

Report of the Transfer Core Committee, January 2016. Neena Din (Chair, CAS Deans Office), Richard Gonzalez (Biology), Brooke Harrington (School of Business), Michael Ichiyama (Psychological Sciences), Mitch Malakowski (Chemistry, Theology and Religious Studies), Roger Pace (Communication Studies), Lynn Stearns (Transfer Analyst), Jennifer Zwolinski (Psychological Sciences)

USD currently has a very robust Transfer Student Population. Over the past 5 years, there have been an average of 339 transfer students admitted in the Fall and 157 admitted in the Spring semesters (1), comprising about 30% of the total undergraduate student enrollment numbers during this period. Approximately 25 to 30% of undergraduate degrees conferred each year are to students who started at USD as Transfer students.¹

Studies by the National Student Clearinghouse in 2012 and 2015 (2, 3) showed that the largest number of transfer students originate from 2 year public colleges where the majority of students tend to come from both racially and economically diverse backgrounds. USD's transfer students come from both 2 year (60%) and 4 year institutions (37%), with the majority (75%) coming from California schools². 19% of our Transfer students identify as minorities³ and 10% are International (1). The number of veteran transfer students has also increased, with an average of 42 being admitted in the past two years (1).

In recognizing the importance of this student population to our community, USD has committed considerable resources toward creating a welcoming environment for these students. For example, Admissions runs very active recruitment programs including Transfer Open Houses and they have a counselor dedicated to work solely with transfer students. The Transfer Transition and Success Committee (TTASC) was formed in Spring 2011 to develop appropriate strategies for enhancing the transfer student experience. This led to an Orientation Program specifically designed for Transfer Students, Summer Registration Days, formation of a Transfer Transition Team and further development of Transfer Preceptorials⁴. Since many of our transfer students are also commuters, a Commuter Student Commons was created and housed in the Hahn University Center. Similarly, the Veteran's center provides resources for our veteran student population.

Clearly transfer students represent a significant part of our undergraduate population, so it is imperative that we continue to attract and retain this diverse student body to USD. As we make changes to the Core Curriculum, we must carefully consider the impact to this crucial population of undergraduates so as not to place an undue burden on them as they progress towards their degrees. With this in mind, the Transfer Core Committee proposes the following guidelines for incoming transfer students who fall under the jurisdiction of the new Core.

1. All courses in the new Core are eligible to be transferred to USD by entering transfer students, **with the exception of the First Year Integration Experience, Advanced Writing course and Core Project.**

- Transfer students will be exempt from the 'Living' component of the LLC experience required of First Year students, but will be required to participate in an integrative experience in their first semester at USD through Transfer Preceptorial classes that are a part of a Learning Community.

As per the ATF Report on Integration, all students should be provided with 'opportunities to make connections between disciplines, apply knowledge in a variety of contexts, make connections between curricular and co-curricular activities, and to synthesize Core competencies'. For First Year students, components of this integration will take place through the LLC experience in their first semester and an additional course taken in their second semester within the same theme. Transfer students should also be provided this opportunity through Transfer Learning Communities (TLCs) where they take a course in their first semester at USD that is part of a cluster of courses centered on a broad -based theme (as modeled by the First Year LLCs). The courses and experiences within these TLCs will address the Student Learning Outcomes of Recognition and Articulation, as outlined in the ATF Report on Integration. The coordination of these Transfer Learning Communities will require additional resources including the hiring of a Program Director taken from the faculty or staff at USD.

-It is expected that incoming transfer students will have completed a writing course equivalent to the First Year Writing Core requirement, but if not, they should be required to take this in their first semester at USD. For the Advanced Writing course, we are requiring that transfer students take this course at USD, because, as per the Writing Competency ATF Report, this will not only allow students to develop critical writing skills, but will enhance their likelihood of success in their majors.

-As per the 2015 Core Proposal, 'students are required to enroll in an upper-division Core Project course to synthesize the connections between Core courses, their majors or minors, and co-curricular experiences' (4). Since this Core project draws upon all of these cumulative, integrative learning experiences, this is another requirement that must be fulfilled at USD by transfer students.

2. Since the number of courses in the new Core is smaller than the current Core, **there will be no waiving of course requirements for students who transfer in at junior or senior standing.** Currently students entering at junior standing (60-90 units) need to only take two THRS classes after entry to USD and a student entering at 90 credits or over needs to only take one upper division THRS course and one Phil Ethics course.

3. During the transition from the Old Core to the New, courses from accredited institutions will be evaluated for transfer to satisfy Core requirements based on similarity to courses listed in the Undergraduate Bulletin.

-Eventually all classes that currently satisfy Core requirements will need to be re-evaluated to determine their alignment with the new Core criteria and will require working with the outside institutions to provide detailed course descriptions/syllabi to help make these determinations. This task is best suited for a dedicated Articulation Officer, a position that we currently do not have at USD. We see a pressing need for this position because of the work volume and time commitment course articulation will require.

NOTES

1. The percentage of the graduating class that entered as transfer students was calculated using the average number of transfers admitted, the 6-year retention rate for transfer students and the number of degrees awarded (Source Institutional Research and Planning website, <http://www.sandiego.edu/irp>).

2. On average, over the past 5 years, 60% of students transferred from 2 year public schools and 37% transferred from 4 year institutions, both public and private. 75% are coming from California and 16% are Out of State and US Territories. On average 10% have been Foreign Citizens over the past 5 years (Source, Institutional Research and Planning website, <http://www.sandiego.edu/irp>).

3. Includes Hispanic/Latino, Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and two or more races. Excludes whites, nonresident aliens, and race/ethnicity unknown (Source, Institutional Research and Planning website, <http://www.sandiego.edu/irp>).

4. **Summer Registration Days**-this program was initiated in Summer 2012 by the TTASC. Deposited transfer students are invited to attend one of the Summer Registration days offered in June, July or August where they have the opportunity to understand how their courses from previous institutions transferred to USD, meet with an academic advisor to initiate the process of registering for classes, connect with various resources on campus (e.g. Financial Aid, Student Accounts, Wellness) as well as network with peers, faculty, staff and administrators.

Transfer Transition Team (TTT)- An essential component to the success of the transition of new transfer students to USD is to have them connect with members of the USD community who can help them quickly navigate and feel comfortable in their new environment. The TTT consists of a group of approximately 10 students

who themselves had been to admitted to USD as transfers, and serve a role in providing peer support and mentoring to new transfer students. The members of the TTT provide support during Summer Registration days (if available) as well as the Fall/Spring Orientation Programs. During the Fall and Spring semesters, the team members connect with students in their designated small group at set check in times to provide support and resources (e.g. third week of the semester, after mid-term deficiencies have been released, prior to the registration) and generally assist students as needed in their transition to USD

Transfer Preceptorials-Transfer Preceptorial classes have been run through the CAS Deans office since Fall 2009. Currently there are a maximum of five to six of these classes running in the Fall semesters and up to two in the Spring semesters. These classes either satisfy Core requirements or serve as preparation for a major. The components of the preceptorials courses are similar to the First Year preceptorials courses, with the exception that the instructor of the course is not the advisor (with the possible exception if the course serves a preparation for the major where the instructor may serve as advisor for some or all of the students) and the classes are currently not linked through a learning community.

REFERENCES

1. Data obtained from the Institutional Research and Planning website, <http://www.sandiego.edu/irp/>
2. Source: <http://www.pas.indiana.edu/pdf/Transfer%20&%20Mobility.pdf>
3. Source: <https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport9/>
4. 2015 Core Curriculum Proposal, <http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/documents/core-proposal.pdf>