

Critical Paths to Career Development: The Challenge of Transfer Students

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Strengthen It**

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Temple University

- ~40,000 students
- Conwellian mission – “Acres of Diamonds”
- New students:
 - ~4,500 First time freshmen
 - ~3,700 transfer students
- Very diverse student population
- Urban campus – North Philadelphia

Temple and the Philadelphia Economy

- Philadelphia's "public" university.
- One in every seven Philadelphia residents with a baccalaureate degree earned that degree at Temple.
- Strong commitment to transfer students
- Temple commitment that all students graduate "world ready"

Challenges Faced by Transfer Students

- **Student based challenges:**
 - Need to learn about and adjust to a different institution
 - Financial concerns – tuition, expenses, financial aid
 - Academic concerns – credits, ability to plan, learning about student support systems
 - Lack of clarity about how credits transfer
- **Institutionally based challenges:**
 - Scholarships/opportunities focused on first time freshmen (e.g. Honors, 4+1 Accelerated Programs, Learning Communities, Freshman Seminars)
 - University Housing
 - Academic policies may not consider transfer student situation (e.g. 30 credit protection for freshmen only)
 - University support systems passive/reactive
 - Limited institutional ability for early identification of transfer student problems
 - Successful transition to labor market or graduate school requires focus on retention, on-time graduation and minimization of student debt

Transforming the Organizational Culture

- Recognize specific needs of transfer students
- Define student success in terms of graduation and post graduation activity – retention, graduation, debt etc.
- Change student support/service units from passive/reactive:
 - Library, Writing Center, Math Science Resource Center
 - Learning Center
 - Career Center
 - University policies – generally pertain to student already in academic difficulty (Warning, Probation, Dismissal, Hold etc..)
- Increased recognition that student experience shapes early post-graduation economic and social behavior:
 - Approach to “job” versus “career”
 - Purchasing decisions.... home, car, investing etc.
 - Life.... marriage, travel, children etc.
 - Degree to which graduates are risk averse
 - Debt burden
 - Alumni networking
 - Alumni giving!

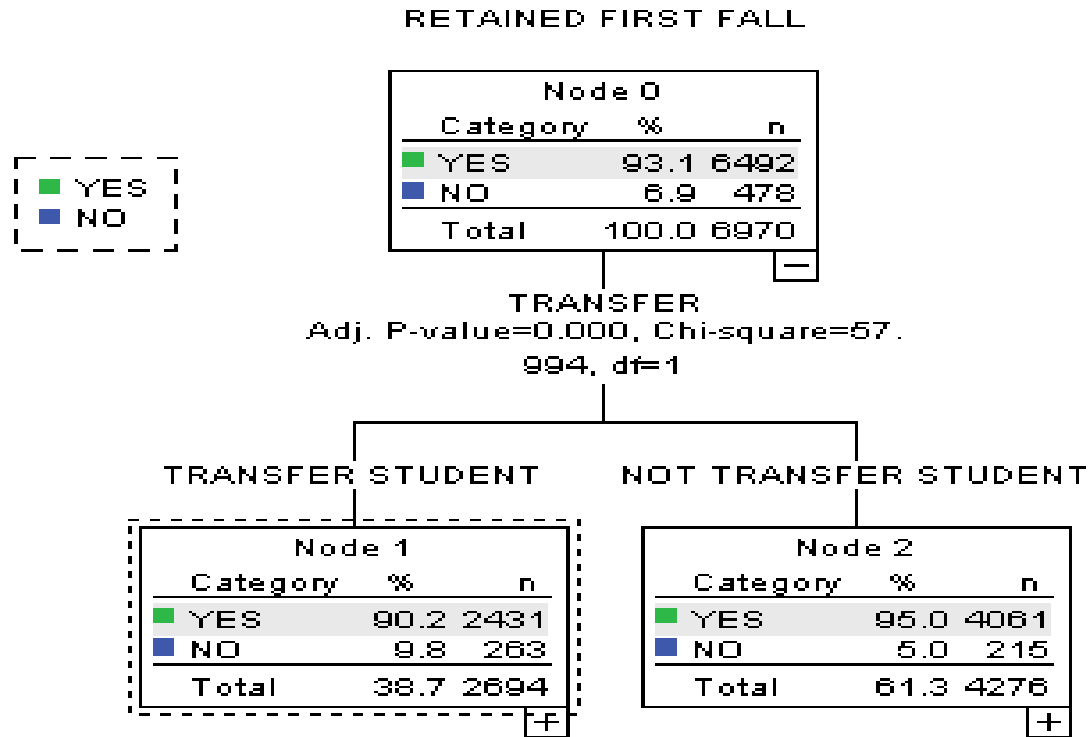
Some Specific Programs at Temple

- Early warning alerts – mid-semester faculty reports
- 8 semester grids – provide every student in every major with a clear map of which courses to take each semester in an 8 semester graduation plan
- Risk based retention programs – use of empirical risk prediction algorithms to identify students with highest risk of attrition
- Critical Paths – identify end-of-semester ‘markers’ that indicate a student that is off-track to on-time graduation

