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## **NCCU** courts transfer students

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DURHAM -- It's Transfer Tuesday.

Today, as it does every other Tuesday during the summer, N.C. Central University is laying out the red carpet for new and potential transfer students.

"It's a chance for them to come to campus and receive information, learn about the process, ask questions, talk to anybody they need to talk to," said Keisha Mark, assistant director of the Office of Transfer Services at NCCU. "It's a onestop shopping opportunity, an opportunity to be the center of attention."

The Tuesday sessions are part of an increased emphasis at the university on attracting, enrolling and helping transfer students.

"We've changed our focus," said Tenita Philyaw-Rogers, the director of the office. "We're approaching the issues of transfer students much more broadly."

The number of transfer students has been steadily increasing at NCCU. Over the last three years, their number has grown from 298 to 451. The goal is to have 500 transfer students at Central this year when the fall semester begins.

NCCU wants more transfer students because they tend to be highly motivated and more successful, improving the university's retention and graduation rates.

"Studies show they are serious about their studies," Mark said. "They do well and with their diverse experiences, they bring so much to the university."

In the past, the focus of transfer activities -- which officially became the Office of Transfer Services at the beginning of the year -- was working out partnership agreements with community colleges, to enable their students to transfer from the two-year institutions.

"And we recruited from that perspective," Philyaw-Rogers said. "But now in addition to recruiting more broadly, we're also working on helping transfer students once they get here. We're developing programs designed just for them. We will be their advocates if they have any issues, offer them assistance in navigating through the process and once they get to campus."

They may need advocates because transfer students are not like the rest of the student body.

The average age of transfers at NCCU is 32.

"They have families, different life situations, commuting, all on top of going to

school, a lot of other things on their minds," Mark said. "They have classes with regular students, and sometimes can get intimidated by that. They may need some comforting, and that's what we want to offer."

The office is creating a transfer advisory board, made up of five to 10 transfer students, who will help determine specific programs. There will be lunch-and-learn opportunities, community service activities, discussion groups and panels for the transfers.

"We want to create a network for them, help them to get to know each other, get to know the rest of the campus and give them a more rounded experience," Mark said.

NCCU this coming year also will inaugurate a new university chapter of Tau Sigma, the national honor society for transfer students.

And the university will continue with monthly Transfer Tuesdays throughout the academic year.

"We will be there for them," Philyaw-Rogers said.

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