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Transfer Students at Mason: Results from the 2004-05 Graduating Senior Survey

I. Introduction and Highlights

The Office of Institutional Assessment has been conducting Graduating Senior Surveys since 1989. Senior students who graduated in summer 2004, fall 2004 and spring 2005 were directed to complete the Graduating Senior Survey online as they completed their online graduation application. In this academic year, 3,406 graduates earned a total number of 3,416 undergraduate degrees from Mason. Among them, 2,924 completed the survey for a response rate of 86%.

The 2004-2005 Graduating Senior Survey focused on experiences of transfer students: their transition to Mason, experiences as students and educational outcomes. All survey respondents were categorized into two groups using the following definitions:

- **Transfer students:** are those who started college at another post-secondary institution as first-time freshmen and, later, transferred into Mason
- **Native students:** are those who started college at Mason as first-time freshmen; have not attended any other post-secondary institution prior to coming to Mason

Each year, transfer students account for about 60% of the graduating class. Among the survey respondents, 57% identified themselves as transfer students. This *In Focus* is devoted only to the survey questions for transfer students. Native students did NOT answer these questions. The results of additional survey questions, which were answered by all students, are included in the full report of the 2004-05 Graduating Senior Survey. For detailed information on college and program level results, and for characteristics of survey respondents, please visit our website at <http://www.assessment.gmu.edu>.

The results reported in this In Focus are based on the responses from 1,669 distinct students who said they "started college at another institution and transferred to Mason."

Because of rounding, not all percentages equal to 100% in this report.

Highlights:

- Half of the transfer students came from a community or junior college; 29% transferred from a 4-year college or university, 1% had attended a technical, vocational or business school, and the remaining 17% of students had enrolled in at least two types of schools before coming to Mason.
- 38% of transfer students selected "location – being close to home" as the SINGLE most important reason for transferring to Mason; 19% cited "availability of academic programs" and another 10% indicated personal, family or work reasons. "Size of college" and "availability of scholarships/financial aid" were not important factors for most.

- In the areas of university support and services, transfer students are most satisfied with “the admissions process at Mason”, followed by “the University Orientation Program for Transfer Students.”
- Students who graduated in less than 3 years after transferring into Mason are significantly more satisfied with their overall academic performance and their adjustment to the Mason environment than their peers who took longer to graduate.
- 46% of transfer students reported no difficulty in transitioning to Mason; 19% had academic difficulties, 18% had financial difficulties, and 17% experienced social difficulties.

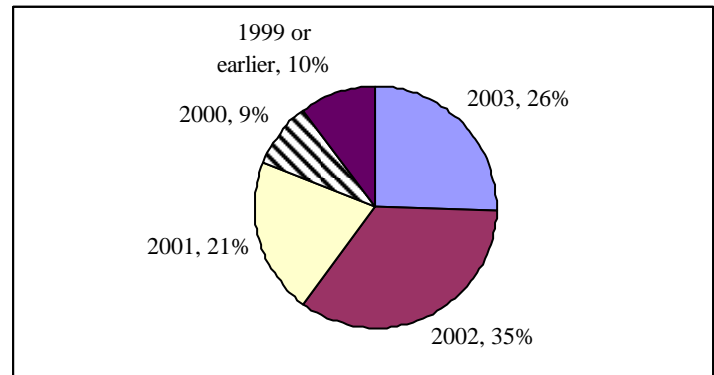
II. Pre-Mason Educational Experiences

1. Previous Institutions

Among the 1,669 transfer students who completed the survey, 53% came from a community or junior college; 29% transferred from a 4-year college or university, and 1% had attended a technical, vocational or business school. The remaining 17% of students had enrolled in at least two types of schools before coming to Mason.

Data from the Office of Institutional Research and Reporting (IRR) show that most transfer students come in as sophomores or juniors. It takes a typical transfer student 2-4 years to graduate from Mason. For the survey respondents (see Figure One), 26% first entered Mason in 2003, 35% started in 2002 and another 21% started in 2001. Nineteen percent entered Mason in 2000 or earlier.

Figure One: What year did you first enter George Mason University?



