

9-21-2012

# Transfer seminars: the impact on transfer student collegiate adjustment

Amanda Farina

Let us know how access to this document benefits you - share your thoughts on our feedback form.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Farina, Amanda, "Transfer seminars: the impact on transfer student collegiate adjustment" (2012). *Theses and Dissertations*. 215.  
<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/215>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact [LibraryTheses@rowan.edu](mailto:LibraryTheses@rowan.edu).

**TRANSFER SEMINARS: THE IMPACT ON TRANSFER  
STUDENT COLLEGIATE ADJUSTMENT**

by  
Amanda Farina

A Thesis

Submitted to the  
Department of Educational Services, Administration, and Higher Education  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
For the degree of  
Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration  
at  
Rowan University  
May 23, 2012

Thesis Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

© 2012 Amanda R. Farina

## **ABSTRACT**

Amanda Farina

TRANSFER SEMINARS: THE IMPACT ON TRANSFER STUDENT COLLEGIATE  
ADJUSTMENT

2011/2012

Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The goal of this study was to investigate the impact transfer seminars at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey had on transfer students' adjustment to college. The study explored the college goals/outcomes, and study strategies students used both before and after taking the transfer seminar. This study utilized archival data from 328 surveys collected since 2003. Students were administered a survey at the beginning of the transfer seminar course and then again at the end of the semester. Results from the data analysis showed some statistically significant changes from pre to post survey. Most notably, students were concerned about financing their education and creating a course schedule that was convenient and would work with their responsibilities and obligations. The results of the study confirmed some of the previous literature written about transfer students and their adjustment to a new institution. While the transfer seminar did elicit some changes in students' thoughts and attitudes about their education, and study strategies, no statistically significant changes were found.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank Dr. Grites at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey for allowing me to analyze and interpret his archival data for my study.

I would also like to thank my family, colleagues, and peers for their continued support throughout this whole process and keeping me motivated to move forward.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. Sisco for his support and guidance during this program. I have learned a lot from him and will be forever grateful for his kindness and willingness to help students grow and learn.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	ii
Appendixes	vi
List of Tables	vii
CHAPTER	PAGE
<b>I.    Introduction</b>	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Purpose of the Study	3
Significance of the Study	3
Assumptions and Limitations	3
Operational Definitions	4
Research Questions	5
Overview of the Study	5
<b>II.   Review of the Literature</b>	6
The Transfer Student	6
Transfer Shock	8
Other Transfer Student Difficulties	9
A Theoretical View of Transfer Students	11
Transfer Programs	13
Relevant Studies	15
Summary of the Literature Review	17

<b>III. Methodology</b>	19
Context of the Study	19
Population and Sampling	19
Data Collection Instruments	20
Data Gathering Procedures	21
Data Analysis	22
<b>IV. Findings</b>	23
Profile of the Sample	23
Analysis of the Data	33
Research Question 1	33
Research Question 2	36
Research Question 3	37
<b>V. Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations</b>	40
Summary of the Study	40
Discussion of the Findings	40
Conclusions	43
Recommendations for Practice	44
Recommendations for Further Research	45
<b>References</b>	46

## **APPENDIXES**

Appendix A: Administrative Permission for use of Data	49
Appendix B: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter	51
Appendix C: Pre and Post Survey Instrument	53

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
4.1 Race/Ethnicity	25
4.2 Mother's Highest Education Level	26
4.3 Father's Highest Education Level	27
4.4 Number of Times Transferred	28
4.5 Reason for Attending Stockton	28
4.6 Main Reason for Leaving Last Institution	29
4.7 When you decided to Transfer, Stockton was Your...	29
4.8 Type of School Transferred From	30
4.9 Highest Degree Intended to Earn	30
4.10 Grades Intending to Earn at Stockton	30
4.11 Attitude Toward Stockton	31
4.12 Amount of Hours Working Off Campus	31
4.13 Amount of Hours Working on Campus	32
4.14 Traveling Distance	32
4.15 Paired Samples Statistics for Transfer Seminar Impact	34
4.16 Paired Samples <i>t</i> -test Results for Transfer Seminar Impact	35
4.17 Paired Samples Statistics for Student Study Strategies	38
4.18 Paired Samples <i>t</i> -test Results for Student Study Strategies	39

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Transfer students and transfer shock have received much attention in the higher education literature in recent years. These students face a variety of challenges when entering a new school. It can be difficult meeting new people, adjusting to life away from home, becoming acclimated to the campus, and adjusting to the level of new coursework. The difficulty in coursework often results in what is known as the transfer shock phenomenon. Diaz (1992), states that transfer shock results in at least a 0.5 point drop in GPA after the first semester in the new institution than the student earned at the previous school. While GPA is important to take into consideration, Rhine, Milligan, and Nelson (2000) explain that transfer shock can also include other “academic and social factors that can result in student attrition and ultimate failure to achieve a bachelor’s degree” (p. 443).

Rhine et al., (2000) explain that institutions need to implement strategies for combatting this issue of transfer shock and making the transition to a new institution easier. Some states such as New Jersey have developed a Comprehensive State-Wide Transfer Agreement adopted by the New Jersey Presidents’ Council (NJPC) in 2008. This agreement established policies that regulated the amount of credits allowed to transfer from New Jersey community colleges for students who possess an associate’s degree and for those who do not. The main purpose of the agreement is to help transfer students make an easier transition from community college to a public four-year institution (NJPC, 2008). While it is important to create policies for community college transfer students, transfer shock affects all types of transfer students, including those from

community colleges and those making a lateral move from a four-year college to another four-year institution. It is important for institutions to evaluate their policies and procedures for handling transfer student issues regardless of the institution they come from. The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey has implemented transfer seminars in the hopes of alleviating some of the issues all transfer students face.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Many transfer students often feel overwhelmed when entering a new institution and as a result their grades suffer as well as their acclimation to the new setting. There are various reasons students find transferring a difficult process. First, Cuseo (1998) explains that curricular barriers cause problems for students transferring to four-year institutions because not all of their credits may transfer. Policy and procedural barriers exist including late registration and requiring incoming students to take standardized tests.

While these problems are very real for students, transfer shock remains one of the biggest issues new transfer students face. Cuseo (1998) states that many transfer students also experience culture shock, where they must become acclimated to their new environment and make new friends. Many institutions have implemented various first-year courses for both new freshman and new transfer students. These courses are supposed to help students become acclimated to the new school and can help them meet new people and become familiar with the policies and procedures of the school. Wynn (2002) states that many new transfer students have a negative perception of faculty members at the receiving institution due to the lack of assistance and help from faculty in understanding course material and course requirements. The implementation of transfer

seminars is just the beginning in attempting to address difficulties four-year and community college transfer students face.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Several hundred students have been surveyed regarding their experience before and after taking a particular transfer seminar entitled Contemporary American Education, since 2003. The main purpose of this study was to evaluate and analyze previous surveys students have taken to determine if transfer seminars are useful and should continue to be implemented every semester. Of particular interest was students' adjustment to college, college goals/outcomes, and study strategies.

### **Significance of the Study**

Hundreds of students have registered for transfer seminars at Stockton since their inception in 2003. Since little research has been done on transfer seminars at Stockton, it is important to gauge the impact these courses have on transfer students. While a significant amount of anecdotal evidence has been collected regarding students experiences in transfer seminars, no formal study has been implemented to determine their impact. Therefore this study may help administrators make more informed decisions about how best to serve transfer students.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

It is assumed that the selected group of students was representative of the transfer students who have taken a transfer seminar since they began in 2003. It is further assumed that all students in the study had some amount of college credit and were officially considered transfer students. It is also assumed that each student who

completed a survey did so voluntarily and answered each survey item thoughtfully and honestly.

There are several limitations to the study. First, this study is focused on only one transfer seminar that has been offered every semester since its inception in 2003. The pre and post survey has been implemented in one course, Contemporary American Education. Therefore, it is possible that transfer students who have taken a different transfer seminar would answer survey items differently. The potential for researcher bias is apparent due to the relationship I had with individuals referenced in the study and the course instructor.

