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TURNING TRANSFERS INTO CAPTAINS

A NEW STUDENT CLUB IS BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS AND CREATING COMMUNITY FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS

by [Kelley McGee](#) | February 28, 2025

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“Never refer to yourself as ‘just a transfer student.’” – President Bill Kelly

This piece of advice offered by President Kelly during [Changing Tides](#) orientation resonated deeply with Elliot Bruce, '27.

“I now proudly tell people I am a transfer Captain. I didn’t start here, but I know for sure I’m going to finish here,” Bruce said. “However, the reality is I don’t have a traditional story.”

Like all transfer students, Bruce started her college journey elsewhere. After spending four years of high school in ROTC and achieving top grades, she was accepted into what she believed to be her dream school: The Citadel. But just a few weeks into her freshman year, that dream unraveled when she realized it wasn’t the right fit for her. She made the difficult decision to leave, and enrolled in a college close to home.

“But I hit another wall there because I missed Welcome Week, orientation activities and all those really important opportunities to meet friends and adjust to campus life. Also, I wasn’t assigned a roommate, which made it feel



Elliot Bruce and President Kelly

even lonelier,” she said.

On the weekends, Bruce would often visit Christopher Newport, where her boyfriend Jack and close friend Gabbi were students.

“There was something about CNU school that really felt like home. Everyone was friendly, I felt connected,” she said. “And I knew they had rigorous academic standards and a great business school, so I applied and was thrilled to be accepted.”



Bruce’s roommates turned out to be fellow transfer students, and found adjusting to some parts of campus life to be challenging.

“One of my roommates transferred in from community college, so she had no idea how to use swipes in the dining hall. Another didn’t know what office hours were,” Bruce said. “Meanwhile, I had never had a college roommate, so that part of campus life was unfamiliar. Transfer students come from so many backgrounds—the military, community colleges, large universities, smaller universities, even time off. It’s a unique experience and sometimes we need a

different type of support than most schools can offer.”

Bruce went to work creating a student club that would help transfer students make friends and feel a sense of belonging, easing any feelings of being an outsider. “Transfer Link is all about students helping students,” she said.

“If I could be available to go to lunch with every single transfer student that doesn’t know anyone, I would do it. That’s what this club is for – to help transfer students connect and feel that sense of belonging we all need,” Bruce said.

With support from her advisor, Dr. Lorraine Hall, Assistant Dean of the [Luter School of Business](#), and Andrea Cataldo from CNU’s [Transfer Center](#), Bruce got the organization off the ground and membership continues to steadily grow.

“Elliot’s initiative in founding the Transfer Link club at CNU is truly inspiring,” said Cataldo, an advisor to the club. “By creating a space where transfer students can connect to [create a stronger sense of inclusion](#) and access vital information, Elliot is making the transition smoother and more seamless for many, which will make a lasting, positive impact on the entire CNU community.”

Bruce has several fun events planned, such as a Bob Ross painting night, “complete with happy little clouds,” and an upcoming mixer with the First Generation Student Club.

“My hope is that all these events are so successful that we no longer need to keep planning them. If students stop coming, that will mean they have found their person—or people. And that’s when I’ll know the club has succeeded!”