Who Are Community College Transfer Students?: A View through the Faculty Lens

Lisa Castellino

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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WHO ARE COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENTS?:
A VIEW THROUGH THE FACULTY LENS

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Lisa Castellino
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Sociology

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Lisa Castellino

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

__________________________________________________________
Robert Heasley, Ph. D.
Professor of Sociology, Advisor

__________________________________________________________
Valerie Gunter, Ph. D.
Professor of Sociology

__________________________________________________________
Thomas Nowak, Ph. D.
Professor of Sociology

ACCEPTED

__________________________________________________________
Timothy P. Mack, Ph. D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Title: Who Are Community College Transfer Students? A View Through the Faculty Lens

Author: Lisa Castellino

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Robert Heasley

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Valerie Gunter
Dr. Thomas Nowak

According to Tinto’s (1975) model of student attrition, the level of student success is influenced by how well students integrate and perform within the academic system. Many studies focused on community college transfer students have considered portions of Tinto’s model from the perspective of the student but not of the faculty. This study focused on one portion of Tinto’s model, the academic system and answered the following questions: 1) How do faculty at a four-year, public institution conceptualize the community college transfer students’ academic preparedness; 2) to what degree, if any, does that conceptualization differ within the disciplines and 3) is there evidence that these perceptions are based on actual student outcomes in course performance?

Using a mixed methodological approach, the study found faculty held specific perceptions about community college transfer students. Some of these perceptions, such as the idea that community college transfer students were not performing at the same level as students who started at the four-year institution, were not completely confirmed through outcomes assessment.