

Assessment of Inter Faculty Transfer Among Students of Nigerian Universities: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

The paper highlighted definitions or concept of inter faculty transfer and the procedures to be followed when inter faculty transfer is to be conducted. A sample survey technique was employed. The paper discussed on possible reasons advanced by students for their transfer. Lastly, problems, challenges, conclusion and recommendations were provided. It was recommended that efforts should be intensified for the early releases of results to enable students begin transfer processes in good time.

Keywords: Inter faculty transfer, Students, Nigerian Universities, Issues and Challenges.

Introduction

Inter faculty transfer is an academic facility provided by the University to enable students having difficulty in their studies whose general cumulative grade point average (CGPA) is 0.75 and above to transfer to other related departments for the continuation of their studies. The facility, when carefully utilized is capable of producing the desired results; which is helping student to remedy their academic deficiencies and pick up for the academic task ahead.

Statement of the Research Problem

Student should be assisted to resolve their educational and vocational problems. He should be help to remove barriers that might inhibit his learning activities and to focus his attention towards problems solving techniques. These challenges cannot be overcome without effective identification of the level of academic progress and performance and the way to match the student actual capabilities with level of his academic ability.

Students face a lot of difficulties in getting appropriate assistance to ease their anxieties and resolve personal, social and academic problems. The aim of the paper is to provide an assessment of how inter faculty transfer is conducted in some selected universities in the country looking at some of the issues and challenges involved.

Research Questions

- i. What is the meaning of the concept 'inter faculty transfer'?
- ii. What are the procedures involved in the transfer?
- iii. What are the major issues and challenges in the transfer?

Research Objectives

- i. Explain the meaning and concept of interfaculty transfer
- ii. Identify the procedures involve in the transfer

- iii. Find out the major issues and challenges and provide solutions

Related Literature

Inter faculty transfer is a product of counselling services which is related to academic advising. Academic counselling has to do with information exchange that empowers students to realize their maximum educational potential. The process is student centred and will result in student gaining clearer picture of him/herself and the experience of higher education (David, 1987).

Higher academic intake of student in the university necessitated the need for professional academic experts as well as coming into effects the formulation of comprehensive advising programme (Frost, 1991).

Academic counselling synthesizes and conceptualizes student; educational experiences within the frame work of their academic aspirations and abilities (Reinarz and White, 1995).

Lowerten, (2005) noted that academic advising is more than given higher educational directions, but an interactive relationship between the advisor and the student.

Miller (2002) submitted that one of the major benefits of Academic advising is the identification of the level of academic progress and performance and the way to match the student actual capabilities with level of his academic ability. He noted that it helps students to determine the programmes and specialization that best suit their aptitudes, capabilities, potential and interest.

Abelmen and Molina (2000) opined that the impact of advising interventions has a significant positive relationship to students' grades and persistence. Winston (1994) noted that academic advising influences and increases students' motivation and interest in studying. Super, (1983) noted that the interactions with faculty members through academic advising can positively affect a students' intellectual, academic, personal and development. Pascarella and Tenezini (2005) submitted that a consistent and positive relationship was found between advising and students success.

Types of Transfer

1. Voluntary Withdrawal/Transfer

The University has no objection to any student withdrawing from any programme voluntarily. However, the University is not under any obligation to accept such student into any other programme. Nonetheless, only students from College of Health Sciences, Faculties of Agriculture, Law, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Pharmaceutical Sciences or Veterinary Medicine may be considered for transfer after he/ she must have satisfied the following conditions:

- I. He/she must have spent two (2) academic sessions in the former Faculty;
- II. He/she must present a letter of consent from the sponsor;
- III. He/she must present written evidence of interaction with the students' adviser, or University Guidance and Counselling Officer;
- IV. He/she must present positive recommendation from departmental and Faculty Boards attaching relevant minutes and other genuine evidence; and
- V. (Ii – v) must be obtained before the expiration of registration period to facilitate registration of the accepted student.

2 Withdrawal Due to Academic Incompetence

For any student withdrawn due to academic incompetence from the College of Health Sciences, Faculties of Agriculture, Law, Medical Laboratory Science, Pharmaceutical Sciences or Veterinary Medicine to be considered for transfer to another Faculty, the following conditions must be satisfied:

- I. At the end of the probationary period a student must have attained a CGPA of 0.75:
- II. Transferring students must satisfy the entry requirements of accepting Department/Faculty
- III. Under no circumstance should a student be considered for transfer more than once throughout the period of his or her studentship: and
- IV. A student who fails to graduate after exhausting his/her maximum period will not be considered for transfer to any Faculty.