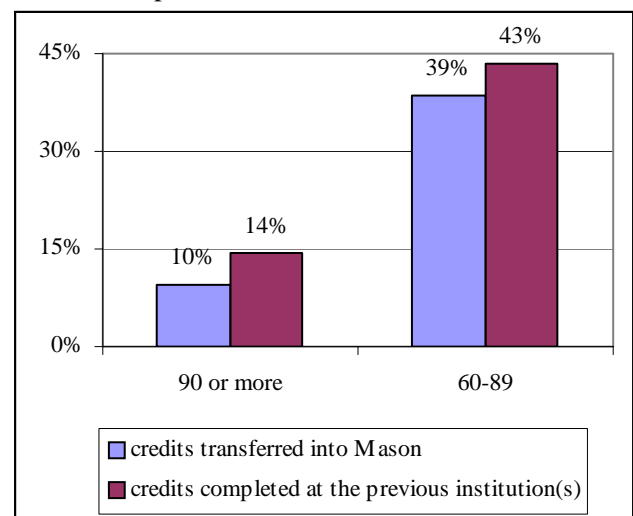
2. Number of Credits Transferred into Mason

The University has the following policies about credit transfer (see the University Catalog):

1. A student transferring into Mason receives a formal evaluation of transfer credit following the admissions offer;
2. In general, credits are accepted from regionally *accredited* institutions, provided that a *grade of C* or better has been earned, and that the *course content is equal to that offered at Mason*;
3. At least *120 total credits* are required for graduation, including *45 credits of upper-level coursework*. At least *one-fourth of the total credits* applied to the degree must be completed at Mason, and must include at least *12 upper-level credits in the major*. Among these, English 302 and a synthesis course are required.

As a result of these policies, some credits will transfer as electives and some students will graduate with extra elective credits. For example, in the survey (see Figure Two), 10% transferred more than 90 credits into Mason. These students still needed to meet the upper division and residential requirements which, in many cases, meant they graduated with more than 120 credits.

Figure Two: Credits Transferred into Mason and Credits Completed outside of Mason



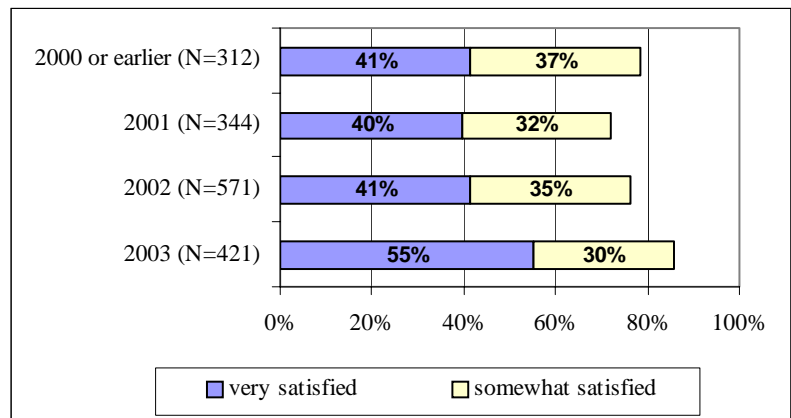
In the *Comments* section (Section VII of this report), some transfer students expressed their frustration with credit transfer or transfer credit evaluation. Some of their comments reflect their lack of understanding of University policies. For instance, many think their credits should be accepted as long as the *title* of the course is equivalent to that offered at Mason. Other students were dissatisfied with the credit re-evaluation process, which they say, is not made known to students.

3. Satisfaction with the Number of Credits Accepted by Mason

Nonetheless, 45% of transfer students were “very satisfied” and 34% were “somewhat satisfied” with the number of credits they were able to transfer into Mason. However, student satisfaction varies significantly by the year they first entered Mason.

As Figure Three shows, students who entered Mason in 2003 had the highest level of satisfaction: 55% were “very satisfied” with the number of credits they transferred, compared with 40-41% of earlier transferees. It is very likely that these students had earned an associate’s degree from the Virginia Community College System or were able to transfer in many general education credits; thus, they finished their degrees within two years. The students who suffered significant credit loss in the transfer process had lower satisfaction and it took them longer to complete their degrees at Mason.

Figure Three: Satisfaction with Number of Credits Transferred to Mason by Year of Enrollment



III. Reasons for Transferring to Mason

Three-fourths of transfer students (76%) indicated that being close to home was a reason for them to transfer to Mason rather than another institution; 53% said they found academic programs at Mason in which they were interested – the second most popular reason. For 39%, low tuition was a factor and 36% considered the academic reputation of Mason as a reason. Personal, family or work issues and recommendations from others are also reasons to transfer.

