institutional administrators offer professional development opportunities to their staff members. By participating in professional development programs, educators have reported that their teaching skills have improved and that they had become more effective educators to their students. The increase in their teaching skills allows them to be more successful in their job responsibilities, which in turn, increases the learning by their students (Antoniou & Kyriakides, 2013; Bayar, 2014; Eun, 2008; Malik et al., 2015; Starman et al., 2013).

## **Implementation**

This section will discuss the implementation of the 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff to attend and learn how they can assist community college transfers students enrolled at this university. I am developing a 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff that I will present to the campus leadership for their support. I am also recommending that student affairs staff attend this 3-day professional development program because they have the closest interaction with community college transfer students at this university. This information was discussed in Section 2, and supported by a review of the literature review that was explained in this section, Section 3. The subsections of the implementation plan will include the following four implementation topics: Potential Resources and Existing Supports, Potential Barriers, Proposal for Implementation and Timetable, and an Evaluation Plan.

### **Potential Resources and Existing Supports**

There are several resources that must be available and in place to develop a 3-day professional development program. While there are stakeholders at both institutions of the students, there must be continued support by the stakeholders at this university because it is this institution that will be receiving the local community college transfer students. The stakeholders at this university are the vice-chancellor of student affairs, the administrators in the division of student affairs, and the community college transfer students. Based on the data I analyzed from this study, I developed a 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff, which was based on the results of the

study. I will propose this program to the vice-chancellor of student affairs, and with the approval of this stakeholder, I will implement the program. The vice-chancellor of student affairs will select 12 student affairs staff to attend the 3-day professional development program. The vice-chancellor of student affairs will also be asked to provide the funding for this 3-day professional development program. This requested funding would rent audiovisual equipment, provide continental breakfast and lunch for the participants, printing the handout, and supplies including journal books, markers, tape, and newsprint pads for the program.

### **Potential Barriers**

Richter, Kunter, Klusmann, Ludtke, and Baumert (2011) found the younger staff members who are new to their careers more readily acceptable of attending professional development opportunities. These younger educators are eager to learn and want to learn more about being educators. A potential barrier may be those more seasoned staff who are not as interested in spending three days of their time in a professional development program. Rather than attend a professional program, Richter et al. (2011) found that these seasoned educators would do more professional reading compared to the younger staff members.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

At the start of fall quarter, the vice-chancellor of student affairs will be asked to choose 12 student affairs staff people to attend the 3-day professional development program to take place at the beginning of winter quarter in January 2017. Also at this time, the vice-chancellor of student affairs will receive a budget request of \$974 to run

this professional development program. The funding for this program is to provide continental breakfast and lunch for the staff attending for the three days, audiovisual equipment, supplies, and the printing the handout each participant will receive for the program. The 3-day professional development program will take place at the start of winter quarter so the staff attending this program will have the remainder of that academic year to plan the programs that will be implemented for community college transfer students at the start of the new academic year in September.

Following the recommendation from the vice-chancellor of student affairs of who to invite to the 3-day professional development program, an email will be sent to the supervisors of those staff requesting permission for their employees to be absent from their staff assignment for that period of time. Once the supervisors have responded, I will email the staff to invite them to attend the 3-day professional development program. Staff members receiving this email will read that the vice-chancellor of student affairs and their supervisor have endorsed the professional development program so they may attend. The email invitation will include a brief description of the program, the purpose of the program and the schedule, and include the logistics of date and time, and location of the program. Each staff person will be asked to RSVP his or her attendance.

In preparation of the program, I will contact currently enrolled community college transfer students for the student panel and any staff who will be presenting during the program. I will ask the presenting guests for any handout they would like the participants to have during the presentation so the handouts can be copied. I will reserve a location of

sufficient size for the program, and place a catering order for the breakfast and lunches from campus catering.

Each of the three days will include a variety of presentations, large and small discussions, media presentations, student panels, and individual work by the participants. I will be the program coordinator, and I will be assisted by a facilitator, who will be a representative from the human resources department. The guest speakers will include a staff person from counseling and psychological services, and a dean of student affairs from one of the undergraduate colleges at this university. The first day will start with an icebreaker that will allow the participants to get to know each other. Participants will have an opportunity at the end of each day to reflect on their learning for the day by writing in their journal. The participants will complete an evaluation on the final day of the program. The evaluation will ask the staff what they learned from participating in the program, what suggestions they have to improve the program the next time it was offered, and who they might suggest attend a similar professional development program in the future.

Table A1

*Project Implementation Timeline: 3-Day Professional Development Program*

Date	Description
Step 1	The 3-day professional development program and a budget of \$974 to fund this program is proposed to the vice-chancellor of student affairs.
Step 2	Notification from the vice-chancellor of student affairs who will support and fund the 3-day professional development program.
Step 3	The vice-chancellor of student affairs will select 12 student affairs staff to attend the professional development program.
Step 4	The list of the 12 staff, with an alternate list, to attend the 3-day professional development program is received from the vice-chancellor of student affairs.
Step 5	An email is sent to the supervisors of the student affairs staff selected to attend the 3-day professional development program.
Step 6	Responses received from the supervisors by this date. If necessary, the alternate staff list will be used at this time.
Step 7	Invitation to attend the 3-day professional development program emailed to the student affairs staff selected to attend.

*(table continues)*



Date	Description
Step 8	Responses about attending the 3-day professional development received from the staff by this date. If necessary, alternates are necessary, they will be emailed at this time.
Step 9	Reminder emailed to staff attending the 3-day professional development program.

### **Evaluation Plans**

A program evaluation is essential to have participants of any program complete shortly following the completion of the program. The information from these evaluations is used for decision making purposes, to determine the value of the program, assess learning outcomes, and to make recommendations that would refine the program for future presentations (Spaulding, 2008). The participants will complete an evaluation on the final day of the program. This evaluation form is included in Appendix A. The evaluation will ask the participants what they learned from attending the program, what suggestions they have to improve the program the next time it was presented, and who they suggest would benefit from attending this program in the future.

After allowing the participants in the 3-day professional development program to reflect about their experiences in participating in the program, I will email each participant in mid-March to follow up with them. I will ask them to answer an additional set of questions and inquire about the progress they are making with the programs they are planning for the incoming community college transfer students. While returning the answers to these new questions, I will encourage them to do that to reinforce the

continuity of the program. They will have approximately two weeks to email this information to me.

Following this initial 3-day professional development program, the results of these participant evaluations will be presented to the vice-chancellor of student affairs in an evaluation report.

### **Implications**

By providing a 3-day professional development program for the student affairs staff at this university, the implications resulting from the work done during the professional development program are predicted to be positive. The staff attending this program will have a greater awareness of the needs, issues, and concerns of community college transfer students by the end of the program. This 3-day professional development program is geared toward student affairs staff because they have the most interaction with these students. The currently enrolled population of community college transfer students will benefit by interacting with a staff that understands and recognizes, and can address the needs and concerns of this specific student population. The staff will be able to address the needs, issues, and concerns the two different student populations, community college transfer students and native students, on campus in an appropriate way.

The potential social change is the way in which the needs, issues, and concerns of community college transfer students will be better addressed by the staff at this university. Those students who experienced difficulty going through the actual transfer process, had difficulty transferring units to this university, and did not have a true understanding of the academic requirements of their major may find the processes and

procedures of maneuvering through this university easier. Community college transfer students may have an easier time transitioning into this university, and find their undergraduate experiences at this university more satisfying. This may also result in shortening their time to graduation by not having to re-take classes and by not taking incorrect classes for their major requirements. In turn, community college transfer students will have a more satisfactory undergraduate experience, and enjoy keeping positive ties as alums with their alma mater.

While this was a first-time professional development model for student affairs staff, professional development training needs to be continuous and on-going (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012; Shady et al., 2013). Depending upon the success of this particular program, I see it expanding to include other members of the student affairs and college staffs, and an abbreviated version of professional development about transfer students for the faculty.

### **Conclusion**

Bayer (2014) found that professional development programs are used to increase the skills of educators. In this regard, the 3-day professional development program offered to student affairs staff at this university is an effort to increase the awareness of the issues and concerns of community college transfers students. The staff who attend this program will also understand the differences between these two populations at this university, community college transfer students and native students, and understand why these two student populations can no longer be addressed and similarly treated.

The following section is Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions. This section will be a summary of the study I conducted, including the strengths and limitations of it, and most importantly how it will affect social change. There are also suggestions of alternative projects that could have also addressed the identified local problem and answered the research questions of this study. In this section, I will also reflect on my journey conducting qualitative research for the first time, including what I learned and how I developed as a scholar, and how I will use what I learned through this process as an educator in higher education.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this section, Section 4, I discuss the strengths and limitations of this study and the implications for social change. I address how I developed as a researcher from submitting a proposal to formulating a viable project using the findings of this study. I also suggest alternative projects that could have addressed the local problem, and recommend further research to improve the experiences of community college transfer students.

The purpose of this study was to explore community college students' experiences at this university. Students who transferred to a large public university in Southern California from community colleges in the same area were asked to report their experiences as undergraduate students at this university. The findings from this study were used to accomplish two important goals: informing the university of the positive and negative experiences of community college students and developing a project to assist the university in improving the experiences of community college transfer students.

### **Project Strengths**

During this study, community college transfer students reported their less than satisfactory experiences as undergraduate students at this university. They reported having difficulty with the transfer process and that neither their community college nor this university assisted them with that process. When describing their experiences at this university, these students reported feeling overwhelmed and intimidated because they did not feel comfortable in large classes and in the campus community. The students also

reported they were used to attending classes in a semester system and that the quarter system moved too quickly for them to keep up with their academic work.

Compared to their experiences at their community colleges, the students found their professors difficult to approach. They also had difficulty making friends and fitting into the campus community. These students attributed these difficulties to the administration at this university who treated them the same way as native students. The participants reported that their needs as community college transfer students were different from those of native students, and the differences between these student populations were not acknowledged by the administration, faculty, or staff.

