A Transfer Champion Tune-Up:

Reflecting on Practice as Agents, Connectors, and Advocates

Presented by: *Emily Kittrell, Transfer Expert-in-Residence at the NRC*

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NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

National Transfer Student Week

October 19-23, 2026

#transferstudentweek


TRANSFER
CHAMPION

What makes someone a “transfer champion”?

How is “champion” different than just good service?

https://www.nists.org/post/defining-transfer-champions

Important Announcement: *NISTS has joined the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition at the University of South Carolina. This site is now a legacy archive and will eventually be deactivated.*

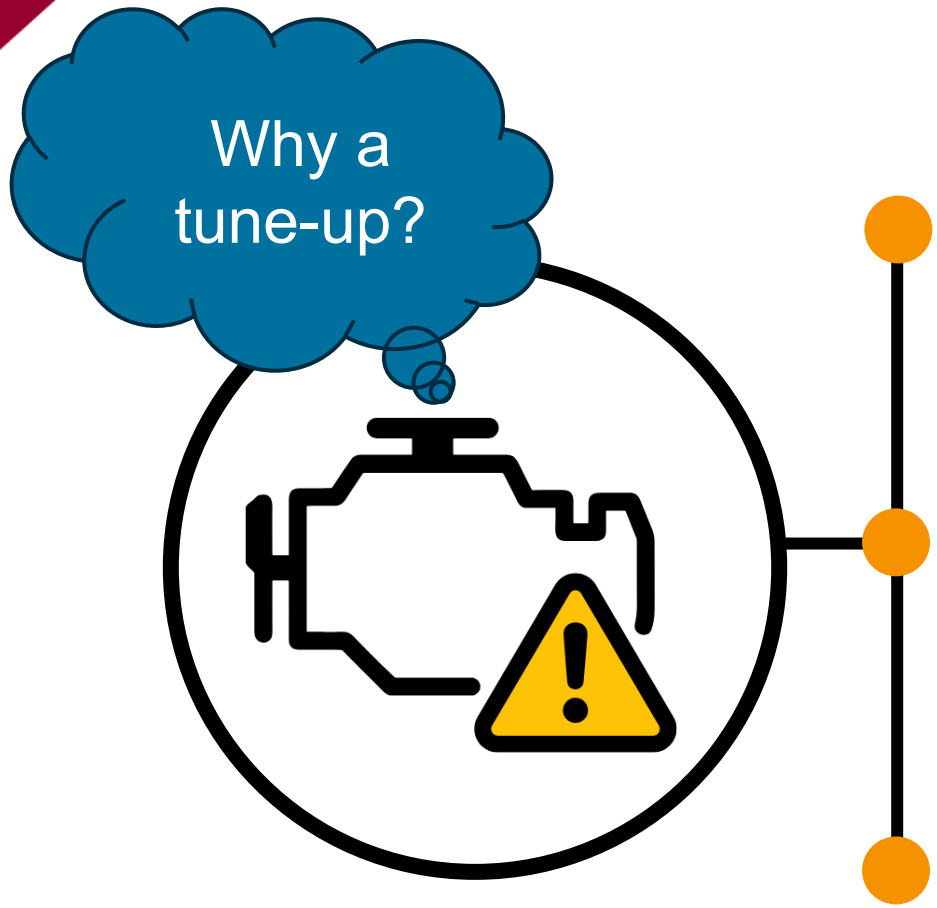
Feb 25, 2025

Transfer Champions: The Agents, Connectors, and Advocates Supporting Student Success

Written by
NISTS




TRANSFER CHAMPION
1
AGENT
2
CONNECTOR
3
ADVOCATE



1 AGENT

2 CONNECTOR

3 ADVOCATE

Theoretical Foundations*

Transfer student capital
KNOW-HOW

What students learn about navigating transfer, like how credits apply and what a major requires

Laanan et al., 2010

Transfer self-efficacy
BELIEF

Students' belief that they can transfer and navigate the process

Buenaflor, 2023

Transfer culture
SENDING · RECEPTIVE · AFFIRMING

An institution's commitment to making transfer a normal, expected, supported path

Ornelas & Solórzano, 2004; Jain et al., 2011; Handel, 2011

Validation
AFFIRMATION

Faculty and staff reaching out to affirm students as capable learners, many times, in many places

Rendón, 1994; Kitchen et al., 2021



Please complete one section at a time.

