**UW HELP Podcast 5 Transcript**

[00:00:08] Randy: Welcome, and thanks for listening to another episode of the UW HELP podcast. If you are a regular listener, you know that I'm Randy Parvin, a student services coordinator here at the University of Wisconsin System HELP Office. Before we get to our guest, I would encourage listeners to email possible topics for future podcasts. My direct email is randy.parvin@uwex.edu. That was randy.parvin@uwex.edu. Folks who share their ideas or topics will be sent a swell prize that I have yet to determine. Well on to our topic on this great day.

Nationally, 37 percent of all college students will transfer at least once, according to the National Student Clearinghouse. I know from firsthand experience that students and families have a lot of anxiety about how to transfer from one university to another. So our guest today that will help us learn more about transferring within the University of Wisconsin System is Joshua Rybaski from the University of Wisconsin College's central office. Josh is a College Resource Counselor and was previously at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse as a Communications Coordinator.

[00:01:24] Welcome Joshua.

Joshua: Thanks Randy.

Randy: All right Joshua, I announced your title and it got me a little curious. What does your job look like on a typical day?

[00:01:34] Joshua: All right. So as a College Research Counselor, there are actually nine of us within the state of Wisconsin, and we're all delegated to a region within Wisconsin. My region would be the southwest portion of the state. Anywhere from Dane County all the way up to La Crosse--that whole I 90/94 corridor. And so I’ll work with any of the school districts that are in that area, and specifically the two-year UW campuses which are UW-Baraboo and UW-Richland. Those would be considered my home campuses. And then I recruit in those local schools. Now every Counselor will know their region pretty well and they work very closely with their Counselor. One of the key components of being a College Resource Counselor is that we are considered campus-neutral, so although we’d love all students to come to UW-Richland or UW-Baraboo, our goal is that we are going to help any student with any question, and help navigate the admissions process.

[00:02:28] It could be something like the application, or may be something with financial aid. We are going to be there throughout that process if they need us.

[00:02:35] Randy: All right, sounds like an awesome job day-to-day.

[00:02:37] Joshua: Yes. Yeah absolutely. And so typically we're out on the road depending on the region. My colleague up in the north-northwest region--she's got a big region with only UW-Barron County in her area. So she's always, you know, from one school the other. She's got a couple of hours between her schools that she's visiting. And those of our colleagues like in the Milwaukee area, it's maybe a short trip from one school to another for their campuses.

[00:03:05] Randy: OK. Well, to make sure that we're all using the same language, what is a transfer student?

[00:03:11] Joshua: That's an excellent question and an excellent place to start. The most common definition of a transfer student is a student who's already graduated high school and then having attended or enrolled at a university, whether they stay in the university for one day once classes started, or they've been there for two or three years. That's what's considered a transfer student and then they're looking at moving to another institution.

[00:03:32] Randy: All right. So what if I went into the UW-Baraboo right out of high school and just did not do well academically; it wasn't the right time for me for any number of reasons. I want to come back to UW-Baraboo or another UW, but I want to forget all about that experience at UW-Baraboo that was eight years ago. Can I apply as a freshman?

[00:03:59] Joshua: So once you actually graduated high school and attended a university you're considered a transfer student if you attend another university. Your academic history is always part of your academic record, especially in the accreditation process, we review credit transferring from one institution to another. You always have that academic history behind you. So as much as we like to forget our past it's always part of our academic record.

[00:04:27] Randy: Well and I guess that leads me to the question: if it's eight or nine years later, you know I'm mid 20s now. How will that all be looked upon? And I haven’t been to college in eight or nine years but I'm much more mature. I'm ready to go to University of Wisconsin-Waukesha and really just, you know, go. How do they look upon that record at Baraboo, you know, from when I was 18? How is that evaluated, I guess is what I'm getting at.

[00:04:53] Joshua: Right. So the UW System looks at a holistic admissions process and this would be as either a new freshmen or as a transfer student. Every System school has kind of their own guidelines for transferring in. And you kind of think of all the UW schools in the state of Wisconsin think of them as the different kingdoms within a country. They all speak the same language and in this country, they're all here to enrich the country to make it a better place. But every kingdom kind of has their different rules of how they're going to accept students into their kingdom. And you have to follow those rules within that. So one school might accept a certain amount of credits and that makes you transfer student regardless of what your GPA is. So I might look back at your high school record. Every school is going to have a little different process or approach to how they review your previous academic record. The major factor is that once a student starts kind of on their academic career, again, going back to that first question, that academic history is always part of their career. And so we have to kind of look at what can we do to prove that you were better prepared for that next level at the next school? So if a student was to say 20 years later or 15 years later after not doing so well in college their first year,