The project is a 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff who have the closest interaction with community college transfer students. These staff interact with these students on a daily basis while serving as advisors in academic departments, student affairs offices, diversity resource centers, the counseling center, the career services center, and the libraries. The purpose of this professional training program is to increase the awareness of the student affairs staff regarding issues and concerns community college transfer students report at this university. Participants in the program will learn the results of this study and the importance that the vice-chancellor of student affairs is placing on this program. The program includes training by members of the university staff that will allow the student affairs staff to better understand and interact with community college transfer students on a daily basis. There is time allocated for student affairs staff to collaborate on programs to make the experiences of community college transfer students more satisfying.

### **Limitations of the Project**

Limitations of a 3-day professional development program include the administration not supporting and funding the program. The refusal to support the program may result from the administration not understanding the issues and concerns of the different student populations at the university, or from a limited budget. If budget limitations impeded support for this program, I could develop an alternate workshop that would reduce the budget to make this program financially feasible. It would be prudent to exclude the food component, which would reduce the budget expenditures. A second limitation may be the length of the program. Having staff members attend for three days could put a strain on the office they are leaving for that period of time. The time schedule could be adjusted to have staff members leave their office for shorter periods spread over a longer program period. An additional limitation would be lack of interest by the student affairs staff. If they were not interested in attending the training, I would suggest looking for student affairs staff interested in attending this professional development program. Forcing anyone to attend if they are not interested or motivated to attend is almost setting up the program for failure, and would be a waste of time and energy by the staff member forced to attend.

### **Remediation of the Study Limitations**

There are ways to modify this 3-day professional development program without decreasing its impact or compromising its integrity. This program could be conducted over several half days, the equivalent of three days spread out over the academic quarter,

or during quarter break. Modifying the schedule may decrease the impact missing them in their respective offices.

Understanding that this university has experienced severe budget cuts recently, the budget for this program could be cut in several ways without undermining the program. The timing could be adjusted so that meals do not have to be provided; participants could bring their own lunch and only a coffee break would be provided. The program could be held in the student services building, which is next door to the student center that has a food court. The lunch break could be long enough to allow participants to purchase their lunches at the student center. None of the handouts need to be printed. Handouts could be emailed to participants prior to the program. Staff could either print their own copy or bring their office or personal computer to the program to access the information during the program.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

The problem addressed in this study was the dissatisfaction community college transfer students experience as undergraduates at this university. The findings showed that this problem could be addressed in a number of ways. However, I determined that none of the alternatives would address the problem as well as the 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff.

One of these alternative projects was a peer mentor program in which currently enrolled community college transfer students would meet with incoming community college transfer students and assist them in their transition to this university. Peer mentors would be able to relate to the issues, problems, and concerns incoming transfer



students would have. Currently enrolled students would serve as role models and resources for the incoming students who would get to know someone who is interested in their success and well-being.

Other project suggestions include a transfer student seminar offered during the fall quarter. This weekly seminar would take place during the first quarter a community college transfer student was enrolled at this university. This seminar would address the issues, concerns, and problems of community college transfer students. In this seminar new students would have the opportunity to meet other students like themselves. Each week a new topic would be addressed by the seminar facilitator. After the presentation, students would have the opportunity to discuss the topic and ask questions. The goal of this seminar would be to teach community college transfer students how to cope with the issues they face as undergraduates at this university.

A project that would involve a less direct approach would be to develop a transfer student resource brochure. This brochure would include all the information about this university that transfer students need in assisting with their transition, including a list and locations of campus resources, and resource telephone numbers and email/website addresses. Transfer students attending their campus orientation would receive this brochure before they enrolled, which would give them the opportunity to learn about this university and its resources. This informational brochure would answer many of the questions community college transfer students have.

One final suggestion would be for the university to establish a transfer student resource center to provide information, support, and resources for transfer students. The

staff at this center would include a director familiar with the needs and issues of transfer students, and peer mentors who would be currently enrolled transfer students. Transfer students would be surveyed to determine the hours that this center would be open.

### **Scholarship**

Boyer (1990) defined scholars as individuals who inspire their students to learn and exhibit the knowledge they want their students to learn in a meaningful way. Students need to leave an institution with an understanding of how they will use their learning to positively benefit humanity and society (Boyer, 1990). Based on Boyer's definition of a scholar, I consider myself to be one. As a result of my experiences attending classes, critically reading research, writing analytically, and learning to do qualitative research, I have increased these skills so that I am a better educator for my students. My experiences in this program have been intense and rewarding. Not only have I learned more about the local problem I identified at this university, I learned about the process of doing qualitative research to address the problem. Learning by doing is the process by which I benefit the most, and that is the process I used in conducting this study.

Through this educational process, I also learned to think critically and write analytically. I now find myself reading educational literature differently; I ask more questions about what I am reading. My questions involve asking myself why the material was written. I read research-related papers, books, and journal articles with a better understanding of what is being written. I am able to read and think critically about what I have read.

My writing has also improved from the intensive writing I have been doing. I write more clearly, concisely, and analytically. I have simplified my writing to remain on the topic that has been assigned to me. I am better at revising my work so it is more easily understood.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

Although the project was not developed until the data were collected and analyzed, I was cognizant of the information I heard from the students who were interviewed. I knew I would need to develop a project based on the analyzed data, which resulted in a 3-day professional development program for campus staff. I listened to the information the students provided during the interviews, took notes during the interviews, and transcribed the audio recordings. I also kept a separate list of my thoughts based on the interview data that related to a potential project. After a number of interviews, the information generally repeated itself from student to student, and each interview built upon the previous interview.

The development of a professional development program for staff came from information I received in two different ways. Students talked about their needs as transfer students at this university, and alluded to wanting and needing some direction and a connection with the university once they were enrolled. When asking these students what would make their experiences more positive, a few of the students spoke about having staff and faculty be more aware of their needs and issues specifically as community college transfer students and their transition to the university. As I coded the

data I collected and formulated themes from the codes, the idea of the staff needing more training in these issues became evident.

The decision of a particular project was important because I wanted to be sure that the project would be beneficial to the students who transferred from a community college to this university. I took into consideration the information the transfer students told me about their experiences at their community colleges, and what they experienced once they enrolled at this university. Once the decision of a project was finalized, the program needed to be developed. I developed this project in a systematic manner, starting from the beginning and taking the program through to the end, which included evaluating the professional development program, and presenting a final report to the vice-chancellor of student affairs. It would not be possible to continue a new program unless there was justification that it was beneficial and met the goals it set out to accomplish. A decision to continue the program would be evident from an increase in the awareness of community college transfer students' issues and concerns, and changes in how these students were assisted by the staff with which they interacted.

### **Leadership and Change**

Lakhani and Marquard (2014) found that strong leaders provide the environment for change to occur in a meaningful and innovative way. Leaders are extremely important in any organization to maintain the integrity of the group, and to assist the group in meeting their goals. A leader who asserts their authority in a positive and cooperative way has the best chance of providing incentives for others in the group to assist in making necessary changes (Gachter, Nosenzo, Renner, & Sefton, 2012).

Leaders do not demand respect; they earn it from their group members by being a team player and a positive role model.

Leaders know how to involve members in a group to be positive assets in the organization. Leaders are ethical in how they conduct themselves and they are positive role models. Good leaders know when to recognize others, and not take the accolades for themselves. The leader I am today comes from both my formal and informal education. My leadership style includes skills I learned from my employment and personal experiences, from watching others modeling good leadership skills, from classes I took in my formal education, and from training sessions I have participated in at the university where I am employed. I am a leader in my position at this university, and I became a leader in many of the Walden class projects I was assigned.

Being the only individual responsible for my study, I became the leader of it. I had to be organized and meet every deadline placed before me. From start to finish, I needed to be sure that the study was ethically conducted. As the leader, I had to have a complete understanding of the study and how it was organized. I needed to have excellent time management skills and I needed to conduct myself in an ethical and positive manner throughout the entire process. This was my way of being a positive role model to everyone I met throughout the study. I hope the energy and the time I put into this study and being the leader for it from the development of it to the completion of the project will result in the implementation of this proposed project benefitting community college transfer students at this university.

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

I take pride in making education a priority in my life, and in the lives of my students and children. Education occurs in many different forms, and can come from books and media, from life's experiences, and from learning what is shared with students by any educator. Education is a natural part of my daily life. I am in the higher education profession to facilitate change in my students. I meet them at whatever level they are at, and then challenge their thinking to broaden their awareness, think more critically, and think in perspectives that may make them uncomfortable. Learning, sharing my education, and challenging others in an educational way is a joy in my life.

When I enrolled in the higher education, adult learning program at Walden University, I was ready but apprehensive about what I would face in a doctoral program. This apprehension stemmed from knowing the amount and the level of writing I would need to complete to be successful. I had not been in a formal educational program in many years. I was ready to take my formal education up to the next level, and I was ready for the challenges I would face. There have been very few challenges in my life that have defeated me, and I was determined that finishing this program at Walden would not only be one of my greatest challenges, but one that would not defeat me.

Walden has shaped me into a scholar, and given me a new educational voice. I look at where I was when I started, and where I am at the end of this journey. It was not an easy journey, but I appreciate the new skills I acquired and can share with others. I am certainly not perfect in these skills, but I continually practice them to make myself better

at them. The skills I have learned at Walden have given me a different perspective about education at a higher level.

I now know how to think critically and look at information that is presented to me in a more analytical way. My writing has improved, and I have learned how to write in a scholarly manner, which is much different from the other writing I do. I challenge myself on a daily basis to be the best writer I can be because practice is important. Because this program is mostly taught online, I have learned new technological skills, and improved my understanding of technology so I can keep up with my students.