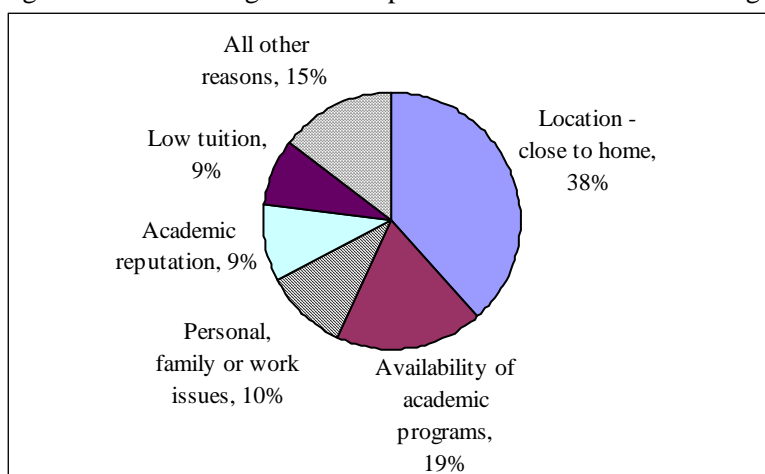
Table One: Top Six Reasons for Transferring to Mason Rather than Another Institution

Possible Reasons:	Percentage*
Location - close to home	76%
Availability of academic programs in which I am interested	53%
Low tuition	39%
Academic reputation	36%
Personal, family or work issues	33%
Recommendations from others	29%

**Percentages do not add to 100% because of multiple selections.*

When asked what was the SINGLE most important reason for transferring to Mason, 38% of transfer students selected location – being close to home. Nineteen percent said availability of academic programs and another 10% indicated personal, family or work reasons. Nine percent selected academic reputation and another 9% selected low tuition as the most important reason. Fifteen percent selected a reason other than the above but almost no one identified size of college, graduates gaining admission to top graduate schools or availability of scholarship/financial aid as the most important reason to transfer.

Figure Four: The Single Most Important Reason for Transferring to Mason



Among the transfer students who came to Mason because of the availability of academic programs (N=294), 22% graduated from NURSING.

IV. Satisfaction and Difficulties

1. Satisfaction with Transfer Experiences

Transfer students are most satisfied with the admissions process at Mason: 55% were “very satisfied” and 37% were “somewhat satisfied.” Students also expressed fairly high levels of satisfaction with the University Orientation Program for Transfer Students: 38% “very satisfied” and 47% “somewhat satisfied.” While higher levels of dissatisfaction were registered for university support for transfer students and departmental orientation program, all support services received relatively high ratings.

Students are satisfied with their own transition to Mason: 55% were “very satisfied” with their adjustment to the environment at Mason, 52% were “very satisfied” with their overall academic performance at Mason, and 51% were “very satisfied” with their academic performance in the first semester after transfer. Social involvement with other students received the lowest rating among all the self-transition items. In the *Comments* section, some students said they could not get involved with other students because they were working and commuting to Mason; others said they felt it hard to interact with students who started college at Mason.

Table Two: Satisfaction with Transfer Experiences**

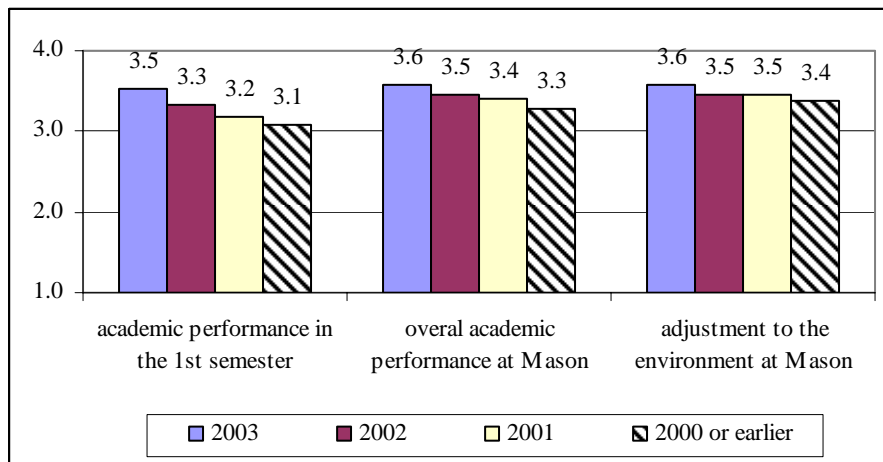
	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Dissatisfied/ very dissatisfied	Mean
University Support and Services				
The admissions process	55%	37%	8%	3.44
The university orientation program for transfer students	38%	47%	15%	3.19
The financial aid process at Mason	38%	42%	20%	3.12
The university support for transfer students	35%	43%	21%	3.07
The departmental orientation program for transfer students	33%	46%	21%	3.04
Student Self-Transition				
Adjustment to the environment at Mason*	55%	38%	7%	3.47
Overall academic performance at Mason*	52%	42%	6%	3.45
Academic performance in 1st semester after transferring*	51%	34%	15%	3.31
Social involvement with other students	35%	47%	18%	3.11

*Indicates significant differences in level of satisfaction between students who enrolled at Mason in different years.