[00:06:18] (Joshua, continuing) they want to come back. The best option is to look at some campuses that might have open access where they can then maybe retake some courses, if they did bad un an English course or math course, retaking that, earning a new grade that might be higher or improve their GPA, and showing that yep, I have done my homework. I know the difference now between where I started and where I am now to go on that process. Some cases also look at, you know, work experience. If students have taken a gap year, maybe they stop school but they were pretty good academically, you know, B or C average but just stopped for a long time, there would be no reason to forget to worry about that previous academic record. They’re in good position, they can keep moving on, and they can write about maybe why they took that gap year, maybe that they were working or raising a family, in between there.

[00:07:06] Randy: All right, I like it. Well let's start from the beginning about transferring. What are the steps a student needs to take to transfer from one UW to another?

[00:07:17] Joshua: All right, so as a representative for the UW Colleges especially those specific to two-year campuses, we actually have a path designed to work with students to transfer from a two-year campus to a four-year campus. So to take kind of a step back, there are these 13 two-year campuses around the state—UW-Baraboo, UW-Richland being some of those—and then the online program, they have paths to help students because it’s typically known as freshman-sophomore campus. And so we know after a year or two, students are going to be transferring to another school for a junior or senior year. They decide when they want to make that transition. What the UW Colleges has in place is called a Guaranteed Transfer Program. So any time a student comes into the two-year colleges as a freshman, so that's under 30 college credits, sometimes students earn credits in high school, as long as they sign an Intend to Transfer form, we're going to work with them to look at the next school that they’re going to. So if someone started off at Baraboo. And they did two years, they earned 60 credits and they maintain at least a 2.0 GPA, earning their associate's degree in Arts, they can then take that with them and be guaranteed transfer admission to La Crosse. So they're maintaining that 2.0 average and so they'll take that, that's a guaranteed path.

[00:08:41] Joshua: Some students might look at an option where they started a school like Baraboo or Richland Center, and they say after a year they want to go to another school that they know right away they want to transfer. If it's not within the UW System or they know what school they’re going to right away, the best option is always to contact that school that looking at transferring to. So if someone starts at Richland Center, UW-Richland, and they want to go to UW-Platteville, you want them to work right away with UW-Platteville and say what courses are you looking at studying. Because most cases a student who is studying or looking at transferring from a campus right away, they probably have an intended major in mind, or reason why they're making that transfer.

[00:09:19] Randy: So when the student gets ready to transfer, do they have to fill out another application? Is there another admissions process?

[00:09:27] Joshua: Yes, so in the UW System, it actually works pretty slick. If you started at a two-year campus, once you're admitted to the two-year campus, you do have to fill out another application, but you don't have to worry about the application fee and all of the kind of the rigmarole that goes along with that whole application. You're just submitting a new UW application to La Crosse or Platteville or Madison or whatever that school may be, and sending your college transcripts.

Randy: OK. So you get the college transcripts and again, what about high school, do you gotta have high school (transcripts)?

Joshua: So that goes back into every school is a little different, depending on how many credits you've earned. You want to really talk with that transfer counselor. They are the experts in knowing what their rules are to enter that kingdom. The rules are some will require high school transcripts, some might need ACT scores, some might waive that. So you really want to check with that early on in the process. But as long as they’re doing that Guaranteed Transfer Program, they'll just need their college transcripts.

[00:10:22] Randy: All right, does this process differ in any way if I'm transferring from Nebraska State to a UW College or, you know, let's say, UW-Baraboo, or any of the campuses? Is the process different in any way that folks should keep in mind?

[00:10:36] Joshua: Yes. So if we're lucky that you think of Wisconsin again as that country, everyone in that country speaks the same language. Once you start moving to a different country like Nebraska, they're going to speak a different language and have different requirements and different objectives of their program. So we can't have guaranteed agreements, or the quick responses with how the application might be received, or program requirements are necessarily needed at Nebraska, versus at a UW-Baraboo or UW System school. The nice thing that the UW System actually has in place is what we call the Transfer Information System or TIS. And this is an agreement with all of the UW System schools that they will list all their courses online, and you can see how they transfer from one institution to another. So each institution within the System will list all their courses, and they’ll say yep, this English counts as this English. And this is how we'll come in for credits towards a major. Once you start getting outside the state, those lines get really pretty blurry. But each state will probably have their own set of guidelines within their own system.