This is the first time I have conducted scholarly research. The process of a study seemed overwhelming at first, but then as I accomplished each step, the study became more manageable rather than looking at it as just one huge endeavor. I will always be a life-long learner, and I look forward to my next academic challenge.

### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

All of my classes were challenging, and as my professors at Walden have challenged me, I have challenged both my colleagues and my students. I am fortunate to work in a profession that allows for the exchange of scholarly ideas with my colleagues. I have taken what I learned in my workplace to projects assigned to me in class, and I have taken what I learned from my professors and my colleagues in class and used that knowledge in my workplace. This is mutually beneficial because my colleagues learn about different areas of higher education from the classes I have taken. I enjoy the exchange of ideas I have with my colleagues and that I am able to contribute to our discussions on a different level based on my reading and the reviews of the literature I did

for my study. As a result of this study, my colleagues have learned about community college transfer students and how they are different from native students with whom we work at this university. All of this has strengthened my skills as a practitioner because I do not separate what I learned in my classes from what I practice in my workplace.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

In making a decision about a project, it was important to take into account the information community college transfer students expressed about their experiences as students at this university. Once the decision was made to propose a professional development program for staff as a project, the development of the program began. It was time to take the information received from collecting and analyzing the data, the opinions of the stakeholders, and my ideas about a project to develop a program that would benefit community college transfer students.

Developing a new program has many components that must be addressed. This process took time and organization, and an honest commitment to listen to the community college transfer students who explained to me what their undergraduate experiences at this university were. My motivation was to ensure that the program that would be developed would be a solid program that would benefit community college students transferring to this university. This was the first time I had responsibility for establishing a program from developing the idea to proposing the final program. The development of a professional development program for student affairs staff has the potential to benefit community college students transferring and enrolled at this university by teaching the staff how to assist these students better.



### **The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change**

Walden University's Social Change Impact Report (2013) describes social change as the ability of an individual to make a difference in what they believe they can change (Walden University, 2013). In this report, the President of Walden University feels that everyone has the power to make a difference; such social change can be big or small, and can affect the local or the global environment.

This study was chosen for a local reason. With information received from surveys administered by this university, transfer students from local community colleges reported being unhappy with their undergraduate college experiences after they enrolled at this university. The data collected from this study supported these students feeling unconnected to the campus community and not involved with much of what this university had to offer. The information collected from these student interviews supports the current literature of transfer students and their feelings of being disconnected with the university to which they transferred.

As reported by the participants in this study, campus administrators do not recognize the differences between transfer students and native students who came to this university immediately from high school. Thinking that the needs of transfer and native students can be addressed in the same way is not respecting the differences of either of these student populations. I believe the university is not acting from malice, but is not as informed as they think they are to meet and support needs of community college transfer students. The success and satisfaction of these local community college transfer students

are important to this university on a local level, and to this state on a broader level, and is based on the satisfaction of their experiences as undergraduate students at this university.

The social change resulting from presenting a 3-day professional development program has far-reaching effects. Immediately and on the local level, community college transfer students will benefit more from their education by taking better advantage of what this university has to offer, potentially shortening the time of these students to graduation, and being strong alumni serving their alma mater. The student affairs staff will have a better understanding and an increased awareness of the needs of community college transfer students.

Students who achieve their academic goal of a baccalaureate degree from this university will leave speaking highly of their alma mater and their undergraduate education. They would become louder, prouder, stronger, and more involved alumni. A future goal of this professional development program would be to make it an on-going program for both current and new staff, and to expand it to cover other staff and faculty on campus who interact with community college transfer students. This program would change as the needs of community college transfer student change, and updating both the current staff as well as the new incoming staff would keep them informed of these changes.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

Community college transfer students are faced with and challenged by issues that are different from other student populations at this university. The data from this study were the ideas to develop a professional development program for student affairs staff.

Student affairs staff members who attend this program will learn the differences between incoming community college transfer students and other student populations at this university. The information the staff members learn can be used to develop programs and procedures that will enhance the experiences community college transfer students have at this university.

There are definitely factors not addressed in this study that should be addressed in future research. The most obvious variable to consider is whether there are benefits or drawbacks of community college transfer students living on campus or commuting, and whether living at the student's college of registration affects the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of that student's undergraduate college experience. Looking at the gender of community college transfer students and whether males or females are more satisfied or dissatisfied with their undergraduate college experiences would be a significant variable to add to future research. Examining these factors in future research will allow administrators at this university to continue training staff about the issues and needs of community college transfer students, and transfer students in general, by refining and expanding aspects of the professional development training programs it offers.

### **Conclusion**

The findings from this study resulted in the formulation of a 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff. This project recognizes the importance of training and increasing the awareness of professional staff about the needs and issues of community college transfer students at this university. By participating in this professional development program, the staff will recognize the differences between

community college transfer and native students, and be able to address them appropriately. Each is a very different population with distinct needs and issues. By having staff participate in this professional development program, they can assist in developing programs to benefit the transfer student population in a positive way.

### **Final Reflection**

Section 4 was a general reflection of my personal academic journey through this doctoral program. Through my experiences, I have become an elementary scholar who knows how to conduct research, a practitioner in the field of higher education and adult learning, and a project developer and facilitator of a program to benefit the community college transfer students at this university. I learned how to think, read, analyze, and write more scholarly and in a more critical way. I know I am more conscious of why this is so important in the field of higher education. I will use these skills as I continue my learning and teaching, and sharing my experiences with students and professional colleagues with whom I interact, and as I continue forward in my own personal academic journey.

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## Appendix A

### **Project: A Professional Development Program for Student Affairs Staff**

The Walden University doctoral program in education requires the doctoral candidate to complete a study or a doctoral study capstone. The purpose of the study is to allow the doctoral student to design a program that answers a local educational issue based on the data that is collected and analyzed from the study (Walden University Candidate Handbook, January 2013).

The project that will be implemented from the findings of this study is a 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff at this university. This 3-day professional development program will give the student affairs staff attending this program the opportunity to increase their awareness of the needs and issues of community college transfer students. A component of this program will be to understand how the needs and concerns of community college transfer students differ from those of native students who enroll at this university right from high school.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this 3-day professional development program is to increase the awareness of student affairs staff at this university about the needs and concerns of community college transfer students enrolled at this university. It may be the first time that student affairs staff realize that all students enrolled at this university are not the same and should not be treated similarly. A staff with this knowledge will have a better understanding of why community college transfer students need to be treated differently than native students at this university. Having a staff understand the needs and concerns

of community college transfer students will allow these students to have a more satisfying undergraduate experience.

### **Goals**

There are five goals for this 3-day professional development program. Following this 3-day professional development program, participants will be able to:

1. understand the difficulties college students experience in transferring to a 4-year university;
2. understand the difficulties community college transfer students face once they enroll at a 4-year university;
3. have a better understanding of the issues and concerns of community college transfer students;
4. be able to identify the differences between the issues and concerns of community college transfer students and native students; and
5. be able to identify ways to assist community college transfer students who are enrolled at this university.

### **Stakeholders**

The vice-chancellor of student affairs, the student affairs staff, and the students, are the primary stakeholders of this 3-day professional development program. The vice-chancellor of student affairs will be presented with the idea of a professional development program for student affairs staff to assist community college transfer students in their transfer process and in their transition to this university. The vice-chancellor of student affairs will be requested to support this program both financially

and from an institutional standpoint.

### **Target Audience and Selection of Participants**

Student affairs staff works closely with this student population at this university so the vice-chancellor of student affairs will accept nominations from departmental supervisors for staff they suggest to attend. The vice-chancellor of student affairs will select 12 staff from the list of staff received from the departmental supervisors to attend this professional training program. The selected staff will again be confirmed with their nominating supervisor by the vice-chancellor of student affairs.

### **Notification of Selected Staff**

After the vice-chancellor of student affairs receives the permission from each supervisor, I will receive the list and email each person individually requesting these staff members to attend this professional development program. The email sent to each staff person includes a brief description of the goals and learning outcomes of the program, and the logistics of the program, including dates, times, and location.

### **Format of Each Day**

The professional development program for the student affairs staff will run for three days from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., which is parallel to the traditional university work day. This schedule allows the staff to check in at their office at 8 a.m. with time to arrive at the program site by 8:30 a.m. Continental breakfast and lunch will be served each day.

Each day will consist of a combination of presentations, panels, large and small group discussions, and group activities. Rogers (2001) found that personal reflection in higher education has the most potential to effect long lasting change. Therefore, each

participant will have time at the end of the day to reflect upon what was learned that day by journaling.

On the last day of the 3-day professional development program, time is allotted for each participant to complete an evaluation form before the conclusion of the day. During this during the program guarantees that each participant completes and turns in an evaluation before they leave. If participants are permitted to take the evaluation form with them and return it later, there is a chance that not everyone will take the time to complete and return it. An evaluation tool called the Likert scale is one of the most widely used and measures attitudes or opinions that participants express and does not allow a participant to answer with a simple yes or no answer (Jamieson, 2004; McLeod, 2008). The evaluation the participants will complete for the 3-day professional development program is based on the Likert scale evaluation tool.

### **Handout**

A handout will be distributed to each participant on Day 1. This handout will have the goals of the program, a schedule for each day of the professional development program, and contact information for the program coordinator and the program facilitator.

### **Implementation**

I will serve as the program coordinator for this 3-day professional development program. I will be assisted by a staff person from the human resources division that does these types of professional development programs on a regular basis. I refer to this person as the program facilitator, and together we will be the facilitators. During

the 3-day professional development program, I will make presentations, facilitate large group discussions, moderate the student panel, and serve as the general troubleshooter for anything needing attention during the course of the 3-day professional development program. The program facilitator will assist in making presentations, and facilitating large group discussions.