** For both mean and frequency, the “Don’t Know” category was excluded.

Transfer students who started at Mason in different years expressed significantly different levels of satisfaction in four areas: number of credits transferred into Mason (See Figure Three.), academic performance in the first semester, overall academic performance at Mason, and adjustment to the environment at Mason. On three items shown in Figure Five, earlier transferees (started Mason in 2000 or earlier) had the lowest level of satisfaction; whereas, the later transferees (started Mason in 2003) had the highest level of satisfaction.

Figure Five. Level of Satisfaction by Year of Enrollment

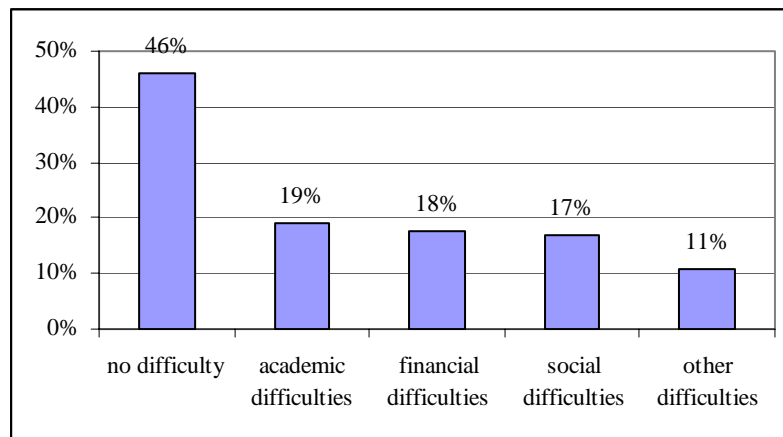


2. The Most Difficult Aspect of Transition

Forty-six percent of students reported NO difficulty in transitioning to Mason; 19% had academic difficulties, 18% had financial difficulties, and 17% experienced some kind of social difficulties. In Section VII of this report, we have summarized student comments on their difficulties in transitioning to Mason.

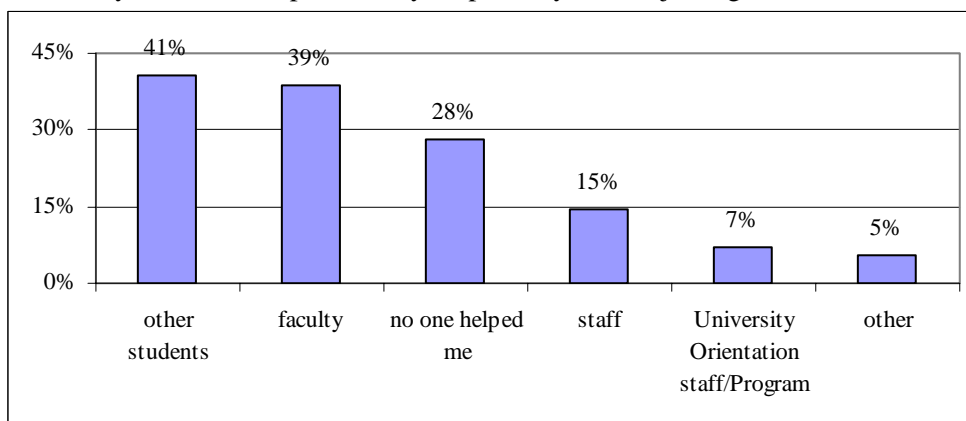
Forty-one percent of transfer students found other students at Mason to be particularly helpful to them in adjusting to life at Mason. Thirty-nine percent said faculty at Mason were helpful and 15% mentioned staff. More than one fourth of the respondents said no one helped them in this transition.

Figure Six: The Most Difficult Aspect of Transition to Mason



*The figures in the graph do not ADD to 100% due to multiple selections.

