

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- There is a long history of studies on transfer students, dating back at least to the 1960s, and these studies continue to have an impact on research today. Much of this research has introduced **challenges** for this population such as **transfer shock** (Hills 1965, Cejda, 1998), **stigma**, (Chen & Liu, 2024), **receptivity**, (Herrera & Jain, 2013), **adjustment** (Ruggles Gere et al. (2017)), **lateral and vertical transfer** (Kirk-Kuwaye, 2007), and **swirling**. While these concepts are acknowledged, they are typically framed as larger institutional challenges or examined as individual case studies. There is little focus on transfer students as a whole student.
- While these studies have contributed much to our understanding of the transfer student experience, they also present their own challenges. Most studies focus on **community college transfer rather than four-year to four-year** even while evidence suggests four-year to four-year students have less support (Kirk-Kuwaye, 2007), (Li, 2010).
- Additionally, much of the existing research emphasizes the need for **academic support or social support, but not both**. While Ruggles Gere et al. (2017) offer research on learning transfer among transfer student writers, discussing the challenges they face and proposing strategies for mutual adjustment to support their writing development in a pilot writing course, the study focuses specifically on academic support. A handful of studies offer suggest both academic and social support are necessary but do not discuss how to do this (Townley et. al. 2012). Other studies reference the significance of personalized support and resources tailored to transfer students' needs (Guenther & Wehlburg, 2022), (Goodwin Roberts et al., 2015).
- Finally, much of the existing research looks at transfer students taking typical college courses alongside first-year students. **Few studies focus on transfer student specific courses and even fewer focus on blending academic, social, and mentorship support with High Impact Practices (HIPs)**. George Kuh (2013) recommends that every student should participate in at least two HIPs during their academic career, to increase student engagement and success. Six of these practices are included in the design of 1533 including collaborative assignments, first-year seminar mentorship, advising, and resource connection, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning through cultural institutions, ePortfolios, and writing-intensive work.

Key Research Question

Can a writing and research course serve as a resource for connecting transfer students to campus through high-impact academic and social experiences?

INTERACTIVE

Which **High Impact Practices (HIPs)** do transfer students find the most meaningful?



To find out, click on the QR code below. All 1533 sections ask students to fill out a closing reflection at the end of the course. The reflective prompt has them consider a specific moment (whether challenging, meaningful, positive, negative) they experienced in the class. The QR code leads to a word cloud of coded reflection themes highlighting the moments they found significant from the course. Snippets of reflective quotes are also included to provide a sense for how students encountered the course.



MATERIALS & METHODS

Procedures & design: IRB approved six-year longitudinal study, seven 1533 sections, four instructors.

Participants: 93 Transfer students from Fall 2022 (49) - Fall 2023 (44), cohorts across seven different 1533 sections.

Veteran: 5

Gender: 54 Female Students, 39 Male Students

First-Generation: 14

Age: The average age is 20 years old, 22 are above the age of 21

Class Standing: 14 Freshman, 57 Sophomores, 21 Juniors, 1 Senior

(93) Opening Surveys (Both Quantitative/Qualitative Analysis)

(87) Exit Surveys (Both Quantitative/Qualitative Analysis)

(72) Closing Reflections (Qualitative Analysis)

This **mixed method study** assessed academic and social experiences of 93 students enrolled in multiple sections of a transfer student-specific research and writing course, which incorporated high-impact practices (HIPs) emphasizing academic and social connections.

These practices were analyzed using grounded theory analysis of opening and closing survey responses.

Transition Theory was incorporated as a framework to analyze 72 closing course reflections

RESULTS

Opening Survey Results

Where do they reside? 87% of students live on campus, 36% of these students live in TLC (Transfer Living Community) or in Centennial Halls (a floor dedicated to transfers), while 13% live off campus and commute.

Do they work and attend school? 32% of students work an average of 20 hours a week.

