

Order of The Golden Bear

ΕΙΡΗΝΗ

ESTABLISHED 1900

The meeting was convened at 6:01pm.

Usual Place, October 14th, 2025

Items for the good of the order:

- A Fellow reminded everyone that the Order is still looking to fill the role of steward. If you or anyone you know may be interested in the position please contact the Warden or Chronicler
- A Fellow mentioned that all of the remaining discussion topics for the semester have been chosen: “Political Divides & Civil Discourse: How Can The University Lead By Example?,” and “The Good Of The Order Of The Golden Bear.” If you have comments or questions please come to one of the Order Council meetings.
- A Fellow rejoiced in having all living Alumni Secretaries in the room.
- A Fellow shared an invitation for a special presentation by Cal Athletics and the NFL: 9066—fear, football and the theft of freedom. The event will be held on October 30th from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. in the Field Club Memorial Stadium. The event is open to the general public. It will be a screening of the film followed by a discussion.
- A Fellow wanted to remind everyone that the Field Club is located in the plaza center of Cal Memorial Stadium
- A Fellow reminded everyone that National Transfer Week is this coming week. Information is available online.

Items for the good of the university: Life as a Transfer Student and Non-Traditional Students

- *What are some challenges that might unintentionally limit participation from transfer or non-traditional students?*
- *How can the University better support opportunities for social connection between transfer and non-traditional students?*
- *How can non-transfer students play a role in helping transfer and non-traditional students feel more connected to campus life and culture?*
- *In what ways can programs, clubs, and student organizations create more welcoming spaces that encourage participation from transfer and non-traditional students?*
- *How well do student government and campus leadership currently reflect the perspectives of non-traditional students, and how can representation be strengthened?*
- *What are some ways to increase engagement of transfer and non-traditional students in leadership roles on campus?*
- *How can on-campus housing options better support the needs and experiences of transfer and non-traditional students?*

The Warden opens the floor for discussion.

- A Fellow started the conversation by expressing a desire for an integrative approach for addressing the problems transfer students face. There are numerous organizations on campus that offer support specifically for transfer students (Bridges, ASUC, Transfer Center). However, there is a potential for this approach to be counterproductive as it is isolating. One thing this Fellow has noticed is a lack of transfer students in leadership positions within student groups on campus. Certain rules in leadership eligibility, such as requiring a minimum length of club participation, disproportionately impacts transfer students who have less time on campus to participate in organizations.
- A Fellow commented that the transfer student experience is often overlooked by freshman students. There is a wide range of identities within the transfer student community and sometimes first-year students don't realize the multitude of pathways transfer students take to get here. The Fellow agreed that leadership roles for transfer students are important, but they also expressed that there is a problem with students not valuing transfer students. The Fellow has experienced students looking down on others who transfer from community college as they claim this is the easy way into the University.
- A Fellow mentioned that a student organization they partake in on campus does accept transfer students but they have not had a new transfer student admitted in over ten years. They mentioned that a major benefit for non-transfer students is that they have a greater ability to reapply if they are rejected once. Also, because they have less time on campus, transfer students have a harder time learning how organizations function. Potential remedies for these problems are targeted workshops, programs, and education.
- A Fellow noted that there are separate welcome days for freshman and for transfer students, and that these separate admissions days offer starkly different resources. While the freshman welcome day is on Cal Day and has abundant programming about campus life, the transfer welcome day during GBO emphasizes academics. In the past, this Fellow has seen as few as ten clubs tabling at the transfer welcome day. Also, the common advice for transfer students to "take it slow" can be problematic as transfer students who miss out on participating in campus organizing during their first semester struggle to get involved afterward. One example being ASUC. The Fellow mentioned there are now three transfer students on ASUC Senate, so things are getting better, but intentional outreach to new transfers would help to increase representation. Also, imposter syndrome is a real problem for transfer students. Transfer students feel a sense of not belonging. How can we address the issues of mental health in the transfer student community?
- A Fellow asked why students are not able to get into clubs through what seems like a screening process. The Fellow was under the impression that clubs would be interested in recruiting as many students as possible but apparently this is not the case.
- A Fellow mentioned that the Order has talked numerous times about how student organizations feel a need to present themselves very seriously which creates a feeling of stress akin to a job. The Fellow wonders if it is possible to minimize the stress of voluntary club participation and increase the sense of enjoyment—balancing fun with rigor.
- A Fellow expressed an idea of creating a common app that would allow transfer students to better access all campus organizations and resources available to them. Students would be able to filter through organizations and organizations would be better able to reach transfer students directly. There is precedence for the concept of a common app that had been implemented for the benefit of other underrepresented groups on campus.