As the program coordinator, I have many responsibilities. Prior to the program, I will propose the program and present a budget proposal of the 3-day professional development program to the vice-chancellor of student affairs. I will request that the vice-chancellor of student affairs recommend 12 student affairs staff to attend this 3-day professional development program. With the recommendation of the vice-chancellor of student affairs, I will contact the supervisors of the recommended staff to attend this 3-day professional development by email and ask for their approval to allow their staff to attend this program.

I will invite the participants to attend the 3-day professional development program by email, and request they RSVP to me by email. I will make the logistical arrangements for the program, which includes reserving and setting up the room, copying the handouts, and ordering food for the continental breakfast and lunch. I will also make the arrangements for the programmatic aspects of the 3-day professional development program. These arrangements include contacting the human resources department, and describing the professional development program to them so that a human development staff person can be selected to work with me during the 3-day professional development program. I will also arrange for the guest presenters, and

recruit currently enrolled community college transfer students to participate on the student panel.

### **Timing of the 3-Day Professional Development Program**

The 3-day professional development program will be scheduled Tuesday through Thursday during winter quarter. This will allow the staff attending the program to begin the quarter by being in their offices at the beginning of the new quarter. Presenting this program in winter quarter will also allow the attending staff to assist the perspective community college transfer students with their transfer applications, and to have programs to assist community college transfer students in their transition in place for the start of fall quarter.

### **Room and Room Set-Up**

The multi-purpose room in the student services building will be used for this professional development program. This large room will allow the group to break down into smaller groups to do particular assignments. No smaller group would have to leave the larger room. This room also allows for many different chair configurations and will allow catering to set up food without bothering the group in session. In the room will be 20 chairs, four tables, a podium, a screen, and a projector for power point presentations.

### **Budget**

The following budget will be proposed to the vice-chancellor of student affairs:

Room, table & chair rental (no charge)	0
Audio visual rental \$50 per day x 1 days =	\$ 50
Continental breakfast \$8 per day x 3 days x 14 participants	336



Lunch	\$12 per day x 3 days x 14 participants	504
Supplies (6 black markers, 2 newsprint pads, 1 roll of blue tape)		35
Copying of handouts		25
12 journal books @ \$2 each		24
Total		\$974

### **Organization of This Remaining Section**

Schedule of Day 1: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Schedule of Day 2: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Schedule of Day 3: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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Description of Activities: Day 1

Description of Activities: Day 2

Description of Activities: Day 3

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Facilitators' Guide by Day: Day 1

Facilitators' Guide by Day: Day 2

Facilitators' Guide by Day: Day 3

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E-mail to Supervisors

E-mail to Participants

Program Evaluation

Handout with Program Schedule

Evaluation Report to the Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs

### **3-Day Personal Development: Hourly Schedule by Day**

**Day 1 Schedule: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Student Services Building: Multi-Purpose Room**

**1. 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. (30 minutes)**

Activity #1: Registration & Continental Breakfast – The program facilitator will be at the table checking in the participants and the program coordinator will greet the participants.

**2. 9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. (30 minutes)**

Activity #2: Introduction of the program coordinator, the program facilitator, and the participants. Led by the program coordinator.

Activity #3: Overview of the 3-Day Professional Development Program & the Handout. Explained by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator.

a. Why You Were Invited!

**3. 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. (60 minutes)**

Activity #4: Icebreaker – “Picnic.” Led by the program coordinator.

Activity #5: 3 “YouTube” Videos – “Transfer Trauma” & Discussion. Led by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator.

Tips on Transferring from Community College to a University: 6 Tips

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=Yf4ZQF1F11s>

By: DominiqueVictoriaTV

How I Transferred from a Community College to UCLA

8r4GQdSPkQK

By: Christine Duong

From Community College to a UC (My Experience)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=3D2QHaL3t7I>  
By: Prettyinpixie

**4. 10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. (15 minutes)**

Break

**5. 10:45 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (45 minutes)**

Activity #6: Personal Expectations of Other Participants. Presented and explained by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator.

Large & small group discussion.

**6. 11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. (45 minutes)**

Activity #7: Personal Expectations of the Program. Presented and explained by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator. Large & small group discussion.

**7. 12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. (60 minutes)**

Lunch provided by campus catering.

**8. 1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. (75 minutes)**

Activity #8: Presentation of the Study & Results – Presentation & Discussion. Presented by the program coordinator.

**9. 2:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. (15 minutes)**

Break

**10. 2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. (60 minutes)**

Activity #9: Student Panel - Community College Transfer Students. Moderated by the program coordinator.

**11. 3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (15 minutes)**

Activity #10: Summary of the Day. Led by the program facilitator.

**12. 4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (30 minutes)**

Activity #11: Personal “free-flow” Journaling. Led by the program facilitator

**Day 2 Schedule: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**  
**Student Services Building: Multi-Purpose Room**

**1. 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.** (30 minutes)

Check-In & Continental Breakfast – Participants checked in by the program facilitator.

Catering provided by campus catering.

**2. 9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.** (30 minutes)

Activity #1: Summary & Discussion of the Previous Day. Explained by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator.

Activity #2: Overview of Today's Schedule. Led by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator.

**3. 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.** (60 minutes)

Activity #3: College Student Development Theory – Presentation & Discussion.

Presented by the dean of students from one of the undergraduate colleges.

**4. 10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.** (15 minutes)

Break

**5. 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.** (60 minutes)

Activity #4: The Differences Among Community College Transfer Students, Transfer Students, & Native Students at This University – Presentation & Discussion.

Presented by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator.

**6. 11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.** (60 minutes)

Lunch provided by campus catering.

**7. 12:45 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. (45 minutes)**

Activity #5: Addressing the Needs of Community College Transfer Students.

Facilitated by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator. Small and Large Group Discussions.

**8. 1:30 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. (45 minutes)**

Activity #6: Compiling the Needs of Community College Transfer Students into One List. Facilitated by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator. Large Group Activity.

**9. 2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. (15 minutes)**

Break

**10. 2:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. (75 minutes)**

Activity #7: The Psychological Aspects of Unhappy & Dissatisfied College Students – Presentation & Discussion. Presented by a counseling psychologist from counseling and psychological services.

**11. 3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (15 minutes)**

Activity #8: Summary of the Day: Led by the program facilitator.

**12. 4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (30 minutes)**

Activity #9: Personal “free-flow” Journaling. Led by the program facilitator.

**Day 3 Schedule: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.****Student Services Building: Multi-Purpose Room****1. 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. (30 minutes)**

Check-In & Continental Breakfast. Participants checked in by the program facilitator.

Catering provided by campus catering.

**2. 9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. (30 minutes)**

Activity #1: Summary & Discussion of the Previous Day. Led by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator.

Activity #2: Overview of Today's Schedule. Explained by the program coordinator.

**3. 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (60 minutes). Activity #3: Identify Changes in Campus Services & Resources. Led by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator.**

Small groups will answer this prompt, and record what the group identifies that can be changed with regard to campus services and resources on the newsprint paper. The small group will report to the large group. The large group will discuss the reports made by the small groups – what changes in particular campus services and resources can be modified to better serve community college transfer students.

**4. 10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. (15 minutes)**

Break

**5. 10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (45 minutes). Activity #4: Campus Services & Resources: What Will Change? Led by the program coordinator and program facilitator.**

From Activity #3, the large group will compile a list of what changes in campus services and resources can realistically be made. The group is to develop a timeline for their identified changes to occur.

**6. 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.** (45 minutes). Activity #5: Brainstorming New Programs. Led by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator. Small & Large Group Discussions.

Small groups will answer the following prompt: Brainstorming New Programs - Each small group is asked to generate as many ideas as possible suggesting programs from which community college transfer students would benefit. Each small group will report to the large group.

**7. 12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.** (15 minutes)

Lunch

**8. 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.** (60 minutes)

Activity #6: Compile List of New Programs. Led by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator. Large Group Discussion.

From Activity #5, the large group will compile a list of what programs could be realistically planned by the start of fall quarter in September and facilitated during fall quarter. The group is to develop a timeline for planning their programs, and when these programs will be presented to the community college transfer students.

**9. 2:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.** (15 minutes)

Break



**10. 2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. (60 minutes)**

Activity #7: Participants Choose a Program to Work On – Becoming a Subcommittee. Led by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator.

By consensus, the large group will narrow down the possible list of programs (from Activity #6) to a list of three programs. Participants will choose one program they are interested in planning and assisting to facilitate in fall quarter. This subcommittee will continue meeting until the program is presented in fall quarter.

**11. 3:15 p.m. – 3:40 p.m. (25 minutes). Activity #8: Presentation of Program Details.**

Led by the program coordinator and assisted by the program facilitator.

Small groups, now subcommittees, will present details of the programs on which they decided to implement along with a timeline of when they plan and present each of their programs.

**12. 3:40 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. (50 minutes)**

Activity #9: Completion of the 3-Day Professional Development Program Evaluation. Explained by the program coordinator.

Activity #10: Personal “free-flow” Journaling: Led by the program facilitator.

## **Description of Daily Activities**

### **Day 1:**

#### **Activity #1: Registration & Continental Breakfast:**

At registration, we will make sure that we have correct contact information for each participant. On the first day, each participant will receive a handout that has the contact information, a schedule of the program, and a journal book. On each day, each participant will receive a name tag to make it easier for other participants to remember and to use each other's names. Continental breakfast will be provided by campus catering.

Because each participant is receiving release time from their regular job responsibilities, at the conclusion of the professional development program, an attendance report will be given to the supervisor of the participant and to the vice-chancellor of student affairs,

#### **Activity #2: Introduction of Program Facilitators & Participants:**

Each person in the room will introduce themselves to the group by stating his or her name, department or office, and the reason for attending this professional development program.