Where did they transfer from? The majority, 85%, transferred from four-year universities while 15% transferred from community colleges. Predominately, students attended small private schools (49%) but typically represent 22 different states per quarter.

What was orientation like? 65% of students attended orientation. Of those attending, six students responded positively, while most were frustrated.

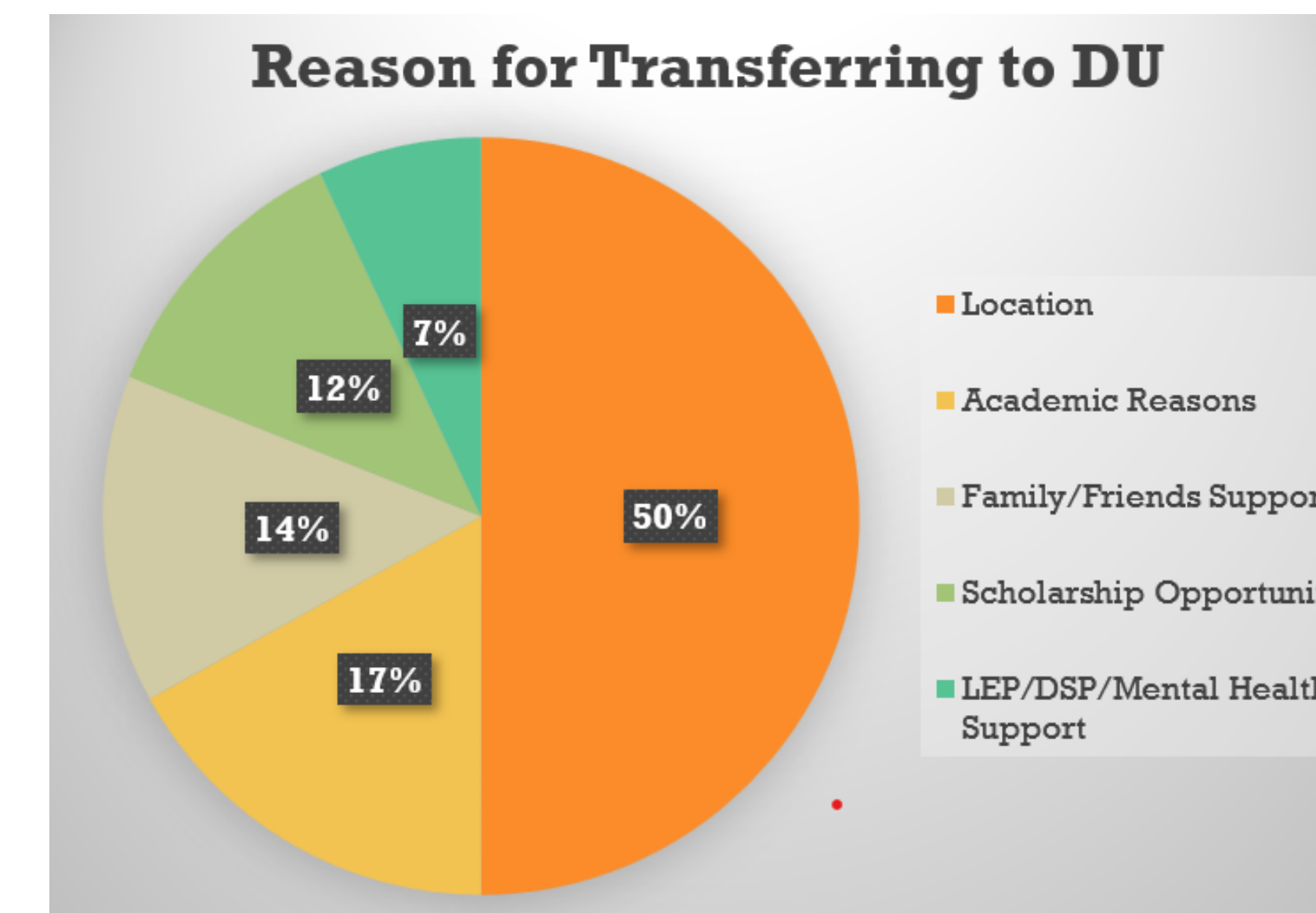
Can they identify their major advisor and have they met them? 82% could not identify their major advisor. Of those who could, only 16 had met with this advisor. Many met with a general transfer advisor over summer to sign up for fall classes but were confused if this advisor was supposed to continue advising them.