[00:11:47] Randy: Let's try something we haven't tried in this podcast before, Joshua. I'm going to make a statement. And you tell if it’s myth or fact, and add onto that if you'd like to say anything else. Transfer students do not graduate in four years. Can't. They just can't get it done.

[00:12:02] Joshua: Well yeah, that'd be a myth. The biggest factor usually with transfer success and there's a lot of factors that go into a transfer, you know, how many credits you’re taking for a year or at a time, what their family life is, but they certainly can do it in four years. The key factor for any transfer student or family listening today is that they should really work with what institution they're transferring to as soon as they know. And usually it's going to be because they’re transferring for a program, or they want to be closer to family members, whatever that reason may be. The sooner you start that process, the more seamless that transition will be in that transfer process. And if I can go back on one thing that I said earlier about that Guaranteed Transfer Program, that will give you admission into a college if you complete the Guaranteed Transfer Program, but it doesn't guarantee you admission into a program. So you can be admitted into UW-La Crosse from UW-Baraboo, but if you're going to an education major, you still have to meet all their program requirements to be an education major, and those program requirements differ from each school.

[00:13:03] Randy: OK. Good to know. Good to know. My second question: My GPA does not follow me when I transfer.

Joshua: Your GPA is always there, and this goes in many different ways. Typically, most schools will start you off fresh with a fresh GPA when you’re entering that new university or college. However, if you look at going on to a graduate school or professional program, any courses that you've taken over the course of your college career and after you graduate high school. that is all fair game for any review committee. So every school that you've attended since you started or graduated from high school will be part of your academic record, and you will need to submit those college transcripts to your institution for review.

[00:13:49] Randy: All right and our final one here for our kind of a myth versus fact: Transfer students will not fit in because all the other students have been there for at least a year or two.

[00:13:59] Joshua: That would be a myth. And there are different programs across the state. Every school is different, and we’ve got a whole bunch of resources for those different transfer students, and we know that helping out with the transfer process is important. As I was leaving UW-La Crosse, they were implementing a start program, or what they call an orientation program for transfer students. Students can take full advantage of that, where they’re learning and meeting new transfer students right away, and they're actually connecting with different programs, meeting their faculty, or meeting their advisers right away. Some transfer students are just going to stick to their courses and not really engage in their community. So it's really kind of what they're making out of that experience. And that just goes true for any college experience that they're going for.

[00:14:44] Randy: Bliss is awesome I'm learning a lot of things here. Do you have time for couple more questions?

Joshua: Absolutely!

Randy: All right. This is kind of personal. Do you prefer a brat or a hot dog?

[00:14:56] Joshua: Well I'm actually a vegetarian…

[00:14:59] Randy: All right, well now, this is something I don't know. What does a vegetarian do, and I don't mean to make fun of you because I’ve read a lot about it; it’s a great healthy lifestyle. What's a vegetarian do when they come to a cook out? Do you…. Is there a vegetarian brat or hot dog? I don't know.

[00:15:16] Joshua: There is. There are vegetarian brats. In my family, I’ve been a vegetarian for at least seven years now, and there are always vegetarian options. You can find substitutes if you want to do like a brat, a veggie brat, or Italian sausage that's made of like soy or tofu product. I'm more likely to opt for some vegetarian option that's not the same as a brat or a hot dog.

[00:15:40] Randy: If you were to have a vegetarian brat or hot dog: ketchup or mustard?

Joshua: I'm a mustard guy.

Randy: All right, is that brown or yellow?

Joshua: Brown.

Randy: All right, that’s what we need to know. I've got to try one of these vegetarian brats. Yeah I've got to try that. In any case, Joshua, it was great to talk with you. And if a listener has questions about transferring, not necessarily vegetarian, but about transferring and your role as a College Resource Counselor, how can they get in and learn more, or get in touch with you?

[00:16:13] Joshua: Absolutely. So yeah this podcast just kind of touched the surface of that transfer process. But as a College Resource Counselor, all of our information is located on the UW Colleges admissions page, and you'll see all of our regional reps are listed with their email address and their phone number so you can always call them; they love to take your questions. Well also again, just a reminder, anytime you transfer into another college, reach out to that college as soon as you can because they are the experts in their fields, so they're going ones who help you with their programs and processes as soon as possible.

[00:16:44] Randy: All right, thank you. Well that's a wrap on another episode of the UW HELP podcast. Until next time, this is Randy Parvin from UW HELP, and we are your guide to the college process.