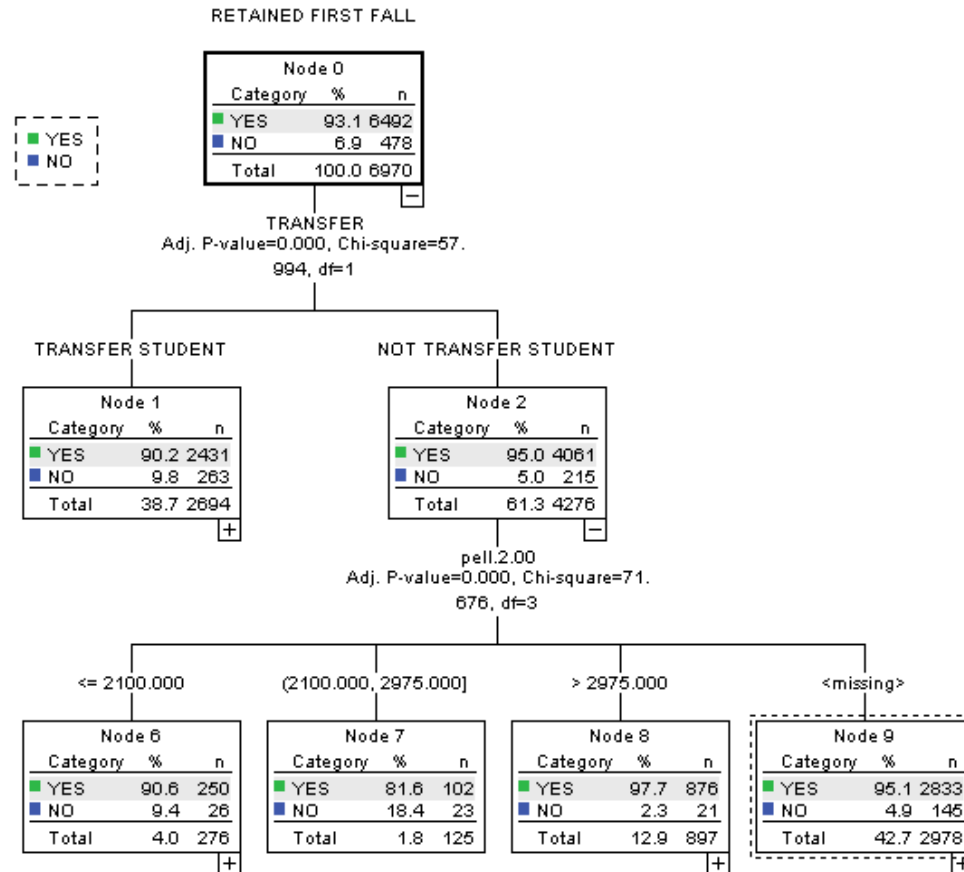
Risk and Critical Paths

- Risk Models reflect belief that students have varying levels of risk of retention.
 - Identify high risk students – including transfer students
 - Academic Advisors provide first point of assessment and intervention
 - Develop strategic interventions designed to enhance retention among highest risk students
- Critical Paths identify students not on-track to on-time graduation
 - Identifies bottlenecks and problem areas for students and majors
 - Provides early indication of any student not on-track
 - Academic Advisors provide first point of assessment and intervention
- Both approaches reflect need for early recognition and strategic intervention shaped to needs of specific student population