How did they register for 1533? The majority, 86% were encouraged to register for 1533 via their general advisor rather than on their own.

What was social engagement like before entering 1533?

35% were signed up for at least one club

16% were in multiple clubs



Closing Survey Results

What was social life like after 1533? Did they find other transfer student friends? 97% found transfer student friends early through First Accent, Orientation, or 1533. 51% directly mentioned WRIT 1533 as a catalyst for meeting other transfer students.

When asked who they spent more time with, transfer or non-transfer friends, 40 students, roughly half the population, made more transfer student friends while 12 spent equal time with both.

Did they join a club while in 1533 or after? Before 1533, 35% had signed up for a club and 16% were in multiple clubs. By the end of 1533, 61% had signed up for a club and 26% were in multiple clubs.

What was their social experience like at DU by the end of their first quarter? 74% indicated having a positive social experience, while another 14% felt it was neither worse nor better.

1533 Impact from Survey Results

84% felt 1533 directly aided them in connecting to the DU community.

When asked about their favorite or least favorite moment in class:

84% commented on favorite moments and predominately on social experiences with 63% focusing on a field trip such as Colorado History Center, the Denver Art Museum, Observatory Park, DU's carillon tour, or social activities such as pumpkin carving or eating together at Lucille's or Spanky's.

37% focused on class assignments they enjoyed, peer workshoping, and the repour they felt with their professor.

Most memorable assignment? 79% felt storytelling assignments that blended creative writing and research such as vignettes, autoethnographies, and feature essays were most memorable.

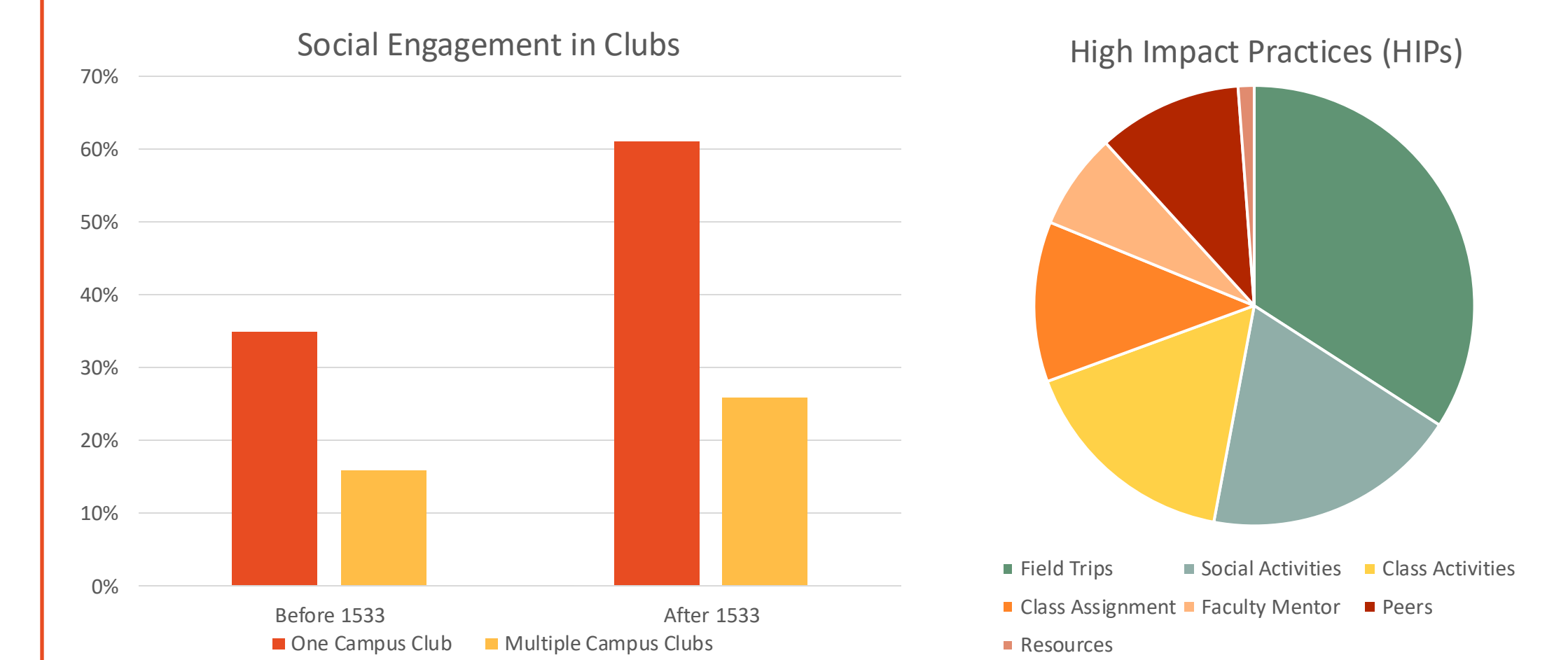
Most challenging assignment? 54% felt traditional research assignments (literature reviews, IMRAD's) were difficult

