

Transfer Student Experience

Strategic Plan Theme: Student Success

Funding Level: Between \$1-5 million

Facility Needs: Adjustments to existing facilities will be needed

Submitting Unit: APUE

Collaborating colleges/departments/units involved with this proposal.

Key collaborators with the Transfer Student Success Center are college and unit advising offices, our student life and engagement partners. College and unit advising leadership would educate and provide insights to the advisors and staff within the Transfer Student Success Center of curriculum changes and major change requirements, impacting the student's path to graduation. Also, college and unit advising leadership, along with staff within the Transfer Student Success Center would attend and collaborate with advising leaderships at two-year community colleges during Envision Green partnership meetings. Having MSU advising insights during Envision Green meetings can contribute to extend our partnerships with other MI community colleges create equitable pathways for transfer students. To build trust in the consistency of academic transfer information being shared with students, transfer advisors will work closely with college and unit advising leaders to ensure transfer requirements align with college requirements. Also, the student life and engagement department are key collaborators with the Transfer Student Success Center. During new student orientation for transfer students, semester informational fairs with participants from various areas within student life and engagement could provide resource material, and points of contacts for services. Resource areas include career services network, Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD), student veteran and parent resource centers, and MSU counseling services (CAPS). Additional collaborators who we would partner with to meet the goals of the TSSC includes MSU admissions, registrar's office, financial aid and government relations. Reps from these areas could provide expertise in enrollment to MSU and advocacy work done on behalf of the university to state legislators when decisions are being made regarding state funding for TSSC and other strategic plan objectives.

What is the proposal's big theme or idea?

As higher education institutions continue to adjust to changes in enrollments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MSU must develop strong policies and initiatives to improve the educational outcomes for transfer students who have been historically overlooked on campus. As the population of individuals completing high school is projected to decrease in Michigan, MSU must recruit a new population of college students beyond our current base. We propose enhancing the Transfer Student Experience by expanding the Transfer Student Success Center (TSSC). The TSSC could be both a conceptual and physical space that eliminates barriers and builds clear pathways for transfer students to MSU. At the forefront of the TSSC is the existing Envision Green partnership with LCC. MSU and LCC have partnered together creating Envision Green, offering LCC students' step-by-step instructions to ensure a smooth transfer to MSU. Students can meet with MSU advisors and admissions counselors to create an individualized roadmap to MSU. The Envision Green Initiative would include wrap around services like peer mentoring, academic success skills workshops, and participation in high impact co-curricular practices. In addition, Envision Green will extend similar transfer partnerships with other MI community colleges, whereby students who indicate, at the point of application to LCC and other two-year institutions, that they intend to complete a bachelor's degree (or who choose a program of study that typically requires a bachelor's) should be offered the opportunity to apply for a place in the Envision Green cohort.

***The TSSC would also include transfer specific student success advising staff. Advising staff are responsible
The TSSC would also include marketing and communications staff to promote the transfer student experience.
first year seminar insights, major and career planning, and co-curricular activities.***

What is the proposal's goal?

The goal of our TSSC is to provide a space committed to eliminating barriers, building equitable pathways to MSU, and the promotion of the transfer student experience to become a more transfer welcoming campus. Eliminating barriers and building equitable pathways for diverse transfer students is part of our existing Envision Green partnership with LCC. However, the goal of this proposal is to expand Envision Green to several other Michigan community colleges. Building strategic partnerships with other Michigan community colleges will allow us to increase access for transfer students. Specifically, first-generation, low-income, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, transfer students who have been underrepresented and underserved in our current transfer policies and structures. We also hope to expand the existing Envision Green structure to include wrap around services like peer mentoring, academic success skills workshops, and participation in high impact practices. Creating an Envision Green network of several community colleges allow us to strategically enhance Envision Green through annual meetings with partners, process mapping workshops in support of enhancing the transfer student experience and creating stronger partnerships across all of Michigan. The collaborative meeting with advising staff, and administrators from various two-year community colleges within Michigan, will allow us to create stronger and equitable transfer pathways to MSU for transfer students from all diverse backgrounds.

***In addition to eliminating barriers and building equitable pathways to MSU the goal of our TSSC is to promote Define the
significance, or impact of your big idea.***

A robust assessment plan will track and measure the impact of our newly created student success center on the increased access, success and graduation rates of transfer students throughout their time at the university. Developing an assessment plan with support from assessment trainings and coaching sessions will allow us to see the impact of our institution's Envision Green partnerships with other community colleges throughout the State of MI and the increase of transfer students to MSU. Moreover, assessment will help us understand the impact of the Envision Green Initiative on those from historically underrepresented and underserved backgrounds and highlight areas for needed improvement. Furthermore, we can evaluate the impact of using culturally responsive approaches and equity centered learning outcomes within assessment projects. Implementing inclusive equity focused assessment approaches will allow us to see the impact of our transfer student success strategies across the various diverse populations of transfer students attending MSU. Also, assessment of transfer student's experience from the start of their orientation, academic advising interactions, leadership roles, utilization of campus support services, and participation in first year seminars, can help us determine if these student success strategies help in the retention of transfers attending MSU. Along the same lines, the assessment of the transfer student publication allows us to determine if the stories are equally represented across the transfer student population. The impact of the assessment can contribute to a student's sense of belonging and community building within the institution.

Who will be impacted?

Those impacted by the creation of the Transfer Student Success Center are the advising community, transfer students, and those who are serving in transfer student leadership positions. The advising community will be impacted by the addition of advisors who are able to dedicate more time to supporting and monitoring transfer student's academic progress and identifying barriers to their success. Transfer students are impacted whereby they have access to critical institutional advising, and support services unique to students in transitions from two-year community colleges. In addition, those who are currently serving on the transfer student advisory board are impacted by the recognition of leadership opportunities they have chosen to hold. A transfer student publication can highlight the transfer student experience that includes academics and leadership interest.

What does sustainability for your proposal look like?

Impact sustainability would be continuous assessment of the Transfer Student Success Center to learn better practices in the elimination of barriers, building equitable pathways to MSU, and graduation. Ongoing assessment of our Envision Green partnership will help determine the increase of transfer rates of students to MSU including those who have traditionally been underrepresented and underserved in the transfer process, (first-generation, low-income, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students). In addition, continuous tracking and assessment of transfer student's academic advising experiences and institutional support will help in determining if student success strategies are meeting the educational needs of our transfer students to MSU.

Operationally, sustainability would be when the TSSC is fully staffed, has strong partnerships with multiple community colleges and financial resources from the institution, grants, philanthropic foundations, and donors to the University. Lastly, impact sustainability would include the relationship building with MI state legislators, such as testimonials during legislative state appropriation committee meetings of our Transfer Student Success Center. Intentionally communicating the work and accomplishments of the Transfer Student Success Center creates sustainability by way of building capital and credibility with state legislators so they can understand the needs, experiences, and successes of transfer student at MSU.