Risk: First Semester

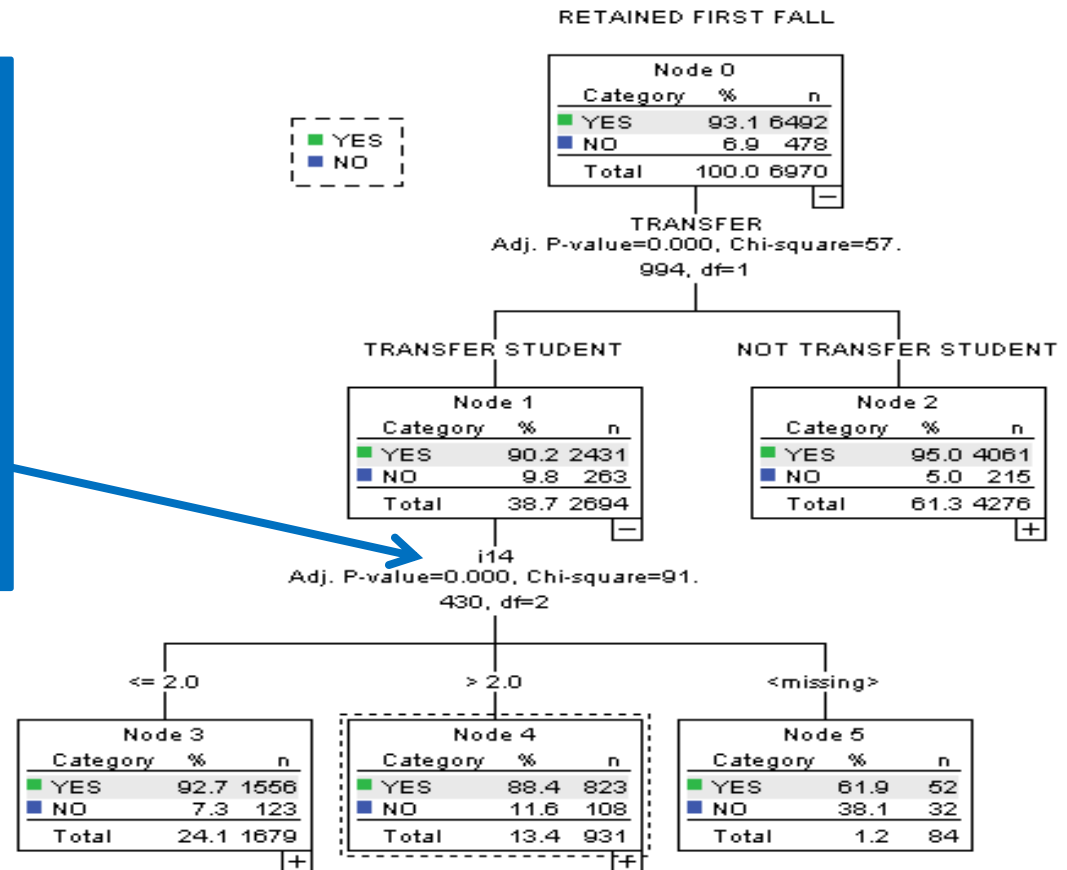


Risk: First Semester (Fr.)

