Using Digital Tools to Build Community with Transition Students

College of Engineering and Applied Science
University of Cincinnati

Jacob Steele and Corinne Cook
Hello!

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GOALS

- Highlight expansion of our major change programming over three years
- Share our Canvas community
- Discuss how major changers can engage with our college on multiple levels
- Encourage attendees to utilize available technology to inform and engage prospective students
1. Context
2. Restructure
3. Outcomes
CONTEXT
TERMINOLOGY
COLLEGE CONTEXT

UC
35,000 undergraduate students
6,000 students distributed across two regional campuses (Blue Ash and Clermont)
13 unique colleges
Major options for future engineers: FEP, Exploratory, Pre-engineering
Exploratory Studies is the largest major at UC

CEAS
5,200+ undergraduate students
14 programs (soon to be 16)
Mandatory co-op program
800+ applicants each year
Growing interest in recruiting transfer and transition students to meet enrollment goals
BACKGROUND

- Before Spring 2019
- Spring 2019
- Fall 2019 & Spring 2020
**BACKGROUND**

**Before Spring 2019**
- No centrally-offered change of major or transition programming
- Scarce, convoluted, and occasionally incorrect communication regarding application review processes
- Extremely limited access to departmental advisors and faculty

**Spring 2019**
- First-ever information session for these student populations
- Lowkey
- Included two advisors and cross-disciplinary student panel
- 40 students
BACKGROUND

Fall 2019 & Spring 2020

- Scaled program up in a big way to include advisors and students from every program in concurrent breakout sessions and campus partners
- Focused on fostering a welcoming environment
- Steadily increasing attendance and engagement (50-80 students)

As a result of attending this session, students will be able to:

1. Summarize the minimum requirements for transitioning to their top choice major(s) in CEAS
2. Calculate their own Calc/Chem/Phys GPA
3. Apply to CEAS majors
4. Explain how and when CEAS reviews transition applications
5. Employ strategies for applying to CEAS to improve chances of admission to the college
6. Give examples of ways to learn more about CEAS majors
7. Recall general information about their top choice major(s) and related disciplines
8. Describe similarities and differences between CEAS majors (for attended cluster breakout)
9. Describe general information about introductory courses for their top choice major(s)
10. Name parallel pathways for their top choice major(s)
COVID PROGRAMMING: FALL 2020

Session format

◦ Virtually replicated earlier sessions

Wins

◦ Great success!
◦ Higher attendance than the prior year’s in-person sessions (100+ students)
◦ Sessions recorded for later viewing
COVID PROGRAMMING: FALL 2020

Challenges looking into Spring 2021

◦ Opportunity to ensure students feel increasingly connected and engaged
  ▫ How to maintain interest throughout a 1-2 semester application process
◦ Encouraging continued attendance and participation
  ▫ Virtual burnout
  ▫ Recordings available online
    ■ Concerns about obviously duplicating content
RESTRUCTURE
Q8 - What changes should be made to the event for next time?

Make it a little longer so the breakout rooms have enough time.

Provide students in the CE area of engineering to talk about their major/co-oping.

Specialize the groups into single or two majors to allow more time to talk about each.

Maybe have more guest speakers from each major.
Survey of campus offerings

Other colleges’ information sessions
- Reviewed transition programming across campus
  - Range of program offerings - self-paced online activities, faculty-driven sessions, and others that looked like ours!

College of Allied Health Sciences input
- Find ways to increase personalization as students approach transition
## Strengths

- A lot of room for discussion
- **Hearing from students, learning about their experiences**
- Website information – this is how you engage with CEAS as a pre-engineering class
- Having the recordings available on the website after-the-fact, ability to record
- General meeting at the beginning, directing them back to the closing
- Clearly “an event”
- Have a “central place” where students can come to be redirected
- **How friendly the advisors were!**
- “Who is room” – letting students know how many people there are to support them
- Keep clusters (for logistics, for students’ good)
- Set-up, prep work – links being created ahead of time... easy to just “show up”
- “Sometimes students don’t realize that these other majors exist at UC”
- Having a moderator gather and present questions – Vikki did a great job at this!
- Students active in chat, asking questions... alternate way to engage

## Weaknesses

- Not having built-in breakout rooms – recommendation to use Zoom
- Managing students’ expectations... what is covered in breakout sessions, what is covered at this event vs. EYM
- Transfer/transition experience once students are in CEAS
- Not having transfer/transition students shaping and/or participating in the event

## Opportunities

- Students want more time in breakout rooms... could we extend the time of Breakout #1, then keep #2 the same time or shorter
- Students want more information on courses, co-op
- Include top 10 co-op companies for each major
- Better outline what to expect in breakout rooms during the introduction
- Better market Info Session + EYM – help students understand the differences
- Provide more information about introductory courses – not just how to add, but what you do in EECE1080C, BME1050C, etc.
- Asking students what their favorite courses have been

## Threats

- No students on EECS panel
- **Lower attendance in second round sessions** – especially for clusters where 2nd/3rd choices are in the same dept
- Better align cluster presentations – some are more focused on curriculum, co-op
- Cross-over of students in WebEx between session
- Making sure students know that we will answer their questions, get answers to them if Q&A is split from the introduction
- Talking about holistic review
- Distinguishing event from EYM
- No EYM in the spring semester
- Parallel pathways – where does this information live? How much time do we spend there? How do we not discourage students from CEAS?
- Spring event timing – January too early, shoot for mid-Feb

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**Feedback from people tasked with smooth transitions to CEAS**
ENACTING NEW RESTRUCTURED PLAN

Goals for Spring 2021

*Develop an arc of increased engagement, depth of program-specific information, and individualized planning*

