Retaining our Students: Survey Results, Implications and Next Steps

Karlene Burrell-McRae
Student Transfer Results

The overall population of students in this analysis is defined as those who entered Colby between 2014 and 2016 and then transferred out.
Overview

• **144 students** met the criteria for inclusion in the overall population.

• Of those, **36 (25%)** were found to have valid emails and **were sent a survey** (some students already graduated from their institution).

• **20 (56%)** students **responded** to the survey.
144 Students in the entire population

**By Gender**
- Female: 51% (73)
- Male: 49% (71)

**By Ethnicity**
- White: 63% (70)
- International: 16% (23)
- Unknown: 7% (10)
- Asian: 5% (7)
- Hispanic: 5% (7)
- More than one race: 4% (6)
- Black: 1% (1)
144 students in the entire population

Athletic Status
- Athletes: 28% (40)
- Non-Athletes: 72% (104)

Entry Type
- Global Entry: 11% (16)
- Waterville: 89% (128)

Financial Aid Status
- Aided: 33% (47)
- No Aid: 67% (97)
36 (25%) were sent a survey

**By Gender**
- Female: 56% (20)
- Male: 44% (16)

**By Ethnicity**
- White: 67% (24)
- Unknown: 11% (4)
- International: 8% (3)
- Hispanic: 8% (3)
- More than one race: 6% (2)
36 (25%) students who were sent the survey
20 (56%) students who responded

By Gender

- Female: 55% (11)
- Male: 45% (9)

By Ethnicity

- White: 75% (15)
- Unknown: 10% (2)
- International: 5% (1)
- Hispanic: 5% (1)
- More than one race: 5% (1)
20 (56%) students who responded

**Athletic Status**
- Athletes: 45% (9)
- Non-Athletes: 55% (11)

**Entry Type**
- Global Entry: 10% (2)
- Waterville: 90% (18)

**Financial Aid Status**
- No Aid: 60% (12)
- Aided: 40% (8)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Type</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Connection</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Why Did You Leave Colby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Climate</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Climate</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When Did You Start to Think About Transferring?

- Fall of First Year: 50% (10)
- Spring of First Year: 25% (5)
- Fall of Sophomore Year: 10% (2)
- Summer Between First and Second Year: 10% (2)
- Spring of Sophomore Year: 5% (1)
Could Anything Have Been Done to Change Your Mind?

- Yes: 25% (5)
- No: 75% (15)
Did Anyone Work with You to Address the Reason(s) You Wanted to Transfer?

- Yes: 45% (9)
- No: 55% (11)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>academic advisor</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advising dean</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coach</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colby friends</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents/family</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other faculty/staff</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*question was “Check all that apply”.*
## Transfer Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado College</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown University</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana State University</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oberlin College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Louis University</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Michaels College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syracuse University</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tufts University</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Vermont</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Wisconsin – Madison</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellesley College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Satisfaction with Transfer Institution

- Dissatisfied: 5% (1)
- Satisfied: 95% (19)
Implications

- The demographics of students who responded to the survey are in line with overall student transfer numbers.

- Half the students who said “nothing could have changed my mind” still talked with someone about the reason(s) they wanted to leave.

- Half of those that said “my mind could have been changed” did not work with anyone.

- 75% of respondents thought about leaving during their first year – critical year for engagement & redirection needed.
Faculty Student-Transfer Survey Results

• Surveyed 230 teaching faculty and 26 head coaches

• 125 faculty, 14 coaches and 3 with from unknown departments responded for a 55% response rate

• Survey covered the last five years of faculty experience with student population
Demographics of Respondents

Years at Colby

- 20+ (44 faculty)
- Five or Less (45 faculty)
- 15 to 20 (10 faculty)
- 11 to 15 (12 faculty)
- 6 to 10 (30 faculty)
Demographics of Respondents

Divisions

- Unknown (3 faculty)
- Athletics (14 faculty)
- Interdisciplinary (16 faculty)
- Social Science (33 faculty)
- Natural Sciences (33 faculty)
- Humanities (44 faculty)
Have you taught or coached students who later transferred?

**Talked to a Student who Transferred**
- 15 Did not transfer
- 127 Transferred

**Wrote Letter of Recommendation**
- 32 No
- 108 Yes
How did you respond to the student’s desire to transfer?

- Talked about issues they faced: 110
- Recommend they connect with campus resources: 53
- Wrote recommendation without probing: 32
- Encouraged them to transfer: 9

*question was “Check all that apply”.*
Have you referred students interested in transferring to other offices/partners on campus?

Yes (67)
No (73)
Who did you refer the student to?

- Advising Dean: 39
- Faculty Member: 33
- Academic Advisor: 29
- Other: 19
- Colby Friends: 15
- Coach: 5

*question was “Check all that apply”.*
What reasons were offered by students who wanted to transfer?

- Social Climate: 94
- Location: 73
- Academics: 63
- Intellectual Climate: 60
- Other: 42
- Change in Family Situation: 17
- Financial Aid: 13
- Facilities: 7

*question was "Check all that apply".*
Did facilities play a role? Which ones?

*question was “Check all that apply”.*
In what semester did the majority of students talk to you about transferring?
In what semester did the majority of students actually transfer?
Implications

• Most faculty have talked to a student about transferring
• Less than half of the faculty referred a student to another office or colleague
• Social climate is the primary reason why students leave, which is similar to climate survey results
• Most students leave between first and sophomore year
Comprehensive Next Steps

• Continue to review data from climate survey to inform practices
• Shifted Advising Dean system to a developmental model to address student needs (i.e. class model)
• Expand First year orientation to an all year experience
• Fall mid-semester check-in survey for First year students
• Follow up programs and one-on-one engagement with first year students after survey results
• Encourage and implement academic advisor engagement and one-on-one check in conversations during Jan Plan
• Develop protocol for advising dean to contact admitted students much earlier (i.e. early decision 1, early decision 2, Posse, Questbridge)
Comprehensive Next Steps (cont.)

• Additional attention should be given to the needs of student athletes
• Develop ‘best practices’ document for faculty and staff to help support students thinking of transferring
• Continue to address social climate issues by creating and enhancing initiatives (i.e. universal experiences, Faculty in Residence Programming, expanded Civic Engagement opportunities, late night programming)
• Administer newly developed survey to students who are transferring (“exit survey”)
  – Change some questions on survey to better understand primary motivation for transferring