

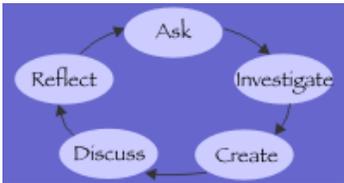
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## What does it mean to be part of UIUC? The stories of Transfer Students from Parkland Community College.

Sandra E. Weissinger ([weissing@uiuc.edu](mailto:weissing@uiuc.edu)) (ready to use)

### Coauthors

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## EXPLORE

### About the ethnographer

Sandra E. Weissinger is a distinguished student of Sociology at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests include understanding globalization, individuals access to social change, workplace inequality and class reproduction.

### Unit Keywords

EPS-500, transfer students, student stories, student life, Parkland Community College, race, ethnicity, UIUC, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, university mythology

### Partner Projects

Ethnography of the University

## INQUIRE

### Rationale of the Unit

4/1 How is the language of the university interpreted? (or some kind of question that leans more in this direction) All other former questions (concerning underrepresented students will act as subsidiary questions).

3/7

How do underrepresented students articulate the university mythology?

2/22

Research Question:

How do CU transfers understand and relate to the mythology of the university?

Subsidiary Questions:

1. How do the mission statements of Parkland Community College and the University of Illinois differ and how are they similar?

2. How does the mission and goals of an institution shape and affect the experiences of hopeful and current CU transfers?

Research Question:

How do transfer students from Parkland view their experience at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign?

**Subsidiary Questions:**

1. How have these students established "a sense of place"?
2. What types of support systems have they developed?
3. How did their experience at Parkland prepare them for UIUC?

**Project diary**

5/8:

I was unable to get the interview with Harris (she was unavailable for our scheduled phone conversation). This means that I am still left without bio data for her. This is ok. I will continue to try to find out more about Harris' educational and career background.

Powerpoint from the Spring EOTU mini conference has been uploaded.

Julia Connor, a faculty member here at UIUC contacted me. She is on a committee composed of Parkland and UIUC faculty. They meet to try to better understand many of the concerns I attempted to address in the fall portion of this project. We will talk after graduation (since I am swamped right now).

4/30 Updates: I have not received a reply email from David Johnson concerning his DI Opinion article (printed 4/8). I have to assume that I will not get a response any time in the near future.

I am awaiting my interview with Parkland President Zelema Harris. We are still scheduled to speak this coming Tuesday.

I have started constructing my powerpoint for the EOTU Spring conference this Friday. Key ideas I will focus on is why comparing the language used by leaders is important now, how ideas of diversity are put into action and also key examples of what students are saying about the campus climate (from former interviews and also from specific DI articles).

4/26 I sent an email out to David Johnson concerning his April 8th 2005 DI article entitled 'Affirming Racism'. Hopefully he will respond and be willing to share more in depth information concerning his opinions.

4/26 It appears that Dr. Harris would rather talk to me instead of sending me her CV. This is wonderful. We have a phone interview arranged for next Tuesday.

I deleted the uploaded item entitled "Coach Weber Methodology." It does not add to the narrative I am creating. I also deleted the uploaded "Watson for Student Senate" email. Originally I wanted to use this piece so that I could speak to issues that concern the campus community. I think the opinion pieces in the DI are much more appropriate. The ad for TD's band (from fa 04) is now gone as well.

4/22 After reading over my notes from the last EOTU meeting, I realized that I still had not solved my problem: how would I get all of my data (hard copies of speeches, newspaper articles from the archives) on to this site. I will still have to scan and upload the archive material; however it did have an epiphany. Cantor did not just drop off of the face of the earth. She went to Syracuse University. I visited their site and found biographical info as well as comparable speeches.

I called and then sent an email out to her secretary 4/22 after I realized I know nothing about the President. Lori Wendt, her assistant, told me that I was correct (there is not a bio for Harris online or in the course catalogs) and that she would try to send a CV out to me.

4/22 I have to write up a short bio or summary on each of the individuals (so info on Cantor, info on Herman and Harris). Links to this information will be found in the 'Reading and Keywords section' and will be discussed in depth within the final write up.

4/18 We can expect the announcement of a new Chancellor within the week according to the Daily Illini.

4/12 I discovered last week that the LAS website had changed. This means that the link I had to the Deans statement no longer works. I am having trouble finding the statement again. Work is going well. Right now I am picking through each sentence of every selected statement or mission

statements. It is difficult only because the language is so similar. The author's address many of the same topics (diversity, the community and the institution), just a bit different. It is the various ways in which diversity (for example) is spoken about (the words used, where the topic is placed on agendas and within the discussion) which I am trying to understand.

4/4 I visited the University Archives today to find statements and articles concerning former chancellor Cantor. Surely the language Cantor used is different than the language used by President White, Interim Chancellor Herman and even Parkland's President Harris.

At the archives I found only articles from the Champaign newspaper, the News Gazette (these were both written by two different staff writers, so far I have collected articles from three different NG reporters). These articles described Cantor's arrival, announcements (mostly concerning the Chief issue) and departure New York State.

I was clued in, by an archive library clerk, to see Robin Kaler. Robin Kaler acts the assistant chancellor of Public Affairs and was at UIUC during the years Cantor was. Kaler was not in her office today, but other staff was able to assist me and make copies of three different Cantor speeches. Now I have speeches (examples of language) from all of the individuals listed on my research plan.

4/1 A new research plan has been posted to reflect where I believe this project should go. An updated research question has been posted as well. I think that rather than focusing on one group (underrepresented students or transfer students) I will study everything that I can and note where differences occur. I hope to write up some type of final paper to tie in all of my findings by the end of the Spring 2005 semester.

After much debate over the direction this project would take, I returned to analyzing the language in which people associated with the university use to describe university mission statements. I did this by looking through the 3/29 and 3/31 Daily Illini of 2005.

I realized that I had missed my chance to speak with President B. Joseph White by reading a DI article from that date. He spoke at the IUB Wednesday evening. Oddly enough, I met him today while walking into the Union to work on this project. I knew he looked familiar as he passed and (perhaps because this happens to him all the time) he graciously stopped and introduced himself. After telling him a bit about the project he handed me his business card and gave me a tip. Apparently the field of positive organization studies looks at the language used within organizations. Who knew?

Summaries of 3/4 articles are now posted in the "Investigate II" box. Also notes concerning these readings have been uploaded.

Teresa Ramos asks a wonderful question: which institution knows its students the best? In my opinion (from what I have learned so far) I would argue that while Parkland seems to advertise its resources (therefore allowing easier access), the ability to know one's students remains mostly the responsibility of the student (this kind of parallels the language used by LAS Dean Mary Macmanus Ramsbottom). Of course this creates a bit of a never ending circle. Students may only be encouraged to get to know faculty if faculty are involved in programs that are advertised to students. If programs aren't advertised (or if for any reason a student can not make these programs) students' concerns and needs go unanswered.

Please see uploaded email from LAS hopeful student senator Kalycia Trishana Watson. I included her statement here, as she seems like a good source for understanding the student experience here at UIUC.

3/4 continued

This is an administrative report from 1999 which I believe speaks to my research Q (the mythology of the university) as well as looks at issues of "sense of place" for underrepresented students at UIUC. Please see "investigate II" box in days to come for my analysis.

[http://www.uiuc.edu/admin2/nca\\_report/part2/invest.html](http://www.uiuc.edu/admin2/nca_report/part2/invest.html)

3/4

In class the other day I was petitioned to vote in the upcoming student elections. One of the hopeful candidates' key points was that she was interested in changing the low minority and transfer student enrollment rates. Not only do I want to interview her at some point for this project, I want to understand better how the enrollment numbers dropped. Could this have something to do with my project? I am sure it does. Below are the links to recent articles concerning the enrolment numbers. Articles are from the campus newspaper (Daily Illini) and the community paper (the News Gazette) Comparing the way the articles are written and who they are targeted should prove interesting. How exactly is the language different, if at all?

<http://www.dailyillini.com/news/2004/12/08/News/Ui.Makes.Strides.Toward.Diversity-824623.shtml>

<http://www.dailyillini.com/news/2004/10/07/Sports/Ui.Makes.Plans.To.Increase.Minority.Student.Enrollment-744744.shtml>

<http://www.dailyillini.com/news/2004/09/23/News/Minority.Student.Enrollment.Lowest.In.Almost.Ten.Years-727931.shtml>

<http://www.news-gazette.com/ngsearch/index.cfm?>

[&page=displyStory.cfm&yearfolder=the04news&file=092704%5Fngstory%5F16813%2Etxt&search=enrollment&theorder=asaphrase](http://www.news-gazette.com/ngsearch/index.cfm?&page=displyStory.cfm&yearfolder=the04news&file=092704%5Fngstory%5F16813%2Etxt&search=enrollment&theorder=asaphrase)

<http://www.news-gazette.com/ngsearch/index.cfm?>

[&page=displyStory.cfm&yearfolder=the04news&file=062104%5Fngstory%5F16235%2Etxt&search=enrollment&theorder=asaphrase](http://www.news-gazette.com/ngsearch/index.cfm?&page=displyStory.cfm&yearfolder=the04news&file=062104%5Fngstory%5F16235%2Etxt&search=enrollment&theorder=asaphrase)

For the NG, Ernst Lamothe Jr. seems to write all of the pieces (so he would be an excellent source later on). For the DI, Se Young Lee.