### **Operational Definitions**

1. Contemporary American Education: A 15 week transfer seminar offered at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. This course is the main focus of the study, taught by Dr. Thomas Grites each semester since 2003.
2. Semester: A 15 week period at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey in which classes are in session.
3. The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey (Stockton): A public four-year institution located in Galloway, New Jersey.
4. Transfer Seminar: A 15 week course offered at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, only available to new transfer students.
5. Transfer Shock: A decline in grade-point average after the first semester of transferring to a new institution.
6. Transfer Student: Any student who has attended an institution of higher education and then transferred to The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

## **Research Questions**

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What impact did the transfer seminar have on selected transfer students at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey?
2. Is there a significant change in college goals/outcomes based on participating in the transfer seminar at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey?
3. Is there a significant change in use of study strategies based on participating in the transfer seminar at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey?

## **Overview of the Study**

Chapter II offers an overview of the literature regarding issues pertinent to this study such as a review of the typical transfer student, difficulties faced by transfer students, solutions to those difficulties, and transfer seminars at Stockton College

Chapter III explains the methodology used in the study. Included in this section is a description of the context of the study, target population, sample selection techniques, data collection tools, data collection processes, and how the data were analyzed.

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study. This section includes a summary of the data using statistical analysis arranged by research question.

Chapter V provides a summary of the study, discusses the findings, and offers conclusions based on the study results. It also provides recommendations for practice and further research.

## **Chapter II**

### **Review of the Literature**

Transfer student issues have become more visible in recent years. As the transfer student population rises on college campuses, transfer students require more attention. In fact, research has shown that transfer students are the largest group of students on college campuses today (Adelman, 2006). While transferring may be inevitable for some students, it does not come without difficulty. The difficulties transfer students face varies, but can affect their overall college experience.

#### **The Transfer Student**

Students have been transferring from institution to institution for decades. However, transfer students have only recently been given more attention and administrators have developed an increased awareness of the issues and difficulties many of these students experience. Grites (2004) explains that much of the literature focuses on community college transfer students. While this population is very important to examine, the transfer student population is becoming increasingly diverse, therefore forcing administrators to reexamine their policies and procedures for these students (Grites, 2004). Adelman (2005) explains that currently, about 60% of traditional age college students have attended more than one institution of higher education. The majority of these students start out in community colleges. In fact, Bingham-Newman and Hopkins (2004), state that about 45% of all undergraduates attend, or have attended a community college. Community college transfer students have been perceived as less prepared and less able to pursue a four-year degree and the characteristics of transfer students,

especially community college transfers are over-generalized (Grites, 2004). The reason for transferring varies among students. Ishitani (2008) explains that the majority of students transferring from a four-year institution to another four-year institution are dissatisfied with their experience at the previous institution, while students who transfer from community colleges do so because various four-year institutions have articulation agreements which make it easier for them to transfer credits. Peng (1979) conducted a study on two-year to four-year and four-year to four-year transfer students. He found that students transferring from two-year to four-year schools made up the largest group of transfer students. Students transferring from four-year to four-year institutions tended to have higher SES and better college grades. Peter and Cataldi (2005) explain that 2-year transfer students are more likely than four-year transfer students to attend multiple institutions.

While students who attend a two-year institution usually plan on transferring to a four-year school, four-year transfer students do not. Thurmond (2004) explains that the four-year to four-year transfer is often unanticipated and sudden for most students. They may decide to transfer for various reasons and usually enter the new school with undefined academic and personal goals. Also, these students bring with them a perception of higher education based solely on their past experiences which may be difficult for these students to get past and reestablish themselves in a new environment (Thurmond, 2004).

Transfer students may decide to transfer to a new institution for a variety of reasons. Townsend (2008) explains that transfer students consider similar factors as freshman when choosing a school to attend. Cost of attendance, distance of the school,

and familiarity of friends or family are all considerations for students. However, transfer students must also factor in how their credits will transfer.

### **Transfer Shock**

Transferring to a new institution is never easy. However, as a result of the growing population of transfer students, administrators are showing increased concern about these students. While there are various reasons for transfer student difficulties, one of the most common and well known issues is the phenomenon known as transfer shock. Hill (1965) describes transfer shock as a decline in transfer students' grades during their first semester at the new institution, resulting in a lower grade point average (GPA). Typically, as a result of transfer shock, students experience at least a 0.5 point drop in GPA at the new institution (Diaz, 1992). While much of the literature on transfer shock focuses on community college students, Grites (2004) states that all transfer students have the potential to experience transfer shock and that transfer students need to make adjustments when attending a new school, similar to freshmen. A study on transfer students performed by Laanan (2007) found that community college transfer students who had negative perceptions of the receiving four-year institution experienced difficulty in adjusting to the academic standards at the new school. He also found that students who had negative perceptions of their academic ability generally affected the way they approached their coursework. Ishitani (2008) found that a transfer students GPA has a direct effect on student departure. Therefore, students who experienced transfer shock were less likely to return for the second semester while those that succeeded academically persisted to complete their degree. Ishitani (2008) also explains that most students recover from transfer shock after a year. However, students who continued on to

their second year may be faced with a higher risk of departure if their GPA had remained low. Cuseo (1998) explains that students who transfer before their sophomore year tend to have higher attrition rates and are more likely to suffer from transfer shock than students who spend at least two years at the previous institution.

### **Other Transfer Student Difficulties**

While transfer shock remains an important issue for transfer students, other difficulties are also prevalent. Cuseo (1998) identified several barriers for transfer students. Curriculum issues and articulation of courses from two-year colleges to four-year colleges often cause problems for incoming transfer students. In a study conducted by Flaga (2006), community college students were interviewed during their second semester at the receiving institution regarding their transition from community college in their first semester. Many students expressed concern about the lack of knowledge and information they had about various university programs and the allocation of transfer credits. Tobolowsky (1998) (as cited in Zamani, 2001) explains that the articulation process has become increasingly complex and is no longer a vertical process but is more multidirectional which requires increased transfer resources and services. Students suggested that increased communication between the community colleges and 4-year schools would help alleviate this barrier for transfer students. Flaga (2006) also states that communication is especially important in relaying information relevant to the incoming transfer student. She suggests that community college advisors and university advisors increase communication to create a comfortable relationship to ask questions and relay information to students.

To alleviate transfer articulation issues, some states have implemented a transfer agreement between community colleges and public four-year institutions. New Jersey has instituted a Comprehensive Statewide Transfer Agreement with New Jersey community colleges. This agreement allows for a smooth transition “from public associate to public baccalaureate degree programs and supporting the successful acquisition of baccalaureate degrees by transfer students” (NJPC, 2008, p.1). Other barriers such as those regarding financial aid, and policies and procedures are also difficult for transfer students. Zamani (2001) explains that the lack of financial resources such as decreased grant money and increased student loans make transferring difficult for community college students. Typically, tuition is higher at the university level and some students have difficulty finding the resources to attend a 4-year institution. Hatton, Homer, and Park (2009) explain that the cost of attendance is one of the largest barriers facing students today. The differences between two-year and four-year institutions are often not made up with financial aid requiring students to take on more student loan debt. Students who are concerned about finances may work more hours while in school which affects their retention and persistence rates. Even though articulation agreements have become increasingly popular, students are still concerned about re-taking courses or wasting money taking courses that they do not need (Hatton et al., 2009). Transfer students are often not pleased to find out that they are last to register for classes and that on-campus housing is limited (Cuseo, 1998). Along with transfer shock, Cuseo (1998) states that many transfer students also experience culture shock. In this case, students have difficulty adjusting to the new college environment and find it hard to relate. Berger and Malaney (2003) explain that “adjustment to college life involves more than performing inside of

the classroom; there is a wide range of academic and social interactions and outcomes that must be considered in a comprehensive view of the college adjustment process” (p. 4). While transfer students are unlike first year students in that they have previous college experience, Townsend’s (2008) study stated that many transfer students expressed that they often “feel like a freshman again” since they are unfamiliar with the school and how the school works. Berger and Malaney (2003) also state that growing research has indicated that a student’s background and nature of their college experiences affect student satisfaction.