Figure Seven: Is there anyone who was particularly helpful to you in adjusting to life at Mason?



*The figures in the graph do not ADD to 100% due to multiple selections.

V. Academic Preparation and Change of Major

1. Academic Preparation

Forty-three percent of transfer students thought their previous institutions prepared them very well for study at Mason; 37% said they were well prepared and 16% said they were fairly well prepared.

2. Change of Major: Frequency and Reasons

When transferring *into* Mason, 52% of students applied for their same major, 32% changed their major and the remaining 17% did not declare a major at their previous institutions. *After*

transferring into Mason, three fourths completed their original major, 23% changed their major field of study one or two times and 1% changed more than three times.

Among the students who changed their major at Mason, 65% said it was because the new major better fit their career goals or interests. Thirty-four percent reported lack of interest in the previous major, 21% had academic difficulties in the previous major and 19% were dissatisfied with the previous program.

Figure Eight: How well did your previous institution prepare you for study at Mason?

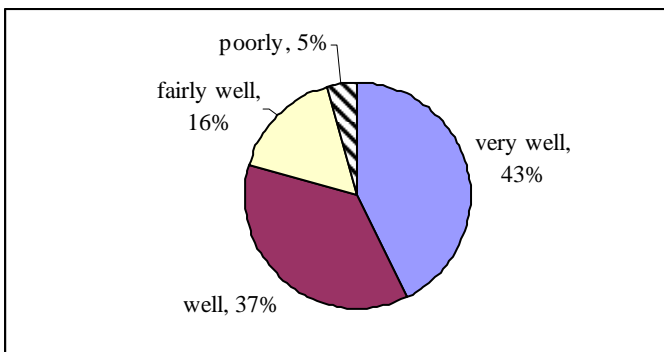


Table Three: Reasons for Changing Major (For those who Changed Major after Transferring to Mason)

Please explain why you changed your major (select all that apply).	Percentage
The new major better fit my career goals/interests.	65%
Lack of interest in the previous major	34%
Academic difficulties in the previous major	21%
Dissatisfaction with the previous program	19%
Reputation of the new program or the faculty in the new program	8%
Other reasons	9%

VI. Educational Outcomes

At the time of graduation, over 50% of transfer students thought Mason had contributed “very much” to their growth in the following areas:

- Critical thinking and analysis (62% rated “very much”)
- Written communication (62%), and
- Oral communication (54%).

Mason’s contributions were rated comparatively lower in three areas: western civilization (28% rated “very much”), arts (27%), and understanding and applying ethics in information technology (27%). These lower ratings are probably related to students not taking general education courses in these areas.

Transfer students who started Mason in different years had significantly different opinions about Mason’s contribution to their growth in the following seven areas: synthesis, information technology, literature, U.S. history, arts, western civilization and understanding and applying ethics in information technology. Transfer students who started in 2003 reported the *highest* level of growth in synthesis among all four groups (as shown in Table Five); but they reported the *lowest* level of growth in almost all the other six categories. This is probably because most students who started in 2003 and graduated in 2005 had completed their general education at another institution, and *synthesis* and *English 302* are the only general education courses they took at Mason. (The synthesis course was added to general education requirements in fall 2003.)

Students who enrolled in 2001 or 2002, are more likely to say that Mason has made substantial contribution to their growth in information technology, U.S. history, arts, western civilization, and understanding and applying ethics in information technology. Students who started in 2000 or earlier reported the highest contribution in literature.

Table Four suggests that for some skills emphasized in Mason’s general education program, particularly critical thinking and analysis, written communication, and oral communication, Mason made almost an equal contribution to transfer students’ growth no matter when they first entered Mason.

Table Four: Mason’s Contribution to Student Growth

Indicate the extent to which Mason contributed to your growth in each of the following:	Very much	Somewhat	A little	Not at all	Mean
critical thinking and analysis	62%	32%	5%	1%	3.55
written communication	62%	31%	5%	2%	3.52
oral communication	54%	33%	10%	4%	3.37
global understanding	49%	37%	11%	4%	3.31
synthesis*	46%	37%	11%	5%	3.24
social and behavioral sciences	47%	34%	13%	6%	3.22
quantitative reasoning	42%	38%	14%	6%	3.16
information technology*	41%	38%	17%	5%	3.14
literature*	35%	45%	14%	6%	3.09
scientific reasoning	37%	40%	15%	8%	3.07
U.S. history*	37%	35%	18%	9%	3.01
natural sciences	31%	38%	18%	13%	2.87
arts*	27%	42%	17%	14%	2.82
western civilization*	28%	36%	20%	17%	2.75
understand and apply ethics in IT*	27%	36%	21%	16%	2.73

*Indicates significant differences in level of satisfaction between students who enrolled at Mason in different years.