As discussed during the 1/26 Ford meeting, I have started to search the EOTU University Library for additional leads. I also searched the Anthropology page to see if I could find the 2002 paper by Heather Foran, as suggested by Dr. Abelmann. No luck, but I did send an email out (anthro@uiuc.edu) just to see if I could stumble upon additional leads and/or information. Did a quick search for UIUC people and found that Heather Foran has in fact left the university and is no longer a student.

2/27

Another site that points to the idea of Parklands supportive community is this:

<http://www.parkland.edu/tutoring.html>

A tutoring site. I need to find a counterpart to this at UIUC.

2/27

Our last Ford researchers meeting left me with the desire to learn a small bit more about EOP and Upward bound programs at UIUC and Parkland. While this is certainly not the direction I thought the project would take, I think that this information will be useful later on.

UIUC's upward bound program boasts that "more than 90 percent of its graduates" go on to enroll in higher education institutions. (<http://www.omsa.uiuc.edu/>)

Feb 22, 2005

This week I would like to unravel the mythologies associated with the university. To do this I need to compare and analyze the mission statements posted to this web page on 2/21.

Feb 21, 2005

To follow up on my inquiry concerning mission statements: No, I have not received a reply concerning a general university mission statement. I have pasted together excerpts to construct the best mission statement possible.

Here at <http://www.parkland.edu/catalog/catalog04-05/presmessage.html> is a message from Parkland's President, Ms. Zelema Harris. Her words are much like a mission statement and should be compared to the new university Presidents (Joseph White) mission statement.

President White's introduction statement:

<http://www.uillinois.edu/president/speeches/013105.html>

Parkland Mission Statement: <http://www.parkland.edu/catalog/catalog04-05/general/mission.html>

I have decided to compare the LAS "mission statement" to the Parkland statement. LAS is a rather large school, which arguably attracts the majority of transfer students. LAS's "mission statement": STILL NEEDS TO BE FOUND, called general curriculum office and found that there was not a mission statement agreed upon (to the knowledge of the speaker). I was directed to another office and then re-directed to another person. Everyone seemed rather confused at my request. I was told to look in the "handbook" (LAS issues a handbook of rules). Out of four staff members, no one was aware of where a mission statement could be found. Finally the last person I spoke to found a statement made by the dean. This statement can be found at: <http://www.las.uiuc.edu/students/handbook/AHnbk03intro.pdf> as of 4/5/05 this link does not work

Chancellor Herman's welcome statement resembles a mission statement. It can be found at: <http://www.oc.uiuc.edu/welcome/index.html>

Feb 21, 2005 cont.

Searching the UIUC website was a bit more difficult than searching the Parkland page. There are just so many announcements on the UIUC page.

The page concerning transfer students had the same link as the Parkland page for the I-transfer website. \*\*I must read through and get a better understanding of the function of I-transfer, since both institutions refer to it.\*\*

UIUC asks students "What would you like to study?" and provides links to course catalogs and programs of study. Basic information for people who are thinking of applying.

<http://www.oar.uiuc.edu/prospective/transfer/handbook/what.html>

Both schools find transferable credit to be very important. Parkland had two different lists to determine how credit would transfer to various schools. UIUC has one system, Illinois Course Applicability System (CAS), which determines course equivalencies.

<http://www.oar.uiuc.edu/prospective/transfer/which.html>

\*overall, my observation is that Parkland directs its resources at helping their students pursue higher education. UIUC wants these students, but focuses on application procedures and grades. The idea that UIUC is saying sure, you can come to our school, but do you measure up? This is not necessarily bad; any school wants the best students they can get. Parkland in this sense seems more nurturing, supporting my past assumptions. The Parkland website lists plainly the counselors one should talk to. The UIUC site lists the programs and websites of the programs, but no general admissions counselors. Is the school so large and detached from itself that there can be no one general admissions counselor?

Feb 21, 2005

Do the majority of Parkland Students plan to transfer? This webpage

<http://cold.parkland.edu/matrix/> which lists the types of transferable courses would suggest so.

Also, the I-Transfer site offers help so that students may "plug-in" courses taken at Parkland to see how they are accepted at various four year state colleges in Illinois

<http://www.parkland.edu/iai/>

What is very interesting is the 2+2 initiative programs. While many universities have agreed to value students associate degrees from Parkland, UIUC is not listed.

<http://www.parkland.edu/twoplustwo.html>

<http://parkland.edu/counseling/> This website will be useful when I start collecting qualitative data. Here, contact information for academic/career planning is listed. Do the counselors at Parkland feel that hopeful transfer students use their services as much as they should?

This part of the Parkland website is an amazing resource!

<http://parkland.edu/counseling/CACollegeinfo.html> It appears that certain counselors at Parkland specialize in helping students transfer to certain universities. Now I know that when I start interviewing I need to speak with Donna Tanner-Harold or Angela Jancola. The site lists a few other counselors who specialize in transfer students who wish to attend UIUC as well

<http://www.parkland.edu/directory/counseling.html>.

\*\*\*Parkland seems to devote much time and resources into the transfer student education process. Does UIUC invest as many resources into its transfer population? I know that the answer is no b/c of my previous research and the research of Anne Maloney. Even still I do not believe either of us has made a chart to compare. We both elude to it, but never write it down in black and white, listing contact information and such.

Feb 17, 2005

<http://www4.ncsu.edu:8030/~jslevin2/access.pdf>

Emailed author of the following piece, as I do not have permission to site this source as of 2/22.

Article is similar to that of the one listed above.

{[http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/groups/rei/cfp2003\\_files/ducros.pdf](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/groups/rei/cfp2003_files/ducros.pdf) }

<http://www.bridgingworlds.org/pdfs/paper6.pdf>

Community/Junior College Quarterly...find out more

Feb 9, 2005

<http://www.oar.uiuc.edu/prospective/transfer/default.htm>

Look at this page for the general information provided to transfer students from the university.

7:30p-8:45 Jan 29,2005

Today I started the preliminary literature search concerning the second phase of my project. After doing a quick search using the UIUC library website, I found that there is an abundance of literature concerning transfer students. I was unable to find literature that addressed transfer students who were employed within the community. I understand that I am asking a very specific question and realize that perhaps the data I am seeking may not be out there.

I hope that the reference librarians at the Champaign Public and UIUC libraries will be able to assist me.

Literature in online journals:

<http://transferstudents.ucdavis.edu/>

This is the official website of UC Davis dedicated to Transfer and re-entry student networks. The goal of the page is to offer "non-traditional" undergraduate and graduate students resources to help in their transitions. The university targets students 25+. This may or may not prove helpful for my project. 2/1/05

<http://www.teacherscollege.edu/iee/ccrc/PAPERS/Briefs/brief06.pdf>

A brief paper that lists the purpose of the community college in developing industry and economies within the community. 2/1/05

[http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/cheri/conf/chericonf1999/chericonf1999\\_06.pdf](http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/cheri/conf/chericonf1999/chericonf1999_06.pdf)

This is a great academic paper from an economist studying the wage earnings of transfer students. The material listed is a bit out of my field. I will certainly have to spend quite some time milling over the authors points and equations. 2/1/05

2/6/05 "Human Capital Theory" seems very much related to "Educational rates of return theory". I have to find the work I read last spring which describes this (Egerton, Muriel and Gareth Parry. Lifelong Debt: Rates of Return to Mature Study. Higher Education Quarterly. Volume 55, No. 1, January 2001).

<http://www.naspa.org/publications/journal/files/Spring02%2FKodama.pdf>

Written by the Assistant Director of Career Services at UIC, Kodama argues that transfer students are marginalized at universities nationwide. Her paper seeks to understand how these students are marginalized (based on class and gender?). 2/1/05

7:30p-7:45p Jan 30, 2005

Both reference librarians sent response emails. Champaign Library referred me to the UIUC library. UIUC recommended a 1986 study from BCC (Broome Community College) and also listed which search words I should input while searching through the ERIC database.

ERIC Subject Headings

\*Academic Achievement

\*Academic Persistence

Community Colleges

Employment Patterns

\*Grade Point Average

Grade Prediction

Predictive Measurement

\*Student Characteristics  
 \*Student Employment  
 \*Two Year College Students  
 \*Working Hours

It is my hope that I will have summaries for the articles listed from Jan 29 by the Ford Researchers meeting this Wed. I do not believe I will start thoroughly searching the ERIC database until Wed Feb 1st.

February 1, 2005 4:45-5:10p

I have skimmed over all of the articles listed and have started thinking of how I want to conduct research based upon the arguments I have read. The Kodama paper seems very relevant. The longer working paper from the economist sites many sources I have read before, making me believe I am on the right track. Wednesday after our meeting I hope to have additional comments about these two papers.

Feb 3, 2005 3p-3:30p

If I want to compare the two schools and truly understand the "myths" each institution has surrounding transfer students I have to look at the mission statements.

<http://www.parkland.edu/catalog/catalog04-05/general/mission.html>

This is the general mission statement for the college.

<http://www.parkland.edu/catalog/catalog04-05/transfer/general.html>

This page speaks to the idea that not all students plan to move into a career after leaving Parkland. What is interesting here is the colleges' belief that by the third year, students will be at their transfer institution, having earned an associates degree. This is possible certainly if students follow the guidelines for each major (which means taking 5-6 courses per semester and passing all of them), but what about non-traditional students who can not commit to such a schedule? My last study clearly indicated that many transfer do not even obtain their associate degree before transferring. So, what does this all mean? I am not certain if CU transfers usually obtained their associates.

