

Research Results

September 2008

Mobility of BC Transfer Students - Fall 2006 to Calendar Year 2007

Prepared by Joanne Heslop, Manager, Student Transitions Project

Introduction

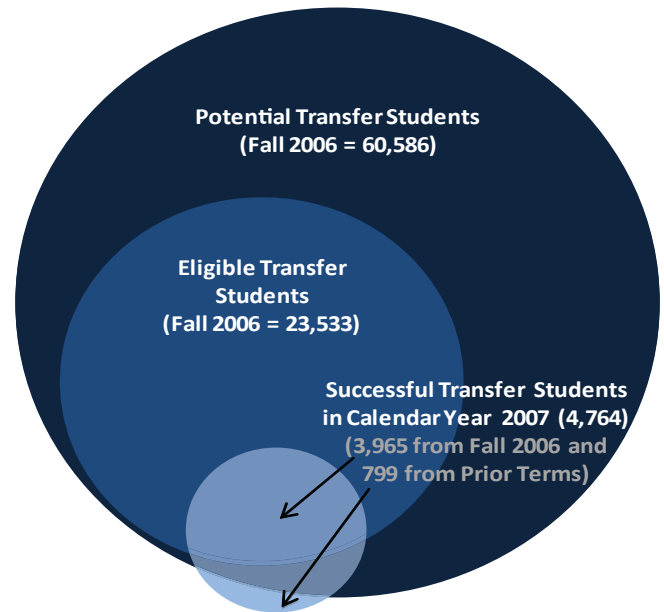
This newsletter summarizes the movement of transfer students from BC colleges, university colleges¹, and institutes from the Fall of 2006 into BC universities in calendar year 2007 and provides predictions for 2008. Additional information is provided on trends from Fall 2003 to the present and on the movement of students into other institutions.

Volume of Transfer Students – From Fall 2006 to Calendar Year 2007

In this study, transfer students are classified according to their likelihood of transfer to a BC university (see **Figure A** on this page and definitions on page 2).

- In the Fall of 2006, there were 60,586 Potential Transfer Students (PTR), i.e., students taking at least one university transferable course, regardless of whether they might ever seek admission to a university.
- Among this group, there were 23,533 Eligible Transfer Students (ETR) with sufficient transfer courses and grades to seek university admission, should they choose to do so.
- Among those students last registered at sending institutions in the Fall of 2006, a total of 3,965 transferred to BC public universities in calendar year 2007 with transfer as the basis of admission.
- An additional 799 students, who last registered at sending institutions prior to Fall 2006, also transferred to BC universities in 2007, thus increasing the total Successful Transfer Students (STR) to 4,764 in calendar year 2007. This represents an 8.6% decrease over the 5,211 transfer students who entered BC universities in calendar year 2006.

Figure A: Volume of BC Transfer Students



Note: 4,764 Successful Transfer Students entered BC Universities in calendar year 2007, of which 3,965 were registered at a sending institution in Fall 2006, and 799 came from a prior term.

¹ Institutional designations in this study are those that were in place for the period of this study, which was prior to Malaspina, Kwantlen, UCFV, and Capilano being designated as universities.

What's Inside this Newsletter?

	page
• Definitions and Project Background	2,5
• Volume of Successful Transfer Students has declined: further decline expected in calendar year 2008	4,7
• Most transfers to university occur directly, without a stop out period	2
• Most transfer students earned more than a minimum 24 credits at their sending institution before entering university	2
• University colleges and Lower Mainland institutions send transfer students to university with more credits than other institutions	3,5
• Where do Eligible Transfer Students go? Half stay put, a third do not re-enroll, nearly 20% transfer out	5,6
• Grade distribution of transfer students	6
• Successful Transfer Student predictions for calendar year 2008, by sending and receiving institution	6-8
• Potential, Eligible, and Successful Transfer Student trends	7,8
• Looking Ahead	8

Definitions

Potential Transfer Students (PTR) are the largest and most broadly defined group. This is the pool of students who might seek admission to university in the near future. **A Potential Transfer Student is any student at a college, university college, or institute who is enrolled in or has completed at least one course listed in the BC Transfer Guide.** The student's intentions or grades are immaterial for inclusion in the Potential Transfer Student group.