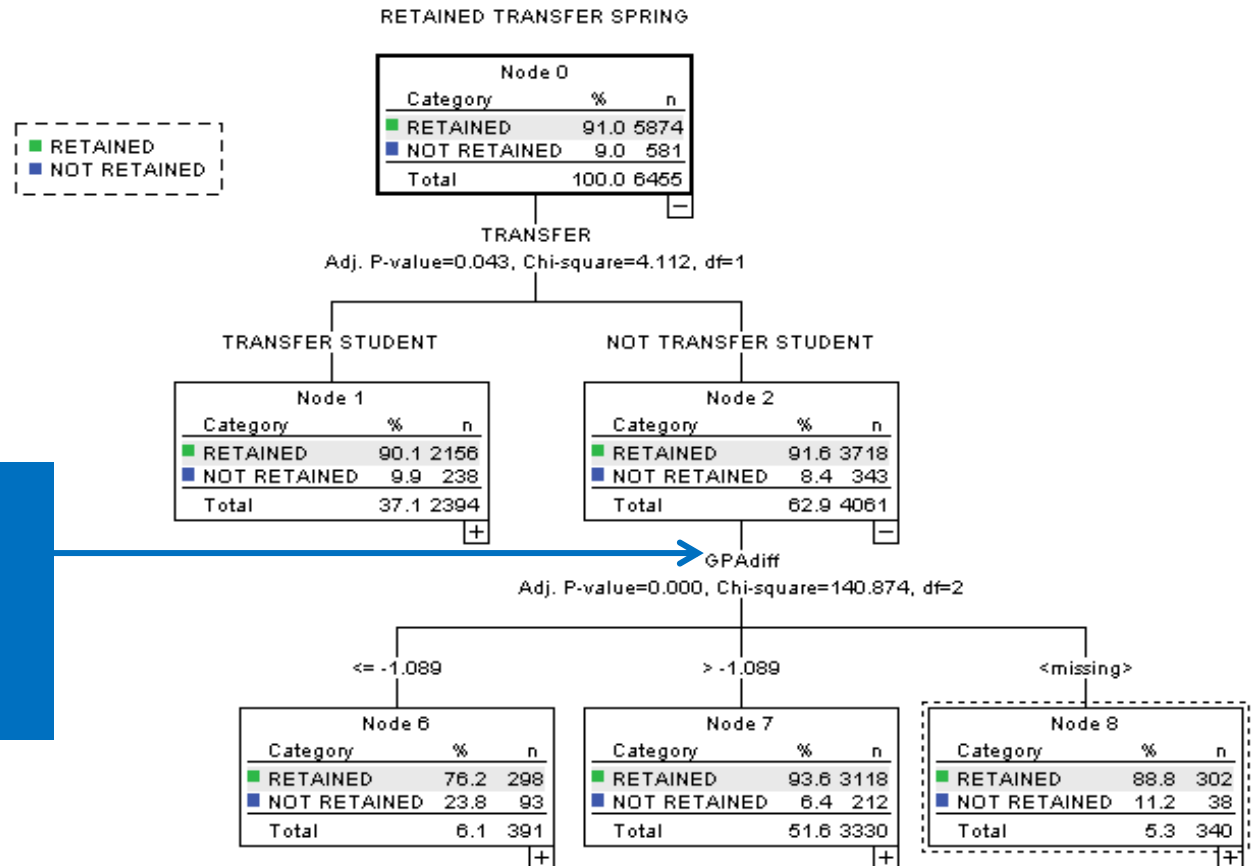


Risk: First Semester (Transfer)

I14: Highest formal education completed by mother
 <=2-some college, graduated college or postgrad degree
 >=2-Did not complete HS or completed HS



Risk: Second Semester (Fr.)

