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Admission rules differ for transfer students

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Some Ohio State students who spent their high school years working toward a high grade-point average and ACT score might be surprised to find out that for transfer students with at least 30 credit hours of college or university experience, high school records don't matter.

Stephanie Sanders, interim director of admissions operations at OSU, said the factors considered for entering freshmen differ from those considered for transfer students.

"Certainly admission is more competitive for entering, first-year students than it is for transfer students," Sanders said. "Clearly the admissions criteria speaks for itself."

Students who choose to enroll as first-years without any college or university experience are evaluated based upon three principles: successful completion of a college prep curriculum, high school rank and/or GPA and performance on the SAT or ACT.

Students transferring from a college or university with less than 30 semester hours are evaluated based upon a combination of their high school and previous collegiate performances, but students with more than 30 semester hours are evaluated solely on their college or university record.

"You can't tell everything you need to know based upon a grade-point average," Sanders said. "But sure, it's likely that a student who has a (3.0) or better is going to do a little better than the student who just has a (2.0)."

Tressa Casey, a third-year in athletic training, said she anticipated coming to college throughout her high school years and strived for a solid high school record. She enrolled at



Katelyn Pruchnicki / Lantern reporter

Many students are able to transfer into OSU with significantly lower admission standards than they would have straight out of high school.

OSU as a first-year in 2009.

“(Coming to college) was definitely a big goal of mine,” Casey said. “I knew I wanted to come to Ohio State because I enjoyed the camaraderie of Ohio State.”

Casey said that although some students might not perform well in high school, she understands that coming to college might prompt changes.

“I understand that some people will do a lot better in college than they will in high school, so I get where they’re coming from, but then again, you could have just taken the bullcrap classes and gotten a 4.0 your first semester in college,” Casey said. “I don’t know how I feel about it.”

The majority of transfer students who enroll at OSU have more than 30 semester hours at their time of transfer, Sanders said.

“For most of our transfer students we don’t have any idea how they did in high school because we don’t see their records and we don’t see their ACT scores,” Sanders said. “For many students, their performance in high school doesn’t really matter anymore.”

Jerry Mancino transferred to OSU for Autumn Quarter 2009, and after a year of trying to get into the health sciences program, he transferred out to attend Cleveland State where he could major in health and education.

“I did not get into the health sciences program because it’s extremely competitive and my grades just weren’t up to par,” Mancino said. “If I knew I had to be absolutely spot-on on all of my work I would have done it from the start.”

According to university records, 919 transfer students enrolled for Autumn Quarter earned GPAs of between 3.0 and 3.49 at their previous institutions and 640 students earned between a 3.5 and 4.0. However, 855 enrolled transfer students earned between a 2.0 and a 2.99 and six students enrolled earned between a 0.01 and 1.99 GPA at their previous institutions.

The average ACT score of the entering, first-year class in Autumn Quarter was 28, and 90 percent of admitted freshmen were in the top 25 percent of their graduating high school class.

Transfer students are not included in the overall statistical summary of OSU, Sanders said. Graduation rates, average GPA, are based solely upon students who come to OSU with no prior university or college experience.

“It’s a completely different kind of data and more difficult to track,” Sanders said. “It’s hard to identify a cohort for transfer students because they’re so varied in what they’ve done before they’ve come to Ohio State.”

Mancino said he believes the university doesn’t include transfer students in the statistical summary for alternative reasons.

“I feel like they’re scared if they do include those students, it will reflect badly on the school

academically,” Mancino said. “Not that they don’t have faith in people, but they just want the school to look more excellent than the people who go here.”

Casey agreed.

“The university is a business, so if you want to take someone’s money and it’s not going to ruin the overall statistics of the school, I get it,” Casey said.

Sara King, a first-year in sociology, transferred in Winter Quarter because she wanted to start working toward a bachelor’s degree. King said a lot of people make plans to enroll as transfer students for financial reasons.

“A lot of people are finding it 10 times cheaper to just go to Columbus State (Community College) for like a year,” King said. “And it doesn’t matter what they got on the ACT because nobody really cares anymore.”

Sanders said there is a lot of evidence to prove that students with at least one year of college experience are prepared to be successful wherever they go, “and are better prepared, in many cases, than they were coming out of high school to be successful here.”

Will Kopp, vice president of institutional advancement at Columbus State, agreed with Sanders.

“For many, Columbus State is an introduction to the rigors of college-level academics in a setting that is focused on excellent teaching and student success,” Kopp said in an email. “With a firm foundation from Columbus State and an associate degree, they are then well prepared to transfer to a four-year university.”

Eighty percent of students who enter as first-years graduate within six years and 72 percent of transfer students graduate within that same time frame, Sanders said.