97% said they would encourage other transfer students to take 1533 because it positively impacted their experience at DU.

CONCLUSIONS

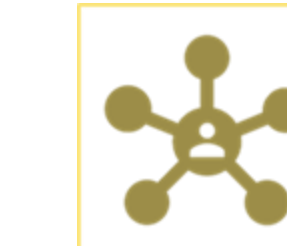
Based on student responses to the end-of-quarter survey, there is evidence that:

- 1533 has had a positive impact on most (97%) of students enrolled in the cohort sections. The majority would encourage other transfer students to take the course.
- 1533 fostered DU community connections. Most students (84%) mentioned a direct connection between the course and finding a sense of community.
- 63% of students found meaningful moments in high-impact social experiences (field trips, food gatherings, class friendships, etc.) and (34%) commented on academic experiences (enjoyable assignments, peer group work, challenging learning) in 1533. Of the academic experiences, (79%) of students enjoyed assignments that blend storytelling/narrative with research.
- Students are mostly satisfied (90%) with their academic experience at DU but their social experience could be better.
- There is an increase in social engagement after joining the class.

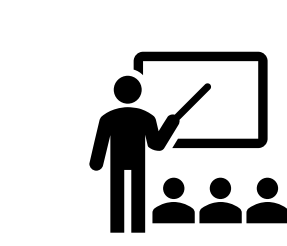


FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- This is a small snapshot of data representing two years of research. The study has a total of seven years of data to still be assessed, including interviews, focus groups, additional surveys, and course reflections.
- While 67% of transfer students feel like DU is trying to connect them to their community, 47% indicated 1533 was the main effort, more can be done especially with orientation, advising, mentorship, additional high-impact practices, and social connections.



DU made effort
67% agreed



1533 had a positive impact
97% agreed



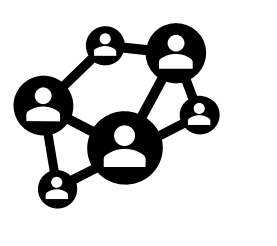
65% Attended Orientation
19% positive



Registration & Advising
65% positive



Academic Experience
90% positive



Social Experience
74% positive

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High Impact Practices in 1533

Colorado History Center

Carillon Tour

Denver Art Museum

Observatory Park

Lucille's, Spankys, & Torchys

Pumpkin Carving

Campus Photo Scavenger Hunt

