

### *Movers and Transfers in the B.C. Public Post-Secondary System*

**New Directions in Mobility Research:** In light of recent changes in the post-secondary education landscape, the newly named Post-secondary Student Mobility (PSM) Sub-committee of the STP (formerly the Mobility of Transfer Students (MTS) Sub-committee) has broadened its research on the mobility of transfer students to include all movers within the post-secondary education system. This change combines previous STP and MTS studies into a single research model in order to capitalize on the potential synergy and efficiency of researching all types of student mobility under one umbrella.

**Research Goal and Objectives:** The goal of this amalgamated research approach is to *describe* and *predict* the *volume*, *direction* and *attributes* of "movers" (students that switch from one institution to another) and "transfers" (traditional college transfer students<sup>1</sup>) in the B.C. public post-secondary system. The objectives are to produce a single, but flexible, model for tracking and predicting all student mobility, including the subset of transfer student mobility, between all sectors and all institutions in all directions, from one academic year to the next, with a focus on students registered in post-secondary credit courses only. In the long run, another objective is to evaluate the impact of recent changes in institutional designations on student mobility in B.C.

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1. Roughly 4,000 to 5,000 traditional B.C. college transfer students are admitted to a research university each year with "college transfer" or "associate degree" as a basis of admission.

#### **Post-Secondary Student Mobility (PSM) Sub-committee of STP:**

This post-secondary student mobility research was conducted under the auspices of the Student Transitions Project (STP) with research directions provided by the Post-secondary Student Mobility Sub-committee of STP. The sub-committee membership includes representatives from across post-secondary sectors:

**Kathleen Bigsby**, Director, Institutional Analysis & Planning, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

**Frank DiPuma**, Manager, Institutional Research, Capilano University.

**Devron Gaber**, Associate Director, BCCAT (Chair)

**Joanne Heslop**, Manager, Student Transitions Project

**Hugh Judd**, Data Warehouse Coordinator, B.C. Ministry of Regional Economic and Skills Development

**Jean Karlinski**, Research Coordinator, BCCAT

**Jacy Lee**, Director, Institutional Research and Planning, Simon Fraser University

**Special Thanks:** The PSM Sub-committee of STP would like to thank B.C.'s Ministries responsible for Education and the B.C. public post-secondary institutions for collaborating in this research effort. Without their co-operation and data contributions, this research could not have been accomplished.

**Key Findings— Volume and Direction of Movers:** The volume and direction of flow of all 22,500 mobile credit registrants<sup>2</sup> are shown in **Figure 1**, including 4,100 traditional transfer students to research-intensive universities who moved from one institution to another, from 2007/08 to 2008/09. The diagram shows that:

- The largest volume of students (4,000) moved from B.C. colleges/institutes into research-intensive universities.
- A slightly smaller volume of students (3,300) moved in the opposite direction (from research-intensive universities to colleges/institutes).
- Roughly equal numbers of students (2,300 and 2,400) moved in opposite directions between colleges/institutes and teaching-intensive universities.
- Among the 4,100 traditional transfer students flowing into research-intensive universities, 2,700 originated at a B.C. college/institute and roughly half as many (1,400) transferred from teaching-intensive universities.
- An unknown volume of college transfer students were admitted to teaching-intensive universities from colleges/institutes. The size of this population cannot be identified because the basis of admission category, "college transfer", is not collected from teaching-intensive universities.
- A total of 1,500 students moved from research-intensive universities to teaching-intensive universities.
- A significant amount of student mobility occurs among institutions within a single sector, including 3,800 students who switched institutions within the college/institute sector, 1,500 between teaching-intensive universities and 1,300 between research-intensive universities.

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2. A mobile credit registrant is a student enrolled in a B.C. public post-secondary institution in the current academic year who was last enrolled in the previous academic year in credit courses, but in a different institution from the one currently enrolled in.

#### **Where to find more information:**

Other information from the **Student Transitions Project**, including former student mobility studies, STP Highlights newsletters, special reports and Fast Facts are available on the public Student Transitions Project web site at:

