Revisiting
Entering the Game at Half-Time:

Engaging Students in Internships and Co-Curricular Activities in Mass Communication Programs

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Origin of this study: 2010

- Economy
- Demographics
- Community College Enrollment
- Transfer students
Pilot Study at Fisher

• 5 years of trends in transfer population
• Online survey
• Personal interviews for added information

• AEJMC Denver: great start—extend study!
Current Trends

- Economy
- Demographics
- Community College Enrollment
- Transfer students
Research Question

How do we engage transfer—and native-- students in internships and co-curricular activities to support their career preparation?
Prior Work: Most Relevant

• National Survey on Student Engagement
  – “NSSE” 2009
  – Transfers lag behind “natives” doing internships

• Wang & Wharton (2010)
  – Transfers lag behind natives in student engagement
  – Astin’s Theory of Student Involvement
Large-scale study based on pilot study

1. Survey of students in 10% of programs listed in AEJMC directory
   --Phase I – 53
   --Phase II - 44

2. Interviews with 24 student volunteers from survey respondents, 5 focus groups
Survey: 609 Respondents

- Transfer: 191 (31%)
- Native: 418 (69%)
Results: Internships

- Have done
- Plan to do (50)
- No plans
- Undecided
How was the internship decision made?

- **On my own**
  - Natives: 80
  - Transfers: 70

- **Professor**
  - Natives: 40
  - Transfers: 30

- **Another student**
  - Natives: 10
  - Transfers: 5

- **Website**
  - Natives: 20
  - Transfers: 10

- **Brochure**
  - Natives: 1
  - Transfers: 2

- **Other**
  - Natives: 5
  - Transfers: 5
Reason for NOT participating in internship:

Natives

Transfers

Academic requirements
No time
Need more info
Not important to finding job
Not interested
GPA
Other
Joining Co-curricular Activities

- Have joined
- Plan to join
- Do not plan to join
- Undecided

Natives
Transfers
How was the co-curricular decision made?
Reason for NOT participating in co-curriculars:

- Academic requirements
- No time
- Need more info
- Not important to finding job
- Not interested
- Other

Natives

Transfers
Interviews/Focus Groups

• 70 volunteers, 24 interviews
• 5 focus groups

Communication majors like to talk....a lot!
Student Suggestions

Communications Fair
--second semester, showcase students and alums

Transfer Day/Evening
--before their first semester

Constant recruiting
--through classes, other students, social media
Role of Faculty...

• Share information about value of internships and co-curricular activities
• Demonstrate relevance of these activities to career preparation
• Serve as Academic AND Career advisor
• Recruit upper class students to serve as role models
Student Responsibility

“Many people have told me this: it’s going to be up to the person in question. They have to put themselves out there, or else they’re not going to be noticed and they’re not going to notice any opportunities, and that’s just the way it is.”

Wilborn Nobles II
Washington Post Intern
Louisiana State University
Going forward...

• Astin’s theory of student involvement
  – Extend to include role of faculty

• More systematic look at what works
Final Reminder: Focus on transfer students

“Being a transfer student is like entering the game at halftime.....you don’t know what’s happened before, but you are expected to get in the game and be successful going forward.”

• Thanks, Bill Doran!
Thank you!

Dr. Katie Donovan—statistics
Sabrina McMillan-Lobo--transcripts
Theresa Lazzara--transcripts
Matt Ulakovic—research/interviews
Michele Rochford--interviews