[http://www.faa.uiuc.edu/about\\_faa/mission\\_statement.html](http://www.faa.uiuc.edu/about_faa/mission_statement.html)

Mission Statement of the college of Fine and Applied Arts.

I am having difficulty finding a mission statement for the university (to my surprise). I have emailed LAS student affairs ([las-studentoffice@uiuc.edu](mailto:las-studentoffice@uiuc.edu)) to ask if they can give me further direction.

[http://www.las.uiuc.edu/students/transfer\\_policy.shtml](http://www.las.uiuc.edu/students/transfer_policy.shtml)

A paragraph is devoted to transfer students within LAS.

September 26, 2004

Assignments:

<http://www.ilcco.net/>

<http://www.ccc.edu/>

<http://www.univsource.com/il.htm>

October 9, 2004

Notes from the University Archives

see these items in the archives library:

15/42/5

41/2/34

Transfer Student Association 1939-1980 (info In UIUC Archives), no TSA now however. See Student Affairs: is there another group similar to TSA?

1. Email Rhonda Kirts about Parkland students ([r-kirts@uiuc.edu](mailto:r-kirts@uiuc.edu)) She is listed as a contact for transfer students

2. [http://www.inquiry.uiuc.edu/bin/update\\_unit.cgi?command=select&xmlfile=u12810.xml](http://www.inquiry.uiuc.edu/bin/update_unit.cgi?command=select&xmlfile=u12810.xml)

A. Maloney's Inquiry Page from last year

3. [ugradadmissions@uiuc.edu](mailto:ugradadmissions@uiuc.edu) Email Admissions and records: Annual stats on transfer students?

4. Marilyn Murphy: data book of transfer students

5. Search EOTU for other projects with similar themes

## INVESTIGATE

[Go to Top](#) 

### Research Plan

Research Plan 4/1

- I. Collect, analyze and compare the speeches and documents which represent mission statements, by your definition
  - a. Mission Statement (definition)
  - b. Speeches will be collected from
    - i. B. Joseph White-UIUS, UIC and UIUC President
    - ii. Richard Herman-Chancellor
    - iii. Nancy Cantor-Former Chancellor
    - iv. Ramsbottom-LAS Dean
    - v. Speeches from other underrepresented individuals organizations
    - vi. Speeches of Harris-Parkland President
    - vii. Mission Statements of Parkland
    - viii. Illinois Promise Statement
- II. Collect, analyze and compare the responses and interpretations of university mission statements
  - a. News Gazette articles
  - b. Daily Illini Articles
  - c. The written work of UIUC undergraduates, graduates and faculty concerning university mission statements
  - d. Any television news report within the CU Community
- III. Compile a list of questions. Where do the statements overlap in language yet vary dramatically in actual actions? Why do such variances occur?
- IV. Interview the authors of the speeches, writers of the newspaper and/or television reports.
  - a. What are their interpretations of the universities published statements?
  - b. Reactions to reports published concerning the university within the community?

2/6/05 1:10p-1:30p

For this second stage of research I would like to:

1. Put together a relevant review of literature that investigates community colleges, transfer students, institutional myths and communities which house educational institutions. The review will include the mission statements of UIUC (perhaps colleges within) and Parkland.
  - 1a. If possible, literature that relates to student employment would complete the literature review.
  - 1b. I would like to follow through with the suggestions for further research and include the points addressed in interviews.
2. Start to connect with individuals at Parkland, particularly those working in admissions. Get their perspective about the CU Transfers and institutional mythologies.
3. Start to connect with individuals at UIUC, asking many of the same questions posed to Parkland officials.
4. This may prove to be the most difficult part of the process: connecting with CU working transfers currently enrolled at UIUC.
5. I do not think the research would be complete without speaking to hopeful CU working transfers, which is students enrolled at Parkland from the CU area hoping to gain admissions into UIUC. What ideas do these students have about this journey. What assumptions do they have? Talking to both groups will prove interesting and show changes within the group due to transferring.

This project is limited to individuals who have transferred to UIUC from Parkland Community College.

First a historical knowledge of transfer students at the University is necessary. Files found in the

University Archives will help paint a picture of the types of organizations or activities transfer students were involved in. Archives may also indicate the requirements these students had to meet academically to be accepted. Besides activities and grades it would be interesting to note the places these students lived. Did they live at home or in the dorms with other students? Statistical data will be evaluated. This data will be provided by the Office of Admissions and Records. It is necessary to determine what percent of the student body are transfer students, transfer students from Parkland and also transfer students from Parkland who are members of under represented groups. Organizations or programs that transfer students are involved in will help to create a pool of possible interview candidates. After conducting historical research, finding statistics and drawing an interview pool, interviewing will begin. Interview questions can be found in the project diary. Data from the interviews combined with my own experience as a transfer student will create the narratives and experiences of transfer students from Parkland at UIUC.

### Project diary

October 11, 2004

I emailed Rhonda Kirts on 10/9. She quickly responded and forwarded my request to transfer students (she knew of) from Parkland. So far two people have responded. I also meet a lady in the computer lab by chance who transferred from Parkland and is preparing to graduate this December. Over the past summer I had observed that she (TFP) studied in the Union just like I did and had similar study habits. Because of her study habits, I assumed she was a transfer student. She very well could have been a graduate student, but she did not strike me as such.

October 19, 2004

I have found a male transfer student from Parkland to interview. He is different from the other transfer students I have met. I have class with him and another student (different classes) and observe them both constantly. The girl fit my assumption: transfer students try harder (take more notes, are more organized) than "regular" students. While both students ask what seems like more questions when compared with the other students in class, this gentleman seems unsure when he asks questions, almost as if he is afraid to ask questions. This is his first semester here at UIUC where as the female I observe has been here for a few semesters.

November 2, 2004

I finally received a reply from the Office of Admissions and records. They have directed me to Abel Montoya. I sent an email to him today. I asked him if he could paint a picture of transfer students from Parkland. Hopefully he is able to respond soon. I also asked him if he would be available for an interview. That certainly would add to my findings tremendously.

November 2, 2004

I changed the status back to an author's only view. After interviewing LR I found that certain aspects of being a transfer student that upset me. Just from writing up my reactions, I have noticed the development of strong defensive feelings towards individuals who talk about their experience in the campus community and then question my involvement. It is almost an outsider/insider conflict. While I may go to school here and excel academically I am not part of the social community and perhaps never will be. That has always been fine in my mind, but after talking to LR, I am afraid perhaps that I am starting to "unearth" my own hidden anger. After reading Astin (Pg. 303) I am also more aware of my own involvement in the university. This awareness has caused me to write in ways I do not want my fellow classmates to see as of yet. Perhaps after I better understand this new awareness I'll be able to share.

November 2, 2004

Thought for the day: I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT YOU CAN NOT HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT CLASS...THEY ARE BOTH SO VERY INTERCONNECTED.

November 4, 2004

This week I have been speaking with Abel Montoya. He keeps records of transfer students for the

Office of Admissions and records. In our correspondence, I have asked him to tell me primarily about statistics. Based on the information he supplies, I may ask to interview him as well.

November 4, 2004

I am having trouble finding under represented transfer students from Parkland to interview. Those who originally volunteered were part of Tau Sigma. It is interesting to me that only one African American female volunteered from this sample. Who makes up Tau Sigma? Do transfer students normally know about Tau Sigma? I certainly did not. Javaris and Daniel have sent out emails to their contacts in order to help me find respondents.

11/04/2004 I would like to interview a few more men. Those who I have spoken to are having difficulties with their schedule and work load. It is interesting to hear about students having so much to do. One person I am having trouble scheduling, lets call him BW, I knew from my time at Parkland. When I first transferred to UIUC we tried to hang out. For me, hanging out with BW was a way for me to say that I knew someone very well on campus, just like everyone else. We hung out for a short while, but between work and school (and for me, a play) we stopped talking. Nothing has changed for either of us. While BW does not work (or at least he did not in Fall 2003), he does put quite a bit of time into his school work. For a short while he wanted to be a critic (of movies and plays). He would sit in front of his computer for hours, sometimes leaving it in hopes of finding something to write about. Writing is an important thing for him. This process sometimes took days. I could never work like that myself. Even if I did have the time, I would probably go insane (from staring at the screen all day). When I go to work on anything, I usually go in with an outline I've worked on either at work or during a break in classes (I often sit in the quiet rooms in the Union and work) or even parts of the paper already written up. Perhaps I should ask more questions on how students study, but I don't think that applies to my main question of how transfer students find their sense of place.

11/08/2004 I changed the view once again so that all could see the project. I am much less upset and starting to realize (again) that I do not have to be apologetic for my own experience at the university. Without my experience no one would know there was a different experience to be had.

11/08/2004 I interviewed a gentleman Javaris contacted for me. Our conversation greatly influenced my rediscovered confidence. Reactions to our interview are listed.

11/08/2004 Last Thursday (11/04/2004) I went to see TD's band at the Cowboy Monkey

11/09/2004 Why is it we segregate ourselves by race? It happens. I have observed it. Even when faced with different "problems"...feelings of not belonging we always rely on and go back to our identity as a member of race. Do we necessarily hang on to our identity as middle class that way?