Eligible Transfer Students (ETR), a subset of Potential Transfer Students, are likely to seek university admission in the near future because they have completed sufficient transfer courses and achieved the minimum grade requirement for admission to most BC universities as a transfer student. **An Eligible Transfer Student is any student who is enrolled in or has completed at least 24 credits in courses listed in the BC Transfer Guide and has a GPA of at least 2.00.** Note that ongoing changes to the set of courses listed in the BC Transfer Guide contribute to fluctuations in the volume of Eligible Transfer Students each year. Not all eligible transfer students will seek university admission in the following year, nor would they necessarily meet specific entrance requirements, but they are the group most likely to enter university in the subsequent year.

Successful Transfer Students (STR) are those from the pool of potential or eligible transfer students who actually entered university in the subsequent year with transfer as the basis of admission. **A Successful Transfer Student is any student who was admitted to university on the basis of having completed a minimum number of credits in courses in a college, university college, or institute that are transferable to BC universities.** Note that students who attended a college, university college, or institute and earned insufficient credits for transfer as a BC College Transfer Student may be admitted to a BC university under another basis of admission category, such as BC Grade 12 or Mature (see Figure F).

This study also uses a **Transfer Ratio** to estimate the subsequent year's (i.e. calendar year 2008) volume of Successful Transfers. **The Transfer Ratio is the number of Successful Transfer Students divided by the number of Eligible Transfer Students from the previous Fall.** By applying this ratio calculated in the previous year to the current volume of Eligible Transfer Students, the subsequent year's volume of Successful Transfer Students is projected, assuming all other conditions remain unchanged. Therefore, by monitoring trends in the Transfer Ratios, along with trends in the numbers of potential and eligible transfer students, this study forecasts the transfer enrolment demand to assist universities in setting appropriate GPA cut-offs to meet their enrolment quotas.

Most Transfers to University Occur Without a Delay or Stop Out Period

Table 1 shows that the majority of students transferring to university from a BC college, university college, or institute typically do so without delay. Of those entering BC universities in calendar year 2007, 83% were previously registered in a BC college, university college, or institute in Fall 2006; 11% stopped out for a year, 3% stopped out for two years, and 3% stopped out for a longer period of time before transferring to university. Larger institutions tend to have higher immediate transition rates.

Table 1: 2007 Successful Transfer Students – Length of Delay in Transfer to University

Length of Delay in Transferring to University	RRU	SFU	TRU	UBC	UBCO	UNBC	UVIC	Total to BC Univ	%
No Delay (Direct from Fall 2006 Term)	16	1,482	76	1,158	205	135	893	3,965	83%
1-Year Stop Outs (Last Reg'd in Acad Yr 2005)	9	199	24	116	21	22	124	515	11%
2-Year Stop Outs (Last Reg'd in Acad Yr 2004)	3	34	15	38	3	8	38	139	3%
3+ Year Stop Outs (Last Reg'd Fall 2003 or Earlier)	6	29	15	27	12	17	39	145	3%
Total	34	1,744	130	1,339	241	182	1,094	4,764	100%