### **A Theoretical View of Transfer Students**

Tinto’s Stages of Student Departure (1988), help to explain why transfer students decide to leave an institution and how they feel once they arrive at the new school. Tinto (1988) explains that research and anecdotal evidence have shown that the same factors that influence student departure in the first year of school, especially within the first six weeks, are very different from the reason a student leaves toward the latter years in college. Tinto’s Stages of Student Departure include separation, transition, and incorporation (Tinto, 1988). The third stage, incorporation may be most important for transfer students. This is the stage in which an individual becomes fully immersed and incorporated into the college culture. Getzlaf, Sedlacek, Kearney, and Blackwell (1984) explain that a student who interacts with the campus environment and becomes academically and socially integrated will have a strengthened commitment to both the institution and their educational goals. Also, transfer students who have a closer connection to the institution and are fully integrated will have a better chance for retention.

Tinto (1988) uses Van Gennep's (1960) *Rites of Passage* in cultural anthropology to explain the stages of passage that college students may experience. Van Gennep's stages are separation, transition, and incorporation. Separation requires an individual to separate themselves from their previous environment and past associations; no interaction with the group from which they came is allowed. The transition stage requires individuals to begin to interact with the new group and adopt the norms and attitudes of their culture. Individuals in this stage learn the behaviors appropriate for the group and become more comfortable with the new environment. The third and final stage is incorporation. Individuals at this stage should be completely enmeshed with the new group. They should feel comfortable and be a fully competent and participative member of the group (Tinto, 1988). Tinto (1988) explains his stages of student departure similar to the way Van Gennep describes his rites of passage. Tinto does not specifically mention transfer students in his description and analysis of the stages but each stage can certainly be applied to transfer students. Tinto (1988) states that individuals must separate themselves from past associations in order to make a smooth transition to college. In making this transition individuals may experience difficulties. Transfer students experience different difficulties than freshman transitioning from high school to college. Students who find these difficulties too overwhelming or not worth it, may leave the institution as a result of not fitting in. Transfer students, as well as first-time students may have difficulties separating themselves from the norms and beliefs related to past associations and may be in a state of limbo where they have not yet adapted to the new institution ultimately resulting in "temporary normlessness" (Tinto, 1988).

Volkwein, King, and Terenzini (1986) explain that several studies have been performed that have shown the rise in student academic and intellectual achievement as a result of faculty-student interaction. Their study focused on determining if transfer students' interaction with faculty had any effect on their academic and intellectual integration. They found that while the frequency of the contact was not significant, students' perceptions of the quality and frequency of contact was significant. They also found that transfer students' experiences, enjoyment, and involvement in the classroom have a positive effect on their academic and intellectual growth (Volkwein et al., 1986). Ultimately their study found that what happens in the classroom environment is most important for transfer students' growth and development.

### **Transfer Programs**

As a result of the research and studies on transfer student difficulties and transfer shock, some institutions have created orientation programs or specialized classes specifically for transfer students. Flaga (2006) explains that many students transferring from a community college would be interested in a pre-transfer orientation course that is taught at the community college to facilitate understanding about various aspects of the university environment and culture. She also mentions that an alternative to offering a pre-transfer course on the community college campus would be to offer a similar course on the university campus. Zamani (2001) mentions a similar solution in which institutions create transfer centers to address academic preparation for transfer students at the university level and encouraging relationships between two-year and four-year colleges.

Saint Louis University has a program for transfer students entitled TRANSFERmations. This is a six week long program that assists students in their transition to the institution. Previous transfer students serve as mentors to the new students and hold one to two events per week to help students adjust to the new environment, become acclimated, and make friends. Mentors email their mentees weekly and newsletters are also sent out to keep the students updated on events and important information (National Resource Center, 2011).

The University of Texas at Dallas also has a transfer specific program entitled “The Transfer Experience.” This program was established to respond to the unique needs of transfer students. They offer services, programming, and involvement opportunities that help students in adjusting to the new institution (National Resource Center, 2011).

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey offers a course called a transfer seminar that is suggested as an optional course for incoming transfer students at orientation. The seminar is a course that is only open to transfer students and can be offered in any discipline so that these courses are sure to count toward a students’ major (National Resource Center, 2011). The transfer seminar at Stockton College is unlike transfer courses offered at other institutions. In an interview with Dr. Grites, he explains that many institutions offer transfer courses that are more like an “intro to college” course. At Stockton College, transfer seminars are full credit courses in various disciplines that count toward graduation. Any faculty member interested in teaching a seminar is welcome. Right now it is not possible for Stockton College to make this course mandatory due to the large influx of transfer students each semester (personal communication, October 1, 2010).

## Relevant Studies

As a result of the increased interest in transfer students over the past several decades, several researchers have performed studies on transfer students to help determine where they are having the most trouble and what remedies work best. While few studies have been done to test transfer courses, many studies have examined transfer students in general and their struggle with transfer shock and integration at the receiving institution. McCormick, Sarraf, Lorenz, and Haywood (2009) explain that many studies regarding transfer students are done at specific institutions and are often qualitative in nature which makes it difficult to generalize to other institutions. They used a survey of students from approximately 700 colleges and universities across the United States. The data came from the responses of senior students who took the 2008 *National Survey of Student Engagement* (NSSE). McCormick et al. (2009) used respondents in their study who indicated on the survey that they had previously attended another school prior to the one that they were currently attending. Based on various questions from the survey, they analyzed the data to find that there was a statistically significant negative effect on student-faculty interaction, quality of campus relationships, and overall satisfaction with college, associated with being a transfer student. Their findings revealed that native students had an advantage over transfer students in the area of high impact educational practices. The researchers referred to this as a “transfer deficit.” One exception to the transfer deficit was the finding that vertical or community college transfer students were more satisfied with the advising at their new school than were horizontal or four-year transfer and native students. This may mean that vertical transfer students were generally unhappy with the advising practices at their community college. McCormick et al. (2009)

also noted that while the transfer deficit declined when examining measures of student-faculty interaction, quality of campus relationships, and overall satisfaction with the college, it was still a modest deficit when compared with native students (McCormick et al., 2009). Flaga (2006) explains that a first-semester seminar course, similar to courses offered to freshmen, would help students gain early access to learning resources, interaction between new transfer students and a greater satisfaction with their university experience. In her study, students reported the value of connecting with students similar to themselves and who shared similar interests and academic requirements. Therefore, programs such as orientation or seminar courses for new students would be beneficial for this student population.

The study performed by McCormick et al. (2009) reveals that transfer students are at a disadvantage at their new institution. Various programs such as orientation programs and transfer courses may help alleviate some of the transfer deficit mentioned in the study. Also, since vertical transfers were most satisfied with the receiving institutions advising practices, it is important to examine how advising is affecting all transfer students.

A study conducted by Wawrzynski and Sedlacek (2003) used the *Transfer Student Survey* (TSS) to examine the expectations, self-perceptions, past academic behaviors, and attitudes of transfer students. A total of 2,492 students were asked to complete the *TSS* during their university orientation. The researchers used statistical analysis to determine differences by race and gender in transfer students' expectations, academic behaviors, and learning outcomes. Their findings revealed that students of color are expected to become part of the new institution by becoming involved outside the

classroom, associating with both students and faculty alike. Students of color were also more likely to establish learning outcomes and goals for their experiences at the institution which would help them acquire lifelong skills. Wawrzynski and Sedlacek (2003) also found that students of color were more likely than Caucasian students to study with other students.

Interestingly, male students were more concerned with focusing on their educational goals while females were focused on becoming more well-rounded students. Females were more interested in learning to communicate effectively and wanted to acquire knowledge that would enhance and complement their education. Also female students were more likely than males to report positive study habits such as reviewing, revising, and updating class notes (Wawrzynski & Sedlacek, 2003).

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

This literature review provides an in-depth review of transfer students' rising role in American education. Transfer students' college experiences are vastly different than native students. Many transfer students experience transfer shock and other difficulties that affect their academic success and social integration. Transfer shock has been one of the most highly studied transfer student phenomenon in higher education. A transfer student's smooth transition to the receiving institution is important to help alleviate transfer shock and help the student become integrated into the school's environment.

