

NISTS 2021

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Educational Session

Mentoring Builds Sense of Belonging—Even When It's Remote

Transition Programs and Services

Can remote mentoring benefit new transfer students? In 2020, Transfer Connect offered mentoring to new transfer students enrolled in remote summer courses at a large research university. Each student received mentoring from a graduate student, both one-on-one and in small groups. On the required exit survey, over 90% of students reported the experience increased their sense of belonging and confidence they could succeed at the research university. This session will describe mentoring model and unpack assessment results.

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Yes, Remote Mentoring *Can* Build Sense of Belonging: Learning from Transfer Connect

Michele Rabkin, Associate Director

Berkeley Connect

NISTS Conference 2021

Questions this session will answer:

- What is the Berkeley Connect mentoring model? How is it different from other mentoring programs?
- What do the data show about the impact of this model on transfer students' *sense of belonging*?
- Is it possible to successfully translate in-person mentoring to remote mentoring? What do the data say?

Berkeley Connect



Program Motto:

“You belong here.”



The Berkeley Connect Model:

Faculty mentor —→ *graduate student mentors* —→ *undergraduates*

The Berkeley Connect Model:

- Outstanding graduate students are awarded fully-funded, yearlong Berkeley Connect research fellowships.
- Under faculty supervision, each Fellow mentors 40 undergraduates a semester (2 groups of 20), *both one-on-one and in small group settings.*
- Dual mentoring mode means 30 fellows can mentor up to 2,400 undergraduates a year.

The Berkeley Connect Model:

- Undergraduates enroll in 1-credit course, taken Pass/Not Pass.
- Matched with mentor, placed in small group.
- Over semester, participate in:
 - One-on-one sessions with mentor (at least 2)
 - Small-group discussions facilitated by mentor (6-9)
 - Special events with professors and alumni (1-2)
 - Field trip to explore campus resources (1)
 - Optional office hours with mentor

Berkeley Connect Outcomes:

When students complete the required exit survey at the end of each semester, they report:

- 95% increased their awareness of resources available to them.
- 94% deepened their knowledge of an academic discipline.
- 92% met other students who share their academic interests.
- **93% increased their sense of belonging at Berkeley.**
- **92% increased their confidence that they can succeed at Berkeley.**

Transfer students:

- About 20% of UC Berkeley student population
- About 50% of Berkeley Connect participants
 - 44% first-generation college students
 - 37% low-income
 - 30% under-represented minorities

Berkeley Connect impact on transfer students:

- Pre-survey: transfer students sense of belonging was **lower** than other students
- Post-survey: transfer students experienced a **greater increase** in sense of belonging than other students

Transfer Connect:

- Summer 2020 pilot project
- Offered to new, incoming transfer students taking Summer Session classes
- Fee to opt-in to 1 credit course (financial aid eligible)
- Space for 120 students; enrolled to capacity (expanding in 2021)
- Cohort of 3 fellows from 3 different departments
- Interdisciplinary, focus on *adjusting to the research university*
- Six-week compressed schedule:
 - 2 one-on-one mentoring sessions
 - 6 small-group meetings
 - 2 special events
 - 1 field trip

Pivot to remote:

- One-on-one mentoring: via Zoom
- Small-group meetings: via Zoom
- Special events: guest speakers via Zoom
- Field trip: “virtual field trip” options

Results:

- 98% increased their awareness of resources available to them.
- 95% increased understanding of research university.
- 87% developed relationships with other students.
- **93% increased their sense of belonging at Berkeley.**
- **92% increased their confidence that they can succeed at Berkeley.**

Impact of Remote Delivery:

- **One-on-one meetings:** 77% felt remote as beneficial as in-person would have been.
- **Small-group meetings:** 56% felt remote as beneficial as in-person would have been.
- **Overall:** 86% felt remote experience made “virtual” arrival at university more positive and more personal.

For more information:

- Website: berkeleyconnect.berkeley.edu
- Introductory videos: berkeleyconnect.berkeley.edu/berkeley-connect-videos/
- Contact me: Michele Rabkin, Associate Director, micheler@berkeley.edu

Berkeley Connect



Thank you!