

Order of The Golden Bear

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ESTABLISHED 1900

Temporary Meeting Location November 12, 2019

The meeting was convened at 6:00pm.

Items for the Good of the Order:

A fellow mentions that the usual Fellow Chronicler sadly cannot attend the meeting because of a work conflict.

A fellow notes that Scribe & Steward positions are still available on the Order Council. If anyone is interested, they can contact the Warden or Chronicler.

A fellow mentions the Warden's challenge in regards to going back to our home at the Usual Place. Fellows or others who feel led to contribute to the Order or the Senior Hall Restoration Program can do so at give.berkeley.edu.

Items for the Good of the University: Transfer and Non-Traditional Student Experiences

To begin the meeting, the Warden poses a few questions for consideration:

- What does community building look like for non-traditional undergraduates?
- How can transfer students gain job experience they need in two years?
- What do non-traditional students bring to this campus that traditional incoming freshmen may not?
- What are some steps we are taking to provide an equitable experience for all undergraduates?
- Where can equity for non-traditional students be improved?
- What do any transfer students in the room see as their role/place in the University?
- What difficulties do transfer students face in joining clubs?
- What are some hardships and joys of non-traditional students that "traditional" students do not see?

The Warden also defined non-traditional students as students who are not coming straight out of high school, such as veterans, formerly incarcerated students, student parents, among others.

A fellow speaks of their experience as a transfer student. They mentioned a transfer student class that they took, which provided information about many different resources on campus. The fellow believes this course should be required for transfers, as it was a very helpful class.

A fellow brings up that many transfers are older students, who bring more life experience to class discussions. The fellow is delighted that more transfers are being accepted to Cal.

A fellow brought up that some transfers feel that there is a stigma against transfer students on campus. The fellow let us know that transfer students generally come in motivated, with life experience. They also mentioned that these transfer students left with less debt than non-transfer students.

A fellow appreciates a former fellow recognizing that there is stigma. They brought up that at high school graduations, students who are going on to 4-year colleges are recognized more than those that are going to pursue other paths. The fellow said that this idea is more of a community standard than simply an individual problem.

A fellow asked about statistics on transfer students with disabilities. The fellow shared their experience going through college as a disabled student, and brought up that not all community colleges and universities have disabled student programs.

A fellow says that transfers that they have talked to are shocked at the disparity between community college classes and UC classes. They are forced to try to catch up on missing units, which they would not have had to do had they come in as freshmen. The fellow also mentioned that many of these students are full time students, and also working.

A fellow shares their experience transferring to Berkeley. They don't feel like the measures in place are adequate to help them adjust to the rigor. The fellow would like more transparency with what the academic load is like.

A fellow brings up GBO, and how the program helps transfer students. The fellow talked about how in this program, transfer students are led through the Career Center and attend an alumni mixer. The fellow shared their experience talking to transfer students at the alumni mixer event. The fellow brought up involvement of transfer students at Cal.

In a discussion this fellow had with transfer students, those students asked if transfer students have a continuing voice on campus.

A fellow says it is important to recognize the efforts that GBO has made to include and prepare transfer students, but wonders if there is a way to provide similar resources throughout their time as a student. The fellow also brought up using inclusive language, such as “first-year” instead of freshman, to include transfers.

A fellow brings up that there used to be a residence building specifically for transfers. They wonder if there is something similar in place today. They support the points of a previous speaker, but they think that there have to be ways to build community here, and do a special “transfer orientation” that provides specific information that will help them succeed at Cal.

A fellow talks about housing communities. They mentioned the transfer referendum, which dedicates a seat in the UC Senate to transfer students.

The Warden ponders what representation there is for transfer students on an administrative level.

A fellow reminds us that Oski would not be here without a transfer student. The fellow was disappointed that there is a stigma against transfer students. They asked a previous speaker about the transfer class, and why it was not more popular, and mentioned that transfer students in spirit groups come in wholeheartedly, because they know they don't have as much time.

A fellow talks about transfer students and the ASUC, as well as other nontraditional students. They said that these students are trying to find opportunities, and that by helping advocate for them, we can help them find a place. Being mindful of language, helping transfers connect with peers through connection programs, like coffee connections, GBO, as well as getting to know students individually in order to improve advocacy efforts.