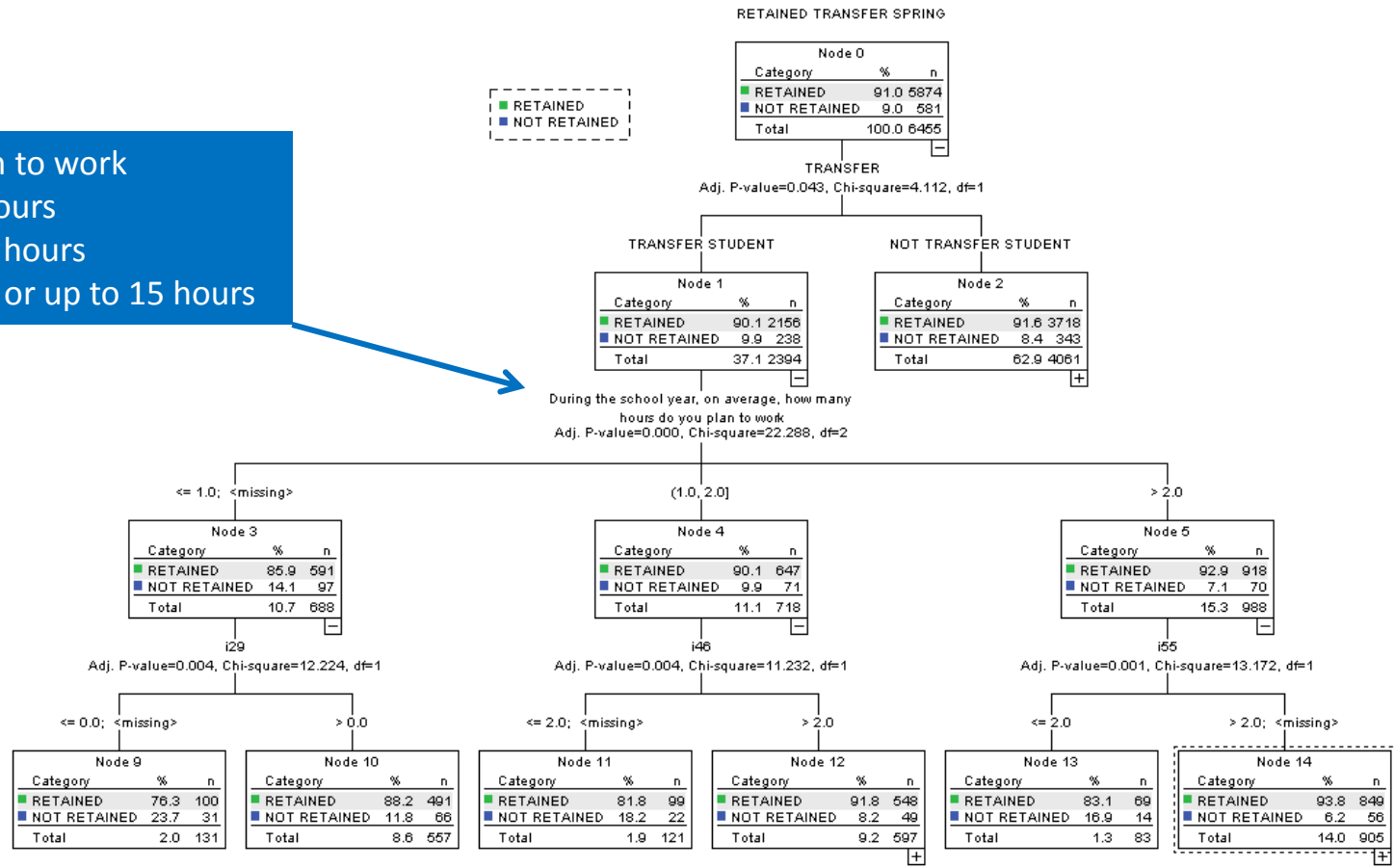


GPAdiff:
Difference
between
HSGPA and 1st
semester GPA

Risk: Second Semester (Transfer)

Hours plan to work
 <=1 21+ hours
 >=2 16-20 hours
 >2 None or up to 15 hours

■ RETAINED
 ■ NOT RETAINED



Risk: First Semester

Freshman Model

- Pell aid
 - Level of education: Father
 - # Hours Intend to work (for money)
 - Degree program
 - Housing
 - Student rank in High School
 - Chance you will change major
 - Attended Temple open houses/reception
 - PA resident
 - Math Placement test score

Transfer Model

- Level of education: Mother
 - Full or Part time
 - Pell aid
 - EFC
 - Math Placement test score
 - PA resident
 - Years studied natural sciences
 - How useful was Temple's website
 - Chance you will change major
 - Residence (Higher= Philadelphia and non-PA: Lower=Rest of PA and International)

Risk: Second Semester

Freshman Model

- GPA differential High School to End Semester I
 - High School Performance at Temple
 - Chance of transferring to another college
 - Self reported organizational/study habit skills
 - Housing
 - EFC
 - Chance you will change major
 - Self reported self confidence
 - Self reported likelihood of over 4 years to graduate

Transfer Model

- # Hours Intend to work (for money)
 - Years studied natural sciences
 - Self reported Temple size not a positive factor in decision to attend
 - Self reported advice of friends not a positive factor in decision to attend
 - Math Placement test score
 - Chance you will change major
 - Self reported chance of making close friends
 - Self reported urban location not a positive factor in decision to attend

Improving Transfer Student Success

1. Transfer Credit Planning:

- Prospective transfer students can see how their courses will transfer prior to applying to University.
- Transfers get clear read of where they start at Temple.

2. Transfer Student Website – enable early planning

3. Transfer agreements

- Labor intensive to establish/maintain.
- Benefits significant
 - Students know how existing credits will transfer to Temple.
 - Allow Temple to communicate with future transfer students before they arrive.

Improving Transfer Student Success (continued)

4. Advising for Transfer Students

- Risk and Critical Paths help identify problems – intervention require early involvement by academic advisors
- All transfer students have primary advising center in their school/college, each with ‘transfer expert’.
- Single point of advising for prospective/newly matriculated transfer students

5. Provide (require?) transfer seminars

6. Engaging student supports

Improving Transfer Student Success (continued)

7. Career/Professional Development for Transfer Students
 - Need to engage immediately
 - Professional development has to be proactive – even intrusive
 - Internships and experiential education must be high priority: limited opportunity
 - Need for integration into alumni network

Summary

- Transfer students face different challenges for degree completion and post-graduate careers
- Existing academic policies often not transfer friendly
- University must be more proactive
 - Early recognition and intervention essential
 - Transfer students empowered to make informed decisions
- Success beneficial to university and local/regional economy