Separating Fact from Fiction:
What students say about their transfer experience
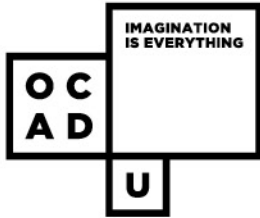
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LEARNING OUTCOMES

- How to implement a relatively simple research methodology for institutional improvement purposes

- Identify some common issues affecting transfer student success

- Identify some common barriers to both institutional and system level change.

OCAD U: the University of the Imagination

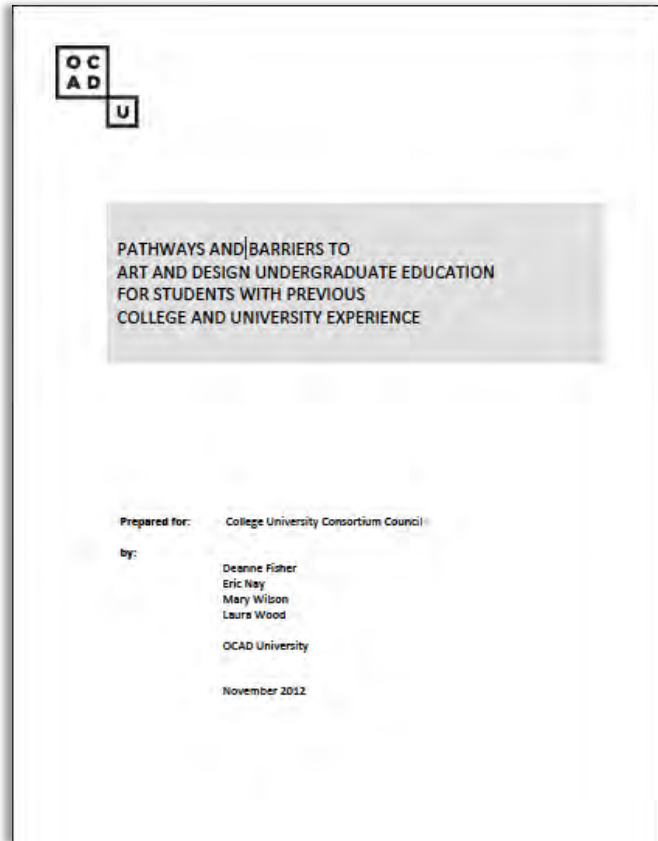4,000+ students in 13 undergraduate programs

1000+ new admits each year, about 200 with transfer credit

SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT CREDIT TRANSFER

1. Do transfer students commit/engage/complete/succeed?

2. In facilitating college transfer, are we creating a "back door" to OCAD U?

3. Is the transfer process too slow/cumbersome/complex?

4. Do students get the credits they deserve?

5. Do we need to build more supports for transfer students?

6. Would online courses help facilitate the transition?

Interior work by Theresa Duong '12

Pathways and Barriers to Art & Design Undergraduate Education for Students with Previous College or University Experience

PATHWAYS AND BARRIERS TO
ART AND DESIGN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION
FOR STUDENTS WITH PREVIOUS
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Prepared for: College University Consortium Council

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Mix of quantitative and qualitative methods
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QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

39 interviews over a two-week period:

- 21 with previous university experience
  - Mean age: 27
  - 45% male
  - Transfer credits of between .5 and 6.5
  - Most not from art & design programs

- 18 with Ontario college experience
  - Mean age: 23
  - 22% male
  - Transfer credits of between 1.0 and 7.5
  - Majority from art & design programs
  - Majority had completed college programs

DECISION FACTORS

1 Students have diverse motivations for transferring

"Grade 12 came around and it was like obviously, everyone's pushing towards going to university. I went to a private school where it's like pretty much 100% of the graduating class goes to university. For me it was like, ok, apply to a Bachelor of Arts program."

DECISION FACTORS

1 Students have diverse motivations for transferring

"So I went to Humber to get some studio-based experience before going to OCAD. Had I known I could go to OCAD despite not having studio practices, I probably would have gone straight-away but I didn't know at that time."

DECISION FACTORS

1 Students have diverse motivations for transferring

"Because I was an art major in high school, and I also majored in technology….Once I got into it at Fanshawe I really enjoyed it. Design became something more I've been really obsessed with since I realized what it was."

APPLICATION

2 The web is the primary source of information on the transfer process.

*"I found the website terrible. It was very —
I don't know, it seemed disorganized and it just wasn't easy to navigate. So there was a bit of guesswork, talking to friends, calling the administration, more than I think is required."*

TRANSFER PROCESS

3 Students are relatively satisfied with the transfer credit process itself.

"She kind of basically carried me through the whole process and she was very, very generous with her time and the information she was giving…. She made everything very easy for me to understand and told me what I need and what I don't need. It was perfect."

TRANSFER PROCESS

4 Many students are dissatisfied with the **result** of the process.

"I accepted it. OCAD is the only thing I wanted to do. It just made me upset that I've done a lot of work and it feels useless now."

TRANSFER PROCESS

4 Many students are dissatisfied with the **result** of the process.

"I feel like when they were looking at it, they were like, 'Oooh, those are college, those don't matter. College people, they're not qualified or smart enough, so you have to do it here.' Now that I'm doing it, a lot of them are just the same crap, or even worse."

TRANSITION

5 University transfer students experience difficulty moving from the formulaic to the emotionally intense.

"By the fourth year of Ottawa U, I knew I how to read a textbook cover to cover. I knew how to do an exam. I knew how to write an essay. But here, it's so much more demanding in so many senses…. Here, you're creating something ."

TRANSITION

5 University transfer students experience difficulty moving from the formulaic to the emotionally intense

"So the design workload is I guess is more draining—you are always thinking, always evaluating. Even though I have finished the assignment, class is over, I've gone home, I'm always thinking about different solutions. It's overtaken my life!"

TRANSITION

5 College transfer students experience difficulty moving from the concrete to the abstract.

"I would say if you can assign someone like a real human who you have their contact information who would like be able to answer the phone when you call them and be able to email you and know. So you have that one person who knew your transferred credit, they knew kind of like the work that you did and you can use them like someone to lean on ."

TRANSITION

6 Students are divided on the use of online courses to facilitate transition.

"Yes, I would have so I would have gotten a gist of how OCAD is and then it would have given me enough comfort to make that move. I had to make a kind of blind leap, decision. Yes, it would have really helped me."
."

TRANSITION

6 **Students are divided on the use of online courses to facilitate transition.**

"No. Because I came here for my studio works, and that's obviously not gonna be online….
I don't like online courses, or at least I don't like the idea of them. So I probably wouldn't want to do it anyway ."

IMPLICATIONS + DISCUSSION

TRANSFER AS PART OF ENROLMENT STRATEGY
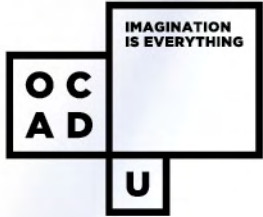
TRANSFER PROCESS

TRANSFER CREDIT RESULTS
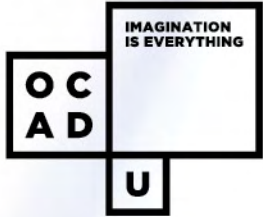
SUPPORT FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

YOU TOO CAN DO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH!

- Define the population
- Assemble a research team
- Create an interview protocol
- Get ERB approval
- Offer incentives for participation
- Use an accepted, rigourous coding and analysis method

THANK YOU

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