- A Fellow commented on why some students are rejected from clubs, noting that transfer students are often seen as having “less return on investment” because they have fewer years to serve in the club. While certain schools (UCSD for example) have addressed problems such as this with anti-transfer bias training, the effectiveness of such training courses is questionable. The Fellow mentioned that they have heard other success stories in addressing this problem, specifically a DEI initiative implemented in certain sororities that implemented a transfer student quota. The Fellow mentions that another solution could be offering priority tabling for transfer-oriented groups. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach.
- A Fellow expanded on a previous speaker’s comment and remarked on the Blue Heart Initiative that is intended to promote less-selectivity in clubs on campus. They are unsure of the success rate. Though they are unsure how this would affect consultant groups which are inherently competitive. The Fellow questioned the effectiveness of quotas as well.
- A Fellow asked for information about the current search engine students use to navigate the 1,000 plus student groups.
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- A Fellow noted that CalLink is the most common tool used to look for current clubs, but most students find clubs by tabling or word of mouth rather than search engines.
- A Fellow shared that social media also plays an important role in how students find information about campus organization. The Fellow then seconded the idea for a common app. They suggested that the app could allow students to have a bio so that organizations could better target desirable students. The Fellow mentioned the newly developed AI tools created by University as a possible tool for campus student groups to use or have access to in addressing these problems. Additionally, the Fellow commented that they are not comfortable with the phrase “return on investment” being applied to people. It minimizes humans and feels arrogant. The Fellow stated that the Order is an example for why this is an incorrect lens by which to gauge potential candidates.
- A Fellow clarified that their previous use of the phrase “return on investment” was not representative of their own opinion. Rather, they were echoing a common logic purported by certain clubs (mainly consulting clubs).
- A Fellow mentioned that while the language of the “return on investment” is problematic, the sentiments behind its use are established and pervasive in certain communities on campus. Rather than attempt to change how groups speak, it would be more immediately effective to focus on concrete issues such as allocating priority tabling space to clubs supportive of transfer students.
- A Fellow commented on the discussion's emphasis on consulting clubs. The Fellow suggested that they can't imagine a faculty member in the Haas School of Business not being receptive to a group of transfer students who wished to form their own consulting group on campus. A transfer consulting group with a faculty member's support could be marketable and competitive among consulting groups. This would be an easier path to marked change than changing other groups set in their ways.
- A Fellow responded to a previous comment, claiming that there currently is a Haas-supported transfer consulting group, Core Consulting Group. The Fellow mentioned that they were personally told not to apply to a consultant group because they were a transfer student. The Fellow stated that there is a bias against transfer students, particularly against those who come

from community colleges. If we want to address this issue we need to address the bias which underlies all of this.

- A Fellow shared the opinion that a transfer student who attended community college for financial reasons made a good financial decision. The Fellow agreed that there is a bias toward transfer students. However, while transfers may feel like imposters, so too do freshmen and sophomores. The Fellow suggested that we stop using the term "non-traditional students"—it keeps people boxed in and upholds the very idea of separation we want to dismantle. In the 21st century, all students are traditional Cal students. The Fellow questioned if there are not inherent drawbacks to being a transfer, for while it is obviously a financial advantage, it comes with other challenges. Students considering attending community college and transferring need to be made aware that there will be difficulties and challenges presented to them because of this choice.
- A Fellow shifted the conversation to re-entry students specifically. The Fellow stated that re-entry students have been expressing dissatisfaction with the current housing being offered at University Village Albany, which houses families of students. Subsequently, more students are turning toward Anchor House. Additionally there is an unaddressed need for re-entry student space in Anchor House. The Fellow reiterated the importance of finding balance between integrative solutions and group specific solutions.
- A Fellow commented on their experience helping organize Golden Bear Orientation. The structure of the recruitment process makes it challenging to find group specific representation in the spring semester orientation. While it is easier in the fall, scale is also an issue because there are not enough representatives to lead the number of transfer students. The Fellow mentioned that training and mandates are only so helpful—cultural change is more impactful. More than anything, clubs themselves are going to have to lead the way in being more inclusive. Certain clubs will not change, but there are other resources that can aid in the transfer student experience such as alumni and willing RSOs.
- A Fellow asked if transfer students have specific counselors.
- A Fellow said they believe there are four transfer-specific counselors to serve a population of 7,000 transfer students. This is probably an issue directly related to funding and resulting from funding cuts.
- A Fellow suggested that Fellows who are interested in addressing some of the topics discussed tonight connect with the California Alumni Association. It seems that it would be relatively easy for CAA to host an event for transfer students during the week they are admitted. The costs would be low and it would allow students the opportunity to interact with potential alumni transfer students who can share valuable information. Likewise, the Alumni Association could host a paid event for transfer students by opening the Lair of the Golden Bear campground to host a transfer weekend trip where students could form connections with each other and acclimate to the Cal community. This would not cost the university and would greatly serve the sizable population of transfer students.
- A Fellow shared that they are currently working towards hosting a transfer mixer but it is difficult to organize without a centralized database of alumni. The Fellow commented that Haas Student Government has hosted similar types of events. The Fellow is also currently working toward creating a one-unit class in which transfer students would be mentored by alumni. The Fellow requested information regarding notable alumni transfer students or potential contacts at CAA.