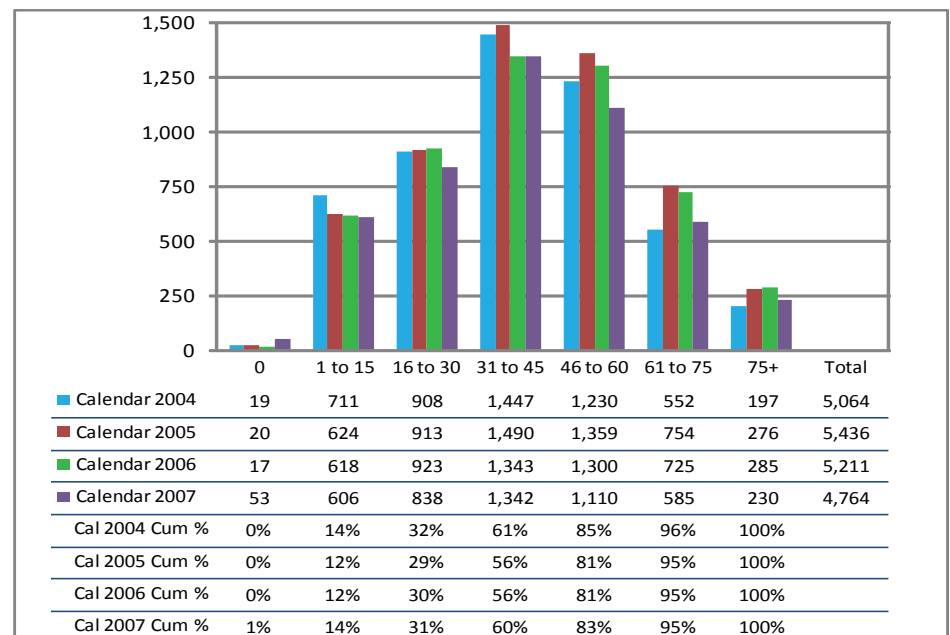
Further analysis of the available data shows that the more credits students have accumulated at the sending institution, the more likely they are to transfer to university directly. For example, in Fall 2006, 85% of students with 31 or more credits transferred to university directly from the previous Fall term, whereas only 79% of students with 30 or fewer credits transferred without delay.

Credits Earned at Sending Institution Before Transfer to University

Based on the above findings, enrolment managers at post-secondary institutions will likely benefit from additional information on the volume of credits amassed by Potential Transfer Students before they enter a university. Figure B provides the distribution of credits earned by Successful Transfer Students at their sending institution(s) prior to transfer to a BC university. The chart shows that more than two-thirds of Successful Transfer Students are staying at their sending institution beyond the minimum number of credits (24) needed for transfer.

In last year's newsletter (www.bccat.ca/pubs/rr_july07.pdf), it was noted that students appeared to be transferring to university sooner, or with fewer credits. This trend is continuing as we see the proportion of students transferring to university with 30 or fewer credits has steadily increased from 29% to 30% to 31% over the last three years. Furthermore, the average number of credits transferred has decreased roughly 3%, from 43.4 in calendar year 2004 to 42.2 in calendar year 2007.

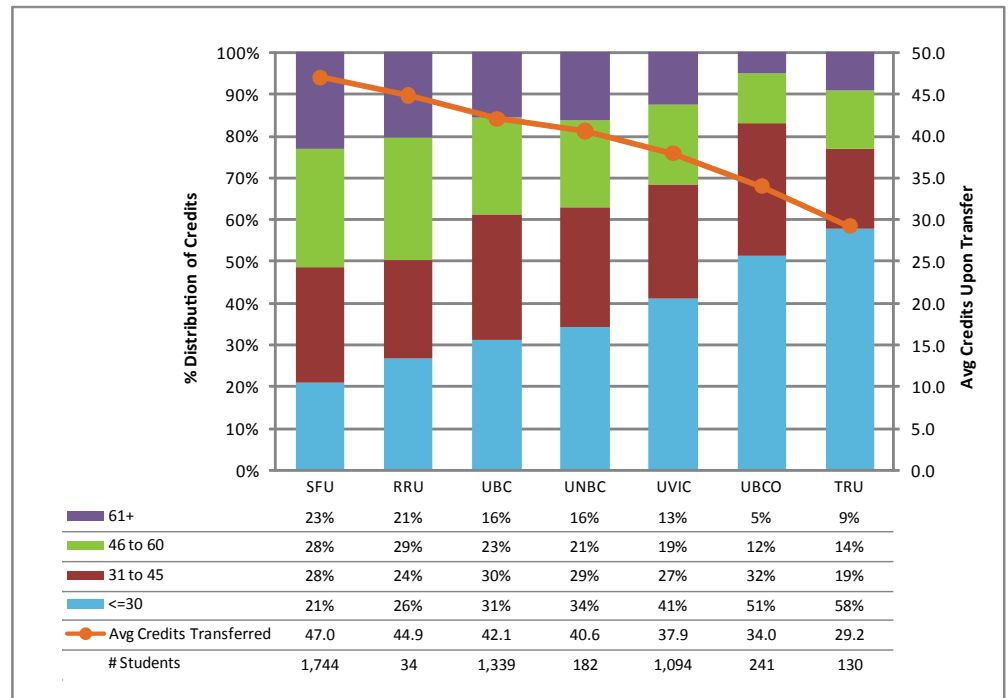
Figure B: Successful Transfer Students - Total Credits Earned at Sending Institution