#### **Activity #3: Overview of the 3-Day Program and the Handout:**

The program coordinator and program facilitator will provide an overview of the 3-day professional development program by having each participant follow along on the handout they received. Participants will be told how they were selected to attend this professional development program.

**Activity #4: Icebreaker – “Picnic”:**

Icebreakers are used for members of the group to learn the names of the other participants and to get to know each other. This icebreaker is called “Picnic.” All participants, including the program coordinator and the program facilitator, are in a circle so everyone can see each other. Each person says his or her name, and then an item beginning with the first initial of his or her first name to bring to the picnic. For example, I would say my name is Pat and I am bringing “peaches” to the picnic. For all the people in sequence, the next person says the name of the person before them (Pat) and the item they are bringing to the picnic (peaches), and then adds their name and an item beginning with the first initial of their name to bring to the picnic. Each person in the circle repeats this sequence.

**Activity #5: Three “YouTube” Videos:**

“Transfer Trauma”: In three separate YouTube videos, students describe the trauma they experienced transferring to a 4-year university. The individuals in the videos offer tips about transferring from a community college to a 4-year university.

Tips on Transferring from Community College to a University: 6 Tips  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=Yf4ZQF1F11s>  
 By: DominiqueVictoriaTV

How I Transferred from a Community College to UCLA  
 8r4GQdSPkQK  
 By: Christine Duong

From Community College to a UC (My Experience)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?V=3D2QHaL3t7I>  
 By: prettyinpixie

There will be a review and discussion of the videos after viewing them.

**Activity #6: Personal Expectations of Other Participants:**

The larger group of 12 participants is broken down into three smaller groups of four participants in each group. Each smaller group will discuss their expectations of each other during the professional development program. Each small group will put these ideas down on newsprint. These newsprint sheets will be posted on the wall. Each smaller group will choose a reporter to make a presentation to the larger group.

**Activity #7: Personal Expectations of the Program:**

Small groups of four will discuss what learning outcomes they would like to see come from this professional development program. Each group will put their personal learning outcomes on newsprint and post the newsprint sheets on wall. Each smaller group will choose a reporter to make a presentation to the larger group.

**Activity #8: Presentation of the Study & Results:**

I will do an overall presentation of the study that prompted this 3-day professional development program, and the findings from it. I will include a brief review of the literature that supports this professional development program, which resulted from the analysis of the data that was collected. The time allocated for this presentation allows for discussion of this information and for question and answer period.

**Activity #9: Student Panel - Community College Transfer Students:**

A panel of five currently enrolled community college transfer students at this university will introduce themselves, describe their experiences transferring to this university, and explain what their undergraduate experience have been like. The remainder of this presentation will be a question and answer period.

**Activity #10: Summary of the Day:**

The program facilitator will provide a summary of day 1 of this 3-day professional development program. The program facilitator will ask participants to comment on anything that was meaningful to them and answer any questions the participants may have.

**Activity #11: Personal “free-flow” Journaling:**

Participants will write their personal reflections and their learning outcomes of the day in their journal book.

## **Description of Daily Activities**

### **Day 2:**

#### **Activity #1: Summary & Discussion of the Previous Day:**

The program facilitator will provide a summary of the previous day and ask participants to comment about anything they thought about following the completion of the day.

#### **Activity #2: Overview of Today's Schedule:**

The program coordinator will review the schedule for the day.

#### **Activity #3: College Student Development Theory:**

The dean of student affairs will make this presentation. There are many theories about how a student will grow and develop while they attend college. There is only one guarantee: all students will change in some way, whether they will be positive or negative changes, or a combination of both. Student affairs professional staff has an impact on how the students with which they interact change. Students will go through many transitions as they try to figure out their identity and who they really are.

#### **Activity #4: The Differences between Community College Transfer Students, Transfer Students & Native Students at This University:**

Based on the literature reviews I did for this study, I will present the differences between these three student populations at the university: native students - students who enroll at the university right from high school; community college transfer students – students who enroll at the university following attending a community college, and transfer students – students who enroll at this university after attending another 4-year

university. The needs and concerns of these student groups are very different. Not knowing these differences results in these student populations being treated in very similar ways, which is not beneficial to any student in any of these student groups.

**Activity #5: Addressing the Needs of Community College Transfer Students,**

moderated by the program coordinator.

The larger group of 12 participants is broken down into three smaller groups of four participants in each group. Each smaller group will discuss the needs of community college transfer students based on the Activity #4 presentation. Each small group will put these ideas down on newsprint, and post them on the wall. Each smaller group will choose a reporter to make a presentation to the larger group.

**Activity #6: Compiling the Needs of Community College Transfer Students into**

**One List,** facilitated by the program coordinator.

From the information learned in Activity #5, the large group will compile the reports of each small group into one comprehensive list. The information on the list that is generated must receive general consensus by the participants in the large group.

**Activity #7: The Psychological Aspects of Unhappy & Dissatisfied College Students,**

A counseling psychologist from counseling and psychological services will make this presentation. Students who are not satisfied with their undergraduate college experiences will be unhappy, possibly depressed, and certainly dissatisfied, and may not continue to complete their academic journey to graduation.

**Activity #8: Summary of the Day,** facilitated by the program coordinator.

The program facilitator will provide a summary of day 2 of this professional

development. The facilitators will ask the participants to comment on anything that was meaningful to them.

**Activity #9: Personal “free-flow” Journaling**, led by the program facilitator.

Participants will use this time to individually write their personal reflections and their learning outcomes of the day in their journal book.



## **Description of Daily Activities**

### **Day 3:**

#### **Activity #1: Summary & Discussion of the Previous Day:**

The program coordinator and the program facilitator will present a summary of day 2 and ask participants to comment about anything they thought about following the completion of the day.

#### **Activity #2: Overview of Today's Schedule:**

The program coordinator will review the schedule for day 3.

**Activity #3: Identify Changes in Campus Services & Resources:** Moderated by the program coordinator and the program facilitator.

The larger group of 12 participants is broken down into three smaller groups of four participants in each group. Small groups will answer and report, and then the large group will discuss the following prompt: Based on the previous days' discussions, identify changes in particular campus services and resources that can be changed or modified to better serve community college transfer students.

**Activity #4: Campus Services & Resources: What will Change?** Moderated by the program coordinator and the program facilitator.

From Activity #3, the large group will compile a list of what changes in campus services and resources can realistically be made. The group is to develop a timeline for their identified changes to occur. There must be consensus by all participants in the group on the information that is compiled into the list.

**Activity #5: Brainstorming New Programs:** Moderated by the program coordinator and the program facilitator.

The larger group of 12 participants is broken down into three smaller groups of four participants in each group. Small groups will answer and report, and then the large group will discuss the following prompt: Brainstorming New Programs - Each small group is asked to generate as many ideas as possible suggesting programs from which community college transfer students would benefit, and recording the ideas on newsprint. A reporter from each small group will report the information on the newsprint list from the small group to the large group.

**Activity #6: Compile List of New Programs:** Moderated by the program coordinator and the program facilitator.

From Activity #5, the large group will compile a list of what programs could be realistically planned by the start of fall quarter in September and facilitated during fall quarter. The group is to develop a timeline for planning their programs, and when these programs will be presented to the community college transfer students.

**Activity #7: Participants Choose a Program to Work On - Becoming**

**Subcommittees:** Moderated by the program coordinator and the program facilitator.

By consensus, the large group will narrow down the possible list of programs to a list of three programs. Participants will choose one program they are interested in planning and then in presenting during fall quarter. This subcommittee will continue meeting until the program is presented in fall quarter.

**Activity #8: Presentation of Program Details:** Moderated by the program coordinator and the program facilitator.

Small groups, now subcommittees, will present details of their program and a timeline of when planning and presenting of their program will occur.

Be sure that the following points are addressed:

Details of the program, including the date of the program and the proposed budget for the program.

Timeline for planning and implementation of the program.

**Activity #9: Completion of the 3-Day Professional Development Program**

**Evaluation:** Presented by the program coordinator.

The program coordinator will distribute an evaluation of the program and ask that each participant complete it during this allotted time. This evaluation is anonymous but a collective evaluation report will be presented to the vice-chancellor of student affairs. No personal information is asked on the evaluation. Participants will be encouraged to discuss anything about the professional development program with the facilitators.

**Activity #10: Personal “free-flow” Journaling:** Led by the program facilitator.

Participants will use this time to individually write their personal reflections and their learning outcomes of the day in their journal book.

## **The Program Coordinator & Program Facilitator's Guide by Day**

### **Day 1:**

#### **1. Start of Day 1 (Activity #2)**

Remind participants to be on time and to check in on each day.

Tell participants that his or her supervisor will receive an attendance report at the end of the program.

Ask participants to wear a name tag with their first name on it each day, and to address each other by name.

#### **2. Overview of the 3-Day Professional Program & Review of the Handout (Activity #3)**

Be sure that all participants understand the goals of the 3-day professional development program.

Ask to see if anyone has a goal they would like to add to the list.

Ask if there are any questions about the goals of this program that you can answer.

Review the timeline and activities on the handout of each day.

Ask if there are any questions you can answer about the activities and programs of each day.

#### **3. Facilitate the Icebreaker: "Picnic" (Activity #4)**

Have the group form a circle.

Emphasize that the individuals in this program will be working together so it important that each person gets to know the other participants.

We will start this process by playing a game called an icebreaker.

Everyone must participate.

Peeking at the name tags for the names of the participants is permissible.

#### **4. Watch the 3 YouTube videos with the group (Activity #5)**

Tips on Transferring from Community College to a University: 6 Tips; How I transferred from a Community College to UCLA; and from Community College to a UC (My Experience).

After viewing the videos, facilitate the discussion by using the following prompts:

Were you able to relate to the videos?

What did you think of the videos?

Highlight the important points for you.

What did you learn from the videos you just watched?

#### **5. Tell the group they can take a 15 minute break.**

Please return on time.