Tinto's Stages of Student Departure are useful when describing transfer students and the stages they must go through in order for them to become a fully involved and committed student. Various studies have revealed that not only do transfer students suffer from transfer shock but they also suffer from culture shock. Transfer resources such as

orientation programs and transfer-only courses may benefit transfer students and help them feel welcome and involved which may help eliminate culture shock completely. Since the literature is sparse regarding the effectiveness of transfer-only programs and courses, it is important to investigate whether these courses are beneficial to students.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Context of Study**

This study was performed at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey in Galloway, New Jersey. Stockton has received full regional accreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Stockton consists of approximately 7,900 full-time and part-time undergraduate students. As of fall 2011, Stockton admitted more transfer students than first time freshman. In the Center for Academic Advising there are currently four advisors that assist undergraduate students. They also advise potential transfer students eligible for admission to Stockton. The surveys used for this study were acquired by Dr. Grites over the course of eight years. Permission was given to analyze these surveys to answer the research questions (Appendix A).

#### **Population and Sampling**

The target population for this study was new transfer students transferring to Stockton who took the Contemporary American Education transfer seminar in their first semester. The available population was 328 first time transfer students attending Stockton starting in the fall of 2003 and ending with the most current population in fall 2011. There are roughly 25 students per semester in the transfer seminar.

Convenience sampling was used to select the surveyed students for the study. All students in the study have taken the pre and post survey for Contemporary American Education. The survey data spans several semesters and were made readily available by

Dr. Grites. Each pre and post survey was matched up to ensure that each student in the study did indeed complete both parts of the survey. An IRB exemption from Rowan University was granted for this study (Appendix B).

### **Data Collection Instruments**

All data were collected from surveys that had been archived for several years. *The Transfer Student Survey* is a 67-item survey (Appendix C) containing self-report items on academic perceptions, academic behaviors, social connections, diversity, support systems, goals/outcomes of college, institutional commitment, work, finances and attitudes and concerns about Stockton College. The survey was designed by Dr. Matthew Wawrzynski while studying transfer students at the University of Maryland. He created the survey after reviewing the current literature on transfer students and identifying holes in the literature. With the help of his colleague, Dr. William Sedlacek, non-cognitive variables were incorporated into the survey. Once the survey was created, it was pilot tested with transfer students and then modifications were made (personal communication, April 27, 2012). Dr. Grites obtained the survey with permission from Dr. Wawrzynski.

The first 26 items on the pre-survey consist of statements regarding students' feelings and attitudes related to school and Stockton. These 26 items utilize a multi-point rating scale ranking items from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Items 27-35 ask students to rate how important certain college goals and outcomes are to them. The students are asked to utilize a multi-point rating scale ranking items from very important to not at all important. The next section includes items 36-42 and asks students about the frequency of their study habits. Items are ranked again using a multi-point rating scale, always to never. Items 43-53 ask students the number of hours per week they are

planning to work on or off campus, how far they will be living, and their general attitude toward Stockton at this time. These items also ask for student demographic information such as the type of institution they have transferred from and if Stockton was their first, second, or third choice school. If a student plans to work while in school items 54-60 list several reasons students may decide to work. The students are asked to indicate whether these were major reasons, minor reasons, or not a reason at all. Items 61-64 ask the student yes or no questions regarding whether they would be interested in certain activities while at Stockton. Finally, items 65-67 ask students their race/ethnicity as well as the grade they predict to earn in their first semester at Stockton. The post-survey consists of the same first 42 items from the pre-survey. Demographic information was not asked again on the post-survey. Dr. Grites has kept all surveys he has given out since he began teaching his transfer seminar and gave permission to use the surveys for this study (Appendix A). No steps have ever been taken to organize or evaluate these surveys. The surveys are valid in terms of content-validity; the questions on the survey represent the content to be measured. Dr. Wawrzynski did not have much information regarding the validity of the instrument. He explained that he did not currently have all of the data related to the survey but that he remembers that items ranged from 0.7 to 0.8 in terms of reliability (personal communication, April 27, 2012).

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

Prior to the evaluation of any data, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was completed and reviewed by both Stockton College and Rowan University committees; an exemption was received from the Rowan University IRB committee (Appendix B). Students were asked to list their student identification number on the pre

and post survey in order to ensure that the surveys matched. However, no personally identifiable information on specific individuals was used in the study. Permission to obtain the surveys and evaluate them was given by Dr. Grites (Appendix A).

Once the surveys were obtained, each pre and post survey had to be matched by student identification number to ensure data accuracy. Next, each survey item was entered manually into PASW software. Values were assigned for all of the responses and coded by number.

### **Data Analysis**

Once the data were entered into PASW, frequency distributions were calculated for the demographic questions on the pre survey. This showed the number of cases in the sample for a particular item and the percentage cases with a certain value. Next, measures of central tendency and dispersion were calculated to determine the mean and standard deviation for all items on both the pre and post survey. Finally, a paired samples *t* test was performed to compare the means of the two scores from the pre and post survey. The output displayed paired samples statistics which showed the basic descriptive statistics for each pair of questions. Paired samples correlations were also displayed with a Pearson correlation coefficient for each pair of items. The final section of the output, the paired samples test, provided paired differences which indicates any differences between the two items in each pair. A *t* value is displayed, along with the degrees of freedom, and the two-tailed significance level. The paired samples *t* test was used to determine whether two mean scores were significantly different from each other. Once all calculations were made, tables were created to display in the next chapter.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Findings**

#### **Profile of the Sample**

Archival data were used from the surveys administered fall 2003 to fall 2011. The data were obtained from Dr. Thomas Grites' transfer seminar, Contemporary American Education. In total, 328 TSS surveys were used for this project. Pre and post surveys were distributed each semester at the beginning and end of the transfer seminar. The transfer seminar is a voluntary course that is only open to new transfer students in their first semester of transfer at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. The course counts as four credits toward a student's degree, usually as an elective.

Table 4.1 shows the percentage of students by race/ethnicity, the highest being White/Caucasian at 84.1%. Table 4.2 shows the highest education level that students' mother had obtained, with 33.8% of mothers earning a high school education. Table 4.3 shows the highest education level that students' father had obtained, with 31.7% earning a high school education. Table 4.4 shows information regarding the number of times students transferred schools. A total of 78% of students only transferred schools once. Table 4.5 shows the reason that students decided to attend Stockton College. A total of 26.9% of students said geographical location was the main reason they decided to attend Stockton College. Table 4.6 shows the main reason students decided to leave their last institution. A total of 63.1% of students left their previous institution because the highest degree they could obtain was only a 2-year degree, not a bachelor's degree. Table 4.7

shows that 75.6% of students rated Stockton as their first choice school. Table 4.8 shows the type of school students transferred from. A total of 69.8% of students transferred from a 2-year college. Table 4.9 shows students' highest degree goals with a total of 52% of students intending to earn a master's degree. Table 4.10 shows the highest grade that the student expects to earn at Stockton College with a total of 61.8% of students intending to earn an A average. Table 4.11 shows students' attitudes toward Stockton College. Combining the "positive" and "very positive" results leaves 91.1% of students with a good first impression of Stockton College. Table 4.12 shows the percentage of students who were working off campus. A total of 21.6% of students did not plan to work off campus. However a total of 21.3% planned to work 20-29 hours off campus. Table 4.13 shows the percentage of students who were working on campus. A total of 88.4% did not plan to work on campus. Finally, Table 4.14 shows the farthest distance student's travel to Stockton College. A total of 39.6% of students reported commuting a total of 11-50 miles each way.