They noted that with their current club budget of five hundred dollars, it is challenging to accomplish these plans.

- A Fellow responded to a previous speaker and states that there is a centralized database called CADS; it belongs to UDAR but CAA has access to it. The Fellow was almost certain that CADS carries information about which alumni are transfer students. The Fellow recommended developing a contact at CAA in order to gain access to this database.
- A Fellow stated that CADS is very helpful and has lots of data, but it also has tons of sensitive data. Direct access would be very hard to gain. The Fellow commented that Julia Lucas is the new Vice Chancellor for University Development and Alumni Relations. It may be beneficial for those interested in alumni and student relations to participate in campaigns such as hers which utilized the CADS system.
- A Fellow acknowledged that the information in CADS is highly confidential; however, it is more than just a fundraising tool. The key in anyone looking to access CADS would be to develop a relationship with someone at the Alumni Association and then establish that the data was not going to be used for fundraising but for community building—building a relationship and forming contact with CAA is the key. The Fellow clarified that The Lair of the Golden Bear is CAA's primary funding source, so it would not be donated for free. That is why any event at the Lair would have costs for participants.
- A Fellow asked how transfer students learn about resources available to them on campus.
- A Fellow responded to a previous comment by stating that they primarily use Instagram to see what organizations are on campus. Second is word of mouth and last is tabling.
- A Fellow mentioned that Paglipat, an initiative created to increase transfer representation in Filipinx groups, may be a successful model for how clubs can restructure themselves to better serve transfer students.
- A Fellow reminded everyone that it is important to note the difference between student resources and university resources. Some departments, such as engineering, have transfer resource centers while others do not. Making sure departments have transfer-specific resources would be beneficial.
- A Fellow spoke about some of the difficulties surrounding Golden Bear Orientation and transfer students. Noting that transfer students in the spring orientation were less likely to receive orientation leaders who had the experience of being a transfer student themselves.
- A Fellow asked what resources transfer students have at Anchor House who do not live at Anchor House.
- A Fellow responded that Anchor House claims to have multiple transfer exclusive amenities: a food pantry, commuter lounge, and lockers. However, they are all currently unavailable to students and have been for some time. They were told by an administrator that the facilities were closed for security concerns. The Fellow mentioned that there are also new transfer hubs in Martinez, Blackwell, and Unit 3 that are solely a space for transfer students to congregate. The co-ops are also an important resource for transfer students, especially for spring admits, because the leases are more flexible.
- A Fellow asked for clarification about comments made concerning a food pantry that is not even open to the residents?
- A Fellow responded to a previous question about the Anchor House food pantry. They have only seen the space used for private events. Never by students. There is no communication to the

students who live in Anchor House, so students don't really know what is going on. The current website would make it appear that the amenities are available but in reality they are not.

- A Fellow asked for clarification about what a food pantry is—"Isn't a food pantry where students go when they need access to food?"
- A Fellow clarified that the food pantry is more of an open kitchen space intended for student use.
- A Fellow asked about the presence of staff at Anchor. Is it possible that a lack of staffing is the reason why resources are not available?
- A Fellow stated that Anchor House does have RAs and other staff present on site. Also, The Transfer Living Learning Community closed after Anchor House opened. The organization provided transfer student programming and this seems like an important thing to bring back or continue. The Fellow mentioned that re-entry housing has been talked about over the past years but there is difficulty in forming themed housing. Maybe re-entry students can look to other themed student housing groups which have succeeded for inspiration.
- A Fellow wanted to acknowledge that while there is room for improvement there are numerous ways that transfer students' needs are being met. Living in Anchor House helped the Fellow transition into being a student at Cal, and it was a crucial experience in establishing the current work they do to help transfer students. The plurality of transfer identity has been an invaluable learning experience. Also, as a political science major, the Fellow has had a positive experience with professors who are very supportive and encouraging of them as a transfer student. The Fellow is thankful for having this experience, regardless of the road bumps. It has been deeply formative.
- A Fellow mentioned that an extension of this conversation is the study abroad students who are only here for one year. It is important to consider how these students feel connected to Cal and how we can help ensure that they reflect positively on their time spent here.
- A Fellow stated that they found their sense of community in the transfer community on campus. They hope programming and representation for transfer students increases. But more than anything they hope that the allyship between four-year students and transfer students increases. They ask that first-years and other non-transfer students reading this to show allyship toward transfer students when they are first starting, and try to support the things on campus which benefit the transfer student experience.

Discussion Adjourned at 7:30 PM. The Meeting closed with Song. Notes were compiled by the Chronicler.