

2023 SERP Transfer Working Group Recommendations

Working Group Charge *(originally issued January 2023)*

This working group's charge has been to focus on generating a robust understanding of who our transfer students are, what their current patterns of enrollment and completion are (and how this is connected to university enrollment and graduation rates), identify barriers to their success, and propose strategies to address those barriers.

The following goals are a particular focus:

- Transfer and PT students feel welcomed and find connecting to the university and their course of study to be straightforward
- Completion rates of transfer students improve (e.g., time to graduation is decreased; gaps in performance relative to students who start as first-time students at Boise State are decreased)

Members

Andrea Orozco, Assistant Director of Strategic Enrollment, co-chair

Susan Shadle, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, co-chair

Heather Ropelato, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Recruitment, Extended Studies

Nick Hudyma, Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, COEN

Adriana Martinez-Saldana - Senior Outreach Coordinator, CSI / CEI

Cynda LeDuc, Assistant Registrar, Evaluation & NCAA Certification, Registrar's office

Matt Steuart, Director of Advising, College of Business and Economics (COBE)

Evelyn Hernandez, Sr Transfer Admissions Counselor, Admissions

Aspirational Statement

We envision a university that intentionally supports access and success of transfer students...We aspire for Boise State to be known internally and externally as an institution that does an exceptional job at supporting transfer students. As a "transfer-friendly institution," our policies and practices show transfer students we have planned for their arrival, onboarding, and journey to success. We envision that transfer students and their journeys are visible on campus; everyone in the campus community knows and values the important role transfer students play in the life of the university.

Information about transferring to Boise State is easy to find and the process itself is straightforward, giving prospective students clear transfer pathways. Our welcoming and onboarding processes are designed to meet transfer students where they are. Processes related to credit transfer and evaluation are easy to navigate; our academic programs make an effort to structure their curriculum for ease of transfer and to enact policies and practice to recognize the value of previous coursework as much as possible.

Why this work is important

Many of our students begin as transfer students.

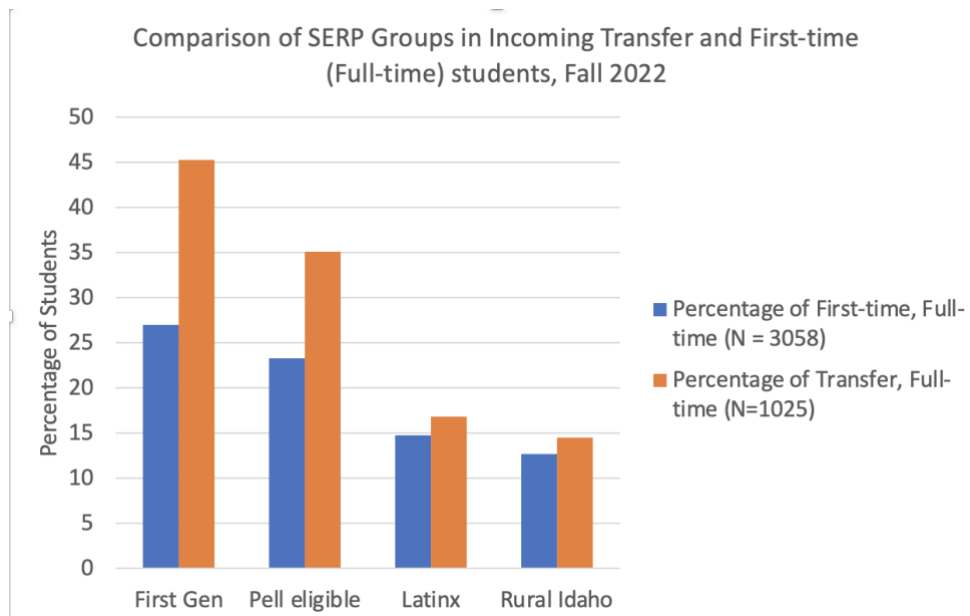
Many students begin their journey at Boise State as transfer students, and it is important that we design our systems, processes, and practices with their needs in mind.

- Approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of our currently enrolled students are transfer students¹.
- Transfer students make up a large portion of each incoming class; in Fall 2022, ~85% of new students in online programs were transfer students; ~26% of new students in on-campus programs were transfer students.
- Between 2020-2023, approximately 46% of our graduates had started as transfer students
- Between 2018-2022, for graduates from on-campus programs, 34% began as transfer students; for graduates from online programs, 91% began as transfer students

Serving transfer students will support students we often serve least well.

Transfer students are more likely than our first-time-in-college students to be Pell-eligible, First-Gen, Latinx, or Rural (or have intersections of these identities). If we improve how we serve transfer students, we will more successfully serve these populations of students.

For example, in the Fall 2022 entering cohorts, we observed the following about our incoming students.²



¹ In January 2023, there were 5,473 transfer students at Boise State and 16,701 degree seeking students at Boise State (including associate degree seeking students and second degree seeking; excluding non-degree seeking, concurrent enrollment, and certificate seeking)

² Additional data about transfer students and their intersectional identities can be found at [this link](#).

- Importantly, the institutional performance gaps in retention and graduation that we observe for first-gen, Pell, Latinx, and rural students in our transfer, full-time students are reduced or absent relative to our first-time, full-time student population³

Commendations

While the transfer working group did not conduct a thorough audit of all efforts focused on supporting transfer students, it is important to note several important areas of work that stand out in support of transfer students.

- Our online programs provide important opportunities for Boise State transfer students to complete a degree at Boise State. (~85% of new students in online programs were transfer students, and ~33% of all the incoming Fall 22 transfer students enrolled in an online program⁴)
- Extended Studies has worked to position full-time Boise State staff at partner institutions (CWI and CSI) to facilitate an intentional, ongoing presence, support relationships with these sending institutions, and engage and support future transfer students.
- The registrar's office has invested in resources to decrease the turn-around time for transcript evaluation for transfer students.
- The College of Engineering, as part of an NSF-funded project, has created transfer pathways for students seeking to transfer from CSI as engineering students.
- The Office of the Provost has worked to create opportunities for chairs at CWI to meet and work with their counterparts at Boise State. This has built relationships and has facilitated the creation of articulation agreements.
- The Office of Admissions has increased from one to four the number of admissions counselors with specific responsibility to serve Idaho and nonresident transfer students' unique needs.
- The Office of Admissions and Student Communications and Marketing have increased the focus of communication strategies to engage and assist prospective and newly admitted transfer students.
- New Student Programs will pilot a cohort of transfer students supported by Peer Navigators in the fall of 2024.

³ For example, the 6 year graduation gap between first gen transfer students and non-first gen transfer students is about 3%, the gap for Pell/not-Pell is 8%, the gap for Latinx students is <1%. Rural Idaho transfer students have a 6 year graduation rate ~10% higher than those of Idaho urban students.

⁴ This includes both full-time and part-time transfer students and includes majors, minors and certificates

Recommended Strategies

The following strategies are recommended by the SERP Transfer Student Working Group, which explored ideas that would help improve access and success for transfer students at Boise State. They are based on the group's experiential knowledge of working with students, scholarly-based effective practice, and data related to transfer students at Boise State.

The highest priority strategies are found in Table 1. We have mapped the strategies onto an audit-tool framework for Transfer Student Success developed by the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students (NISTS).⁵ The basic categories of the framework are shown below.

NISTS Categories for Transfer Student Success

Institutional Policies and Practices

- Institutional strategies - mission/vision/values; finance and budgeting; training & professional development
- Goals and Measurement - setting goals & monitoring outcomes; transfer student identification
- Partnering - partnerships & curriculum maps;
- Communication - communications about transfer

Student Facing Delivery and Supports

- Admissions, Advising, Orientation & Registration - Admissions; Advising; Orientation; registration and course schedules
- Evaluating, Awarding, and Applying Credits - Transcript Eval, dual credit/dual enrollment; credit for prior learning; credit by exam; reverse transfer of credits
- Transfer Student Engagement and Supports - Transfer-focused supports; TR student orgs/engagement; housing for TR students; Financial Aid

Additional strategies discussed by the working group are outlined in Table 2.