11/16/2004: I am having trouble finding additional respondents. I have emailed former respondents to see if they know of anyone who would be interested in helping. LR was able to suggest one person. I emailed the person she suggested, but have not gotten a response. I also sent out reminder notices to those who a) indicated they were interested in helping (those Rhonda Kirts directed to me and also those directed to me by my classmates in EPS) b) re-contacted individuals I am acquainted with from Parkland. The person I know from my time at Parkland (well, one person in particular) is having trouble scheduling. I will not pursue him any further if he does not respond to this last email attempt. I do not want to force anyone to be a respondent who does not wish to be. However, if it is truly an issue of time (which I could understand easily) I sent him a makeshift questionnaire, which he can answer at his own leisure. I will make this questionnaire available to all hopeful candidates who are having trouble setting aside time for a traditional interview (the questionnaire is attached in field notes and the uploaded files).

Additionally, I have run into two Parkland students (one at her job and the other at the UG library). I have both of their phone numbers and will contact them soon for interviews.

11/17/2004

I contacted the hopeful insider I ran into at UGL the other day. Hopefully (b/c) she lives and works in town) we can meet over the break and interview.

I was also able to get in contact with two other transfer students. One is a non-traditional student and the other I was directed to by LR.

11/17/2004

Tau Sigma National Honor Society

President: Nazanin Nikki Hamedani hamedani@uiuc.edu

Purpose: An academic honor society designed specifically to recognize and promote the academic excellence and involvement of transfer students.

<http://frontpage.auburn.edu/tausigma/index2.htm>

(National Tau Sigma page)

Contacted via email

### Readings, Keywords, and Constructs

4/22 Herman bio data

<http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/newchancellor/bio.html>

Cantor bio data

<http://www.syr.edu/chancellor/about/index.html>

4/22 Herman acceptance speech

<http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/newchancellor/speech.html>

'A call to action'

<http://www.oc.uiuc.edu/speeches/mlk2005.html>

'Illinois Promise speech'

<http://www.oc.uiuc.edu/speeches/ilpromise.html>

Harris

\*WAITING FOR REPLY EMAIL\*

Cantor 'SU Inauguration speech'

<http://www.syr.edu/chancellor/inauguration/index.html>

Cantor 'SU Michigan Case speech' \*compare to UIUC similar speech

<http://www.syr.edu/chancellor/speeches/brown50.pdf>

\*\*OTHER Cantor speeches and documents must be uploaded\*\*

<http://www.oir.uiuc.edu/seniorsurvey2005/>

News Gazette articles from 2004 concerning decreased minority enrollment rates. Please also see uploaded notes.

1. All articles seem to note that a.) problems with Banner caused significant problems for OAR and b.) that the student pool for Fall 2004 just was not qualified enough.
2. NG 9/24/04 quotes La Casa Director Giraldo Rosales. Rosales, trying to understand why the sudden decrease in admissions for underrepresented students, questions whether the "Chief Illiniwek controversy" deferred students. Also, Rosales looks at the issue of finances: are people staying at home instead? \*\*This warrants an investigation of Parklands admissions rates for Fall 2004. Did they increase?
3. I asked, if this has never happened before why is it such a big deal? The answer was provided by Rosales "...the UI is a state land grant university, which is subject to state and federal funding requirements." \*\*In other words, without underrepresented students the school loses funding.
4. My main summary, after reading both the DI and NG articles is this: Diversity is part of the university mission statement, so is the idea of quality. At what point does quality outweigh the need for diversity? How is quality measured and should it be measured using different instruments?

Daily Illini articles from 2004 concerning decreased minority enrollment rates. Please also see uploaded notes.

1. The university has 43 programs especially for underrepresented students (DI 9/23/04)

2. Fall 2004 freshman included only 410 African Americans, a decrease of 8% and also noted as the lowest in almost ten years.

3. This quote by LAS freshman Elana Williams is interesting (and I am not quite sure what I think of it):

"I think the reason that it declined is that African Americans are not testing as well and the University is not accepting lower scores...I think it's good that they're not just taking them because they're minorities, but are taking them for their grades." (DI 9/23/04, Kim, C.)

4. Purdue, Univ of Michigan and Ohio State also saw a decrease, but this was not the case at all big ten schools.

5. Implementation of Illinois Promise, to encourage students regardless of economic setbacks.

6. Increased recruitment techniques to involve the perspectives students' whole family in the process.

7. Herman cites (and is supported by a US Dept. of Edu report, see NG 06/21/04, Lamothe, E.) that there has been a "...overall decrease in the number of minority students enrolled in universities and college in the United States." \*\*WHY? Is this because of cuts to federal educational grants? Where are these "would-be" college students at? Yes, low wage labor market is increasing so these students would have jobs, but why are they looking towards the workforce (if they are in fact in the workforce)?

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools 1999 report concerning UIUC.

This statement is filled with the language of the various UIUC mission statements reviewed earlier.

1. The idea that the university invests in its people, as they are the universities "greatest asset." Investing in people means that faculty will receive support and continuing education. This statement addresses support staff and graduate students as well. A key point is that all three groups must receive economic compensation that is comparable or better than that received by their peers at other institutions.

\*\*\*This is interesting, considering the recent concern by the GEO (?) Graduate Student Union over healthcare.

2. Speaks to the idea that UIUC has made a commitment to recruit only the best (in this report the authors refer to graduate students, however, I believe this ideology can be used with the recruitment and admissions of undergraduates-hence the dilemma discussed in the NG and DI).

3. "UIUC has become a leader in addressing the student quality of life." The NCA report speaks here about annual Senior Survey results. I would like to look at some of the results from these surveys. What exactly do the surveys address?

Zelema Harris: Presidents Message

key ideas and words:

1. The idea that Parkland is dedicated to "investing in our community". This dedication can be seen by examining the percentage of employees trained within the institutions doors ("...more than 70 percent of employed Parkland graduates live and work in this area").

2. The idea (as their motto says) that "education pays".

3. The idea of access. Even in their mission statement there is a knowledge that students will continue their education and transfer, as opposed to entering the workforce full time.

4. Besides a dedication to transfer students, Parkland holds to original community college principles: a college for community development.

Parkland's Mission and Purpose

1. "To prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities." I would argue that from my brief research, Parkland lives up to this standard (see transfer counselor listings).

2. "To actively engage members of the college community in the process of developing an appreciation for cultural diversity." DIVERSITY... sounds like Cantor.

3. "To provide a nurturing, quality work environment..." This statement was the heart of Anne Maloney's inquiry.
4. "We celebrate the diversity in both our community and our world. Our goal is to recognize, promote, utilize, and educate one another regarding the unique qualities and shared humanity of all people and cultures."

President Joe White's introduction email

1. "I believe deeply in the transforming power of education and research and in the value of a great public university with its mission of service."  
Ok, this is interesting and very reflective of Harris' mission statement. Who does the university try to provide service to? Arguably, this service would be provided to the community in which it resides as well as its student population.
2. "To faculty and staff: thank you for the part you play in the life of the University. I know that you have weathered difficult times in recent years. I cannot promise they are over but I will do my best to bring in the resources we need."  
What does that mean? What has the university staff weathered? Job freezes?
3. "To students: At the top of my agenda is enhancing the quality of your education and maximizing the value of your degrees."
4. "We worked with each other every day with integrity, honesty and a sense of humor and perspective and we always treated each other with dignity and respect."

Mary Macmanus Ramsbottom, Associate Dean of LAS Student Academic Affairs Office:  
Statement for the LAS Handbook

1. "The energy you invest in your education now will be repaid many times over as you develop multiple competencies and transferable skills. Liberal arts graduates are broad and agile learners with great promise as leaders in our interdependent and rapidly changing world."
2. "You have the primary responsibility for tracking your academic progress."  
This is a much less "nurturing" statement when compared to the wording of Parkland's mission statement and the words of Harris.

Richard Herman, Interim Chancellor: Welcome Statement

1. The following quote sums everything up:  
"Today, this university has many faces: a superb undergraduate institution for exceptionally talented students; a research powerhouse that produces breathtaking discoveries and advances in knowledge; one of the world's leading training grounds for the next generation of scientists, professors, and policy makers; and, a force shaping the possibilities of the future across the domains of human endeavor."  
This is an awesome, noble statement by Herman. Among all of the mission statements, this one has the strongest language. Certainly, his expectations of the Illinois are very high. How do these expectations affect students, especially those who do not come to the school with a sense of privilege or ownership?
2. "Here, shared interests lead students and faculty to form small communities within the expanse of one of the world's great universities."  
UIUC will nourish students academically, through intellectual communities, but as Astin would suggest (get this citation from Fortier again), academic achievement alone is not enough to sustain a person. There perhaps is the myth...or is it? No where in any of these statements has a promise been made to nourish the individual. Rather, nourishing the community seems to be the stated goal.

[http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/cheri/conf/chericonf1999/chericonf1999\\_06.pdf](http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/cheri/conf/chericonf1999/chericonf1999_06.pdf)

pg. 15 "The family background and high school academic performance variables all have significant positive effects on the probability of graduating from college, regardless of whether one transfers or not."

This is perhaps the least disputed fact among educational attainment scholars.

pg. 15 "Increasing both four-year and two-year fees decreases the probability that a student initially attends that type of institution and increases the probability he or she initially attends the

opposite type of institution."

This makes sense. When tuition costs rise, individuals seek additional ways in which they may obtain education. Parkland President Zelema Harris is quite aware of this, as she states the effect of economic insecurity in her mission statement.

pg.

pg. 15 "...unobserved characteristics that encourage a student to start at a two-year college before transferring to and graduating from a university are positively associated with his or her future earnings."