#### **6. Personal Expectations of Each Other (Activity #6)**

Break the group down into 3 groups of 4 participants by counting 1-3.

Have each small group take a piece of newsprint and a marker.

Give the following instructions:

Mark on the newsprint the expectations your small group has about all of the other participants. After 15 minutes, each group must post their newsprint paper on the wall with blue tape. One representative from each group must present the ideas of the smaller group to the large group.

Following each small group presentation, ask the large group for any feedback or questions they may have that you or someone in the particular small group can answer.

Be sure the following points are addressed:

Participants must arrive on time each day.

Participants must come to the program with a positive attitude with a willingness to be flexible and to compromise.

That there is absolute confidentiality within the group. Nothing said in the group is permitted to be discussed with anyone outside of the group.

That each individual is willing to seriously participate in the group.

Participants are encouraged to share their ideas and opinions, but no one in the group will be forced to share anything they choose not to share.

That each participant is respectful of all other participants.

That each participant is permitted to express their opinion without interruption and without being judged.

### **7. Personal Expectations of the Program (Activity #7)**

Similar to the previous activity, the large group will break down into 3 small groups by counting off from 1-3.

Each small group should take a piece of newsprint paper and a marker.

Each small group must discuss what they are looking to learn from participating in this professional development program. These ideas should be recorded on the newsprint. After 15 minutes, each group must post their newsprint paper on the wall with blue tape.

One representative from each small group must present to the large group what the small group expects to learn from participating in this professional development program.

Following each small group presentation, ask the large group for any feedback or questions they may have that you or someone in the particular small group can answer.

Be sure the goals of this professional development program are discussed:

1. Understand the difficulties college students experience in the transfer process.
2. Understand the stressors community college transfer students face.
3. Have a better understanding of the issues and concerns of community college transfer students.
4. Be able to identify the differences between the issues and concerns of community college transfer students and native students.
5. Will be able to identify ways to assist community college transfer students who are enrolled at this university.

**8. Lunch:** Provided by campus catering.

Announce there will be 1 hour for lunch.

All participants should return to this room on time.

Encourage participants to eat together.

**9. Presentation of the Study & Results (Activity #8), which I will present.**

- The idea of this particular project began when I heard anecdotes from community college transfer students who said they were not happy attending this institution.

- My daughter had a positive experience attending one of our local community colleges. She was not ready to attend a university after she graduated from high school, so attending a community college was a good alternative for her. She decided when she was ready to attend a university. She took the initiative to apply, and eventually graduated from a 4-year institution.
- Investigating the comments from the community college transfer students enrolled at this university further, I informally talked with some of these transfer students and asked why they made the comments I heard.
- The students told me that this university was too big, they did not feel included in the campus community, the academics were difficult, and that they found it hard to make friends.
- In the research I did to prepare to formally conduct this research, I learned that students who were not satisfied with their undergraduate college experience were in danger of not completing their degree, and if they did graduate, they were not alums involved with their alma mater (Moore et al., 2007).
- This study was formally proposed as a qualitative case study. In it, 11 community college transfer students were individually interviewed.
- The data from these interviews were analyzed and I found the findings to be very similar to the formal research I reviewed. In speaking with the Office of Student Research and Information, the difference in what I researched in the literature review, and what I found in the data I collected from the students and analyzed,



was that these transfer students had very high rates of graduation; they were just not happy while there were here.

- The students who were interviewed told me they were not involved in many, if any, cocurricular activities if they were outside of the classroom. The only friends they met were in their classes, so they were short-term friends – one the class ended, their friends were gone.
- These students also told me they had difficulty in the actual transfer process coming from the community college to this 4-year university. Once they were enrolled, they all felt like the faculty and staff at this university misunderstood them, and treated them as native students, students who enrolled here right after high school. They were not those students, and as transfer students, they had different needs and issues.
- This information became the basis of this 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff. Student affairs staff have the most interaction with these students, so I felt that was a good place to start. With a better understanding of community college transfer students, this staff could do a better job at assisting these students, resulting in students who are satisfied with their undergraduate experience.

**10. Tell the group they can take a 15 minute break.**

Please return on time.

**11. Student Panel – Community College Transfer Students (Activity #9)**

The panel of 5 students will sit in chairs at the front of the room.

Ask the students on the panel to introduce themselves. Students should include the following information: name, major, hometown, and the community college from which they transferred.

Have each student answer the following questions:

Describe his or her experience in transferring to this university.

Since enrolling at this university, how would you describe your experience at this university?

What would enhance your experience at this university?

Allow the group to ask questions of the individual students.

## **12. Summary of the Day (Activity #10)**

Ask participants in the group to report what they learned from today's activities.

Ask the participants if they have any questions you can answer for them.

## **13. Personal "Free-Flow" Journaling (Activity #11)**

Have the participants write in their journals any thoughts they had about the day's activities.

Tell the participants this is a personal activity and the information they write will not be shared.

When the participants are done with this exercise, they may leave for the day.

## **The Program Coordinator & Program Facilitator's Guide by Day**

### **Day 2:**

#### **1. Welcome the group back for the start of Day 2.**

#### **2. Review of Day 1. (Activity #1)**

Ask the participants what they thought about it and discuss any comments anyone has.

Ask if anyone has any questions you can answer.

#### **3. Review Today's Schedule (Activity #2)**

Ask if anyone has any questions about today's schedule that you can answer.

#### **4. College Student Development Theory (Activity #3) presented by the Dean of Students.**

**Title: Is There Really A Theory About That? Yes, Theory is the Foundation of the Student Affairs Profession.**

The Dean of Students has been asked to prepared remarks for the group and to include the following points. This is the workshop the Dean of Students will present, and is available to anyone who may have to present it in the absence of the Dean.

There are many theories about how a student will grow and develop while they attend college.

According to Widick, Parker, and Knelfelkamp (1978), student development theory should answer these questions:

- What changes occur to students while they are in college?
- What development should we see in students who are in college?

- What aspects of the educational environment either promote or hinder growth?

What are those theories?

- Student development theory is centered on how a student develops and constructs their identities (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Chickering and Reisser (1993) describe students developing their identities by experiencing seven vectors: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity.
- Learning from real-life situations is essential for personal growth and development (Kolb, 1984). Kolb (1984) bases his experiential learning theory on four components: concrete experiences, reflection, generalization, and application.
- Theories used by student affairs professionals become best practices.
- Theory allows student affairs professionals to make sense of what is observed of student behaviors.

The only guarantee is that students will all change in some way. Some of changes they experience may be positive, and some changes may not-be-so-positive. In what ways will students change?

- Developing confidence.

- Establishing positive personal, academic, and supportive relationships.
- Developing maturity to being able to handle different challenges: academics difficulties, changes in relationships including personal and family relationships, and financial difficulties.

Ask the group how they have observed students change from year to year?

Student affairs staff has an impact on how a student develops while they are in college. Ask the group what they think the impacts that student affairs staff have on the changes students go through?

#### **5. Announce a 15 Minute Break**

Ask everyone to return on time.

#### **6. The Differences among Community College Transfer Students, Transfer Students & Native Students at This University (Activity #4), which I will present.**

Define each student population:

- Native students – Students who enroll at a 4-year university right from high school.
- Community college transfer students – Students who enroll at a 4-year university after attending a community college.
- Transfer students – Students who enroll at a 4-year university after attending a previous 4-year university.

Each of these groups has very different needs and concerns. Each of these groups should be addressed as an individual student population and not like either of the two other groups of students.

- Native students –
  - Of these 3 groups of student populations, they tend to be the less stressed and the most satisfied with their undergraduate experience.
  - They have time to transition in to the university environment and university community.
  - Not looking for new friends because their circle of friends was established during their first year at the university.
  - They generally have 4+ years to graduation, which gives them enough time to be involved in cocurricular activities. They also have time to attend programs and activities, and time to decide on a major.
  - They do not feel as stressed and pressured as incoming transfer students and community college transfer students.
- Community college transfer students -
  - These students are coming from educational institutions that are generally on semesters to a university that is on quarter. This causes academic and emotional stress because quarters move much more quickly than semesters do.
  - These students have less time to adjust to a 4-year university coming from a community college that has a very different campus

Community and environment.

- The faculty at community colleges are much more focused on teaching than on research as they are at a 4-year university.
- Students feel more comfortable at their community colleges and with their professors than they feel at a 4-year university.
- These students feel that the staff and faculty treat them as all other students instead of recognizing their individual differences coming from community colleges as transfer students.
- Transfer students –
  - These students have transferred to this 4-year university from another similar institution so they are familiar with the university environment and university community.
  - They are more satisfied with their undergraduate college experience than transfer students from community colleges.

**7. Lunch:** Provided by campus catering.

Announce there will be 1 hour for lunch.

All participants should return to this room on time.

Encourage participants to eat together.

**8. Addressing the Needs of Community College Transfer Students (Activity #5)**

The large group will break down into 3 smaller groups. Based on yesterday's discussion, each small group will discuss and record the needs of community college

transfer students on newsprint, which will be posted on the wall with blue tape. Each smaller group will choose a reporter to make a presentation to the larger group.

**9. Compiling the Needs of Community College Transfer Students into One List (Activity #6)**

From the information discussed and posted in the previous activity, the large group will compile the information from the smaller groups into one list. There must be consensus in the large group when formulating this list.

**10. Announce a 15 Minute Break**

Ask everyone to return on time.

**11. The Psychological Aspects of Unhappy & Dissatisfied College Students (Activity #7), presented by a counseling psychologist from Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS).**

The CAPS psychologist making this presentation has been asked to address students experiencing being unhappy or dissatisfied, and to include the following points in their presentation:

- What effects do college students experience when they are unhappy or not satisfied with their college experience?
- What signs should staff look for in unhappy or dissatisfied students?