⁵ <https://www.nists.org/post/nists-transfer-policy-practice-audit-tool>

Table 1. Highest Priority Proposed Strategies

NISTS Category	Proposed Strategy	Description	Stakeholders
<p><i>Institutional Policies and Practices: Partnerships</i></p> <p><i>Student Facing Delivery and Supports: Admissions</i></p>	<p>Enhance intentional connections with community colleges, including through the BroncoConnect program, to support the recruitment of transfer students from partner institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create effective dyads⁶ with select community college partners. ● Establish and maintain curriculum maps to facilitate the seamless transfer of students between institutions, focusing on programs that attract the highest number of transfer students. ● Create advising tools (2+2 documents) that help transfer students understand how courses at the community college fit into their academic plan. ● Leverage the BroncoConnect program to help students build a sense of community. ● Establish a regular process for transcripts to be sent and evaluated automatically each semester. (student gets an evaluation report every semester, independent of their start at Boise State) ● Explore strategies, within and beyond BroncoConnect to allow students coming from select partner institutions to choose their catalog year. ● Consider expanding intentional programming to other institutions (e.g., CEI) ● Create a set of resources or a course that could be taken by students at partner institutions to learn about transfer to Boise State and explain the value of participating in the BroncoConnect program. ● Leverage the capacity of site-based coordinators to encourage BroncoConnect enrollment; identify specific practices for each community college partner 	<p>Admissions, Registrar's Office, Advising Offices</p>

⁶ US Department of Education [report](#) (2023).

<p><i>Institutional Policies and Practices: Partnering</i></p>	<p>Regularly meet with key transfer-sending partners to assess transfer student outcomes and identify necessary policy and practice changes. Conduct an audit of relationships, collaborations, and partnerships with Idaho community colleges (both formal and informal).</p>	<p>Implement a proactive approach, where we regularly meet with community college partners, attend relevant meetings, extend event invitations, and ensure open communication.</p> <p>By leveraging existing relationships cultivated by Admissions Counselors, site-based Extended Studies Coordinators, and faculty, coupled with a comprehensive audit, we aim to streamline partnerships, address specific gaps, and clarify job descriptions for effective engagement with Idaho community colleges.</p> <p>The REP4 program at CSI, led by Peter Risse and Adriana Saldana-Martinez, might enable a systematic evaluation of collaboration strengths and identify areas needing attention.</p>	<p>Admissions, Extended Studies, Office of the Provost, Colleges</p>
<p><i>Institutional Policies and Practices: Goals and Measurement</i></p>	<p>Support academic departments to better serve transfer students</p>	<p>Identify a process by which colleges and departments can understand their transfer student population so they can be better prepared to serve these populations and be better informed when collaborating with community college partners.</p> <p>Provide academic depts with information about their incoming transfer student population each semester (#s, source institutions); advocate for using the FATE dashboard to understand outcomes for TR students. Consider adding information about transfer students to the DAR</p> <p>Make it clear to whom admitted transfer students can/should reach out with additional questions</p>	<p>Institutional Effectiveness and/or Enrollment Services.</p>
<p><i>Student Facing Delivery and Supports: Evaluating and Applying Credits</i></p>	<p>Revise program curricula to facilitate more effective transfer</p>	<p>Identify examples of problematic transfer course issues (e.g., upper vs. lower division course numbering). Create practice and policy to encourage curricular changes that</p>	<p>Deans, Chairs</p>

		will better support transfer students.	
<i>Institutional Policies and Practices: Communication</i>	Help prospective transfer students navigate by improving the information available online ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure easy-to-find info is available online to help transfer students make decisions about coming to Boise State (at the university, college, or department level) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission requirements to the institution and specific programs are clearly communicated to transfer students and others supporting their journeys • Academic colleges and departments include information on websites geared toward prospective transfer populations • Make it clear to whom a prospective can/should reach out with additional questions • Highlight majors that may be particularly attractive to transfer students (e.g., based on popularity, agreements in place, or flexibility of major) • Specific program application deadlines are highlighted⁸ • Be intentional about stories/images used on websites and in communications to be inclusive of non-traditional/transfer students; our choices should reflect the significant numbers of rural, Latinx, Pell, and first-gen students within our transfer student population. • Collaborate with partner Marketing and Communication offices to update and maintain transfer pages on Community College partner websites 	SAEM Communication and Marketing in collaboration with colleges, departments, and CC partners.