Table Five: Mason’s Contribution to Student Growth, by Year of Enrollment*

Mean Comparison (Rated on 1-4 scale: 1=not at all; 4=very much)	2003	2002	2001	2000 or earlier	Sig.**
synthesis	3.34	3.27	3.18	3.16	0.015
information technology	3.03	3.17	3.22	3.17	0.014
literature	2.94	3.13	3.11	3.19	0.000
U.S. history	2.93	3.04	3.13	2.91	0.010
arts	2.61	2.92	2.92	2.83	0.000
western civilization	2.56	2.85	2.87	2.75	0.000
understand and apply ethics in IT	2.56	2.86	2.76	2.72	0.000

* Only those areas in which statistically significant differences were found are shown here.

** This column shows the test results from Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). A result <.05 indicates that the mean values are significantly different across the four groups.

VII. Verbatim Student Comments on Transition to Mason

This section summarizes student comments on the transition to Mason. The original question on the survey was: *What was the most difficult aspect of your transition to Mason? Please explain.* Because of the way this question was asked, most of the comments were negative – students talked about frustrations or problems they encountered at Mason, not only limited to the initial transition period but their entire educational experience at Mason. There were only a few positive comments about a smooth transition to Mason, although 46% of transfer students said they had a smooth transition.

The following findings are supported by direct citations from student comments. Keep in mind that negative comments were solicited. Some frustration may have been avoided if students attended the University Orientation Program for Transfer Students, or met their advisors on a regular basis, or if they had been active in campus activities. The University might consider the following to improve the transfer experiences for most students:

- Enhance student understanding of University policies on transfer requirements, especially those regarding credit transfer/evaluation
- Enhance student awareness of services for transfer students
- Emphasize student participation in the Orientation Program
- Emphasize regular meetings between students and their academic advisors in the major

1. Reasons for a Smooth Transition:

Forty-six percent of transfer students had no difficulty in transitioning to Mason. From their comments, we suspected that many of these students had one or more of the following characteristics:

They come from local areas and got help from family and friends who attended Mason before their arrival.

- No difficulties in transferring to Mason – [I] grew up in the area, comfortable with the region and knew other students.
- Fortunately for me, my brother and cousins attended the University upon my arrival, so it made my transition smooth.

They had clear plans and expectations before transferring into Mason.

- I entered Mason as an adult working student. I had all my plans laid out and I took advantage of all the opportunities that Mason offered for me.
- I was very focused on what I wanted to do by the time I had enrolled at Mason.

They made necessary adjustments to their study habits and got involved in campus life.

- The overall experience has been good. I had to enhance my studies in order to gain full knowledge of my courses.
- The cultural and ethnic differences between the students here are huge- which was an adjustment for me, but also was very cool!

They took advantage of opportunities and support for transfer students provided by Mason.

- The school provides all the necessary facilities to assist the students to be successful and enjoy their educational and life experience in Mason.
- I did not encounter any difficulties when I transferred to Mason. The staff and the orientation were excellent.

2. Possible Reasons/Causes for Academic Difficulties

From the transfer students who reported academic difficulties during the transition, we summarized a list of possible reasons or causes:

Academic Demands Higher at Mason/Academically Under-prepared

- The most difficult aspect of transition was to adapt to the rigor of a four year university compared to a community college.
- I had academic difficulties in some classes because community college wasn't as demanding. I had to adjust to studying more and writing more papers.
- The studying behavior between a community college and the university were different in many terms. For example, it required a lot more studying time and communication between friends and professor to complete a course successfully.
- The Computer Science courses at [Northern Virginia Community College] (NOVA) did not use a Unix environment which made the transition to GMU very difficult. This was ultimately one of the major reasons for my change of major. (*Note: At least four transfer students mentioned the same problem in their comments.*)

Late Registration for Classes at Mason*

- When I came to Mason from NOVA, I came at the beginning of Spring Semester and by orientation all of the courses that I was interested in taking were full. It was extremely difficult to find classes that were compatible with my schedule while at Mason.
- The classes I was forced to take my first semester at Mason were four hard classes because I couldn't break them up. Every class I wanted was full during registration...
- The only problem was that transfer students registered very late, it impacted my ability to get the right classes. I probably could have finished a semester earlier if more classes had been available to me then.