So, factors outside of economic access?

pg. 15 "...given the evidence discussed above ... two-year transfers are more likely to be income-constrained students who are forced to work full-time while pursuing their degrees. Students who are willing to make such sacrifices may have higher motivation levels, a trait that is likely to be highly valued in the post-graduation labor market."

pg. 15-16 "Controlling for other factors, Hispanics observe a large statistically significant earnings premium if they attend a community college and eventually transfer to and graduate from a university. This finding is particularly interesting as anecdotal evidence suggest that Hispanics disproportionately rely on community colleges for their first access to higher education. A similar result is observed for Blacks."

Interesting...

Hilmer also notes, as Dr. Mortensen suggested, employer look and judge applicant based on the quality of the institution from which they graduated from.

(Egerton, Muriel and Gareth Parry. Lifelong Debt: Rates of Return to Mature Study. Higher Education Quarterly. Volume 55, No. 1, January 2001).

"Mature graduates tend to work in the public sector rather than the... business services sector which conventional age graduates increasingly enter" (Egerton, pg. 12).

<http://www.naspa.org/publications/journal/files/Spring02%2FKodama.pdf>

2/7/05 Kodama summary (read 2/3/05 3:45p-4:05p) (2/6/05 12:30p-1:05p)

1. From Kodama's paper I believe that I too should define transfer students. CU Transfers would be much like Kodama's commuter students. Kodama's definition (see p 236)"Commuter students are students who do not live in university-owned housing on campus." This is an ok definition, but I am sure this could apply to many students and does not encompass my (slowly developing) definition of the CU transfers.

2. I would like to read the Schlossberg piece cited. While her theory of marginality was very well described, perhaps there is additional knowledge I can learn directly from the original source.

3."Transferring more than once is not unusual..." p 235

"Yet some of the research indicates than even when transfer students do well academically, they may not be socially or psychologically prepared for the transition from a community college to a university." p 235-A great quote that I can pose to interviewees later on.

4. In her study of 1000 students, Kodama found that gender was a significant predictor (for transfer students feelings of marginality)and that race was not(p 242),(p 243) "...women generally make up a larger percentage of the transfer student population" and also (p 244) "...other studies have found that women have less positive experiences in college than men." I suppose it supports my previous argument that transfers from under represented populations are usually more connected, and therefore find more support systems. I need to really look to see who feels marginalized and who does not.

5. "...the more support students have, the less likely they are to feel marginal." (p 243) This finding makes perfect sense.

6. There is a paragraph on p 244 that I would like to address at a later point. The author argues that perhaps too much type has been spent focusing on the affects of race and ethnicity and not gender.

7. The very last paragraph on p 244 speaks to my project directly. Students, like the CU transfers, who are employed off campus as opposed to on campus feel more marginalized. This makes perfect sense. Astin (one of the EPS 500 readings) spoke to this idea, as cited by Kodama. "...an on-campus job may in a sense serve as a source of support and mattering for students' college experience" p 244. I have said this many times about group projects. One of my informants also spoke about the desire just to have someone to study with.

8. p 245 NCES data states that 4:5 college students are employed. That is a bit high when compared to Parklands' avg of 68%.
9. The author thinks additional research should focus on the role of gender, but also the experience of Asian Americans, "the model minorities".

## CREATE

[Go to Top](#) ↑

### Field Notes

5/8

Obviously, the speakers cannot change the community through their words alone. Social change takes action and with innovative actions comes reprocostions. In other words: someone has to burn for the rhetoric to become reality.

Cantor perhaps came the closest to making the university mythologies reality, though only time will tell how leaders like Herman or White affect change. Parkland's Harris seems to also have her ear to the ground. Her speeches and language is a reflection of the working goals and actual outcomes dedicated Parkland students achieve (please refer to fall 2004 EOTU Parkland transfer interviews by Weissinger).

Harris's statements constantly reflects the institutions responsibility to the community. The idea that Parkland is dedicated to Champaign and Urbana is repeated over and over again both within a single publication and within all of the publications selected for analyses. Overall, her statements are not obscure and are prompted by community need. Are tuition rates a little too high at UIUC, even with programs like Illinois Promise? Parkland can provide you with comparable, transferable course work. Is there a need for more computer technicians or nurses? Parkland will create such academic programs to accommodate this need. UIUC maintains that, yes they are responsible to the community, but to what extent is still unclear to me.

Cantor's statements constantly seem to ask its listeners to question. Question what they know, why they know it and if this knowledge registers the same both inside and outside the small space which is the university. Her language seems to place a certain responsibility upon its audience. This idea of responsibility is present in the language of Zelema Harris; it is one of Parkland's mission and purpose statements.

Herman never asks the UIUC community to question themselves in the same way Cantor did. Where Cantor would come out and say we need to question this, Herman uses imagery and storytelling which act to hypnotize the audience. When he finally poses his question (perhaps more of a request) you feel anyone who disagrees would have to be mad and unreasonable. It is this kind of language which does not cause controversy, as Cantor did. Rather it soothes ones soul through compliment (we are a world class institution with world class intelligence, so of course we can talk about this subject like intelligent adults) and adds a small request. Perhaps Cantor should have offered more compliments to her audience, who lived within the insecure and shaky campus climate.

#### The Climate vs. the language

It is ridiculous to talk about the language of university leaders without speaking to how this language is interpreted and appropriated by the listeners (primarily, for my purposes, the students).

Past interviews ask and address former Parkland students' appreciation for the colleges small community feel. Harris's language, to serve the communities needs, was (to these students) realized and [not a myth]. Though additional interviews have not been conducted, selected articles and opinion columns from the campus newspaper give insight into the student's thoughts and reality. Needless to say, comparing the lived reality of the students to the language of those in leadership positions sheds light upon what the myths are [and perhaps how they are integrated into the campus].

Statement analyses

Harris: President's Message, found in the summer 2005 Class Schedule booklet

Parkland as a "...premier academic institution..." and as a "...statewide leader..." In this way, Harris uses the type of imagery language found also in the speeches of Herman. They both start their statements by complimenting the school, listing the schools accomplishments.

The second paragraph quickly jumps from Parkland's excellence to Parkland's role as a community organization. Here she lists a few of the many community links: partnerships with Carle and Provena Hospitals, trade unions and local high schools.

Throughout the piece, Harris refers to key principles such as continuing "revitalization" and "innovation." Regardless of what ever changes, there is a specific desire to keep to the tradition of the schools key purposes: integrity, fairness, responsibility, honesty, diversity and outreach. "These enduring values must never go away."

Harris: President's Message, found in the Parkland College 2004-2005 Catalog, page 2  
Again the belief that Parkland is "...a leading community college committed to investing in our community..." Obviously, the statement would not say the college is mediocre, it is important to have positive, true statements, especially for those unfamiliar with the school. It is just interesting to see how the key/core values are integrated into a welcoming message. This opening sentence is almost identical to the statement found in the summer course catalog.

Harris provides an image here. "...in these uncertain times, more and more residents feel a need to brighten their futures...They expect Parkland College to support their efforts and we answer this call in various ways..." Here she reaffirms the college's commitment to the CU area. It is as if she is saying that the school answers directly to the people it serves. This is interesting, as interviewees like TD note how well Parkland worked and changed for him and his needs. Besides answering to its students, there is also the idea that Parkland answers to local businesses and employment agencies. This sentiment is evidenced in Harris's statement that "Parkland's ... faculty work hard to train and educate students in business, agriculture, technology and service occupations that fulfill local business demand."

Uncertain times and affordability paint the same type of speech Herman often delivers: this makes so much sense and is obtainable...you would be mad not to try it.

Harris: Mission and Purposes, Parkland College Catalog, page 10  
Parkland wants to create "responsible" and "self-disciplined" citizens (first point) and will do this through "promoting personal growth", providing guidance and a culturally diverse community (seventh, ninth and tenth goals).  
Repeatedly there are references to community, industry and business (second, twelfth and thirteenth points).  
Because these are bullet points, they are fairly straightforward, lacking extraneous words and language.

Harris: Parkland College Catalog 2004-2005, "Cultural Diversity", page 11  
"Setting a standard for the larger community by promoting sensitivity, communication and understanding among people with differing beliefs, color, gender, cultures and backgrounds." This is an excellent, all inclusive statement. I would be interested in finding out how this occurs. Past interviews (for the most part) suggest this is true, except for the experience of LC, who claims that Parkland was "segregated": people from certain areas and High Schools hung out together and did not intermingle. Only additional interviews will prove if this is a common experience. As it stands now, LC is the only informant to report this. I am certain that UIUC has a mission statement or goal very similar to this. With recent opinion articles like that found in the DI, "Affirming Racism" (pg A7, April 8, 2005) and "Debate surrounds minority groups" (pg A1 and A3, March 29, 2005), this "sensitivity" goal is failing.

#### PRE-INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Please indicate your age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Please indicate your ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long have you lived in the Champaign/ Urbana area (in years)? \_\_\_\_\_

4. When do you expect to graduate with your Bachelors degree from UIUC?

December 20\_\_\_\_

May 20\_\_\_\_

August 20\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. How would you rate your experience at Parkland?

1a. How long were you there for?

1b. Was you major the same at Parkland as it is here? (THIS Q IS DESIGNED TO GET INTERVIEWEE TO STATE THERE INTENTIONS AT PARKLAND)

1c. (IF THEY HAD A SPECIFIC MAJOR WHILE AT PARKLAND) What made you switch majors?

2. How many of your classes transferred to the University?

3. Describe the circumstances that lead you to the decision that you wanted to come to UIUC.

3a. Did you apply to other places as well?