⁷ <https://www.nists.org/post/from-transfer-guides-to-program-maps-updating-your-website-with-student-friendly-terms>

⁸ For example: nursing deadline is Sept xx for spring, but university priority/scholarship deadline is Oct 1 and general admissions is later (Dec 1); for graphic design, deadlines are the Monday of the 6th week of classes each fall and spring

<p><i>Student Facing Delivery and Supports: Evaluating Credits</i></p>	<p>Implement technology solutions for transcript evaluations to decrease evaluation time and access.</p>	<p>Adopt EDX and partner with other institutions to facilitate the transfer and evaluation of credits</p> <p>Once in place, explore how the new system might allow for access to better information and/or advising before admission or intent-to-enroll</p>	<p>Registrar's Office, Admissions</p>
<p><i>Student Facing Delivery and Supports: Advising</i></p>	<p>Support regular connections between Boise State and community college partner advisors</p>	<p>Establish a liaison role to facilitate connections between partner institution advising staff and Boise State Advising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate across units at Boise State (Small UAN, Admissions, Extended Studies) • Facilitate ongoing information sharing and engagement (e.g., support travel for those not local). • Proactively and regularly involve partner advisors in professional development advising events and advising summits. • Ensure that advisors have relevant information about program deadlines³ 	<p>Admissions, College Advising Offices, AASC, Extended Studies</p>
<p><i>Student Facing Delivery and Supports: Evaluating, Awarding, and Applying Credits</i></p>	<p>Make the credit adjustment process⁹ more transparent</p>	<p>Streamline the credit adjustment process: 1) specify individuals who can serve as navigators to support students through the process. 2) make the adjustment status more transparent to stakeholders and the student (e.g., is it approved?) by adopting a central electronic system to house and track requests</p>	<p>Registrar, Advising offices</p>
<p><i>Student Facing Delivery and Supports and Institutional Practices: Evaluating, Awarding, and Applying Credits.</i></p>	<p>Create and maintain a system for making current articulation agreements available</p>	<p>Create an online resource where articulation agreements are kept for in-state, out-of-state, and program-specific agreements, accessible by staff, faculty, and students</p> <p>Develop a sustainable cycle for reviewing articulation</p>	<p>Registrar</p>

⁹ After transcripts have been evaluated, it is not uncommon for students to have one or more courses that MIGHT count toward their major, but in the evaluation process is an elective. This means that a student has to go through a process to request an evaluation of their prior coursework and, if appropriate, get an academic adjustment. This can be a cumbersome process and presents a barrier for students.

		agreements for the purpose of providing students and partner institutions with up-to-date information.	
<i>Institutional Policies and Practices: finance and budgeting</i>	Create a targeted scholarship strategy for transfer students.	Implement a scholarship program recognizing TR students' achievements, community engagement, leadership, and financial circumstances. Develop a scholarship timeline that allows more TR students to be considered for scholarships.	Enrollment Services, Financial Aid
<i>Student Facing Delivery and Supports: Evaluating, Awarding, and Applying Credits</i>	Remove barriers to completion for general education requirements for transfer students.	Clarify and adjust foundation course requirements to ensure they support our transfer students' journey in pursuing a bachelor's degree.	General Education Committee
<i>Institutional Policies and Practices: Goals and Measurement</i>	Publish and share an annual transfer student report.	Collate data, comparisons of progress year over year, college-specific information, and plans for the coming year to better serve transfer students. Engage in regular strategies for sharing info. Report on a regular review process to ensure institutional policies and practices are aligned with state policies designed to support transfer students and credit mobility.	Institutional Effectiveness and/or Enrollment Services. SERP leadership, Enrollment and Retention Action Team and/or Permanent Transfer Student Committee