** Note: transfer students are often admitted late. They can only register after going to the Orientation; otherwise, they have to wait until the final week before a semester starts.*

Frustration with Credit Transfer/Credit Evaluation

- I was very disappointed in the terrible initial transfer credit evaluation. Not enough information is provided to transfer students in the case they want to get a class re-evaluated. I have talked to many people who were not aware they could get a class re-evaluated... During orientation students should be told how to re-evaluate a class if they feel it was inaccurately transferred on their record.
- Not all my classes were transferred as I had hoped and I was required to retake classes that were almost exact to classes I had completed elsewhere.
- The transfer of credits [was difficult for me] due to the fact that my associates degree was not accepted and I had to retake general education requirements.
- NOVA claims that its program for transfer is the best for transferring to Mason. This is not true, I ended up taking a lot of classes that I thought were transferable, but actually turned out to be electives at Mason.

Large Class Size at Mason Made Student-Faculty Interaction Difficult

- The size of the classes made it more difficult to get aid from teachers or any one else...
- My previous institution had smaller classes, professors recognized me by name, professors and students relationship were better and their offices were nearer to the classes. Whereas GMU professors' offices are further, need appointment most of the time. Most professors are part time, their interest are different from the students.
- Sheer size of GMU made me just a number in lectures, which made it tough [for me] to adjust to a new environment.

Different Grading Systems Used by Different Professors

- I was dissatisfied with the grading system here. Making the GPA depend on + and - but not requiring ALL professors to use that, screwed my GPA. I came in with a 3.75 and am leaving with a 3.4 because A's are not A's but A- and B+. Some professors don't even use the scale; therefore, even if you receive a B+ they only submit a B.
- The grading system [in my program] is primarily subjective and allows for biased or preferential treatment of some students...

Dissatisfaction with Faculty/Teaching in the Program

- I think that Mason, especially my program, needs to screen their professors in order to find teachers that can TEACH, and make the material interesting and understandable. I've had several teachers who did not meet with students and did not make an effort to make the material digestible for students. I've had teachers who set expectations that no student in the class ever reached. Learning should be a combination of good teaching and reachable expectations.
- It is my belief that instructors [in my program] spend a great deal of time professing his/her knowledge rather than disseminating the subject matter. This creates an atmosphere of competition instead of making the student feel as if his/her success is the primary goal... Adjunct professors are not thoroughly screened before being allowed to interact with students in the program. The program is constantly changing (claiming for improvement) and does not have a proven system to educate students. It does not seem as if the student's success is the primary goal...; when 100 students out of a graduating class fail the license exam and need remediation, I think the system needs reevaluation.

- In general, I found the professors inaccessible to students except for strict circumstances. Mason has changed in the past few years because it is trying to become a much larger institution. Because of this desire, personal interaction between professors and students and the professors' love for teaching has dropped dramatically. Students are numbers now instead of people as it was when I first came here.

3. Dissatisfaction with Academic Advising

- I didn't feel like there was a great deal of guidance/support from the department or my academic advisor.
- I was told on more than one occasion that my academic advisor couldn't help me because I was a transfer student. Too difficult to deal with.
- My main problem was advisors. They were uninformative and just gave their most used answers. They seemed to be clueless to the individual student.
- It took a lot of effort to understand exactly my status, I am a transfer student, and my graduation requirements. Nobody explained that part to me; I figured it out on my own. Although the administrative staff throughout the campus were very helpful and pleasant when I asked them questions.
- I received no help from the university on procedural questions when I first started. I was not told how to register, where things were or who to talk to about academic questions. A packet including answers to these questions would have been helpful. When I did find out who my advisor was, he was less than helpful with my questions. He was also very hard to get in touch with. The school I transferred from provided much more support for its students. At Mason, one is very much on their own.
- I received inadequate information about a minor in special education. I was advised to take six graduate level classes which I took every semester from induction. It wasn't until the summer of 04 when I applied to the graduate school did I find out the information I received was not "completely accurate."
- I felt like I was never supported by my academic advisor or my college. In fact, I have never met my academic advisor. When planning what classes to take, or understanding what path I was on, I was completely alone in making decisions. I, as a student, have felt completely alone in my progress here at George Mason... As a part-time student, I feel that most of the support is directed elsewhere. With such a large number of students being working professionals, perhaps George Mason should review how they treat this class of students.