- More interaction with academic departments
  - Departmental advisors
  - Faculty
  - Co-op faculty
  - Students
- More “personalized” transition information
  - Advise to transition - include GPA and credit hour information
- Welcome students regardless of where they are in their transition process
DEVELOPING PLAN FOR RESTRUCTURE

New components
1. Canvas community
2. 1:1 Advising Consultations
3. Major-specific information sessions
4. Discussion boards with CEAS Ambassadors
NEW: CANVAS COMMUNITY

- Hub for resources, outreach/communication, and event promotion
- Combined scope of information presented in information sessions and classroom visits into a series of videos
- Centrally invited prospective applicants to join
- Public Canvas page - viewable to folks outside of UC
  - Link to join listed on public website
NEW: 1:1 ADVISING CONSULTATIONS

- Students completed a brief knowledge survey before signing up to meet 1:1 with their “future” advisor
- Individualized schedule and transition planning
  - Included conversations about timeline to co-op/graduation
- Brief consultations - scheduled as 15 minute drop-ins
- Focus on creating a welcoming environment, demonstrating care for individual students
NEW: MAJOR SPECIFIC INFO SESSIONS

- Piloted major-specific information sessions for two programs:
  - Construction Management
  - Environmental Engineering
- Promoted information sessions via email and Canvas (announcements and calendar events)
- Focused on programs that were...
  - Committed to growth
  - Welcoming to transition students
Teamed up with CEAS Ambassadors to offer an open Q&A for students in the Canvas community

Goals were to

- Encourage engagement with peers
- Provide first-hand information about curriculum and co-op
- Allow students to field relevant and/or high-level questions (and engage in the COM/transition process!)

Student-driven - advisors available for questions if needed, but otherwise managed entirely by student leaders

NEW: DISCUSSION BOARDS
OUTCOMES
OUTCOMES: CANVAS COMMUNITY

- 749 active students in Canvas community at the end of 20-21
- Permanent resource - remains up-and-running for the entire academic year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Page Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Home</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>3.7k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Complete this survey before signing up</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Modules</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>1.2k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Announcements</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Complete this survey before signing up</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to the CEAS Change of Major and Transition Canvas Community</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminder: Applications to CEAS majors due Mar 1</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing to Apply</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEAS application deadline extended to Apr 9</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit your Application</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Discussions</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Review Process</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Pass Opt-in on CEAS Applications</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEAS Senior Showcase - this Fri Apr 16</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers in Engineering</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-op in CEAS</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards Open for your Questions!</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;What’s Next? Career Paths for Engineers&quot; Panel Event Tonight at 5pm</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a CEAS Student</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Exploration Resources</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Please rate your experience using the CEAS Transition Canvas Community.

- The Canvas Community was easy to gain access to.
- The Canvas Community was easy to navigate.
- The Canvas Community made finding answers to my questions simple.
- The information contained in the Canvas Community was valuable and helpful.
- I feel more engaged with my potential new major because of the Canvas Community.
- I feel more prepared to Transition to a new CEAS major because of the Canvas Community.
OUTCOMES: ADVISING CONSULTATIONS

- 179 students completed **Step 1**

  ![Step 1: Complete this survey before signing up](image)

  - 60 total scheduled 1:1 Advising Consultations (**Step 2**)
### OUTCOMES: ADVISING CONSULTATIONS

6. Please rate your experience with Drop-In Advising for Transition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The email I received prior to the Advising Meeting was helpful.</td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Advisor was prepared for my appointment.</td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Advisor listened to my questions and concerns.</td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>The advisor seemed genuinely interested in me.</td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Advisor was courteous and professional.</td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Advisor clearly communicated the information presented.</td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Advisor answered all of my remaining questions.</td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more prepared for transition after meeting with an Advisor.</td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
OUTCOMES: INFORMATION SESSIONS

**Construction Management**
- Hosted by:
  - Program Director
  - Co-op faculty
  - Three advisors
  - One industry professional
- 8 attended CM info session
  - 21 session video views

**Environmental Engineering**
- Hosted by:
  - Program Director
  - Faculty member
  - Two advisors
- 18 attended ENVE info session
  - 71 session video views
OUTCOMES: DISCUSSION BOARDS

- 15 CEAS Ambassadors participated in training and discussion boards
- After the Discussions closed, we were able to leave them up for students to read after-the-fact
- Will continue as a long-term way for CEAS Ambassadors to participate in COM/transition and earn hours
LOOKING AHEAD

**Canvas**
Transition Recruitment Plan (outlined on the next slide) will be driven by the Canvas community

**1:1 Advising Consultations**
Advisors and students both responded positively to this format - will continue as part of our spring semester programming

**Information sessions**
We will separate these out into stand-alone sessions with students, transition advisors, departmental advisors, and faculty to offer more programming and depth of information

**Discussion boards**
Since engagement was low, we plan to offer these at the start of our recruitment cycle instead of at the end
LOOKING AHEAD

Canvas welcome
Discussion boards

Major advising sessions
Canvas welcome back
1:1 advising consultations

Transition overview sessions
Transition Student Panel

Faculty sessions
What to expect when you’re accepted sessions

21-22 Transition Recruitment Plan
TAKEAWAYS

◦ If you build it, they will come!
◦ You can build community through digital tools
◦ Get creative with the resources you have at your disposal
  ▫ Campus technology
  ▫ People who are invested in your goals
◦ Get feedback every step of the way - and don’t be afraid to make real-time changes!
Thanks for being here!

Feel free to reach out to us

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Jacob Steele  steeljt@uc.edu

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free!
Presentation template by SlidesCarnival