

Common Themes:



Transfer Students

The Beginning Transition

Living off campus made it difficult to make friends outside of class; non-transfer students already had their own “pods” of friends created; unsure about academic expectations; and varying cohorts in each class was hard to make consistent friends in all classes

Building Relationships

Relational program with small class sizes helped to make connections; the likelihood that we might be working together in the field was helpful to want to make connections

Changes Over Time

Seeing familiar faces on campus and having people acknowledge you outside of class; being a part of the student society; starting to get excited to come back to school, and wanting to buy the CYC hoodies

Feeling the Difference

Previous institutions were situated in our hometown so there was not a need to try to make new friends; used to being in all the same classes (electives included) with our cohort; used to a familiar setting at previous college and/or university; took a while to adjust to CYC and UVIC community; and no sense of community with the 1st, 2nd or 3rd year students

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Purpose

This qualitative study is the 3rd phase of a multi-phase project, documenting transfer and international students’ perspectives on their sense of belonging within the Child and Youth Care (CYC) student community.

Method

Two semi-structured focus groups were conducted on separate occasions. One specifically for transfer-identified students and the other for internationally-identified students.

Dissemination of Findings

The findings along with the recommendations will be presented to the staff and faculty at their monthly department meeting. This presentation will be filmed and uploaded onto Course Spaces for all CYC students to access.

Recommendations

Orientation: Transfer-specific orientation that is CYC-focused and have international CYC specific tours sponsored by Child and Youth Care Students’ Society (CYCSS)

Cultural Inclusion: Opportunities to learn more about the Canadian culture; provide support in helping international students navigate Canadian living; have opportunities to write about all cultures in assignments; request international guest speakers; provide clarification in syllabus and international options for assignments; and lastly have professors trained to be more culturally-informed, globally-minded, and aware of differences (e.g., study habits)

Mentoring: Both groups stated that a peer mentoring program would be beneficial

Academic Support: Writing centre to have a CYC student hour with help for CYC-specific papers

CYCSS: Create a “welcome” letter to be put into the acceptance package specifically from the board members; have the CYCSS provide more information about what constitutes the student society and define the roles of the board members; and create a flexible schedule for student society meetings

Social Events: Continue having Connect the Dots events; add a CYC mixer for transfer students before school begins; create opportunities to mingle with other CYC students (years 1-4) in an environment where non-school related conversations are encouraged; adapt social events similar to the ones within the International student society; and create more networking events

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Common Themes:



International Students

Appreciation of the CYC Community

Stronger sense of belonging compared to other programs; feeling comfortable; feeling connected to the CYC community; professors know your names; program is noticeably different in a good way; group projects are enjoyable because it creates social and academic exchange

Relational Experiences

Positive relationships with teaching faculty but a disconnect between international and Canadian students; students are polite but interactions seem to be “surface-level”; language barrier appear to limit other students to initiate conversations; unsure of what to talk about and conversations are not very engaging; feeling trapped to solely talk about assignments; hard to relate to the non-international student’s conversations, and a noted tendency to stick with individuals who share the same culture due to familiarity

Feeling the Difference

Disconnect between class and student engagement; and public transit is not used as an outlet to socialize about non-class related topics