Average Credits Earned Before Transfer to University

While we previously saw in **Figure B** that roughly two-thirds of students accumulate more than thirty credits at their sending institution before transferring to university, this is not consistent across all receiving institutions. For instance, as shown in **Figure C**, 79% of students who transferred to Simon Fraser University (SFU) in 2007 had earned more than 30 credits at their sending institution before coming to SFU. By comparison, only 42% of students who transferred to Thompson Rivers University had previously earned 30 or more credits at their sending institution. Therefore, it is likely that transfer students will seek different programs and year-level entry points, depending upon the destination university they have selected.

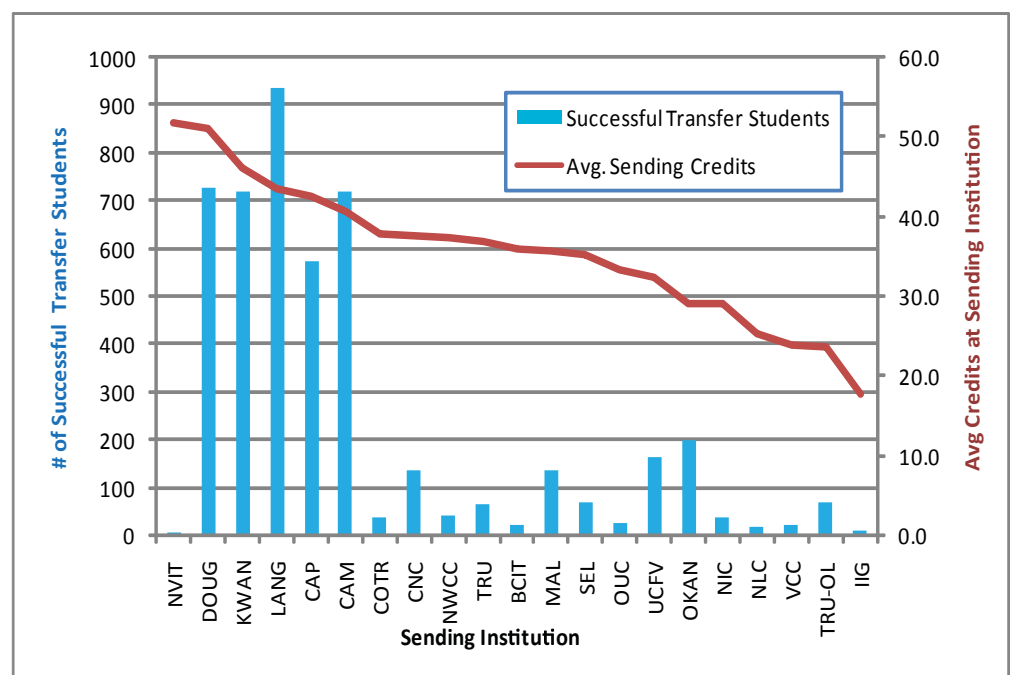
Figure C: Successful Transfer Students in Calendar Year 2007 – Range of Credits Earned at Sending Institution Before Transferring to University, by Destination University



Lower Mainland Transfer Students Staying Longer at Sending Institutions Before Transfer to University

It is evident in **Figure D** that students transferring from Lower Mainland sending institutions or Camosun College in Victoria are much more likely to remain at their institution longer to accumulate more credits before transferring to university. For example, students transferring from Douglas, Kwantlen, Langara, Capilano, or Camosun earned an average of 45 credits before transferring to university in Fall 2007, versus an average of 33 credits earned at other sending institutions before transferring to university. At the smaller institutions with fewer course offerings, students might be forced to transfer to university sooner to register in desired courses not available at their local college.

