

Helpful Information for Transfer Parents

- According to both the Department of Education and the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, nearly 60% of college students will start and end their college careers at different schools. Westmont has a high retention rate, meaning we often see our students persist and complete their college education once they are enrolled and admitted into the institution. We do not have a high number of students that transfer out of Westmont. Instead, we inherit a larger number of transfers. And in all honesty, we love having them come to Westmont and become more integrated into our Westmont community.
- This year we have around 55 transfer students, so your son and daughter is not alone in the transition. We love that our transfers come from a variety of experiences such as 2 and 4-year institutions, gap-year programs and internships.

Adjustment Process

- Transfer students need to be prepared for differences in campus culture, academic expectations, and levels of formality at different institutions. They should also be prepared for a phenomenon often dubbed “transfer shock.” This accounts for a possible dip in GPA in the first semester at a new institution. Meaningful support is key in order to help your son or daughter remain resilient and pursue success at Westmont.
- Transferring to a new college can have moments of challenge and can produce an array of conflicting emotions. The adjustment can be difficult. While every student is different, feelings of nervousness, excitement, and pressure to be successful are quite common ... and to be honest a natural part of the process of transferring.
- Your student is aware of what college is like, but they do not know what Westmont College is like, and this can be disorienting for some. These dual emotions can produce a sense of confusion, loneliness, or uncertainty in a transfer student’s experience. Your child is making another transition, and is, in some ways, much like a new first-year student only wiser.



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Suggestions for Helping Your Student Transition

- **Affirm the Past College Experience:** Your transfer student has learned something from his or her experience in their former college and can take advantage of that knowledge while still experiencing a clean slate at a new school.
- **Affirm the Reasons for the Transfer:** Your student will be most successful if they know themselves well, understand their strengths, challenges and passions, and evaluate their reasons for the transfer. According to the 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement, transfer students may be less “engaged” in high impact activities such as study abroad, internships, research, or capstone experiences, so your student may need you to remind them to seek out those opportunities – and affirmed in their decision to be at Westmont.
- **Help them Think Beyond the Transfer Process:** It is important that your student think beyond the actual transfer process itself and give thought and attention to what comes next as they settle into Westmont. So . . .
- **Encourage them to Engage and Learn their Community!** Here are a few suggestions that you might want to keep in mind and pass on to your student in order to encourage their entrance into the community:
 - Encourage questions about anything that doesn’t seem clear or is confusing.
 - Get to know their RA and ask them questions–RAs love welcoming and resourcing new students!
 - Attend a Res Life event and get to know other students living in your residence hall and section.
 - Identify a professor with whom you’d like to attend office hours. Ask them about classwork, their journey into their discipline and their experiences at Westmont.
 - Explore and commit to one group, club or activity. Identifying one, or a few, places of involvement can be rewarding while also prevent over-extension for the student.
 - Find a mentor.
 - Don’t fall into the “familiarity trap.” Just because you know how something worked at your old school, don’t assume that it is the same.
 - Make use of the “college knowledge” that you do have. You’ve learned some important lessons so far.
 - Remember that your experience is going to be what you make of it.

