Pre-Orientation Advising as a Mechanism for Transfer Retention and Persistence

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What we’re talking about today

- Overview of USF and CAS
- Why transfer students? What research tells us
- A solution: Pre-Orientation Advising
- Implementing the model
- Outcomes from summer 2018
- Challenges and how to overcome them
- Areas of future research
University of South Florida-Tampa

- 31,389 Undergraduate students
- Fall 2018 New Transfers=4,906
- Fall 2018 New FYS=3,265

College of Arts and Sciences

- 14,822 Undergraduate students
- 41 majors
- 40 Academic Advisors
The problem...

FYS

Transfer
Despite the fact that...

- Transfer students make up 38% of all students in higher education (Tugend, 2018)
- At large, public, urban universities, that number can increase to 62% (UCF)
Because of this:

- Transfer students are more likely to feel neglected (Tobolowsky and Cox, 2012)
- Transfer students are more likely to be ignored when institutions consider retention efforts (Kuh, Kenzie, Shuh, and Whitt, 2005)
- Students are less likely to feel attached to their 4-year-institutions (France, Finney, and Swerdzewski, 2010)
USF’S Solution: Pre-Orientation Advising

- Presented to Orientation Committee
- Collaboration b/t Office of Orientation and Advising
- Optional participation
- Carrot: Early registration
## Logistical Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Person(s)</th>
<th>Responsible For</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Office Coordinator</td>
<td>● Regular (weekly) updates of new orientation reservations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
<td>● Communicating with Registrar’s Office to “unlock” registration for completed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Troubleshooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>2-3 Orientation Committee Reps</td>
<td>● Creating and oversight of the process for new transfer student advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Individual Advisors</td>
<td>● Communicating and meeting with new transfer students</td>
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</table>
Benefits to advisors

- Fewer students at orientation advising
- More likely to reach out with concerns
- Identifying issues early on (need to change major, etc.)

Benefits to students

- Relationship
- Advocacy
- Positive Initial Experience
- Early Registration
- Flexibility
- Shorter Orientation
- Clear picture of path to graduation
- Fewer students at advising
- More likely to reach out with concerns
- Identifying issues early on (need to change major, etc.)
Concerns

● Additional administrative workload
● Less time for current students
● Unexpected nuances of transfer students (out-of-state credits, international credits, etc.)
Process followed by CAS Advisors:

CAS Advisors receive E-Mail once a week

Advisors e-mail new transfer students inviting them to meet for pre-advising

Transfer students view overview, then meet with advisors

Advisors add info to shared Excel sheet, college reps e-mail orientation daily, orientation notifies Registrar

Registrar
Dear [Name],

Welcome to the University of South Florida and the Zimmerman School of Advertising and Mass Communications! We look forward to working with you to reach your goals and aspirations for a career in Mass Communications; we have received your orientation reservation, and look forward to meeting you on Wednesday, July 11!

- The College of Arts and Sciences allows students to meet with an advisor prior to their orientation date. By doing this, you can have a personalized, 30-minute appointment with an Academic Advisor, and possibly register before your orientation date! If you will be in the Tampa area, and want to meet with an advisor, please make an appointment with an advisor using your U-Number [Here](#).

- In order to begin taking courses in the major, you will need to complete the English Diagnostic Test; this is a requirement for admission into the Zimmerman School, and can be taken Monday-Friday on USF’s Tampa Campus. For more information, click [Here](#). **Please note:** If you cannot take the EDT prior to attending orientation, that’s okay! We will still be able to recommend a Fall schedule; however, taking the English Diagnostic Test allows you to enroll in MMC 2100, which is the first course every Mass Communications student takes.

If you have any questions about courses or the program prior to orientation, please contact us at [MassComAdvise@usf.edu](mailto:MassComAdvise@usf.edu). We look forward to meeting you later this Summer!

In Bull Pride,
Your Mass Communications Academic Advising Team
Daniel Shelnutt & Laura Wilcox-Curl
New Transfer Students

The College of Arts and Sciences welcomes you to the University of South Florida! As a new student to the University and to the College, it is important that you review each of the following steps below.

Once you are admitted to the University of South Florida - Tampa Campus:

1. Register for Orientation
   - Orientation is mandatory for all newly admitted USF students, including transfer students. You must register for an on-campus Orientation on the Orientation website (Opens in New Window). If you do not intend to come to USF Tampa, you are in the wrong location. Please go to either St. Petersburg, or Sarasota / Manatee, as Orientation and the degree requirements can differ from one another.

2. Watch College Overview
   - Please feel free to pause, rewind, and rewatch this video. If you would like to see additional information about what is presented, please see the links at the bottom of this page.

3. Schedule Appointment with your Academic Advisor
   - **Schedule an Advising Appointment.** If you cannot attend an appointment in person, please contact an advisor for instructions on how to have a phone or re-appointment.

   To schedule an appointment, you will need your USF NetID, which is necessary for many other activities as a new student at USF. **Set up/activate your NetID & Password.**

4. Review Major Information and Meet with Academic Advisor

See links below for specific information about your major, and how to best prepare for your advising appointment.

- Majors A-E
- Majors F-M
- Majors P-W

**REGISTER FOR CLASSES**

- Students who meet with their academic advisor prior to attending orientation will have the opportunity to register before attending orientation. We highly recommend that you take advantage of this!!! You can use the below links to assist you in the registration process.

- [Addison Career Center](https://www.addisoncareercenter.com)
- [College of Arts and Sciences](https://www.cas.usf.edu)
- [Registrar’s Office](https://www.usf.edu/registrar)
Overview of a typical pre-orientation advising meeting:

- Appreciative Advising mindset
  - Focus on disarming, relationship-building
- Registration process
- Recommended coursework
- Reminder to attend orientation
Outcomes

- Participation = 37.46% of all students
  - 40% of non-traditional students
  - 47% of students attending first orientation
  - Later orientation = less likely to participate

- Anecdotal outcomes
  - Students appreciated having the opportunity to register early
  - Participation peaks within 24 hours of each communication
## Participation by major

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Participation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANT</td>
<td>3/37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLS</td>
<td>8/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MET</td>
<td>14/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QEE</td>
<td>9/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS</td>
<td>152/281</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLY</td>
<td>1/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIC</td>
<td>7/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL</td>
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<td>CAM</td>
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<td>CHM</td>
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Outcomes

- Average incoming GPA
  - Attended=3.20
  - Did not attend=3.05
- STEM majors more likely to attend
- Characteristics of high-participation majors
  - Received ongoing communication
  - Higher number of advisors
    - One point person for all transfers
    - Despite similar student: advisor ratio
    - Motivation for advisors at orientation
COMMUNICATION IS THE SILVER BULLET!
Challenges and how to overcome them:

- Additional administrative workload
  - Larger majors=One person
  - Use technology (mail merge)
- Less time for current students
  - Clear expectations
  - Biggest issue with large #, low participation
- Unexpected nuances of transfer students (out-of-state credits, international credits, etc.)
  - Flexibility
Bringing it home:

- Identify the stakeholders, and gain buy-in from those people
- Consider your population, and meet them where they are
- Students are less likely to feel attached to their 4-year-institutions (France, Finney, and Swerdzewski, 2010)
What comes next? Areas of future research

● Quantitative
  ○ Two-year and four-year graduation rates
    ■ Need to control for # of incoming credits
  ○ Number of credits enrolled and completed after one year

● Qualitative
  ○ How pre-advising mitigates transition issues for new transfer students
Questions?
Thanks!

Any questions?
You can find me at
- @daniel_shelnutt
- dshelnut@usf.edu