Figure D: Fall 2007 Successful Transfer Students by Sending Institution and Average Sending Credits

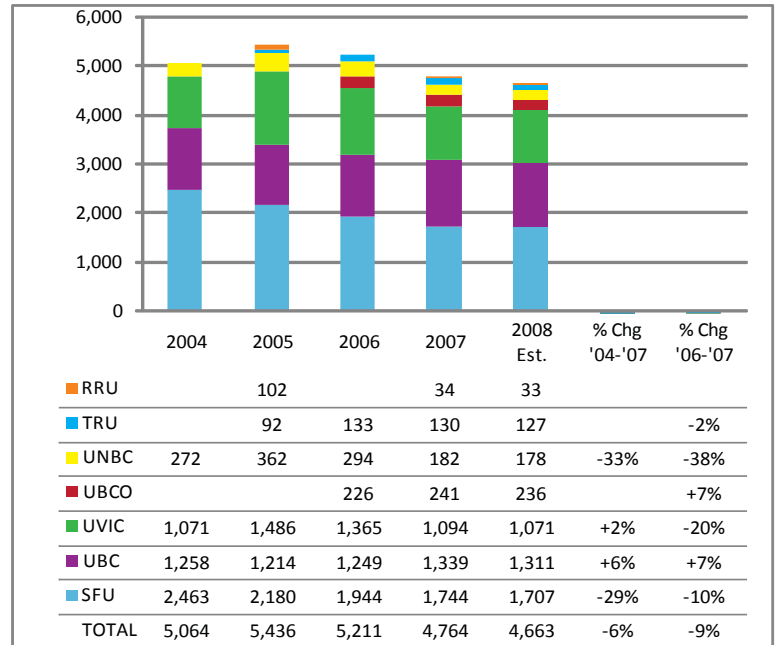


Trends – Successful Transfer Students

Figure E shows a declining trend (-6%) in the number of Successful Transfer Students entering BC’s public universities from 2004 to 2007. Over the four-year period since 2004, UNBC and SFU have experienced declines of nearly one-third in their incoming transfer students, while UBC saw a small increase in the volume of new transfer students.

Assuming transfer rates and other enrollment conditions remain unchanged next year, it is estimated that we will see a further 2.1% decline in transfer students entering BC universities in calendar year 2008. Although the volume of Successful Transfer Students is largely a function of the pool of Eligible Transfer Students, it is also affected by numerous other factors, such as students’ desires to enter university; other opportunities available for completing a bachelor’s degree at a college, university college, or institute; changes in institutional designation; and university enrolment quotas and GPA thresholds by Faculty and program.