There are a lot of controversies on whether to abolish the facility or to maintain status quo. It is also on record that many students are not conversant with the existence of the facility, and even if they do, they do not take good advantage of the facility.

If a student is placed on probation in the first year, it is an indication that the student could not attained CGPA 0.75. If in the second year, there is no corresponding rise in the CGPA, it implies that the student stands to be withdrawn. It is important to emphasize that when a student is advice to withdraw especially if it is among the six faculties earlier mentioned, implies that he is to withdraw from the programme and not from the University. A student who attained CGPA of 0.75 and above can apply for inter faculty transfer.

At this level, a student is expected to satisfy four requirements as follows:

- I. He/she must have spent two (2) academic sessions in the former Faculty;
- II. He/she must present a letter of consent from the sponsor;
- III. He/she must present written evidence of interaction with the students' adviser, or University Guidance and Counselling Officer;
- IV. He/she must present positive recommendation from departmental and Faculty Boards attaching relevant minutes and other genuine evidence; and
- (ii – v) must be attained before the expiration of registration period to facilitate registration of the accepted student.

Currently, it is only items 1 and 2 that were being adhered to. On item 3, records have shown that the students' level adviser play little or no role during the inter-faculty transfer process. According to students' records no written evidence of interaction with the students' adviser has ever been received or documented. Most of the students do not know their academic level adviser, hence could not have any serious academic interaction with them. Even where they are known, the bulk of the work is always pushed to the Faculty Examination officer or Head of Department.

On item 4, few cases of inter faculty transfer were followed by departmental or faculty boards' recommendations with the attachment of relevant minutes and genuine evidences regarding the transfer.

Factors to be considered before changing a Course.

Before a student start thinking of changing his/her course, he/she must put the following factors into consideration

- a) Deciding whether to change a Course:** Students should think very carefully on whether it is necessary to change his/her course or not. He should also contact his academic level adviser for a thorough advice. The need for the change must be thoroughly established.
- b) Researching the Course you want to switch to:** Ask yourself whether you are sure, it is what you want. Talk to your tutors and other students to find out what it involves and whether you will be able to do it.

c) Thinking carefully about your current Course: If you change your course because of one bad module, and you realized that you are good at other modules, then you are backing up a wrong tree. Instead, think of what you can do to improve on the bad module since you are good at other modules.

d) Thinking about why you want to change your Course: There might be other ways of tackling the problem you are having. For example, if you are not doing well as expected, try to improve your study skills.

e) Checking whether you are qualified for the transfer and extension of your scholarship: Changing your course of study will definitely affect your sponsorship. It is therefore important to contact your sponsors to find out whether your scholarship will be extended to cover the transfer.

Procedures for the Transfer:

When you decided to go for transfer, the follow steps are followed:

1. Contact your head of department on the issue
2. Contact the head of the course you are seeking transfer to, to find out whether they have vacancy for you or whether you meet the entry requirements for the course.
3. Pay some prescribed fees in the bank to obtain the form.
4. Fill inter-faculty transfer form and get recommendations from Guidance and Counselling office.

Do not expect the head of your current course or the new one to nod you through without some serious questions. They should make sure that you have taken an informed decision before they let you change.

Reasons advanced by students for the Transfer:

During interactions with the students, the writer of this paper came to realized that majority of students were following the footsteps of their parents by dictating to them the type of course to offer, without necessarily considering the child academic background, his weak and strong subjects and his academic disposition.

Some students were carried away by the high-sounding names of their Faculties and Departments to the extent that they become fully submerged into such acronyms and before they realized they were under probation or withdrawn from the programme.

Some parents considered current employment trend before deciding on what their ward will read or study. Parents having this line of thought failed to realize the fact that there were no permanent employment trends that were relevant at all times. Employment trends are dynamic. What is relevant now may not be relevant in some years to come.

In whatever way you look at it, it is always better and safer to allow a child choose a career that is based on his interest and academic ability. The role of both parents and teachers should always be to counsel and guide the child where appropriate.

Problems and Challenges:

- 1) Lack of Awareness:** One of the important problems of inter faculty transfer is lack of awareness about the existence of the facility on the part of students. Though the information is contained in their hand books, yet students are not willing to read and digest the information for their academic use.