Table 4.1

<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
African American/Black	19	5.8
Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander	8	2.4
White Caucasian	276	84.1
Hispanic/Latino(a)	14	4.3
Native American/American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>97.0</b>

Table 4.2

*Mother's Highest Education Level*

	<i>f</i>	%
Grammar school or less	3	.9
Some high school	14	4.3
High school graduate	111	33.8
Postsecondary school other than college	27	8.2
Some college	70	21.3
College degree	63	19.2
Some graduate school	6	1.8
Graduate degree	32	9.8
Total	326	99.4

Table 4.3

<i>Father's Highest Education Level</i>		
	<i>f</i>	%
Grammar school or less	5	1.5
Some high school	18	5.5
High school graduate	104	31.7
Postsecondary school other than college	22	6.7
Some college	62	18.9
College degree	73	22.3
Some graduate school	4	1.2
Graduate degree	33	10.1
Total	321	97.9

Table 4.4

<i>Number of Times Transferred</i>		
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Once	255	77.7
Twice	51	15.5
Three times	21	6.4
Total	327	99.7
Missing System	1	.3
Total	328	100.0

Table 4.5

<i>Reason for Attending Stockton</i>		
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Geographical location	83	25.3
Offered kind of program I wanted	66	20.1
Reputation of program/school	49	14.9
Recommendation of family/friends	47	14.3
Size of institution	6	1.8
Availability of financial aid	2	.6
Other	22	6.7
Total	309	94.2

Table 4.6

<i>Main Reason for Leaving Last Institution</i>		
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Community College/No BA degree	205	62.5
Dissatisfied	34	10.4
Cost of school	16	4.9
Did not have desired major	15	4.6
Moved away	10	3.0
Got a job	3	.9
Other	42	12.8
Total	325	99.1

Table 4.7

<i>When you decided to Transfer, Stockton was Your...</i>		
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
First Choice	248	75.6
Second Choice	62	18.9
Third Choice	8	2.4
Other	10	3.0
Total	328	100.0

Table 4.8

<i>Type of School Transferred From</i>		
	<i>f</i>	%
2-year college	229	69.8
4-year college	90	27.4
Other	8	2.4
Total	327	99.7

Table 4.9

<i>Highest Degree Intended to Earn</i>		
	<i>f</i>	%
Bachelor's	105	32.0
Master's	167	50.9
Ph.D or Ed.D	32	9.8
Medical	5	1.5
Law	5	1.5
Divinity	1	.3
Other	6	1.8
Total	321	97.9

Table 4.10

<i>Grades Intending to Earn at Stockton</i>		
	<i>f</i>	%
A	175	53.4
B	105	32.0
C	3	.9
Total	283	86.3

Table 4.11

<i>Attitude Toward Stockton</i>		
	<i>f</i>	%
Very Positive	167	50.9
Positive	132	40.2
Neutral	23	7.0
Negative	3	.9
Very Negative	1	.3
Total	326	99.4

Table 4.12

<i>Amount of Hours Working Off Campus</i>		
	<i>f</i>	%
Do not plan to work	71	21.6
1-9	28	8.5
10-14	42	12.8
15-19	51	15.5
20-29	70	21.3
30-39	50	15.2
More than 40	14	4.3
Total	326	99.4

Table 4.13

<i>Amount of Hours Working On Campus</i>		
	<i>f</i>	%
Do not plan to work	290	88.4
1-9	9	2.7
10-14	10	3.0
15-19	10	3.0
20-29	1	.3
30-39	1	.3
Total	321	97.9

Table 4.14

<i>Traveling Distance</i>		
	<i>f</i>	%
I will be living on campus	101	30.8
Less than 3 miles each way	10	3.0
3-5 miles each way	26	7.9
6-10 miles each way	44	13.4
11-50 miles each way	130	39.6
51 miles or more each way	10	3.0
Not sure where I will live yet	3	.9
Total	324	98.8

## Analysis of the Data

Research Question 1: What impact did the transfer seminar have on selected transfer students at Stockton College?

A paired samples *t* test was calculated to compare the mean pretest score to the mean posttest score for each of the first 26 Likert scale items (Table 4.15 & Table 4.16). Each of the Likert scale items are the same for both the pretest and posttest. The mean score on the pretest regarding students' concern about financing their education was 3.18 ( $SD=1.17$ ) and the mean score on the posttest was 3.52 ( $SD=1.09$ ). A significant increase from pretest to posttest was found ( $t(325)=-5.725, p < .001$ ) for item three. The mean score on the pretest regarding students' preparation for college was 3.53 ( $SD=.926$ ) and the mean on the posttest was 3.31 ( $SD=1.01$ ). A significant decrease from pretest to posttest was found ( $t(323)=4.620, p < .001$ ) for item four. The mean score on the pretest regarding students' concerns developing a course schedule was 3.61 ( $SD=1.00$ ) and the mean score on the posttest was 3.85 ( $SD=.965$ ). A significant increase from pretest to posttest was found ( $t(326)=-3.889, p < .001$ ) for item five. The mean score on the pretest regarding students' decision to attend school if better jobs were available was 2.05 ( $SD=1.01$ ) and the mean posttest score was 2.41 ( $SD=1.09$ ). A significant increase from pretest to posttest was found ( $t(326)=-6.252, p < .001$ ) for item eight. The mean score on the pretest regarding students' concern adjusting to a new environment was 3.00 ( $SD=1.04$ ) and the mean score on the posttest was 2.72 ( $SD=.990$ ). A significant decrease from pretest to posttest was found ( $t(326)=4.176, p < .001$ ) for item nine. The mean score on the pretest regarding students' concern about course availability was 3.72

( $SD=.961$ ) and the mean on the posttest was 3.99 ( $SD=.825$ ). A significant increase from pretest to posttest was found ( $t(325) = -5.041, p < .001$ ) for item 15.

Table 4.15

*Paired Samples Statistics for Transfer Seminar Impact*

	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std. Error Mean
Pair 3: I am concerned about my ability to finance my college education.				
Pretest	3.18	326	1.167	.065
Posttest	3.52	326	1.095	.061
Pair 4: My high school prepared me well for college.				
Pretest	3.53	324	.926	.051
Posttest	3.31	324	1.013	.056
Pair 5: I am concerned with creating a course schedule that meets my other obligations.				
Pretest	3.61	327	1.008	.056
Posttest	3.85	327	.965	.053
Pair 8: If better jobs were available that did not require a B.A. degree, I would not go to college.				
Pretest	2.05	327	1.015	.056
Posttest	2.41	327	1.090	.060

Pair 9: I am concerned about adjusting to a new academic environment.				
Pretest	3.00	327	1.044	.058
Posttest	2.72	327	.990	.055
Pair 15: I am concerned about course availability.				
Pretest	3.72	326	.961	.053
Posttest	3.99	326	.825	.046

Table 4.16

*Paired Samples t-test Results for Transfer Seminar Impact*

	Paired Differences					<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 3: I am concerned about my ability to finance my college education.	-.340	1.069	.059	-.457	-.224	-5.752	325	.000
Pair 4: My high school prepared me well for college.	.219	.854	.047	.126	.312	4.620	323	.000
Pair 5: I am concerned with creating a course schedule that meets my other obligations.	-.235	1.095	.061	-.355	-.116	-3.889	326	.000

Pair 8: If better jobs were available that did not require a B.A. degree, I would not go to college.	-.358	1.035	.057	-.470	-.245	-6.252	326	.000
Pair 9: I am concerned about adjusting to a new academic environment.	.272	1.179	.065	.144	.400	4.176	326	.000
Pair 15: I am concerned about course availability.	-.273	.978	.054	-.380	-.166	-5.041	325	.000

---

Research Question 2: Is there a significant change in college goals/outcomes based on participating in the transfer seminar at Stockton College?

A paired samples  $t$  test was calculated to compare the mean pretest score to the mean posttest score for items 27-35. Each of the statements are the same for both the pretest and posttest. According to the  $t$  test results, there were no significant changes in students' college goals/outcomes after participating in the transfer seminar.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant change in use of study strategies based on participating in the transfer seminar at Stockton College?

A paired samples  $t$  test was calculated to compare the mean pretest score to the mean posttest score for questions 36-42 (Table 4.17 & 4.18). Each of the questions are the same for both the pretest and posttest. The mean score on the pretest regarding students review habits was 3.78 ( $SD=.874$ ) and the mean score for the posttest was 3.52 ( $SD=.932$ ). A significant decrease from pretest to posttest was found ( $t(327)=5.413, p < .001$ ) for question 36. The mean score on the pretest regarding students' class reading habits was 3.60 ( $SD=.930$ ) and the mean score for the posttest was 3.32 ( $SD=.928$ ). A significant decrease from pretest to posttest was found ( $t(327)=5.413, p < .001$ ) for question 37. The mean score on the pretest regarding students' study habits was 2.69 ( $SD=.762$ ) and the mean score for the posttest was 2.96 ( $SD=.925$ ). A significant increase from pretest to posttest was found ( $t(327)= -5.702$ ) for pair 38. The mean score on the pretest regarding students' class attendance was 4.82 ( $SD=.457$ ) and the mean score for the posttest was 4.58 ( $SD=.570$ ). A significant decrease from pretest to posttest was found ( $t(324)=7.107, p < .001$ ) for pair 42.

