ABSTRACT

THESIS TITLE: Transfer Transitions: Predictive Models of Entering Transfer Student

Academic Success at Ball State University

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Tinto's (1993) Theory of Individual Departure from Institutions of Higher Education conceptualized the decision making process students navigate when committing to institutions of higher education and persisting to graduation. Transfer students are gaining the attention of administrators and policy-makers because of the high level of transfer activity in higher education. Many of these students face a uniquely difficult transition when moving from one institutional environment to another. The phenomenon, known as transfer shock, is the overall integration and adaptation difficultly that transfer students face (Hills, 1965). Since previous institution cumulative grade point average (GPA) is a criterion used in transfer admissions decisions, it was studied. Six-year graduation totals were also observed in the study because they indicates student commitment to their institution and goals toward graduation.

The purpose of this study was to examine Ball State University entering transfer students and how to predict post-transfer GPA and six-year graduation based on previous institution cumulative grade point average, age, sex, previous institution type, and BSU college. Regression analysis was used to make predictive models for post-transfer GPA and six-year graduation using the observed variables (i.e., previous institution cumulative GPA, age, sex, previous

institution type, and BSU college). The sample consisted of 1,857 entering transfer students at Ball State University, a state-assisted, residential university with high research activity in Muncie, Indiana.

Previous institution cumulative GPA averaged 2.994 while the average post-transfer GPA was 1.681. Nearly 60% of the sample achieved six-year graduation. The results of the revised model for predicting post-transfer GPA found only previous institution cumulative GPA, age, previous institution type, and whether or not the student was in CAST to be statistically significant predictors. The model used to predict six-year graduation found previous institution type, age, sex, previous institution type, and three of the BSU colleges (CAST, CCIM, and TC) to be statistically significant predictors. When applied to the data, the six-year graduation prediction model correctly predicted six-year graduation at a rate of 79.6% and had an overall correct prediction percentage of 63.6% of the time. Suggestions for practice and recommendations for future research were included.