Transfer Agents

…are people whose role gives them access and insight students don't have. They proactively use their insider knowledge to help students navigate the institution. Crucially, they build relationships where students feel affirmed as capable learners who belong here and safe enough to keep asking questions.



Information alone often isn't enough.

Transfer Agents

Use **insider knowledge** and **affirming relationships** to help students navigate.

1. **Validate students' strengths and aspirations**
2. **Explain the written and unwritten rules**
3. **Offer ongoing encouragement and support**

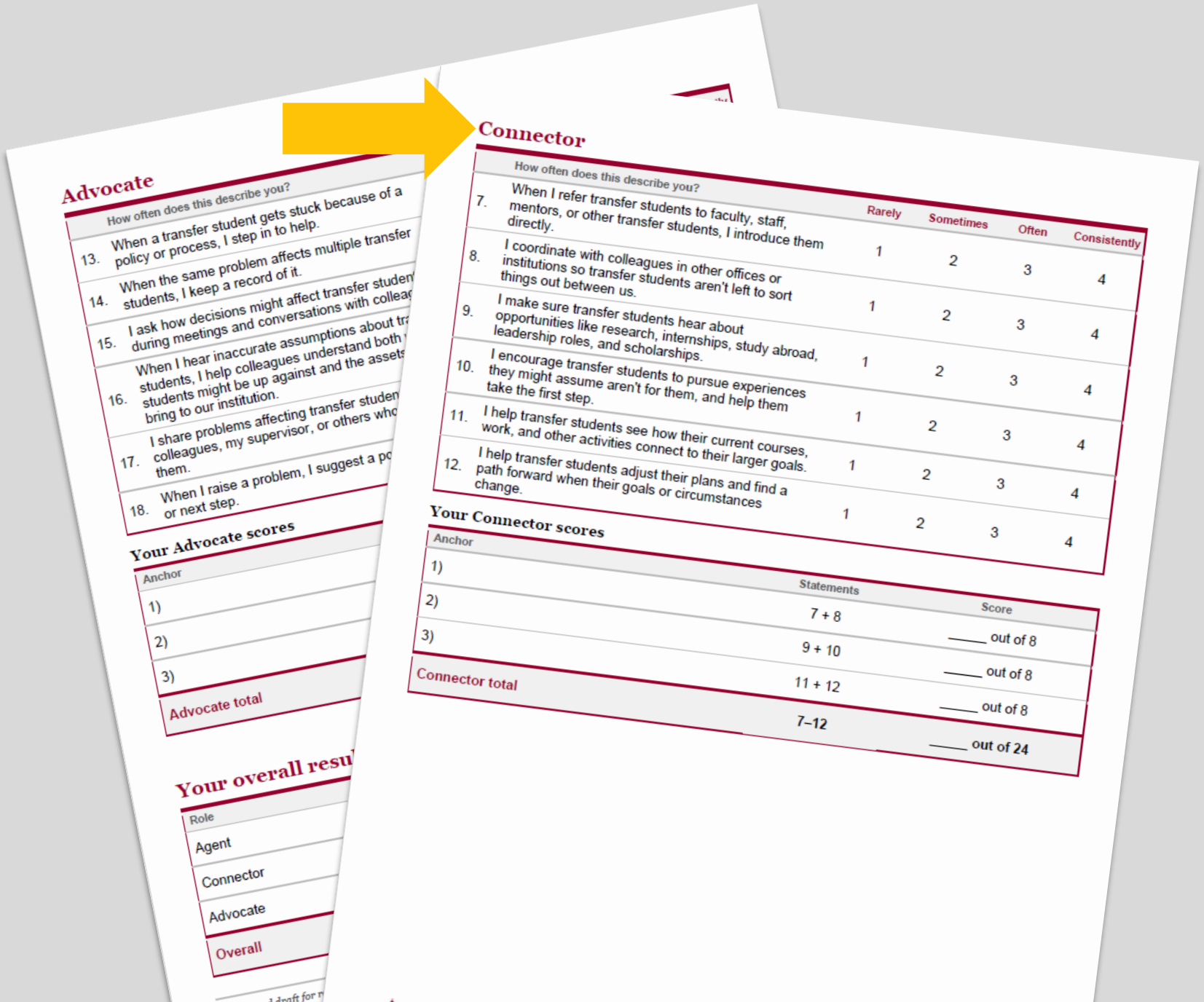
Pause & Reflect

With 1-2 people near you:

Which anchor/behavior feels most natural?

Which would you like to try or improve?

(What might get in the way?)



Please complete one section at a time.