Table 4.17

*Paired Samples Statistics for Student Study Strategies*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 36: At present, how often do you revise/review/update class notes?				
Pretest	3.78	328	.874	.048
Posttest	3.52	328	.932	.051
Pair 37: At present, how often do you prepare for class by reading ahead?				
Pretest	3.60	328	.930	0.51
Posttest	3.32	328	.928	.051
Pair 38: At present, how often do you put off study?				
Pretest	2.69	328	.762	.042
Posttest	2.96	328	.925	.051
Pair 42: At present how often do you attend class?				
Posttest	4.82	325	.457	.0025
Pretest	4.58	325	.570	.032

Table 4.18

*Paired Samples t-test for Student Study Strategies*

	Paired Differences					<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
	<i>M</i>	<i>sd</i>	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 36: At present, how often do you revise/review/update class notes?	.268	.906	.050	.170	.367	5.363	327	.000
Pair 37: At present, how often do you prepare for class by reading ahead?	.277	.928	.051	.177	.378	5.413	327	.000
Pair 38: At present, how often do you put off study?	-.271	.862	.048	-.365	-.178	1.702	327	.000
Pair 42: At present how often do you attend class?	.246	.624	.035	.178	.314	7.107	324	.000

## **Chapter V**

### **Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

#### **Summary of the Study**

This study investigated the impact transfer seminars have on selected transfer students' college goals and outcomes as well as their study strategies at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. The subjects in this study were new transfer students in their first semester at Stockton College. The surveys from these students have been collected since the fall of 2003 until fall 2011. The 328 surveys collected were from the same transfer seminar, Contemporary American Education. Each semester, students were asked to complete a pre and post survey regarding their thoughts about their adjustment, and involvement in college.

Quantitative data were collected from all surveys since 2003. These data were analyzed using PASW software to compare the mean pre survey and post survey scores to determine statistical significance.

#### **Discussion of the Findings**

Quantitative data analysis revealed several statistically significant changes from the pre survey to post survey regarding students' attitudes about college and the adjustment process. It appears that after taking the transfer seminar students continued to have concerns regarding various aspects of their college experience. Data analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant increase from pretest to posttest scores regarding students' concern about financing their education ( $p < .001$ ). This increase

could mean that after taking the transfer seminar, students were still concerned about financing their education. As explained by Zamani (2001), the decrease in student grants and financial aid force students to borrow more student loans than ever before. The burden of having to repay these student loans may worry many students which is illustrated in the transfer student survey results. Hatton et al. 2009 explain that this concern may also affect student's persistence and retention in school. Berger and Malaney (2003) performed a study comparing students' pre-transfer experiences to post-transfer experiences of community college transfer students. This study found that students worked less hours while attending the four-year institution to allow for increased study time. Similarly, the data illustrate that many students are either not working, or working minimal hours while attending Stockton. The lack of time to work outside of school may also contribute to students financial concerns. Townsend (2008) explains that students may transfer for a variety of reasons, one of which is geographical location. As illustrated in the data, new transfer students at Stockton College reported geographical location as the main reason for attending Stockton.

Students were also concerned about developing a course schedule that would meet their obligations as well as course availability, and expressed concern about adjusting to a new academic environment. After taking the transfer seminar, these concerns did not subside which illustrates some of the main points in the literature about the difficulties students are experiencing when transferring to a new school. As Flaga (2006) explained in her study, community college students were unhappy with the lack of communication between the community college and the receiving institution and wanted more information regarding the allocation and articulation of their transfer credits.

Zamani (2001) explains that as a result of the transfer articulation process becoming so complex, students are frustrated and concerned about their course schedules. As Cuseo (1998) states, transfer students often have concerns about financial obligations and are unhappy to discover that they have to register last for classes. This would explain students' concern regarding course availability and creating a course schedule that meets their obligations. Students reported that even if there were better jobs available that did not require a bachelor's degree they would still consider attending college. Even though students have financial concerns, it can be assumed that they are still putting the effort into their education in order to obtain better employment in the future.

Students reported feeling less concerned about adjusting to a new academic environment after taking the transfer seminar. In a study conducted by Flaga (2006), she determined that transfer students transferring from a community college would be interested in some sort of pre-transfer orientation or course prior to entering a new school. While transfer seminars at Stockton College are offered during a student's first semester, the impact may have led students to feel more comfortable in their new environment. Flaga (2006) also states that a first-semester seminar course offered just for transfer students would help students gain more access and awareness to various resources and would also allow them to interact with individuals who are also new transfer students at the institution. In her study students reported that connecting with other students similar to themselves was important to them and ultimately made them feel more comfortable at the new institution.

Quantitative data analysis also revealed that students' study strategies changed after participating in the transfer seminar. It appears that after taking the transfer seminar,

students were less likely to review notes before class and less likely to prepare for class by reading ahead. Also, students reported after the transfer seminar that they were more likely to put off studying and not attend class as often. There are many factors that may contribute to these results. Since the *Transfer Student Survey* was administered at the end of the 15 week semester, students may experience stress and weariness from the semester which could contribute to their decline in class attendance and studying. Berger and Malaney (2003) explain in their study that student socialization increased after transferring from the community college. It can be suggested that students are more interested in socializing with their peers during their first semester at Stockton College which in turn creates a decline in studying, preparing for, and attending class.

The data analysis results also revealed no significant changes to students' college goals/outcomes as a result of participating in a transfer seminar. Perhaps students continued to have strong college goals and the transfer seminar did not have a significant impact on them. Students' ultimate goals and what they hoped to obtain from education did not change after completing the seminar.

## **Conclusions**

The results of this study confirmed much of the previous literature written about transfer students and their adjustment at a new institution. Data analysis revealed that the transfer seminar did elicit some changes in student's attitudes and thoughts about their education and study strategies. Even after taking the transfer seminar, students continue to have concerns about the major issues that researchers have continued to discuss. Some of the major concerns that students have are financial concerns and concerns regarding course availability, and ease of scheduling.

Some changes regarding study strategies did occur as students appeared to be less likely to read ahead and prepare for class and more likely to put off studying after taking the transfer seminar.

No apparent changes were found in student' college goals and outcomes as a result of participating in a transfer seminar at Stockton College.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Based upon my findings and conclusions, I recommend the following:

1. Continue to survey students using a survey that more closely resembles the culture of Stockton College.
2. When teaching a transfer seminar, focus on students concerns regarding financial aid and course availability.
3. Provide transfer mentors to the new transfer students to serve as a guide during a student's first semester at Stockton College.
4. Maintain a positive relationship with the New Jersey community colleges to help make a smoother transition for transfer students.
5. Make transfer seminars mandatory for all incoming transfer students at Stockton College.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based upon my findings and conclusions, I recommend the following:

1. A study that tracks students' academic progress and their attitudes and thoughts about adjusting to college.

2. A study that includes qualitative data to gain a more thorough perspective of participating students.
3. A study that includes students from a variety of transfer seminars taught by a group of diverse faculty members at Stockton College.
4. A study that includes focus groups to gain first-hand insight into students' experiences during their first semester at Stockton College.
5. Further research into the programs that other colleges offer for first semester transfer students.
6. A longitudinal study examining students' experiences and outcomes from their first semester at Stockton until graduation.
7. A longitudinal study examining the differences in student responses based on which semester they matriculated at Stockton and participated in the transfer seminar.

## References

- Adelman, C. (2005). *Moving into town and moving on: The community college in the lives of traditional-age students*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Adelman, C. (2006). *The toolbox revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Berger, J. B., Malaney, G. D. (2003). Assessing the transition of transfer students from community colleges to a university. *NASPA Journal*, 40(4), 1-23.
- Bingham-Newman, M. A., & Hopkins, L. R. (Ed). (2004). Transfer students: An overview [Monograph]. *Advising Transfer Students: Issues and Strategies*, (12), 7-12.
- Cuseo, J. B. (1998). *The transfer transition: A summary of key issues, target areas, and tactics for reform*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Diaz, E. P. (1992). Effects of transfer on academic performance of community college students at the four-year institution. *Community/ Junior College Quarterly of Research and Practice*, 16(3), 279-292.
- Flaga, C. T. (2006). The process of transition for community college transfer students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 30, 3-19.
- Getzlaf, S. B., Sedlacek, G. M., Kearney, K. A., & Blackwell, J. M. (1984). Two types of voluntary undergraduate attrition: An application of Tinto's model. *Research in Higher Education*, 20 (3), 257-268.