The Warden asks how we can make the community more welcoming, and fostering the idea of belonging.

A fellow shares their experience as a transfer student. They talked about how the career center simply told them that they were behind. They mentioned Carol Christ, and the stigmas with being a transfer.

A fellow talks about having a dinner discussion with transfers, where transfer students can feel welcomed and like people care about their experiences. The fellow said that it is almost like transfer students are treated like they have some sort of disability or

illness, going back to the stigma idea. The fellow reiterated that transfer students come from a different experience.

A fellow addresses the stigma that has been discussed, and talked about how this stigma began in high school. They talked about how they had this stigma about community colleges themselves, but realize that the path of Community College was the right decision for them. They believe that as a community, the stigma can be combated on campus, but we cannot combat the stigma that grows in high schools. The fellow felt that going through the obstacles that they had made them a stronger, more successful person today.

A fellow talks about a family member's experience as a transfer student to Berkeley. The fellow talked about how cost-effective it is to go to a community college before going to a 4-year university. They talked about how once you're employed, nobody cares whether you were a transfer student or not.

A fellow talks about their experience as a 4-year student, and how talking to transfer students has shaped their experience on campus. They feel that hearing about other people's life experiences have expanded their horizons and viewpoints

A fellow responds to a previous comment about terminology, particularly "first year" vs. "freshman." They asked the Order about what terms are used, and also mentioned that not everyone responds to a term the same way. The fellow brought up Cal Day, and realized that many prospective students that attend may not know that they do not have to come here the following year. They suggested that a change in the language may make it clear that you do not have to take the most common path to get to Cal.

A fellow is concerned about the academic issues associated with being a transfer student. They talked about how not all transfer students come into Cal knowing certain citing formats or the resources offered here. They bring up that 2 years is very rushed for transfer students to adjust and succeed academically.

A fellow talks about the Transfer Welcome Day, which began in spring 2019. This day was catered toward prospective transfer students, and is being planned again for next year and following years. In the future, Transfer Welcome Day and Cal Day will hopefully be on the same day. The fellow talks about their experience getting to know and talk to transfer students, and how that in high school, they had a limited view of what a transfer student was.

A fellow talks about their experience in FPF (Fall Program for Freshmen), a smaller program that helps incoming students adjust to Cal. The fellow wondered if this program could be expanded and tailored to include transfer students.

A fellow talks about international “transfer” students, and how these students have the additional challenge of adjusting to a new country. The fellow also remarks about the poise of international students coming to this country, and how respectable it is to pursue education abroad.

A fellow comments on a previous fellow’s remark about the nomenclature and stigma of “first year” vs. “freshman.” Even in an assumption that “first year” is better, we are still labeling. This is a form of judging others, and stigmas find a way to creep in.

Stereotypes and stigmas emerge from fears of people being different. The fellow encourages us to consider some of the stigmas associated with the labels:

International

Out of state

Undocumented

There is a clear, negative pattern with labeling, judging, stigmatization.

With regards to the first year vs freshman debate, the fellow further encourages us to think about the stigma when students have to admit a “fifth year” status. This might be seen as an inverse of a transfer student, who has to come to a “lesser school” to qualify to move onto a “better school.” Even “transfer” has some connotations. We have to recognize stigmatizations that are attached, not just for students coming in from community college, and actually look at what that student experiences entering this campus for the first time: what do they need with regards to support and structure, and what can they give back to our campus? They are a resource to the campus just as much as any other student.

A previous speaker’s comment about FPF gave this speaker an idea. The FPF program could possibly be used as a transfer intro program, as classes in FPF are very small. The fellow particularly notes the now-defunct FPF San Francisco program, which was situated in SF’s financial district. If this space could potentially become an introduction to transfer student programming, this could mix student ideas and professional development, including networking opportunities. Of course, the logistics would be difficult to work out, but an interesting idea nonetheless.