Transfer Connectors

…link students to people and experiences beyond their own office, and often beyond their institution. They know what other offices and departments offer and who's best to contact, so students don't have to rely on being in the right place at the right time to find what they need.



Access shouldn't be left to chance.

Transfer Connectors

Link students to people and opportunities **beyond your office**.

1

Expand students' networks and coordinate on their behalf

2

Make opportunities visible and reachable

3

Tie decisions and next steps to students' larger goals

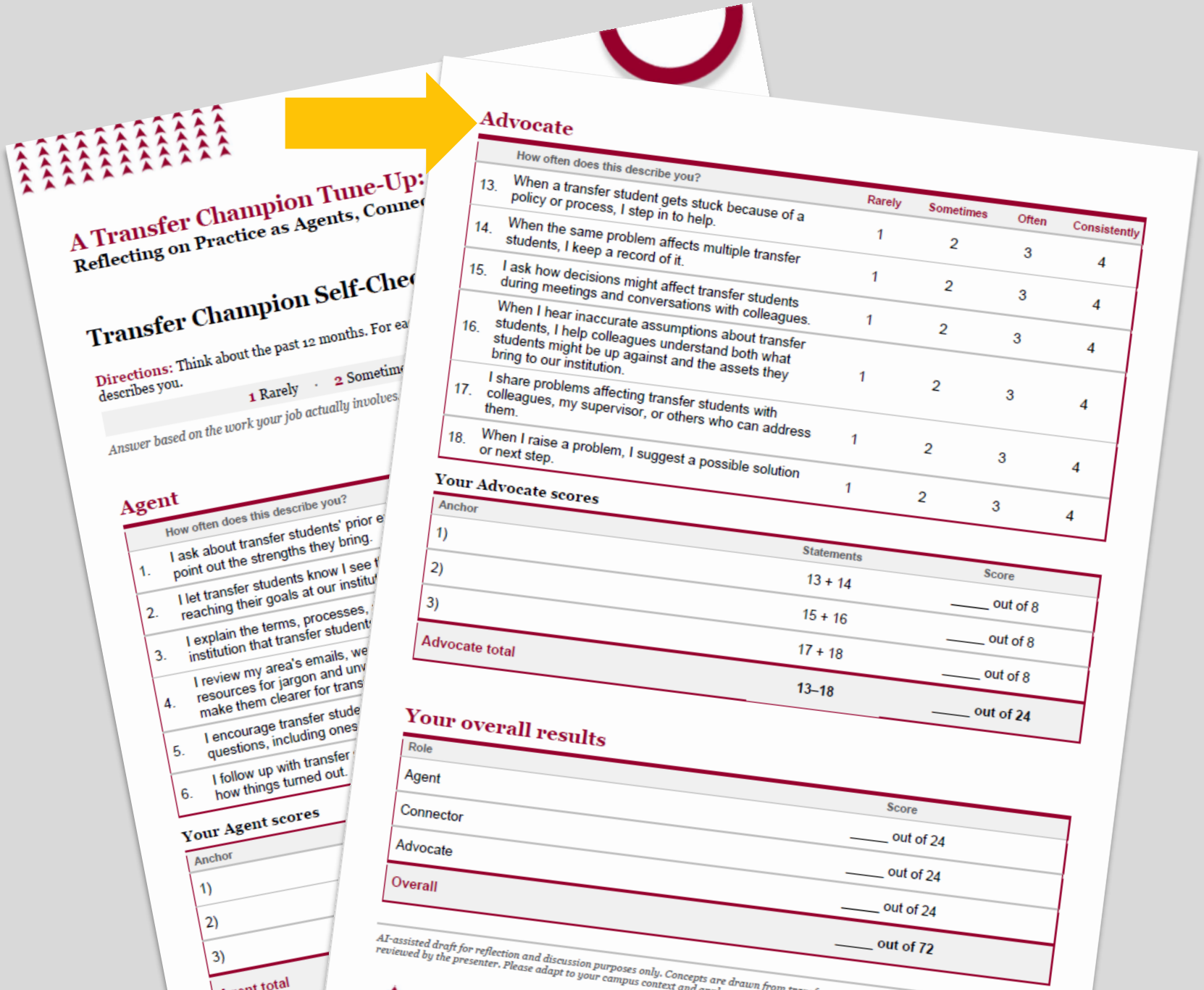
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Transfer Advocates

…work to improve the systems, policies, and practices transfer students navigate. When the same problem keeps coming up, they bring the pattern, along with data and student stories, to people who can change it. Their role shapes what they notice and how far they can take it.