- Grites, T. J. (Ed). (2004). Redefining the role: Reflections and directions, [Monograph].  
*Advising Transfer Students: Issues and Strategies*, (12), 123-132.
- Hatton, A., Homer, S., & Park, L. (2009). Creating bridges between institutions: A brief look at advisors' roles in transfer student transition. Retrieved April 20, 2012 from the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* Web site: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/clearinghouse/M02/Transfer.htm>.
- Hill, J. R. (1965). Transfer shock: The academic performance of the junior college transfer. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 33(3), 201-215.
- Ishitani, T. T. (2008). How do transfer survive after "transfer shock"? A longitudinal study of transfer student departure at a four-year institution. *Research in Higher Education*, 49, 403-419.
- Laanan, F. (2007). Studying transfer students: Part II: Dimensions of transfer students' adjustment. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 31, 37-59.
- McCormick, A. C., Sarraf, S. A., BrckaLorenz, A., & Haywood, A. M. (2009). Examining the transfer student experience: Interactions with faculty, campus relationships, and overall satisfaction. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education in Vancouver, Canada.
- New Jersey Presidents' Council. (2008). Comprehensive State-Wide Transfer Agreement. Retrieved June 1, 2011.
- National Resource Center (n.d). Transfer year resources. Retrieved from <http://sc.edu/fye/resources/transfer/index.html>
- Peng, S. S. (1978). Transfer students in institutions of higher education. *Research in Higher Education*, 8(4), 319-342.

- Peter, K., & Cataldi, E. F. (2005). *The road less traveled? Students who enroll in multiple institutions*. Postsecondary Education Descriptive Analysis Report. National Center for Education Statistics. U.S. Department of Education.
- Rhine, T., Milligan, D., & Nelson, L. (2002). Alleviating transfer shock: Creating an environment for more successful transfer students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, (24), 443-453.
- Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of student departure: Reflections on the longitudinal character of student leaving. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 59(4), 438-455.
- Thurmond, K. (Ed). (2004). Communication among 4 year institutions. [Monograph]. *Advising Transfer Students: Issues and Strategies*, (12), 25-27.
- Townsend, B. K. (2008). "Feeling like a freshman again": The transfer student transition. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 144, 69-77. doi: 10.1002/he
- Volkwein, J. F., King, M. C., & Terenzini, P. T. (1986). Student-faculty relationships and intellectual growth among transfer students. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 57 (4), 413-430.
- Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The rites of passage*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Wawrzynski, M.R., Sedlacek, W.E. (2003). Race and gender differences in the transfer student experience. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44 (4), 489-501.
- Wynn, A. (2002). Cracking the code: Determining what transfer students really need to be successful at four-year institutions. Retrieved December 1, 2010, from <http://www.psu.edu/dus/mentor/021104aw.htm>
- Zamani, E. M. (2001). Institutional responses to barriers to the transfer process. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 114, 15-24.

## **Appendix A**

### Administrative Permission for use of Data



Office of the Provost

Ph: 609.652.4514  
Fax: 609.626.5509

101 Vera King Farris Drive  
Galloway, NJ 08205  
www.stockton.edu

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Dear Thesis Advisor/Committee:

When I began my transfer seminar concept and course at Stockton, I started using a pre-post questionnaire simply to get a sense of whether what I was doing might result in any differences with those transfer students having such an experience. It was sort of a supplement to the standard Student Evaluation of Teaching (IDEA) used at Stockton and for my own edification. I received permission from the authors of the instrument to use it.

I have been doing this every term I've taught the course, and I actually had some data analysis done once, again simply to try to get some sense of an answer to my own question. No conclusive results seemed to surface, so I sort of dropped the project, although I kept collecting data.

Now, a graduate student at Rowan University and former student employee in the Stockton Center for Academic Advising, Ms. Amanda Farina, would like to use my data in completing her Master's thesis. I am certainly willing to share the data, and give her full permission to do so. The surveys have only been identified by Z-numbers so that I could match the pre-post responses in the aggregate. If any specific student identification were to occur (of which there is no intent or expectation to do), it could only be done by me.

I have also consulted with the Chair of the Stockton IRB Committee who acknowledges that no action is needed by that group, since Stockton is not involved in the research project.

Upon completion of her thesis, I would like to work with her toward a joint publication of her findings.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Thomas J. Grites".

Thomas J. Grites, Ph.D.  
Assistant to the Provost  
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey  
101 Vera King Farris Drive  
Galloway, NJ 08205

Phone: (609) 652-4871  
Fax : (609) 626-3502

## **Appendix B**

### **Institutional Review Board Approval Letter**



February 22, 2012

Amanda Farina  
1192 Garry Avenue  
Vineland, NJ 08361

Dear Amanda Farina:

In accordance with the University's IRB policies and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to inform you that the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has exempted your project:

IRB application number: 2012-166

Project Title: Transfer Seminars: The Impact on Transfer Student Achievement

If you need to make significant modifications to your study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Please reference the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

If, during your research, you encounter any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, you must report this immediately to Dr. Harriet Hartman ([hartman@rowan.edu](mailto:hartman@rowan.edu) or call 856-256-4500, ext. 3787) or contact Dr. Shreekanth Mandayam, Associate Provost for Research ([shreek@rowan.edu](mailto:shreek@rowan.edu) or call 856-256-5150).

If you have any administrative questions, please contact Karen Heiser ([heiser@rowan.edu](mailto:heiser@rowan.edu) or 856-256-5150).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harriet Hartman".

Harriet Hartman, Ph.D.  
Chair, Rowan University IRB

c; Burton Sisco, Educational Services, Administration and Higher Education, Education Hall

Office of Research  
Bole Hall  
201 Mullica Hill Road  
Glassboro, NJ 08028-1701

856-256-5150  
856-256-4425 fax

## **Appendix C**

### Pre and Post Survey Instrument

## TRANSFER STUDENT SURVEY *Pre-Survey*

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey needs your help to obtain the best possible information about your experience here. Your honest and thoughtful responses are very important and much appreciated. In accordance to College policy, your responses are treated as confidential and available only to university advising and research personnel fulfilling assigned specific responsibilities. Summarized results will be reported to campus departments and/or staff to help plan and provide better services to students. Group results may appear in many locations including campus media.

[REDACTED]

Z

	5	4	3	2	1
II. Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel adequately prepared for the academic demands at Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. It is best for me to rely on the advice of close friends or relatives when I have a problem.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. I am concerned about my ability to finance my college education.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. My high school prepared me well for college.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. I am concerned with developing a course schedule that meets my other obligations.	<input type="radio"/>				
6. Most of my friends are my own race.	<input type="radio"/>				
7. I expect to have a hard time adjusting to the academic work of Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. If better jobs were available that did not require a bachelor's degree, I would not go to college.	<input type="radio"/>				
9. I am concerned about adjusting to a new academic environment.	<input type="radio"/>				
10. I have a close friend who is <u>not</u> my race.	<input type="radio"/>				
11. I am looking forward to meeting people different from me at Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				
12. I would be interested in living on-campus.	<input type="radio"/>				
13. I discuss topics related to cultural awareness with friends.	<input type="radio"/>				
14. I feel adequately prepared for the math demands that I will have in my coursework.	<input type="radio"/>				
15. I am concerned about course availability.	<input type="radio"/>				
16. I would consider seeking study skills training at Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				
17. I feel adequately prepared for the writing demands that I will have in my coursework.	<input type="radio"/>				
18. I am concerned about the transferability of my courses completed at other institutions.	<input type="radio"/>				
19. I would be interested in working with a faculty member on a research project.	<input type="radio"/>				
20. My family encourages me to continue my college education.	<input type="radio"/>				
21. Getting a broad and well-rounded education is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>				
22. I am interested in joining campus organizations.	<input type="radio"/>				
23. I am interested in interacting with faculty outside of class.	<input type="radio"/>				
24. I am concerned about the academic requirements outside my major.	<input type="radio"/>				
25. I am feeling a sense of connection with Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				
26. I do <u>not</u> expect to earn a degree from Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				

