

Student Transitions Project

Annual Report

2008/2009



About STP

The Student Transitions Project (STP) studies how students move from kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) into and through post-secondary education. The project is a collaboration among British Columbia's Ministry of Education, Ministry of Advanced Education & Labour Market Development, public post-secondary institutions and the B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT).

STP research is made possible through the use of Personal Education Numbers (PENs), which track student mobility while protecting privacy. By linking PENs across the two education systems, STP can analyze student transitions from high school graduation into and among post-secondary institutions – both within and, to some extent, outside the province. This information helps government, school districts and post-secondary institutions plan programs to meet B.C.'s education and labour market needs.

For more information about STP visit: http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/.

Accomplishments in 2008/09

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

STP's core research this year provided insights about immediate and delayed student transitions; student mobility among institutions; mobility of transfer students and applicant flows.

Immediate and Delayed Student Transitions

A key focus for STP is understanding when B.C. high school graduates enrol in post-secondary education. This year STP examined student transitions over the five year period of 2002/03 to 2006/07. The results indicate that transition rates to B.C. public post-secondary education remain stable and consistent.

Key Findings

- > Each year about 50% of all high school graduates register at a B.C. public post-secondary institution within one year of graduating.

- > Within five years, 72% of high school graduates enter public post-secondary education in B.C.

For the first time this year, STP investigated student transitions to post-secondary institutions beyond the B.C. public system. Findings show that the five year cumulative transition rate of B.C. high school graduates increases to at least of 78% when attendance at B.C. private and non-B.C. public and private institutions are accounted for.

STP estimates the non-B.C.-public transition rate using two data sources: Passport to Education and student financial assistance information. Passport to Education stamps, which can be redeemed for tuition credits, are awarded annually by schools to qualified students (about 30% of the students) in grades 10 through 12. When students redeem the stamps outside the B.C. public system, STP uses this information to boost the overall student transition rate. Similarly, financial assistance data is used to determine the number of financial aid recipients who register in private institutions, or institutions in other provinces and countries.

STP recognizes the limitations of using these sources to determine the non-B.C.-public transition rate. Some students who attend post-secondary institutions outside of the BC public system do not redeem their Passport stamps and STP can not account for these transitions. Also, many students attend post-secondary institutions outside of the B.C. public system without applying for or receiving financial assistance.

Student Mobility Among Sectors and Institutions

As well as highlighting student transitions into post-secondary education, STP is revealing how

students move within the system. STP tracked a cohort of 43,360 B.C. high school graduates over five years (2002/03 to 2006/07) to study their flow into and out of the B.C. public post-secondary system. A variety of findings – including student mobility, drop out and credential completion patterns - were reported.

Key Findings

- > Students from the 2001/02 high school graduation cohort flowed into and out of B.C.'s public post-secondary education system over the next five years, with the majority first enrolling within one year of high school. In total, about 20,000 to 22,000 students from the cohort were registered each year, dropping to 17,000 in 2006/07 after the largest volume of students completed credentials.
- > Credential completion rates were higher among those who graduated from high school with GPA's of at least 75%.
- > Universities had lower first-year immediate-entry dropout rates compared to small colleges and university colleges – perhaps attributable to different academic qualifications required for admission to universities versus colleges.

In February 2009, STP expanded its mobility cohort study to examine the movement of all B.C. public post-secondary registrants from 2002/03 to fall 2007.

Key Findings

- > Each year, 15 to 19% of those who continued their education in B.C. from one year to the next changed institutions from the previous year; the majority of movement (80%) occurred between sectors.
- > Most B.C. students continue their education at the same institution. The majority of student movement occurs between sectors, such as college to university.
- > Among undergraduate students who moved from one sector in 2005/06 to another in 2006/07, the most popular destination was the university sector - a reflection of B.C.'s effective credit transfer system.

STP's mobility research shows that B.C.'s public post-secondary education system is working well to allow students to move between different institutions and sectors. STP plans to repeat this research in the future, with an expanded focus on program mobility.

Mobility of Transfer Students

STP regularly studies the volume and flow of transfer students from sending institutions to BC universities to help post-secondary institutions plan enrolments. The research is conducted by

STP's Mobility of Transfer Students Subcommittee in collaboration with BCCAT.

This year STP highlighted the movement of transfer students from B.C. colleges, university colleges and institutes (sending institutions) into six B.C. universities from the fall of 2006 into calendar year 2007. Predictions were also provided about the expected volume of transfer students to university in 2008.

Key Findings

- > Between calendar year 2006 and 2007, the volume of successful transfer students declined by 8.6%. From the peak in 2004 to 2007, the volume declined by 14.2%. (Successful transfer students include those admitted to university on the basis of having completed a minimum number of credits in courses in a sending institution that are transferable to B.C. universities).
- > The volume of eligible transfer students dropped significantly in fall 2005 but has stabilized from fall 2005 to fall 2007. (Eligible transfer students include students in colleges, university colleges and institutes that are enrolled in or have completed at least 24 credits in courses listed in the BC Transfer Guide and have a GPA of at least 2.0)

STP will continue to monitor and report these trends each year.

Applicant Research

STP's Applicant Research Subcommittee has made progress in its preliminary study of student applicant flows. As a first step, the subcommittee surveyed registrars at B.C. public institutions to identify the extent of data available. The results highlighted the need to develop consistent data definitions in order to study applicant patterns in an in-depth way across institutions. A follow-up survey will likely be done to investigate institutions' different business practices regarding applicant data.