Recurring issues indicate structural barriers.

Transfer Advocates

Turn **repeated problems** into **lasting change**.

1

Intervene when possible and document trends

2

Raise transfer perspectives wherever they're overlooked

3

Help fix what isn't working

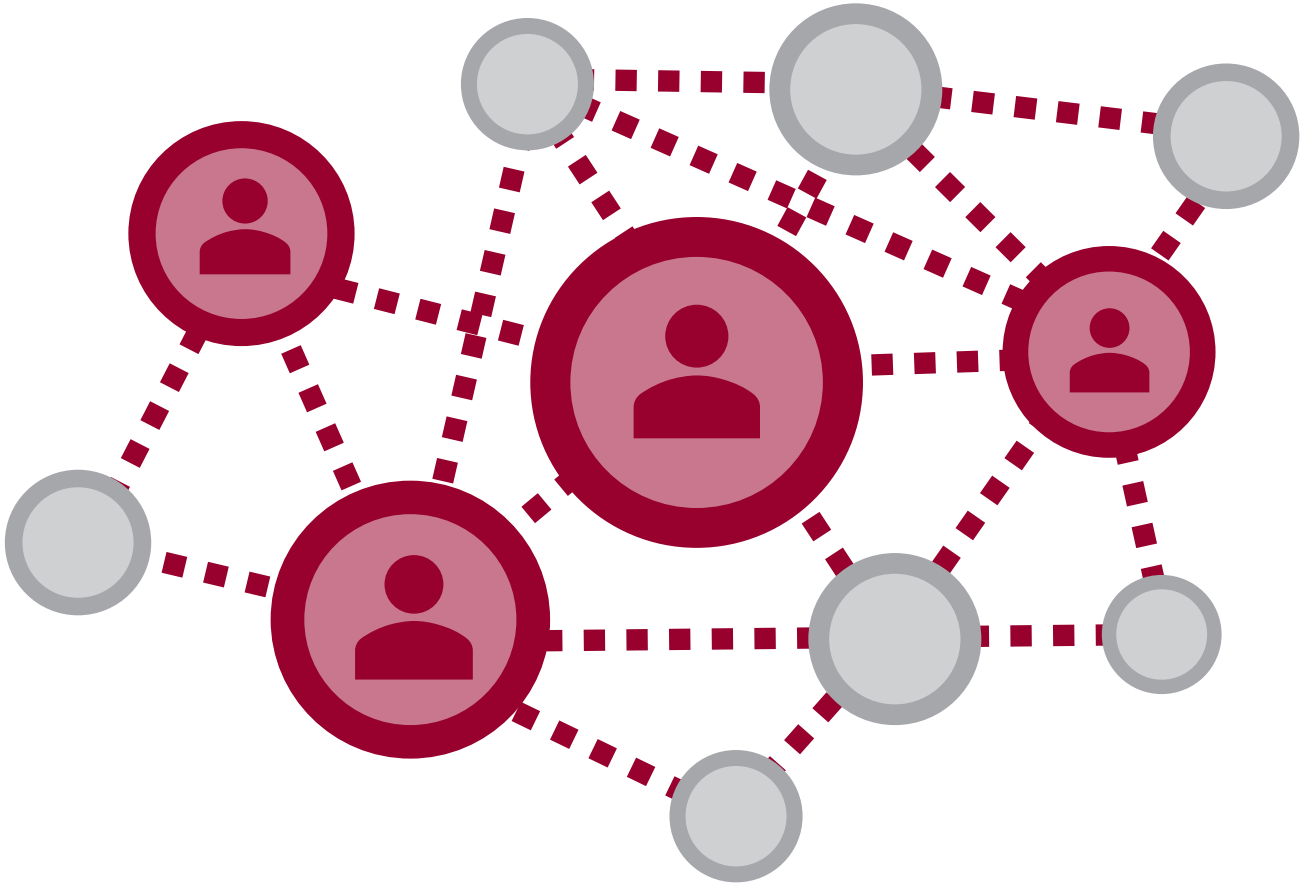
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Anyone can be an advocate!

Schedule Your Next Tune-Up:

Let’s make sure it’s not just happenstance that students interact with transfer champions.

Stay Connected

@nrcfyesit

@nrcfyesit

National Resource Center
for The First-Year Experience
and Students in Transition



(session materials)

THANK YOU

for attending this session!

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