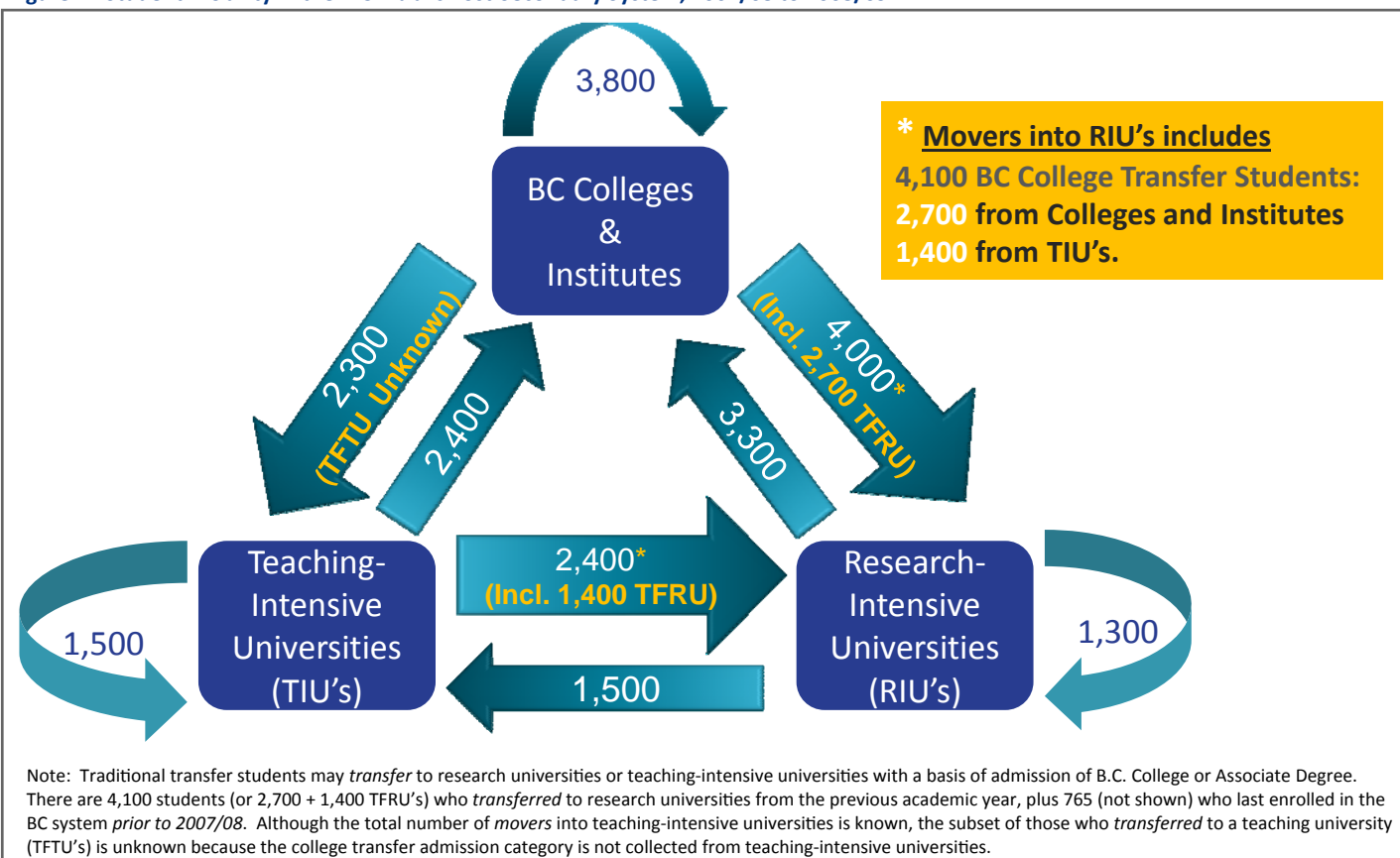
[http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions)

Additional detailed information is also available to authorized STP SharePoint users within B.C. public post-secondary institutions.

Previous studies on the mobility of transfer students are available at the **B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer** at: [www.bccat.ca/publications](http://www.bccat.ca/publications)

*Newsletter Prepared by Joanne Heslop,  
Manager, Student Transitions Project*

Figure 1: Student Mobility in the B.C. Public Post-Secondary System, 2007/08 to 2008/09



**Mobility Trends and Projections to 2010/11:**

One of the objectives of the student mobility research is to predict the future volume of student movers and transfers. Despite the upward growth in continuing registrants and movers between institutions, the new mobility model predicts a slight decline in the volume of transfer students into research-intensive universities. This is consistent with recent trends. From the peak in 2004/05, the total volume of transfer students enrolling in research-intensive universities is expected to decline by 22% by 2010/11, reaching levels almost identical to the level in 2002/03. Alternatively, by measuring the drop from 2007/08 (several years after the correction from an unusually high transfer population in 2004/05), the expected decline in transfer students is 13% (see Figure 2).

It is not clear whether this trend will continue, but a number of possible factors and other recent changes may be contributing to the downward trend, such as:

- Changes in institutional designations, including expanded opportunities for a university experience with the establishment of new teaching-intensive universities and more degree choices offered at other institutions that traditionally did not offer degree programs.
- Possible shift in transfer student destinations, with more students entering teaching-intensive universities and fewer transferring to research-intensive universities.
- An overall increase in student demand to enrol at research-intensive universities, resulting in higher entrance requirements for all new students.
- College transfer student demand for admission to research universities may be more sensitive to changes in GPA entry

requirements than other admission categories.

- Possible weakening demand from college transfer students.
- Possible redistribution of admission quotas at research universities, resulting in a larger intake of direct entry students from grade 12 and fewer college transfer students.

**Conclusion and Next Steps:** The PSM Sub-committee of the STP will continue to report and predict overall student mobility and transfer student mobility over the next few years, with a keen interest in the potential changes to student mobility patterns as a result of recent changes in B.C.'s post-secondary landscape.

Figure 2: Long-Range Trends and Projections — College Transfer Students Entering Research Universities