The subcommittee also conducted an analysis of supply and demand in nursing programs at Thompson Rivers University that answered questions about applicant and registrant flows. A report was presented to the B.C. Registrar's Association. Given registrars' support for moving forward, STP plans to expand its analysis of nursing applicants to all institutions. STP applicant research is a work in progress and therefore initial results are provided only to the contributing institutions, for the purpose of reviewing the accuracy of the data.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The STP Data Management Subcommittee made several improvements in 2008/09 to enhance the quality and usefulness of STP data.

Comprehensive Data Quality Checks

New data quality tests were developed to streamline STP data submission and processing. Post-secondary institutions were provided with checklists to ensure the accuracy and completeness of their data before submission. Rigorous data quality checks were also conducted before and after files were merged between the K-12 and post-secondary system. These improvements will increase STP's ability to report results in a timely way.

New Variables in STP

For the first time this fall, STP began collecting post-secondary enrolments by term. Previously, student transitions were reported only on an annual academic year basis, meaning the most recent fall transitions were not reported until the following year. STP will now be able to provide transitions by academic year and term (fall, spring and summer) up to and including the most recent fall term.

Study level data was also collected this year. This addition allows STP to analyze student enrolments in developmental, undergraduate and graduate programs.

STP also began gathering program information using six-digit Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes. This will provide more detailed information about students' post-secondary program destinations. The accuracy of program-level data will further improve with consistent assignment of CIP codes to similar programs across institutions.

STP will report its findings on student enrolments by term, level of study and program in upcoming newsletters.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

2008 STP Symposia

In June 2008, the STP Steering Committee held two full-day events to highlight the work of STP and discuss research priorities with institution partners. The first event offered hands-on training to institutional researchers on the effective use of STP pivot tables. The second event, for members of the B.C. Registrar's Association, focused on using STP for planning. Registrars also provided input on how to improve the completeness and accuracy of PEN submissions, which continues to be a key priority for STP. As an outcome of the event, ministry and institution partners formed a working group to address the data quality issues with PEN.

STP Online Resources

In spring 2009, STP launched a new SharePoint site for committee members and institutional researchers. The site provides access to pivot tables and other resources. An upgrade of the former

STP extranet, STP SharePoint allows for more group collaboration with enhanced security. Both the STP public website and STP SharePoint are maintained by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.

Presentations

During 2008/09 STP members presented to:

- Education Partners Leadership Council (April 2008)
- B.C. Registrar's Association (BCRA) (June 2008)
- B.C. Institutional Research Directors (June 2008)
- B.C. Secondary to Post-Secondary Transitions Forum (Oct. 2008)
- Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Association (CIRPA) (Oct. 2008)
- BCCAT Admissions Committee (Nov. 2008)
- Vice-Presidents Academic of BC Research Universities (Nov. 2008)
- BCCAT (Dec. 2008)
- B.C. Institutional Researchers and Planners (BCIRP) (Dec. 2008)
- Council of Senior Student Affairs Leaders (Dec. 2008)
- University of Victoria President's Advisory Council (Jan. 2009)
- BCCAT Transfer and Articulation Committee (Feb. 2009)
- BCRA (Feb. 2009)
- University of Victoria staff (March 2009)
- WestVAC / WestPAC (March 2009)

Publications

A number of reports and newsletters were released over the past year:

Annual Research Reports and Newsletters:

- *Transition Rates to BC Public Post-Secondary Education Remain Stable* (June 2008)
- *Mobility of BC Transfer Students - Fall 2006 to Calendar Year 2007* (Sept. 2008)
- *Movement Among BC Public Post-Secondary Institutions* (cohort study) (Nov. 2008)
- *Movement of All Registrants Among BC Public Post-Secondary Institutions* (Feb. 2009)

Other Resources:

- *STP Fast Facts*
- *Student Transitions to Public Post-Secondary Education by Region*

All STP publications are available at http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/. Additional resources, such as pivot tables, are available to STP members and public post-secondary institution staff on the password-protected STP SharePoint site.

STP Membership in 2008/2009

Steering Committee:

Bob Cowin	<i>Douglas College</i>
Devron Gaber	<i>BCCAT (Chair)</i>
Gerald Morton	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
Jacqui Stewart	<i>Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development</i>
Patty Beatty-Guenter	<i>Acting Jan. – May 2009</i>
Walter Sudmant	<i>University of British Columbia</i>

Data Management Subcommittee:

Mike Bennett	<i>Camosun College</i>
Tony Eder	<i>University of Victoria (Chair)</i>
Joanne Heslop	<i>Student Transitions Project</i>
Hugh Judd	<i>Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development</i>
Alex Mann	<i>Ministry of Education</i>

Non-voting members:

Pam Bischoff	<i>Douglas College</i>
Eylin Gilbert	<i>Ministry of Education</i>
Tim Jah	<i>Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development</i>

Mobility of Transfer Student Subcommittee:

Kathleen Bigsby	<i>Kwantlen Polytechnic University</i>
Bob Cowin	<i>Douglas College</i>
Devron Gaber	<i>BCCAT (Chair)</i>
Joanne Heslop	<i>Student Transitions Project</i>
Hugh Judd	<i>Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development</i>
Jean Karlinski	<i>BCCAT</i>
Jacy Lee	<i>Simon Fraser University</i>

Applicant Research Subcommittee:

Sarah Dunn	<i>British Columbia Institute of Technology</i>
Heather Friesen	<i>Thompson Rivers University (Chair)</i>
Devron Gaber	<i>BCCAT</i>
Jody Gordon	<i>Kwantlen Polytechnic University</i>
Kate Ross	<i>Simon Fraser University</i>
Joanne Heslop	<i>Student Transitions Project</i>
Hugh Judd	<i>Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development</i>
Jean Karlinski	<i>BCCAT</i>
Ashley Lambert-Maberly	<i>University of British Columbia</i>

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