

ABSTRACT

Title: Advisors' Perceptions of Barriers to a Smooth Transition from a Community College to a Four-year University

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This descriptive study examines closely advisors' perceptions of barriers that impede or inhibit the smooth transition of students transferring from a community college to a four-year university. Administering poor, inaccurate or improper advice to potential transfer students can pose serious problems to both community colleges and four-year colleges and universities whose student population is comprised of a growing number of transfer students. Without effective transfer advising programs, transfer students often suffer from a loss of transfer credit. Many current transfer practices impair community college students' efforts toward completing a baccalaureate degree because students often have to repeat one or more courses at senior institutions. This practice is costly to both students and taxpayers. To better serve students wishing to transfer and apply a large number of transfer credits towards an undergraduate degree, students and advisors would benefit from a more strategic and effective advising process supported by the institution.

The study used a quantitative survey and a series of short open-ended questions designed to assess advisor perceptions of their role of advising students transferring from a community college to a four-year university. The study built upon previous research on academic advising with updated survey items added to reflect current transfer advising practices. The survey focused on advisors' perceptions of the importance and practice of

the role of an advisor, advising tasks and skills, and perceived barriers to effective advising.

The study concluded that the perception of the advisors at both the community college and the four-year university agree on the existence of barriers to effective advising and that their perceptions of the importance and practice of the role of an advisor contributes to these barriers. The other barriers identified in the study include 1) level of interest, 2) training, 3) access to accurate information, 4) motivation or rewards, and 5) time limitations. The advisors agree that many of these barriers can be minimized with the support, cooperation and commitment of the administration together with the advisors in developing an advising process that utilizes a more holistic rather than prescriptive approach.