Figure E: Trend in Successful Transfer Students

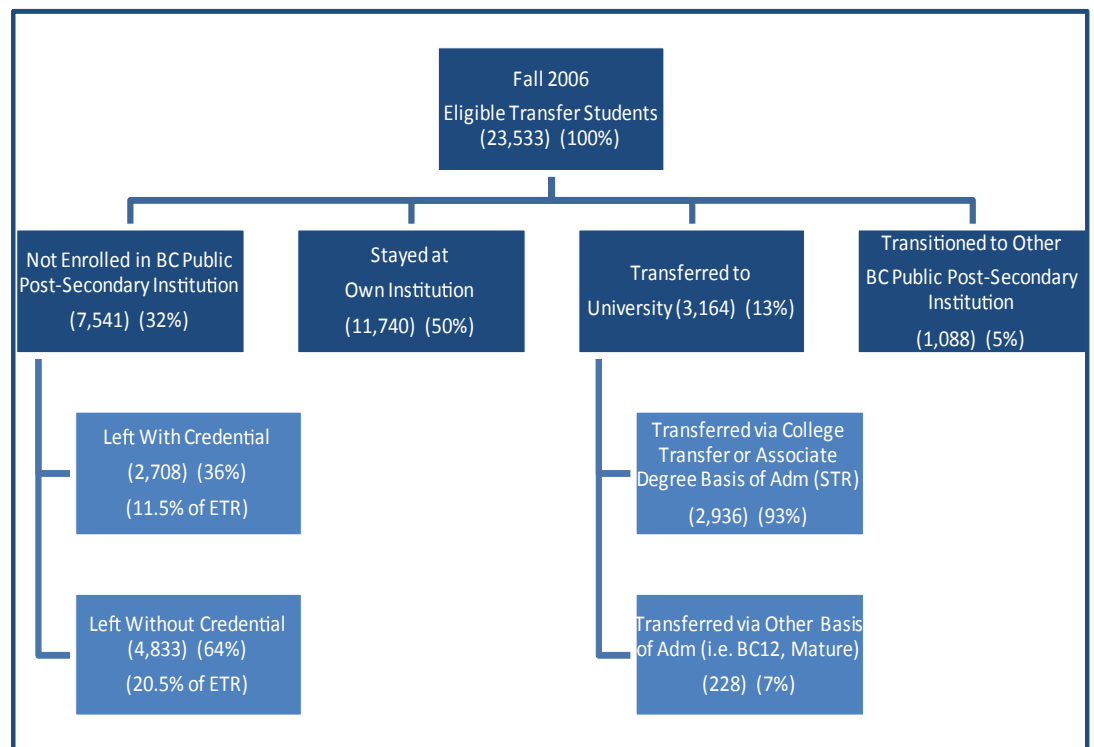


Destinations of Eligible Transfer Students

Figure F shows the destinations of Fall 2006 Eligible Transfer Students in calendar Year 2007. The largest group (50%) stayed at their own institution, despite having accumulated sufficient minimum qualifications for transfer to university (at least 24 credits and a minimum GPA of 2.00). The next largest group did not re-enrol in a BC public post-secondary institution (32%), although they may have chosen to enrol in a BC private institution or an institution outside of the province. Of those who did not re-enrol, 36% had completed a credential. The remaining Eligible Transfer Students entered a BC university (13%) or transferred to another BC public post-secondary institution (5%).

In terms of trends, the proportion of students in each of the destination categories has remained relatively unchanged for the past three years. Figure G on the following page provides similar information, but for each of BC’s public post-secondary sending institutions (colleges, institutes, and university colleges).

Figure F: Destinations of Fall 2006 Eligible Transfer Students in Calendar Year 2007



Project Background

Each year, as BC post-secondary institutions work toward achieving their annual enrollment targets, they are challenged by changing levels of student demand. Among other factors, the new student demand often fluctuates with changes in the volume of recent grade 12 graduates and changes in the flows of transfer students.

To manage incoming grade 12 enrollments effectively, institutions often use information from the Ministry of Education and the Student Transitions Project (STP) to predict enrollment demand and determine enrollment quotas and minimum GPA cut-offs for admission. However, the extent to which students transfer from colleges, university colleges, and institutes to BC universities has not always been easy to monitor or predict.

The volume and flow of transfer students from sending institutions into BC universities (both historically and predicted) is now possible through a collaborative research effort and pooling of post-secondary enrollment data from the Student Transitions Project (STP) and the Central Data Warehouse (CDW). This work builds on earlier research conducted by the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT). In this third annual newsletter on the Mobility of Transfer Students research, the goal is to provide accurate data about the pool of transfer students seeking admission to university and to aid enrollment management and program planning at both the sending institutions (colleges, university colleges, and institutes) and receiving institutions (universities).