Table 2. Additional recommendations for supporting Transfer Students

Strategy	Description
Provide academic advising to prospective students	Create a mechanism by which prospective TR students can get early advising if needed (e.g., to map onto a new major); invest in advising resources to support this service. Students who say they intend to transfer to the institution receive advising from the institution before the point of transfer, and their participation is encouraged/required and monitored.
Explore subpopulations of transfer students who might benefit from specific interventions	Engage in an exploratory analysis to understand the specific challenges for subpopulations of transfer students (e.g., students who transfer in a large number of credits); Craft strategies to address needs and gaps identified by the analysis.
Engage in intentional onboarding practices for transfer students.	<p>Design NSO experiences with the needs of transfer students in mind; connect explicitly to advising experiences designed for transfer students</p> <p>Design a holistic outreach program that follows incoming transfer students through their admissions, orientation, and first-year.</p> <p>Ensure that all academic departments/colleges have plans for onboarding new transfer students.</p>
Develop and introduce transfer information courses and workshops at Idaho community colleges to enhance support and offer additional resources.	The goal is to elevate support services and provide students with additional resources as they navigate the transfer process. By developing targeted educational sessions, we aim to empower students with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions about their academic journey and seamlessly transition between institutions.

<p>Create a Center for Transfer Students</p>	<p>Create a physical space and digital hub for supporting innovative transfer student solutions. The Center will provide new and continuing transfer students with resources to recruit, welcome, successfully transition, and persist to graduation at Boise State University.</p> <p>The Center will provide annual reports, engage in assessment, and support the use of research-based practices for serving the transfer student population.</p> <p>Examples of other university transfer centers: https://transfercredit.wsu.edu/</p>
<p>Transfer-specific professional development for advisors</p>	<p>Build professional development related to engagement of transfer students into support for both new and experienced advisors. Ask every college advising office to articulate strategies to serve the unique needs of transfer students in their college.</p>
<p>The institution has a transfer student success team focused on helping transfer students reach their goals.</p>	<p>Establish and empower a dedicated Transfer Student Success Team within the institution to provide comprehensive support and guidance to transfer students, enabling them to achieve their academic and personal goals.</p> <p>Rather than suggest a permanent team... roll into a TR student center idea, the suggestion is to engage in regular process/audit to consider TR student needs</p>
<p>The institution clearly communicates to transfer students any activities or testing they must complete (e.g., advising, placement exams) before registering for their first semester. It provides an easy way for students to monitor their progress.</p>	<p>Develop a streamlined admissions, orientation, and post-orientation process tailored for incoming transfer students. This design ensures that students receive clear guidance on required activities and testing, providing a transparent roadmap before successfully registering for their courses and making changes to their registration (if needed).</p>
<p>Curate a comprehensive list and compile resources for transfer-friendly degree programs.</p>	<p>Create an accessible and regularly updated list of transfer-friendly degree programs, emphasizing those with seamless credit transfer policies and strong collaboration with partner institutions.</p>

	Educate students about degree options that could help them potentially graduate faster or be a better fit to maximize their credits if that is helpful for the student.
Explore ways to maximize the transfer of program-applicable credits	Engage in exploratory work to understand the source of "wasted" credits and identify ways to increase flexibility to make more credits transfer Modify degree requirements to minimize the possibility of using wasted credits as much as possible.
Assign specific financial aid staff members to assist students planning to transfer to the institution, ensuring dedicated support and personalized guidance throughout the financial aid process. Especially for students with previous college credits (reaching the maximum).	Increase/assign financial aid staff so the financial aid office has the capacity to effectively focus on the needs of transfer students.
Implement effective dual enrollment/dual admission practices	Explore the possibility of establishing reverse transfer agreements with CWI, CSI for select programs