4. Where is your family located?

4a. How about your good friends, where do they live? Where did you meet them at?

5. Do you feel that you have enough time to relax and hang out with friends?

6. Give me a summary of the things you do in an average week/ day?

7. Think of a place where you feel the most comfortable at. On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most comfortable) rate how you feel when on campus.

10a. Explain why you ranked the university the way that you did.

#### TD Field notes

TD, a very calm and seemingly peaceful young man. Small, thin framed, square brown glasses. Seems to have the air of someone who reacts slowly and plans his moves thoroughly. This seems evident in the way he speaks about graduation. I personally am obnoxious about having all of my classes in order. I have already been to see my advisor for class audits twice and the LAS people (As TD would say) twice as well.

His patience was especially apparent when he spoke of his time at Parkland. He stayed at home because "it made sense". He went to Parkland because (in his own words) it was "the next logical step". He chose his major because he went through all of the other majors and crossed out the ones that "did not make sense". When I found sociology, I stuck with it because it made sense. It clicked. That is the only way I can describe it really. I, however, was not as methodical as TD. I never "xed" things out. In my mind I knew what I certainly had no interest in, but that was it. I see that he is in a developmental stage when it comes to the idea of grad school. While it seems to be the next logical step he is unsure what he will do.

He is much like me in that his friendships have been made away from the university. While I no longer have HS friends to talk to, he is still actively involved in the lives of a few. His friends seem to share a similar characteristic though. None of them are enrolled in school. His roommate, a friend from his home town with an interesting story to say the least, was enrolled in a trade program but dropped out of it, perhaps b/c of disappointment at failing the exams. His band mates are all from his hometown. The only person he was close to from this campus was a former girlfriend who he met in class.

TD's demeanor changed when he talked about his experiences at UIUC. While still calm and thoughtful, he reflected on an incident involving one of his teachers. At the beginning of the semester TD remembers walking into a small class packed with people. He was told that his real professor would be gone for one month, he was stuck in Africa teaching, the contract was messed up or something. TD was handed a large packet of quizzes for the first five chapters and pretty much told to go on his way until his teacher got back. I tried to hide my own amazement as he told me this story. As anal as I am I would have been hot, I mean really just pissed off. What do you mean your going to be in Africa? I paid money for this class! Is this a joke? I want to see the Dean... NO the Chancellor!!!!

Concerned with the economy and money.

Not getting his monies worth here, when compared to his experience at Parkland. I have to agree. It was in the community college that I found myself academically and as a person. It is certainly hard to explain, but I feel TD hits on something important. He says all of his teachers were excellent and engaging. They helped him to shape his own academic interests. For me, it has always been an issue of class. I found that I enjoyed the community of cc because I felt I was a part of their social class. We were in this together. If we messed up that was it. There would be no other chances. I don't believe all UIUC kids feel that way. In fact, I am sure that they don't. I am diligent in my work because I am afraid of the other side. It is this community feeling that allowed TD to excel at Parkland. This same feeling motivated me as well. Perhaps different in that I felt I also needed to be an example to all the first year students, especially if they reminded me of myself in some way. I had to show people that yes; while I may be enrolled in CC I am absolutely bright. The only difference between you and me is the money, period. I would challenge people I knew went to the university or my former private college in conversation and work ethic. I am just as good as you, perhaps better. I earn my grades. I am here for a reason. You can't say the same. You are not as worthy.

There are things that allow us to hold on as transfer students, especially when dropped into a busy, busy community that is the university. For me, it is my desire to prove all of my self-doubting fears wrong. For TD perhaps it is his connection to his band, Wastetoid Workforce. When I first heard the name I thought my goodness, a social commentary on class through a local band, YES!!!!

TD was so helpful. He wanted to give me answers. He kept trying in fact, even when I felt uneasy about taking a full hour of his time. It was not that he didn't have things to do, he commented on having some class work. Rather, it is his nature to be helpful. I think that my project probably addresses questions he has often thought about himself. I know for me, it is a joy to finally talk to people who understand because they've been there. Part of what alienates me from the university social community is the fact that no one talks about anything that is interesting to me outside of class work of course. I think there are still some wounds that are open in my own journey to earning the BA. I have always wanted to address them, but have lacked the people to address them with. This project is liberating to me. I hope that my participants feel the same way.

LR Field notes

LR 10/29/04

She seemed very much like me. A very similar outlook on life ("try to stay motivated"), a very busy schedule, even the same hair cut. We both have the same major and I wonder if that helps us to have similar thoughts.

She had a t-shirt and sweats on as she was on her way to work at 12noon. Unlike most students I see here, I come to school dressed in my work clothes, as I will be going to work after my classes each day. Until recently, I didn't mind going to work after class and coming back to campus to study after work. That was just the way things were and they would get better as soon as I was able to graduate. After being asked "why don't I see you own campus being an activist" I am a little more upset at the aspect of work. I know I need to keep my grades high so that when I go to grad school I don't have to deal with working hours like the ones I have now. I am starting to float into my old train of thought where I hate university students. They always think they are right and know all of the answers without actually examining all of the factors. I never like myself when I slip back into my "Me v. Them" way of thinking. The "they can never understand because they have never lived it so why bother to even listen to them" train of thought. It is a defense mechanism I haven't used since my days back at IC.

Both LR and I agree that you will never see us at a campus party, after working and going to school we are exhausted. LR works two jobs on campus and tries to attend the Tao Sigma meetings. I live off campus and try to attend the AUS meetings. However, considering the time it takes to take the bus, because I try not to walk at night, I am limited in my abilities. The past few weeks I have failed to make it to any meetings at all. I've been studying for my GRE's day in and day out. It, however, has not done me much good. The old me would snidely remark "Some people do not have the privilege of running our mouths on campus... it is just to hard, we don't have the time" the new me battles that thought and says "If I hard time to run my mouth I would

be doing the same thing...run your mouth a little longer for me, ok?"

The university is a priority, it is LR and my number one job.

Work that affects the community. For those who must work, we choose jobs in which we feel we can affect change. LR has tutored and now supervises tutors on the UIUC campus. The idea of literacy for all is important to us both. I work at the public library.

LR transferred from a large well-known university. She originally went there because she was told that would be her best mode of action. At the age of 18, we are often still seeking the approval of those closest to us. For LR, attending Northwestern was a kind of nightmare. She fell into her own self described depression. She would say she was her being "down". I can sympathize with LR and this sadness. When you don't do what you think you should do (are regretful), depression is a common side effect.

As I set in the computer lab I see many sets of examples of different types of students. There are kids who are truly working and being quite and focused. Then there are kids who continuously feel they need to talk and sing and just be loud. For those like LR and myself, we come to campus to get our work done. We go to the computer labs to type our work up. At no time are we on campus to play. People, like my loud peers, confuse and sometimes anger me. As LR pointed out, people come here with the idea that they need to work and socialize. We both believe this is common among people who started here as freshmen and have a sense of ownership. We hold on to the belief that it is work first, then socializing if time permits.

MMC 11/08/2004

I like him. He is very calm. Very open. He wants to talk. He is used to talking, or at least stating his opinion. He is used to doing this however in a non-confrontational way. It is hard to explain, but just listening to him I get the impression that he knows who he is, he knows what he has done and he stands by all of his choices. While this seems like a quality everyone has, it is not. A lot of people are shaky, in their opinions and in their beliefs. They are apologetic and may not necessarily understand why. I am more often than not someone who is apologetic. While I understand that the events of my life have happened for a reason, I sometimes wish I could better justify my decisions. Mmc seems like the kind of person who could do this. An example of this came from his description of his decision to join the military. In his own words, his decision came in the 11th hour. He wanted to see something different. Without apology or even a second thought he states that he was always dedicated to school however and signed up for classes as soon as he could.

Where I am defensive about my transfer record, Mmc is not. I state adamantly I didn't drop out; I just couldn't afford my old school. Look at my record...I worked really hard at each school trying to get back. I am ready for graduate school!!!! Mmc states what he has done and accepts it. Perhaps the main difference is acceptance. Mmc works hard, he puts together many campus events and is active, as well as maintaining a high GPA. He accepts who he is, period. There is something in my soul, which understands that my experience as a transfer student taught m many lessons. In fact, it is all I want to study now. However, I still feel for some reason a need to defend my time away... to graduate school panels, to financial aid counselors to anyone who would question it, including myself. I know I wouldn't be any good at school without working my way through school. Perhaps my guilt comes from my vigilance to not "hang out" on campus. I have to study and get everything solid to make up for my time away or else this time and this learning experience will be worth nothing. Is that true? It sounds good. It is the best explanation that I have. I doubt Mmc has these long extended thoughts, or perhaps he does and that is why he can stand by his life experiences.

There is a kind of maturity about this gentleman that I have yet to find in any of my other respondents. While they are mature in their own way, Mmc sticks out. I admire him for being in the military and transferring twice. While LR shares the experience of transferring twice, she did not indicate that she worked for a long period in the community, as Mmc had. I was never in the military, but did experience working at what some (certainly my older co workers) considered a

real job 40 hours per week. I remember doing this while taking classes. During those days I didn't sleep. "Sleep..." as Mmc would say "[was] a privilege." It also falls back to my old mindset: once you've worked so hard, felt like you were going to die b/c you just couldn't stop, going to school only is almost like nothing. You just do it (Mmc mentioned this b/c of his military experience and not needing sleep). What I have found also is opposite of Mmc's experience. Where he take his spare time and puts it to fraternity and campus activities, I take my time away from campus and put it towards my job, leisurely reading on race, class and labor and also towards additional studying. Perhaps I should learn to relax, but I have such a different perspective, a different background that I can't. I can never (b/c I don't want to) go back to the life I had before becoming a transfer student. I feel that most campus concerns are silly when juxtaposed against real life problems like poverty or hunger. I just don't know how to reconnect.