How do these signs of unhappy or dissatisfied students manifest themselves in the students and how are students affected by these manifestations?

**12. Summary of the Day (Activity #10)**

Ask participants in the group to report what they learned from today's activities.



Ask the participants if they have any questions you can answer for them.

### **13. Personal “Free-Flow” Journaling (Activity #11)**

Have the participants write in their journals any thoughts they had about the day’s activities.

Remind the participants that this is a personal activity and the information they write will not be shared.

When the participants are done, they may leave for the day.

## **The Program Coordinator & Program Facilitator's Guide by Day**

### **Day 3: (The last day of the professional development program.)**

**1. Welcome** the group back for the start of Day 3, which is the last day of the program.

**2. Review of Day 2. (Activity #1)**

Ask the participants what they thought about yesterday, and discuss any comments anyone has.

Ask if anyone has any questions you can answer.

**3. Review Today's Schedule (Activity #2)**

Ask if anyone has any questions about today's schedule that you can answer.

**4. Identify Changes in Campus Services & Resources (Activity #3)**

As done in previous exercises, the large group will form smaller groups of 4 by counting off 1-3.

Each small group will answer the following prompt and record their ideas on newsprint to be presented to the large group by one small group representative.

Based on yesterday's discussions, your small group is to identify changes in particular campus services and resources that can be modified to better serve our community college transfer students.

**5. Announce a 15 Minute Break**

Ask everyone to return on time.

**6. Campus Services & Resources: What Will Change? (Activity #4)**

This is a large group discussion exercise. Based on the previous activity the large group will take the input from the small groups and compile one comprehensive list of

what they would like to see changed by campus services and resources that would be beneficial to community college transfer students.

Be sure these discussion points are addressed:

What is realistic?

Of the changes you propose, how do you think they will benefit our community college transfer student?

When suggesting these changes, who would be the individuals to address regarding them?

### **7. Brainstorming New Programs (Activity #5)**

This is both a small and large group discussion.

As in previous activities, smaller groups of 4 will answer the following prompt: Please brainstorm in your small group as many ideas as possible suggesting programs that would benefit.

Remind the group that brainstorming means there are no limitations to what can be suggested! The sky's the limit in suggesting these program ideas!

The smaller groups will post their suggestions and report back to the large group.

### **8. Lunch:** Provided by campus catering.

Announce there will be 1 hour for lunch.

All participants should return to this room on time.

Encourage participants to eat together.

### **9. Compile List of New Programs (Activity #6)**

This is a large group discussion.

Taking the information that was shared by the smaller group in the previous activity, the large group will condense the large list of suggested activities and compile a smaller, and now, realistic, list of activities. The goal behind this exercise is to determine what realistically can be planned by the start of fall quarter for community college transfer students to attend during the quarter.

#### **10. Announce a 15 Minute Break**

Ask everyone to return on time.

#### **11. Participants Choose a Program to Work On – Becoming a Subcommittee**

##### **(Activity #7)**

This is a large and small group discussion.

By consensus of the large group, the participants must narrow down the list of possible programs that was generated in the previous activity to a list of three.

Participants will choose one program they are interested in working on. These small groups, which are now subcommittees will meet with the following instructions:

Each subcommittee must appoint an individual to facilitate the direction of the group. Everyone on the subcommittee must agree to abide by the directions of this appointed person. The subcommittee will continue to meet following this professional development program until the program they are planning has been completed.

Each subcommittee will work on a timeline for planning and implementing their program, and their proposed budget for the implementation of their program.

**12. Presentation of Program Details (Activity #8)**

Each subcommittee will present the details of their program idea to the other members of the large group for suggestions and feedback about it.

The appointed member of the subcommittee who is coordinating the efforts of this subcommittee must remain in communication by email with the program coordinator. This individual will email the program coordinator every other week to report the progress the subcommittee is making.

The program coordinator will work with each subcommittee appointed contact person regarding the budget to implement the subcommittee's program.

**13. Program Evaluation (Activity #9)**

Distribute the program evaluation to each individual.

Direct each participant to fill out the program evaluation during this allotted time period.

While the evaluation is anonymous, an evaluation report of this professional development program will be presented to

Anyone wanting to give direct feedback about the program should contact the program coordinator. The program coordinator will encourage anyone wanting to give feedback directly to the program coordinator.

Collect back the individually completed evaluations.

**14. In closing**, the program coordinator will thank the large group for their hard work and the effort they all put into this 3-day professional development program.

**15. Personal “Free-Flow” Journaling (Activity #10)**

Have the participants write in their journals any thoughts they had about the day’s activities.

Remind the participants that this is a personal activity and the information they write will not be shared.

When the participants are done, they may leave for the day.

**E-Mail**  
**(To Supervisors of Selected Staff to Attend the 3-Day Professional Development Program)**

Date: TBD

From: Pat Danylyshyn-Adams, Program Coordinator (Associate Dean of Student Affairs/Director of Residence Life)

Re: 3-Day Professional Development Program

Dear (Name, supervisor of Name),

On behalf of the vice-chancellor of student affairs, I would like to inform you of a 3-day professional development program for student affairs staff to be held in the multi-purpose room of the student services building on January 17-19, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day. Your employee, (Name), has been nominated by the vice-chancellor of student affairs to attend this program. I would like to have your approval to have this employee attend before I e-mail them an invitation to the program.

The purpose of this program is to increase the awareness of the student affairs staff of the needs and concerns of community college transfer students and to learn why these needs and concerns are different from those students who enrolled at this university right from high school. By the end of this program participants will be able to use this information to assist community college transfer students in their transfer process and in their transition as enrolled students at this university.

I hope you will allow (First Name) to attend. Please e-mail me by December 6, 2016, if you will allow your employee to attend. Your support of this program is greatly appreciated.

**E-MAIL**  
**(To Student Affairs Staff Invited to the 3-Day Professional Development Program)**

Date: TBD

From: Pat Danylyshyn-Adams, Program Coordinator (Associate Dean of Student Affairs/Director of Residence Life)

Re: 3-Day Professional Development Program

Dear (Name),

On behalf of the vice-chancellor of student affairs, I would like to cordially invite you to attend a 3-day professional development program to be held in the multi-purpose room of the student services building on January 17-19, 2017. You have been nominated, selected, and approved by the vice-chancellor of student affairs and your supervisor to attend this program. The program will begin at 8:30 each day in the multi-purpose room at the student services building for continental breakfast and for registration and check in on each day. Each day will end at approximately 4:30 pm.

The purpose of this program will be to increase the awareness of the student affairs staff of the needs and concerns of community college transfer students and to learn why these needs and concerns are different from those students who enrolled at this university right from high school. By the end of this program participants will be able to use this new information to assist community college transfer students in their transfer process and in their transition as enrolled students at this university.

Please RSVP to this e-mail regarding your decision to participate no later than December 16, 2016. You will receive a reminder email on January 9, 2017.



## PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

**(Completed by all participants on the last day of the 3-Day Professional Development Program for Student Affairs Staff, on date TBD)**

Thank you for participating in this 3-day professional development program. We are interested in your feedback. Please feel free to refer to the notes in your journal. Please circle your response and add any additional comments you would like us to have.

1. I found this professional development program to be valuable.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. I left this program learning the five stated goals for the program.

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
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They are: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. I will use what I learned to better serve community college transfer students?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
----------------------	----------	---------------	-------	-------------------

How? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. This program does not need any changes before it is presented again.

Strongly Disagree                      Disagree                      No Opinion                      Agree                      Strongly Agree

What changes would you suggest? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Attending this program was a valuable use of my time.

Strongly Disagree                      Disagree                      No Opinion                      Agree                      Strongly Agree

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Your time was greatly appreciated!**

**Please refer any additional comments or questions to**

**Pat Danylyshyn-Adams, padams@ucsd.edu**

**The following individuals may be interested in attending the next 3-day professional development program to learn more about community college transfer students.**

**Please print and include name and department or office in which they work:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3-Day Professional Development Program**  
**Over a 3-day period, January 2017**

**Student Services Building: Multi-Purpose Room**

**Handout:**

Distributed to all participants

**3-DAY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: OVERVIEW**

**Facilitators:                      Dept:                      Email:                      Office #:**

Pat Danylyshyn-Adams    Muir Res Life    padams@ucsd.edu    858/534-4200  
 (program coordinator)

Human Resources staff person (program facilitator) assigned to be a facilitator for this professional development program.

**GOALS: 3-Day Professional Development Program**

1. Understand the difficulties college students experience in the transfer process.
2. Understand the stressors community college transfer students face.
3. Have a better understanding of the issues and concerns of community college transfer students.
4. Be able to identify the differences between the issues and concerns of community college transfer students and native students.
5. Will be able to identify ways to assist community college transfer students who are enrolled at this university.