4. Financial Difficulties

- I struggled a bit financially because tuition was much more than what I was paying before I transferred to Mason plus the books were more expensive also, alongside the parking sticker, new student fee, etc. Tuition rate was o.k. when I first started Mason but then it went up and it hasn't gone down.
- Coming from another country and not being able to get aid was very difficult to concentrate on academics and pay next semesters tuition.
- It was very hard to get the amount of financial aid I needed and the process was difficult.

5. Social Difficulties

Although only 17% of transfer students said social difficulties were the most difficult aspect of their transition to Mason, many experienced frustrations when they tried to be socially involved with other students who came to Mason earlier, or lived on campus, or were different from themselves in age or ethnicity. Other transfer students, mostly working adult students, admitted that they had no intention of being socially involved.

Hard to Get Socially Involved with Other Students

- As a transfer student it was harder to meet people, there were not many events catering to transfer students socially, and not very many social events for upper classmen in general.
- Students of GMU are busy, most are working. Students usually hang out with their races, and international students are more difficult to get along with than local students.
- It seems everyone had already formed groups of close friends. I think this is because they were together since freshman year, and lived on campus. For me who transferred in my junior year, and lived at home, it wasn't easy trying to cut in and socialize.
- I'm amazed at how little social interaction I've had during my 3 years at Mason, especially since I consider myself an outgoing person. I am a commuter, and I know that has played a part in me not making connections with other on-campus students, but I also commuted to my previous university, and I

did not encounter the same issue. I'm not sure why it's been such a challenge to develop relationships here, and as such I'm not sure that I have a proposal for what GMU can do to improve the situation. I do think it is something worth looking into though, as I have heard very similar comments from other students about this experience, and I do think it affects the camaraderie (or lack thereof) felt at the school.

- I did not know anyone here and it took me a while to realize that you have to be involved in organizations at Mason to get to know people because a lot of people at Mason still act like they are in high school with their cliques.
- It's difficult to get involved socially when you are not at the school from day one of your freshman year. It's hard to meet people other than in your classes because everyone has a set group of friends prior to your arrival.

Lack of Proper Peer Group – Age Differences

- I'm from another culture and found it difficult to mingle with peers; possibly because I am also an adult learner and people were either too young or too busy to stick around with me.
- I was 24 years old when I transferred to GMU, so it was difficult to relate to students so much younger than me. I came here only to finish my education so it was hard to relate with many of my peers.
- I am a student in my 30's and the lack of a peer group can lead to a feeling of isolation.
- I was a returning student, age 30, had been a nurse for 5 years. I felt very old and outdated with all the youngsters... Still, the classes suited me fine, I just needed to adjust my frame of reference sometimes to understand the kids.

Living off Campus Making Social Interaction Difficult

- As both a transfer and commuting student, I found that I did not know many people in my classes. In addition, the distance I had to travel made it difficult to get together with folks. I also found that night classes were especially prohibiting when it came to making friends because many of the students had full time jobs and were in and out of the class without a word. As a transferred commuter, it was difficult to make friends. All I could do was go to class and then go home because of family responsibilities.
- When I transferred, I became a commuter instead of living on campus, and that hurt my chance to make long-lasting friendships that didn't already exist while at college.
- It's such a big commuter school and since I didn't stay on campus, making and gaining friends was difficult. The best way to make long lasting friends in Mason is to join a club/organization.

6. Parking

- The most difficult aspect of Mason is undoubtedly the parking issue. It is extremely frustrating to pay a large amount of money for a parking decal, only to find that there are never any parking spots available. This causes the commuting student to drive around searching for a place, often causing many students (and teachers) to be late for class. On my very first day of school at Mason, I drove around for 45 minutes before finding a parking spot. At that time, I seriously considered withdrawing from Mason and transferring to another school right away
- It is very difficult for commuter students to be involved in social aspect of school if there are no parking spaces available for us. As a commuter student, I spent extremely too much time locating a parking space. There should be a parking lot for long-distance commuters, as well as more spaces in general (that you don't have to pay extra for, we are not made of money).

7. Physical and Learning Disability

- I am disabled and had problems with my service animal on campus (especially with a professor).
- Many teachers did not know how to deal with deaf student like me. I was frustrated. Many of them discriminated me but I tried everything to fit in. I didn't have many good professors; some professors won't be flexible like slowing or clearing up with lectures since I am deaf.
- [My difficulty was:]Dealing with my learning disability in regards to contacts with professors and feeling substandard because of it.

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