A fellow follows a previous speaker, building on the FPF idea. It is quite brilliant because of the core mentality of community college: professors are there for you. They are bridging the gap of education inequality, and they want you to succeed. They prepare working adults who are also able to go to school. Classes are usually no bigger than 40 students in community college, and students receive more personalized attention that does not always happen at Cal. The transfer student limit to 5 semesters is problematic because it does not accommodate for different types of community college. Cal doesn’t have a lot of students from Northern California for example, and some of these small extension community colleges are very limited with the classes they offer.

A fellow commends vulnerability and openness of previous speakers, regarding the various challenges that transfer and other students face. With regards to the discussion of labels, this fellow thinks that there is not an inherent problem with labels themselves, just with the stigmas attached. We should continue to use labels as long as they are properly used. It is not fair to *not* acknowledge our differences in background, we should take pride in the labels / communities we represent. Drawing on previous comments on FPF, this fellow also mentions the Bridge program. A program that addresses specific concerns for first generation students who do not have parents who have gone to college, the classroom sizes are smaller, and it also provides a supportive environment and cool community.

A fellow wants to mention housing (a huge problem generally) for transfer students and international students in particular. For this fellow, when they were first coming to Cal, it was really hard to find a place to live. This fellow had already attended some college and did not want to repeat the dorm experience. This fellow got lucky getting housing, but this is not always the case. How can administrators make finding housing better for transfers? If we had a program that directed students with how to find off-campus housing, this would be very beneficial to transfer students as well.

In response to the previous speaker, there is a website run by the University that can be found via the Cal housing website. It is designed to help students find off-campus housing. This fellow found transfer roommates based on this. But, the site is not very well advertised. But it really is a great resource to find current students, or graduating students with opening up apartments.

Another fellow continues, with Cal Housing. It does have a lot of problems, but we do have to keep in mind transfer students. Many of them prefer UCLA, because they offer housing explicitly to transfers. Transfers are the last group to find out they are coming here, this is an inherent disadvantage in the race for housing. There is no designated space, some people get lucky and get crammed in with the dorms with freshmen (and they are often spread out amongst freshman.) It is actually really scary to find housing here, especially having to make a quick decision. Also, transfers have to take into consideration that you are not guaranteed housing, which lead them to decline an offer from Cal. It really is a big thing that scares away transfers from Cal.

A fellow mentions the talk about the use of language. This fellow is very proud of identities, insisting that they are a very important part of Cal, as well as the diversity of identities within an individual person. But this identity should not be placed before the student themselves, it should be included with them. "Disabled," "transfer," corrected to "Student who is disabled," or "student who transferred." This helps open up the conversation. Common language "a [] student," this fellow asks that we think about changing the norm about putting labels before the person. This is a larger problem

about society, in the news all the time. In our personal conversations, we should stray from confining people to one category.

A fellow acknowledges the comments made by a previous speaker. Where on campus do these labels come after the person? It was deliberate, a marketing idea, trying to bring down stereotype and stigma. "Student athlete," or "student parent" are great examples. When you do this, you automatically make a more positive image of that student, their experiences, and the value to campus and community.

The Warden offers a perspective about labels, and preference with individual people. Some people self-describe as [] person, with the label out front.

A fellow appreciates the conversation, a shift from assuming a label to asking. Just like pronouns, we can ask students about their experiences so that they can choose the labels. Also, this fellow mentions Cal rentals. Maybe it would be possible to work with admissions to provide information on this resource up front. The fellow also wonders if we could make use of technology and innovation to make connections between students even prior to coming to Cal?

A fellow remarks that when a person makes a choice about labels and personal preference, it depends on the context. If you identify yourself, if the society has an attitude toward people in a category, when you identify yourself as part of that category, are you feeding into that, or contradiction that? The fellow encourages us to be conscious of this relationship so we can change the norm. You can change the code context, and put it in your own context of descriptive language.

A fellow thinks about what actions we as individuals want to take as a result of this conversation. Such as: we have to make sure that information gets out sooner rather than later about housing for transfer students, to prevent bad housing situations. If we want to attract them to Cal, we can make considerations about our own processes of choosing nominees and topics.

The meeting closed with song, and was adjourned promptly at 7:28 pm.

Meeting minutes taken and compiled by a dedicated fellow in the Chronicler's absence.