**Schedule: Day 1-Multi-Purpose Room, Student Services Building: Page 2**

<b>Time:</b>	<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Length of Time:</b>
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Act #1: Check-in & Continental Breakfast		30 minutes
9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Act #2: Introductions Act #3: Overview of the Program & Handout	Group	30 minutes
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Act #4: Icebreaker-“Picnic” Act #5: YouTube Videos	Group Activity, Video Viewing, & Discussion	60 minutes
10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.	Break		15 minutes
10:45 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Act #6: Personal Expectations of Other Participants	Group Activity & Discussion	45 minutes
11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Act #7: Personal Expectations of Program	Group Activity & Discussion	45 minutes
12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.	Lunch		60 minutes
1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Act #8: Presentation of Program Study & Results	Presentation	75 minutes
2:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	Break		15 minutes
2:45 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Act #9: Student Panel	Presentation & Q & A	60 minutes
3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Act #10: Summary of the Day	Presentation	15 minutes
4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Act #11: Personal Journaling	Individual activity	30 minutes

**Schedule: Day 2-Multi-Purpose Room, Student Services Building: Page 3**

<b>Time:</b> 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	<b>Activity:</b> Check-in & Continental Breakfast	<b>Format</b>	<b>Length of Time:</b> 30 minutes
9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Act #1: Summary & Discussion of the Previous Day Act #2: Overview of Today's Schedule	Presentation & Discussion	30 minutes
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Act #3: College Student Development Theory	Presentation & Discussion	60 minutes
10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.	Break		15 minutes
10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	Act #4: Differences Among College Student Populations	Presentation & Discussion	60 minutes
11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch		60 minutes
12:45 p.m. - 1:30 pm	Act #5: Addressing the Needs of Community College Transfer Students	Small & Large Group discussions	45 minutes
1:30 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	Act #6: Compile Results from Act #4 into One List	Large Group Activity	45 minutes
2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Act #7: The Psychological Aspects of Unhappy Students	Presentation & Discussion	75 minutes
3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Act #8: Summary of the Day	Presentation & Discussion	15 minutes
4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Act # 9: Personal Journaling	Individual Activity	30 minutes

**Schedule: Day 3-Multi-Purpose Room, Student Services Building: Page 4**

<b>Time:</b> 8:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.	<b>Activity:</b> Check-in & Continental Breakfast	<b>Format</b>	<b>Length of Time:</b> 30 minutes
9:00 a.m. -9:45 a.m.	Act #1: Summary & Discussion of the Previous Day Act #2: Overview of Today's Schedule	Presentation & Discussion	45 minutes
9:45 a.m. -10:30 a.m.	Act #3: Identify Changes in Campus Services & Resources	Small & Large Group Discussions	45 minutes
10:30 a.m. -10:45 a.m.	Break		15 minutes
10:45 a.m. -11:30 a.m.	Act #4: Campus Services & Resources: What Can Be Modified?	Large Group Discussion	45 minutes
11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Act #5: Brainstorming New Programs	Group Activity & Discussion	45 minutes
12:15 p.m. -1:00 p.m.	Lunch		45 minutes
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Act #6: Compile List of New Programs	Large Group Discussion	60 minutes
2:00 p.m. -2:15 p.m.	Break		15 minutes
2:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	Act #7: Participants Choosing a Program to Work On	Large Group Activity	60 minutes
3:15 p.m. - 3:40 p.m.	Act #8: Presentation of Program Details	Subcommittee Presentations	25 minutes
3:40 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Act #9:Evaluation Act #10: Personal Journaling	Individual Activities	50 minutes

**Evaluation Report (sample):  
Results of the Evaluations Completed by the Participants:  
Presented to the Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs**

I am not including an actual evaluation report in this section because I do not have any actual data to report to the vice-chancellor of student affairs based on this inaugural 3-day professional development program. Instead, I will show a template of the information that is recommended to be included in the evaluation report (Spaulding, 2008). Spaulding (2008) tells researchers that there are many ways to write and present an evaluation report, although he always recommends that evaluation reports always be completed and presented in a timely manner, and presented to the appropriate individuals supporting the program, and to the stakeholders who may have a vested interest in the findings from the program.

There are some general components that should be included in any evaluation report including a cover page, an executive summary page, which is optional for short reports, an introduction of 2 to 3 paragraphs, a brief report of the methodology, and the body of the report (Spaulding, 2008).

Spaulding (2008) recommends using the following template for an evaluation report:

- Cover Page – This page should include the title of the project, the name of the individual preparing this report, and the date that this evaluation report is being submitted.
- For this project, I would include “3-Day Professional Development

Program for Student Affairs Staff,” my name as preparing and presenting this report, and I will use the date of January, 2017, following the completion of this professional development program in January, 2017.

- Executive Summary – If this is being used, it is typically 2 or 3 pages, and includes all parts of the evaluation report in an abbreviated version. There are times this executive summary may be used as the sole document presents highlights of the program or project that is being evaluated, especially if only a brief summary of an evaluation report is required at a particular meeting or presentation.
- Introduction – This section begins with 2 or 3 paragraphs explains how the project came to fruition, what the evaluation report is about, and include the project goals.
- For this section, I would include the 5 goals of the 3-day professional development program:
  1. Understand the difficulties college students experience in the transfer process.
  2. Understand the stressors community college transfer students face.
  3. Have a better understanding of the issues and concerns of community college transfer students.



4. Be able to identify the differences between the issues and concerns of community college transfer students and native students.

5. Will be able to identify ways to assist community college transfer students who are enrolled at this university.

- Methodology – This section includes a brief description of the methodology of the study, the sources of the data, and the research tools that were used to analyze the collected data.
- In this section I would report that the 3-day professional development program came from a qualitative study, that the data came from individual interviews of community college transfer students, and that I analyzed the collected data using coding and themes.
- Body of the Report – This is the main section of the evaluation report. This section contains the information that came from the evaluations submitted by the participants in the program. The data collected from the evaluation should initially be presented in a table. Then the evaluator will describe the data as the findings from the evaluations in a summary form. If there are recommendations from the evaluator, they should be included in this section.
- An example of a recommendation would be to suggest that based on the evaluations submitted by the participants completing the 3-day

professional development program, the program should continue on an annual basis.

**E-MAIL**  
**(To Student Affairs Staff Who Completed the 3-Day Professional Development Program)**

Date: Mid-March 2017

From: Pat Danylyshyn-Adams, Program Coordinator (padams@ucsd.edu)

Re: Follow-up of the 3-Day Professional Development Program

Dear (Name),

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to follow up on the 3-day professional development program you attended in January. As you know, the program you attended was an inaugural one. I hope this is a program we will continue allowing more student affairs staff to attend. The feedback and information you provide will be important to continuing this program.

The time you take to answer these questions is greatly appreciated. I would strongly encourage you to answer these questions and email them to me by April 3.

Please refrain from only yes or no answers!

1. Are you using the information you learned about community college students. If you are what you learned, how are you using it?
2. Are you finding the information you learned useful in your interactions with community college transfer students?
3. Do you think community college transfer students are benefitting from what you learned in the professional development program?
4. How if the planning process of the program you working on proceeding?

## Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

**Are You a Community College Transfer Student?**

**Are you willing to participate in a doctoral study  
about your college experiences at UCSD?**

**You must be a transfer student from a  
San Diego community college & You must be an  
enrolled student at UCSD**

**If you are interested in this study, contact Pat at  
[pat.dadams@waldenu.edu](mailto:pat.dadams@waldenu.edu) for detailed  
information!**

**(Your help is greatly appreciated!)**



## Appendix C: Return Email to Student

DATE:       Date  
TO:         Student Name  
FROM:       Pat Danylyshyn-Adams  
RE:         Community College Transfer Student Study

Dear "Student",

Thank you for emailing me expressing your interest in the study I am conducting. I will contact you to discuss the parameters and details of this study.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Patricia Danylyshyn-Adams  
Doctoral Student at Walden University

## Appendix D: Interview Protocol

## Interview Protocol

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Location of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date & Time of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

=====

A. Welcome & introduction: Good morning/afternoon, (student's name). Thank you for joining me today and agreeing to participate in this study. My name is Pat Danylyshyn-Adams and I work in student housing at this institution. I am working on this research project as part of the doctoral program I am in at Walden University, Higher Education - Adult Learning.

B. Explanation of the study: I am doing this study to explore the types of experiences community college transfer students have while they are undergraduate students at this institution.

C. Signing the consent form: As we discussed in our telephone conversation, I have a consent form I would like you to read and sign prior to the interview. As you read it, please let me know if you have any questions about it. You can either email it back to me, or bring it to the interview, but it must be signed before you arrive for the interview so there is no perceived issue of coercion to sign it in my presence. Before you leave this afternoon, I will make a copy of the form you signed so you can keep it in your personal records.

D. Description of what will take place during the interview: The time we will spend together will be no more than one hour. It is anticipated that the interview will last approximately 45 minutes, and we will spend the last 15 minutes concluding the interview when I will answer any questions you may have for me, and discussing an optional follow-up meeting. The interview will consist of 10 questions, which may include follow up questions based on your responses.

The interview questions are written on cards for you to read as I read them to you. Please feel free to go back to an interview question at any time, or ask for clarification of the question. The cup of water is for you. As you are aware, your interview will be recorded and I will be taking notes so there is an accurate account of the interview. The contents of this interview and your identity will remain confidential.

E. Thank you: Thank you very much for your interest in participating in this study.

## Appendix E: Reminder Email

DATE:        Date  
TO:           Student Name  
FROM:        Pat Danylyshyn-Adams  
RE:           Interview Reminder

Dear “Student”,

As you recall, we scheduled your interview for (Day & Date), at (Time). We will meet at (Location), located at John Muir College on the University of California, San Diego campus in La Jolla. I anticipate the interview to go for approximately 30 - 40 minutes. Please complete and email me back the Informed Consent Form prior to your interview.

If you need to re-schedule, or if you are no longer interested in participating in this study, please email me at [pat.dadams@waldenu.edu](mailto:pat.dadams@waldenu.edu) or call me at 619/871-2183.

I am looking forward to meeting with you very soon!

Sincerely,

Patricia Danylyshyn-Adams  
Doctoral Student at Walden University



## Appendix F: Interview Questions

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please describe how you academically arrived at this institution.
2. How did you decide that this institution was academically suited for you?
3. What expectations did you have about transferring to this institution as an undergraduate student?
4. Have the expectations you expressed been met by the institution? Why or why not?
5. Since you have been at this institution, what has been your most memorable experience?
6. What types of relationships have you formed at this institution?
7. Please describe these relationships. Describe how they are important to you.
8. What campus resources do you regularly use on campus?
9. What would enhance your experience as an undergraduate student at this institution?
10. Is there anything I have not covered with these questions that you would like to share with me about your college experience at this institution?
11. What questions do you have for me?

Thank you for participating in this study.