#### .LC Field notes

LC is a young lady who from first sight seems to have found the perfect field. She is studying to be an elementary school teacher. She is very bouncy, very energetic and extremely positive. As we spoke I found myself constantly glancing at her freshly painted bright pink nails. I suppose I went into this interview with my own assumptions that I was dealing with someone who wanted everything to seem like it had bright rainbows attached to it. After every sentence in our email correspondence she had an explanation mark. Every sentence. However, even with this enthusiasm, LC was very professional. Perhaps this is the business side of her, as she did study business at Parkland for two years before transferring into the teaching program here at UIUC.

While at Parkland LC choose business because it was a nice, predictable, desirable and transferable degree. She found out that she wanted to teach through guidance at Parkland, but especially here at UIUC. Her major is small and personal. Everyone knows each other well from classroom and class project time. In all of my interviews I have never heard anyone speak so highly of their advisor. Small programs however can offer this and give its recipients (the students) a true sense of place, regardless of what is going on campus-wide. LC describes her program as a true learning community.

LC liked Parkland for the one-on-one time she was able to spend with advisors. Socially however, LC remembers the self-supported segregation of students on the Parkland campus. Students from Mahomet hung out specifically with other students (perhaps High School friends) from Mahomet. Students from Centennial High School in Champaign hung out with their former High School classmates. My friends in the community often describe Parkland as "High School only with ashtrays." There is no way to interact with others outside of the classroom when students refuse to try. This certainly could lead students, especially those who hope to transfer, to go to class and return home, not even trying to mingle or break the pattern of segregation. Without socializing one could assume that students may become more academically involved. While I was at Parkland I enjoyed myself thoroughly. Perhaps this was the only time in my undergraduate career where I felt so relaxed. I met a lot of people, as I was new and had just moved to town and had lots of free time (I worked part time and only took two classes). Many of the people I met that semester remained my friends, even when I started classes at the university. LC's comment on such segregation is interesting and certainly worth further investigation.

LC's friends are from her home town and from her major here at UIUC. Her longtime boyfriend she met even before attending college. She moved from her parents' home when she began college, becoming roommates with individuals she did not have a longtime friendship with. Like the majority of the students I have spoken to and interviewed, friendships are not usually made at the university. Individuals either have to have a strong academic group (like LC), work with individuals who happen to have a connection to campus (like LR) or have the time to actively seek friendships (this means the individual must be secure with themselves, which usually applies to more non-traditional students like MMC, but not always).

QUESTIONNAIRE for busy transfers  
(Email that introduces questions)

XXXXXXXXXX,

I have not been able to catch you for an interview. Rather than rescheduling, I am sending you four key questions that I hope you will be able to answer and return to me via email.

To comply with IRB procedures, I need you to understand that this "interview" and all data obtained is:

- a. confidential- your name will not be disclosed
- b. voluntary- you can skip some, all or none of the questions asked

Also, I supply all of my interviewees with information about the Counseling Center. The Counseling Center is available to help you in the event that the questions asked upset you in anyway. Their number is (217) 333-3704 or you can visit their website: <http://www.couns.uiuc.edu/>

The Questions are attached. If you choose to participate, please email your answers back to me (preferably as an attachment) and type your name (a computer signature) below:

(Attached Q's)

EOTU: INTERVIEW XXXXX

Weissinger

November XX, 2004

Q1: In your opinion, what makes UIUC different than Parkland? What, if anything has made your experience at the university different than your experience at other schools?

Q2: Make an outline of your collegiate experience.

For me, my outline looks like this: IC‡ TC3‡ Parkland‡UIUC

My outline has four different colleges listed because I ran out of money and had to move here, get to know my family again and enroll in school. What allowed your outline to look the way that it does? What usually influences where you end up attending school at?

Q3: I know what makes UIUC different to you and also how you got here. What is your major now, what was it at Parkland and what do you feel about your classes and academic counseling?

Q4: Last question. I have very little time because I work quite a few hours at my job. Often I feel left out of campus events and barely know anyone on campus. For me, college is much like a job. Is this true for you as well? This question can be broken into three parts.

A. How did you learn to adjust and find friends, or are you more like me and have not done this yet?

B. Where did you meet these friends? Are they in school as well?

C. Do you find that you are comfortable at UIUC? Why or why not? Do you believe that friendship would/ has allowed you to become comfortable on campus?

## DISCUSS

[Go to Top](#) ↑

### Findings

Here are some findings, supplied by Abel Montoya, an Associate Director in Admissions and Records in our correspondence.

Of the 1085 fall transfers 214 (19.7%) were from Parkland. While, 63.3% of the total transfers are from community colleges. On that note, 31.1% of the transfer students from community colleges came from Parkland College.

We have not broken down the numbers by ethnicity and specific community college. Overall, for the community college transfers:

- 0.4% are Native American
- 3.3% are African-American
- 9.5% are Asian American
- 3.6% are Latino/a
- 78.0% are White
- 1.2% are international
- 3.9% did not report ethnicity

Of the transfers from Parkland College 77 (36%) went into LAS.

Although we don't have exact numbers, the majority of transfer students live off campus in apartments.

## CONNECT

[Go to Top](#) ↑

### Refer to other EOTU work

Anne Maloney- Transfer Student Project Fall 2003

Ms. Maloney asks a few very important questions that apply to my own study of how race affects transfer students. While my research focuses solely on the connection between UIUC and Parkland, Ms. Maloney examines transfer students at UIS and UIC in comparison to UIUC. As a transfer student like Ms. Maloney, I feel that we both are asking the same essential question:

"What are the major problems that transfer students have?"

I would like to use the Anne's three major concepts. In interviewing I hope to examine how transfer students make the transition, how they find their identity and the conflict they face as a small population (1/12 according to Anne) at UIUC.

## REFLECT

[Go to Top](#) ↑

### Project diary

LIMITATIONS

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

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Please see uploaded paper as the charts and graphs text refers to is not available on this page.

## INTRODUCTION

In August of 2002, fresh off a twenty-two hour train ride I enrolled in a few classes at Champaign's only community college. I recalled my time at previous colleges and knew that I simply could not be happy in my new home without an intellectual outlet. Parkland was the place. The receptionist was friendly over the phone and (amazingly so) even friendlier in person, asking what I was interested in, what kind of hobbies I had and then proceeding to write down a list of contact information. This was a very kind act on her part, which I never forgot. Not only had this stranger managed to make me feel at ease about my own transition, she also managed to leave a lasting impression that influenced my own involvement in the Parkland community. That single experience has acted as the heart of this project. What does it mean to be part of UIUC seeks to examine the subtle differences between Champaign-Urbana's two institutions for higher education. To tell this unique narrative, the perceptions and experiences of other transfer students from Parkland had to be examined and compared.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

How do transfer students from Parkland Community College view their experience at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign?

## SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS

1. How do these transfer students establish a "sense of place" or even a feeling of ownership here at UIUC?
2. What types of support systems have they formed?
3. How did their experiences at Parkland prepare them for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign?

## METHODOLGY

In my own attempt to understand the "transfer student culture" here at the university, I conducted a general search in the university archives. I read through meeting notes of the Transfer Students Association, which was a registered student organization until 1971. From the personal notes of TSA officers I learned much about what it was like to lead an organization, but little about what it meant to be a transfer student. With this knowledge however, I contacted the Assistant Dean of Students, who in turn contacted members of Tau Sigma, an honorary transfer student association. Individuals who were notified of the study through the office of the Dean of Students volunteered to be interviewed. All interviews lasted on average between half an hour and one hour long sessions. Informants were only asked to meet once. I did attempt to contact the President of the universities Tau Sigma branch before interviewing had completed, but still await a response to this day.

Informants who were not the product of Tau Sigma, tended to be individuals I knew from being a former Parkland student. These individuals appeared in the library or outside of one of my classes waiting for their own to start. Two individuals were also observed during a class period, to examine how transfer students acted in the classroom.

I conducted four in-depth interviews with two males and two females. I spoke informally to three females and one male. I observed one male and one female from current classes I am enrolled in. I also observed several students indirectly in the hallways of the Foreign Language Building, the Illini Union and the Illini Union CITES lab. Of these individuals, two described themselves as African-American; one described herself as Asian American (although she noted that she had 1/8 Native American blood) and seven described themselves as White or Caucasian.

## LIMITATIONS

Rhonda Kirts, Assistant Dean of Students, located many of the individuals interviewed. The individuals she contacted were from the Tau Sigma Honorary National Transfer Student Association. Because of this association, we have to assume that these students have integrated academically and do not find the courses and workload to be overwhelming. These are academically successful students.

Informants were also discovered through the help of classmates, my own associations and through observation. Additional informal interviews with students who were not associated with Tau Sigma helps to paint a less biased picture of how the Parkland students fit here are the university. Without the input of various informal interviews this study could have been an

ethnography of the Tau Sigma organization and not of Parkland students at UIUC. In additional studies, it would be beneficial to gain the perspective of Parkland transfers who are doing poorly (academically) at the university. From my findings thus far, students from Parkland College are on average very motivated and organized.