III. Please indicate how important the following college goals/outcomes are to you.	5 Very Important	4 Important	3 Undecided	2 Not too important	1 Not at all important
27. learning to communicate effectively in writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. learning to communicate effectively orally	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. acquiring technology skills for work and life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. acquiring knowledge and skills in my academic interest area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. acquiring knowledge in areas that complement/enhance my academic interest area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. gaining appreciation of attitudes/cultures different than mine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. participating in community service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. learning to think and reason	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. developing leadership skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IV. At present, how often do you do the following?	Always <sup>5</sup>	Most of that time	Sometimes <sup>3</sup>	Rarely <sup>2</sup>	Never <sup>1</sup>
36. review/revise/update class notes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. prepare for class by reading ahead	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. put off studying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. have trouble deciding what coursework to study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. speak up in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41. study with other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. attend classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

43. What type of school are you transferring from?

- 2 year college = 2
- 4 year college or university = 1
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

44. When you decided to transfer, was Stockton your:

- First Choice of transfer school = 1
- Second Choice of transfer school = 2
- Third Choice of transfer school = 3
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

45. If you were not accepted to Stockton, what would you most likely do:

- continue to take classes at the institution you are transferring from = 1
- transfer to another institution = 2
- get a job = 3
- reapply to Stockton = 4

46. What was the main reason you decided to leave your last institution? (CHOOSE ONE)

- Community College (no B.A. available) = 1
- Job = 5
- Cost of school = 2
- Dissatisfied- Please specify why: = 6
- Did not have major I wanted = 3
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Moved = 4

47. What is the main reason you decided to attend Stockton? (CHOOSE ONE)

- Relatively inexpensive = 1
- Reputation of program/school = 5
- Geographical location = 2
- Size of institution = 4
- Offered kind of program that I wanted = 3
- Availability of financial aid = 7
- Recommendation of family/friends = 4
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

48. How many times have you transferred colleges or universities (including your transfer to Stockton)?

- Once = 1
- Twice = 2
- Three times = 3
- More than three times = 4

49. What is the highest academic degree you intend to obtain?

- Bachelor's = 1
- Law (LL.B. or J.D.) = 5
- Master's = 2
- Divinity (B.D. or M.Div.) = 6
- Ph. D. or Ed.D. = 3
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Medical (M.D., D.O., D.D.S., D.V.M.) = 4

	Do not plan to work	1-9	10-14	15-19	20-29	30-39	More than 40
50. How many hours per week will you be working at an off-campus job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
51. How many hours per week will you be working at an on-campus job?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	I will be living on campus	Less than 3 miles each way	3-5 miles each way	6-10 miles each way	11-50 miles each way	51 miles or more each way	Not yet sure where I will live
52. How far from campus will you be living this fall?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative		
53. At present, your general attitude toward Stockton is:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		

V. Please indicate the importance of reasons you plan to work while in college:	1	2	3
	Major reason	Minor reason	Not a reason for me
54. help pay for your college education (tuition, books, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
55. take care of personal or family obligations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
56. earn extra spending money (clothes, snacks, gas, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
57. gain general job experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
58. gain job experience related to your anticipated major	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
59. career exploration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
60. career networking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

VI. Please answer the following questions below.	Yes	No
61. Would you enroll in an upper-level (UNIV 300) class to assist in your transition to Stockton?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
62. Would you be interested in attending a five-day outdoor adventure experience with other new students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
63. Would you be interested in discussing your transition to Stockton during the fall semester with a research member?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
64. Have you applied to Stockton before?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

65. What grades do you expect to earn your first semester at Stockton?

- A = 1                       C = 3  
 B = 2                       D or below = 4

66. What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents? (Mark one in each column)

	Father	Mother
Grammar school or less	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some high school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High school graduate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Postsecondary school other than college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
College degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some graduate school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduate degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

67. Racial/ethnic group (select all that apply):

- African-American/Black                       Hispanic/Latino(a)  
 Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islander                       Native American/American Indian/Alaskan native  
 White Caucasian

68. Although many of your questions may be answered during your orientation, what concerns do you still have regarding your transition to Stockton?

For more information and/or permission to use the TSS, contact: Dr. Matthew Wawrzynski, Assistant Professor, Michigan State University, 426 Erickson Hall, East Lansing, MI 48823 or mwawrzyn@msu.edu

TRANSFER STUDENT SURVEY *Post-Survey*

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey needs your help to obtain the best possible information about your experience here. Your honest and thoughtful responses are very important and much appreciated. In accordance to College policy, your responses are treated as confidential and available only to university advising and research personnel fulfilling assigned specific responsibilities. Summarized results will be reported to campus departments and/or staff to help plan and provide better services to students. Group results may appear in many locations including campus media.



      Z      

II. Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel adequately prepared for the academic demands at Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. It is best for me to rely on the advice of close friends or relatives when I have a problem.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. I am concerned about my ability to finance my college education.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. My high school prepared me well for college.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. I am concerned with developing a course schedule that meets my other obligations.	<input type="radio"/>				
6. Most of my friends are my own race.	<input type="radio"/>				
7. I expect to have a hard time adjusting to the academic work of Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. If better jobs were available that did not require a bachelor's degree, I would not go to college.	<input type="radio"/>				
9. I am concerned about adjusting to a new academic environment.	<input type="radio"/>				
10. I have a close friend who is <u>not</u> my race.	<input type="radio"/>				
11. I am looking forward to meeting people different from me at Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				
12. I would be interested in living on-campus.	<input type="radio"/>				
13. I discuss topics related to cultural awareness with friends.	<input type="radio"/>				
14. I feel adequately prepared for the math demands that I will have in my coursework.	<input type="radio"/>				
15. I am concerned about course availability.	<input type="radio"/>				
16. I would consider seeking study skills training at Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				
17. I feel adequately prepared for the writing demands that I will have in my coursework.	<input type="radio"/>				
18. I am concerned about the transferability of my courses completed at other institutions.	<input type="radio"/>				
19. I would be interested in working with a faculty member on a research project.	<input type="radio"/>				
20. My family encourages me to continue my college education.	<input type="radio"/>				
21. Getting a broad and well-rounded education is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>				
22. I am interested in joining campus organizations.	<input type="radio"/>				
23. I am interested in interacting with faculty outside of class.	<input type="radio"/>				
24. I am concerned about the academic requirements outside my major.	<input type="radio"/>				
25. I am feeling a sense of connection with Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				
26. I do <u>not</u> expect to earn a degree from Stockton.	<input type="radio"/>				

III. Please indicate how important the following college goals/outcomes are to you.	Very Important	Important	Undecided	Not too important	Not at all important
27. learning to communicate effectively in writing	○	○	○	○	○
28. learning to communicate effectively orally	○	○	○	○	○
29. acquiring technology skills for work and life	○	○	○	○	○
30. acquiring knowledge and skills in my academic interest area	○	○	○	○	○
31. acquiring knowledge in areas that complement/enhance my academic interest area	○	○	○	○	○
32. gaining appreciation of attitudes/cultures different than mine	○	○	○	○	○
33. participating in community service	○	○	○	○	○
34. learning to think and reason	○	○	○	○	○
35. developing leadership skills	○	○	○	○	○
IV. At present, how often do you do the following?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
36. review/revise/update class notes	○	○	○	○	○
37. prepare for class by reading ahead	○	○	○	○	○
38. put off studying	○	○	○	○	○
39. have trouble deciding what coursework to study	○	○	○	○	○
40. speak up in class	○	○	○	○	○
41. study with other students	○	○	○	○	○
42. attend classes	○	○	○	○	○

43. What type of school are you transferring from?

- 2 year college
- 4 year college or university
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

44. When you decided to transfer, was Stockton your:

- First Choice of transfer school
- Second Choice of transfer school
- Third Choice of transfer school
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

45. If you were not accepted to Stockton, what would you most likely do:

- continue to take classes at the institution you are transferring from
- transfer to another institution
- get a job
- reapply to Stockton