- 2) **Time of the Transfer:** Students often came at a very wrong time seeking for the transfer when registration is almost about to be close. Students seeking for transfer should endeavour to start the process in good time.
- 3) **Informing Students' Guardian about the Transfer:** One of the requirements for transfer is to produce a written letter of consent from the students' guardian indicating that they are fully aware and well informed about the transfer. However, majority of students do not want to disclose this information to their parents probably they do not want to be seen as academically incompetent.
- 4) **Consideration of Transfer cases by the Faculty Board:** All students intending for inter faculty transfer must have their cases considered by the departmental and faculty boards and minutes of the meeting made available before transfer is affected. About 80% of the transfers were done without the departmental or faculty recommendations. This attitude should be discarded forthwith.
- 5) **Late release of results:** Results of students involve in inter faculty transfer needed to be release in good time. This will enable them know their status and start the transfer process on scheduled. Late release of results often hampered smooth transfer process.
- 6) **Concentration of transfer students to a particular Department:** Students on transfer from College of Health Science, Veterinary medicine, Medical laboratory Science, Pharmacy and even Agriculture all want to be transferred to the department of Microbiology. The chunks of transfer students were largely concentrated in the Micro biology department. The concentration is so much that available vacancies became quickly exhausted leading to overstretching of the resources at the disposal of the department.

Analysis of Data

S/n	Items	Agree	%Agree	Disagree	% Disagree
1	Interfaculty transfer should be abolished	70	70	30	30
2	Students are mostly unaware of the existence of the facility	60	60	40	40
3	Guardians should be inform before approval of the facility	70	70	30	30
4	Late release of results affects students transfer	80	80	20	20
5	The facility should be enjoyed by all departments	90	90	10	10
6	The cumulative grade point average of 0.75 should be raised to 1.0	30	30	70	70
7	Academic level advisers should identify potential transfer cases in good time	60	60	40	40
8	Inter faculty transfer should be entertain at the beginning of each academic session	70	70	30	30
9	Adequate sensitization programme should be put in place to create adequate awareness on the part of students	90	90	10	10
10	Students to be closely monitored to graduation stage after the transfer.	70	70	30	30

Discussions

Item 1 indicated that Inter faculty transfer should not be abolished, but strengthened to ensure that it is serving the purpose it is meant to serve as indicated in the table (70/30). Item 2 shows that majority of students are not aware of the existence of the facility (60/40). This could be achieved through adequate publicity and enlightenment.

Item 3 shows that guardians should be adequately inform before approval of the facility (70/30). A lot of students got the facility without the consent of their parents/guardians. This means the guardian is not fully aware that his/her ward has changed his/her initial approved course of study. This development normally posed a lot of difficulties. Item 4 indicates that students strongly believed that late release of results affects the process of transfer (80/20)

Similarly, Item 5 revealed that Equal treatment should be extended to other students in other Faculties and Departments taking into consideration the nature and peculiarities of their courses (90/10). The facility should not be one sided, but should be made to cater for all. Item 6 indicates that student disagreed for the CGPA to be raised. They prefer the current state of 0.75 to be maintained (30/70). Though the student may view it as more tasking academically; it makes the student to read harder to be able to obtain the score to qualify for the transfer

Item 7 shows that academic level advisers should identify potential transfer students before the release of results (60/40). This will go a long way to facilitate the transfer process. Item 8 indicates that Inter faculty transfer should only be entertained at the beginning of every academic session. Situations where transfers are allowed throughout the academic session should be avoided (70/30). This will bring more sanity to the process and allow speedy consideration of results.

On item 9 It shows that Adequate orientation should be given to students in order to ensure that students make adequate use of facility (90/10). Item no 10 indicates that close monitoring of students after the transfer should be provided in order to ensure that student reach graduation stage (70/30). Efforts should be intensified aimed at ensuring that students reach graduation stage after the transfer. This could be achieved through constant monitoring and supervision.

Conclusion

Inter faculty transfer is a good academic facility aimed at providing a formidable outlet to students faced with academic difficulties in the midst of their academic programme. It provides opportunity to students for the continuation of their studies giving the required guidance and counselling services. The facility should be maintained but carefully fine-tuned to cater for some inadequacies and to conform to the academic reality of the time.

Recommendations

The study has the following recommendations:

- 1) Early release of results will enable students begin transfer process in good time.
- 2) All cases of transfer should receive positive recommendations from the department before initiating the process of transfer.
- 3) Consent letters from guardians and sponsors should be maintained as one of the important requirements before the transfer. This will make the guardian be in the picture and ensure sustainability of their scholarships.
- 4) The minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 0.75 should be discarded and a new CGPA of 1.00 should be adopted in order to conform to current academic reality.

- 5) Request for inter faculty transfer should be equally enjoyed among all the departments to ensure less concentration of students in a particular department at a time.
- 6) Both College of Health Sciences and Faculty of Veterinary Medicine should establish single honour degree programme such as B.sc Anatomy, B.sc Physiology to absorb weak students in their mainstream who could not continue with MBBS and DVM, rather than going to Microbiology or Biochemistry.

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