It was hard to find students from underrepresented groups. As transfer students in general only make up about 1/12th of the total undergraduate student body (Maloney, 2003), Parkland students make up a smaller proportion and underrepresented groups and even smaller percentage. Perhaps if I myself was on campus more or had invested more time in developing friendships with those within the student body, this problem would have been less pronounced. According to statistics from Abel Montoya, Assistant Director in Admissions and Records at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, there were 1,085 transfer students admitted to UIUC. 687 of these students were from community colleges. Of these, 214 (31%) were transfer students from Parkland. The university, according to Mr. Montoya, has "...not broken down the numbers by ethnicity and specific community college." However, 7.3% report being a member of an underrepresented ethnic group. (Please see tables attached)

#### FINDINGS

When I was at Parkland I observed that the students in my classes fell into two categories: those who saw Parkland as a way to bigger, better schools and those who were not necessarily sure they would even make it through Parkland, let alone a larger four-year institution. Often this dichotomy of students was unspoken, but very plain to any "outsider" who took the time to step back and observe. When I searched for this dynamic within my insiders, it was not present. Students like TD, LR and MMC always understood that Parkland was just a starting point. TD notes he always saw college as the "next logical step." What perhaps was not understood was what field he would specialize in. For him, as well as others, Parkland gave TD the time he needed to experiment and search for what interested him. The ability to find the right fit at a relatively reasonable price was an important factor in determining TD's decision to start at Parkland.

As informants from the Champaign County, LC, AFP and TD had heard about Parkland through family, friends and others. As mentioned, TD went to Parkland to explore. LC on the other hand went to Parkland with her mind set on obtaining a degree in business. The time Parkland gave LC to explore her career options was enough time for her to realize that a degree in business was not for her. By the time she was ready to transfer to UIUC, she had met with advisors and planned her career as a hopeful secondary education teacher. For LC, the advice and direction she received at Parkland was valuable. LC, unlike other respondents, has found that her new academic program has wonderful and knowledgeable advisors as well.

While the majority of insiders (6 out of 10) believe that the academic program they are now enrolled in is the "perfect fit", none (with the exception of LC) went out of their way to describe their connection to the program through excellent academic advising. When the topic was touched upon in interviews, more likely than not the typical response referred to closer relationship between faculty at Parkland and limited contact to faculty at UIUC. TD told the story of a professor who was absent from class for the first month or so while teaching in a foreign country. AFP notes the disconnect between faculty and students of one college from the rest of the university. To say that the university is too big is not enough to address the problem. Rather, additional research should focus on the connection between academic success, limited advising and the campus community.

LR and MMC were well aware that they would be transferring to the university. LR, originally from the northern part of Illinois, had learned of Parkland through an admissions staff member here at UIUC. In her explanation, LR notes that it made more sense to move to the area, take classes and apply for admissions than it did to stay at her former university. LR originally transferred because she had not established "a sense of place" at her former institution. MMC on the other hand chose Parkland while serving our country in the armed forces. He knew he wanted to attend college within a relatively close distance to his hometown in southern Illinois. Both of these informants did not mention economics as a major factor in their decision to attend college. Nor did they even refer to the idea that college may not have been an option. Like the majority of Parkland transfers, obtaining a degree has never been the question. Rather, finding an institution and program in which one can excel has been the key concern.

#### Sense of Place

Parkland was certainly a different community. In my experience it was perhaps a more accepting

community. Students of all ages gathered together, asked questions and often held study sessions outside of class. Due to the transient nature of the community college, perhaps everyone was more eager to make friends because they themselves were relatively new. This is perhaps one of the larger differences amongst the communities. AFP confirmed my suspicions exclaiming, "The undergrad students have already have found friends..." With the exception of LR, all of the informants live off campus and note that it is hard to meet students. Busy work schedules and family commitments (remember these are students who have families within the community) and attempting to do well academically leaves little time for social organizations. In order to find a sense of place, to fit in, these transfers relied on in class discussion, group projects, strong academic programs or involvement in extracurricular activities when time permitted.

Overall, students whose hometowns are within a half hour are more involved academically and less involved socially than their peers, who are often more involved socially than they are academically. The students who live in the Champaign-Urbana area generally attended Parkland for longer and enjoyed the small community feel of Parkland. LC was a bit of an exception to this generalization, but I believe what sets her apart is the program in which she is involved. For her, perhaps this department has provided her with the same nurturance a first year freshman would receive. LC is certainly the exception, but I have to wonder how her story might have been had she choose a different field of study.

The students who identified as African-American or Black tended to be involved in more campus events and social activities. LR works multiple jobs on campus and is involved in a few registered organizations. MMC is an active member in one of the Greek fraternities. He also is involved in campus policy boards and registered organizations. While these students are doing very well academically they both note the importance of time. MMC's motto is that "sleep is a privilege." LR agrees, but her motto is a bit different. She "is here to study." She notes the ideology of other students that they are here to "socialize and study." Overall, the informants tend to believe that finding a sense of place at UIUC is much harder than at Parkland. The different communities expect different levels of participation based on the students' lifestyle. At Parkland 68% of the student body is employed, which means that these are individuals who do not necessarily have time during the evenings to participate in campus events. UIUC lives under the mythology that students do not work and do not have commitments outside of the few hours they spend in class. Therefore, the two universities differ in their approach to student involvement.

#### Different Communities

I had expected many more students to mention the different ways in which social groups interact, but only one insider did. Where TD was very concerned with money matters, LR wanted to study and LC was just happy, AFP made note that campus was divided not only by class, but by ethnicity as well. She saw Parkland as a less segregated institution. This is understandable. There was certainly a high level of tolerance at Parkland. One has to wonder if this was due to the limited amount of space or limited amount of people to talk with. LC, on the other hand disagreed. Coming from twenty minutes outside of Champaign, LC found that the students were segregated based on what high school they attended and often socialized accordingly. My experience at Parkland and my perception of UIUC tends to be more similar to that of AFP. After all, I found many friends at Parkland and I attended high school in a different state. I believe that perhaps the difference in perception may stem from when one entered Parkland. LC indicated that she went to Parkland straight out of High School, perhaps this colored her experience. Where I entered Parkland after having attending other colleges.

It should be noted that with the exception of a few (which will be spoken about later) many transfer students retain the friendships they had prior to entering UIUC and have made few substantial friendships while enrolled. Why is this? Well as mentioned, it is hard to make friends at the university. During interviews I picked up on an underlying theme in the stories of transfers coming from the CU area. LR and MMC had to immerse themselves in the campus community. If they did not they would have been alone, as their families and old friends live far away. LR herself noted that during her time at her old college she tended to travel home almost every week. Transfers from CU however do not need to adjust, adapt or change to fit in. These are individuals who can observe the students from the community, as they have a support system that lies in CU and Champaign county.

#### Conclusion

Transfer students from Parkland Community College can be divided into two categories: those from Champaign or the surrounding counties and those from other areas. Those from outside of the CU area tend to "blend in" with the rest of the general student body. These are the individuals who are in fraternities, volunteer on campus and have found their sense of place within the university itself. Those from the CU area however tend to rely on support systems and friendships built within the community. For CU Parkland transfers, their sense of place is developed from their place of employment (which is generally off campus), with their friends (who they met off campus) and with their families who live in the Champaign-Urbana community.

Implications for Further Research

A division between transfer students from Parkland has been noted. There are those from the CU area who establish community relationships and those from the greater part of Illinois who tend to be more representative of first and second year students on campus. In additional studies, understanding the division amongst CU Parkland transfers will prove interesting. This study found that while a large majority of Parkland students tend to work, not all of the Parkland transfers do. A comparison between the narratives of working transfers from the community and non-working transfers from the community is relevant and necessary.

### Credits and Acknowledgement

I would like to thank everyone from Educational Policy Studies 500 for their advice and guidance. I would also like to thank the individuals from the University Archives for their excellent research skills. A very special thanks to the informants, who generously gave me their time and stories.

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[TransferStudentsPercentsfromOAR.doc](#)

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### Users' Comments on this Unit

- Good progress since I last saw it! We'll talk on Thursday. Bring interview questions on Thursday. - *by pfortier@uiuc.edu*
- Work on reading connections. Also, embellish your project diary or create sections with thoughts from your interviews. Are you beginning to get partial answers to your "inquire" questions? - *by pfortier@uiuc.edu*
- Ok--It's fine to change the authors. I am hoping that you will feel comfortable today talking about the articles, since the topic is "involvement." No need to share anything you don't want to. It's hard sometimes if your experience is very different from the majority, and it is for transfer students here. Did you read Anne's project all the way through? - *by pfortier@uiuc.edu*
- You are doing a great job. You are really involved in reflecting on this project. I'm glad you feel a bit better about the one aspect that you mentioned. One of the challenges of immersing yourself is that it can be upsetting sometimes. Interesting comments about money and community college students!!! - *by pfortier@uiuc.edu*
- Oops--I wasn't finished yet..I didn't mean to hit the submit button so soon. I can identify with some of your thoughts. Even back when I was in college, community college students seemed to be viewed by some people as a little less entitled. We'll talk soon. pf - *by pfortier@uiuc.edu*
- Sandra, I think your search for a university mission statement is fascinating. What do you think this says about the University? You ask, "Is the school so large and detached from itself that there can be no one general admissions counselor?" I think this is a great question especially in comparison to Parkland. They seem to place preparing students for transfer toward the center of their mission. Which university knows its students better? Is that possible to judge? - *by tramos@uiuc.edu*

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