Mobility of Transfer Students Subcommittee

This study on transfer student mobility was conducted under the auspices of the Student Transitions Project (STP) and was funded by BCCAT as part of its Admissions Committee work plan. Research directions were provided by the Mobility of Transfer Students Subcommittee of STP whose membership includes representatives across post-secondary sectors:

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

Bob Cowin, Director, Institutional Research & Planning, Douglas College

Jacy Lee, Director, Institutional Research & Planning, Simon Fraser University

Hugh Judd, Data Warehouse Coordinator, Ministry of Advanced Education & Labour Market Development

Joanne Heslop, Manager, Student Transitions Project

Devron Gaber, Associate Director, BCCAT (Chair)

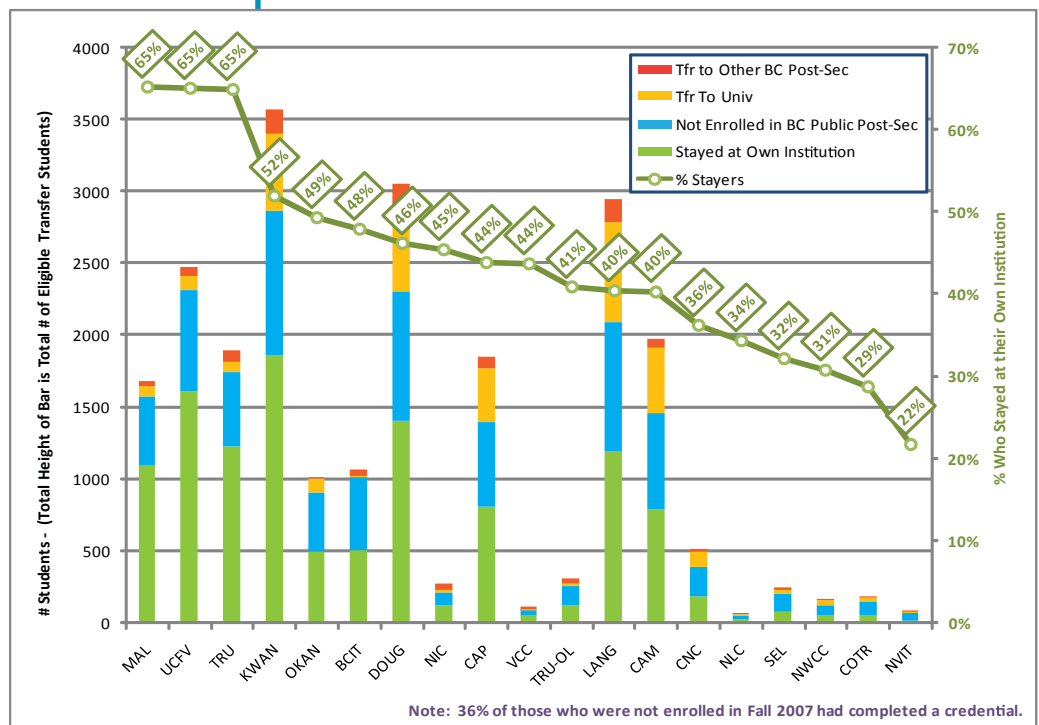
Jean Karlinski, Research Coordinator, BCCAT

More information is available at www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student-transitions/mobility-subcommittee.htm.

Eligible Transfer Students at University Colleges More Inclined to Stay at Own Institution

Related to the variation in the volume of transfer credits accumulated prior to transfer is the finding that university colleges are more likely to retain their eligible transfer students than other institutions. As previously shown, roughly half of the Fall 2006 Eligible Transfer Students re-enrolled at their own institution in Fall 2007; however, the proportion remaining at university colleges is much higher at 65%, although this proportion is lower at Kwantlen (52%). By comparison, many of the smaller institutions outside of the Lower Mainland retain less than one-third of their Eligible Transfer Students.

Figure G: Fall 2006 Eligible Transfer Students - Where Did They Show Up in Fall 2007?



Some Eligible Transfer Students Do Not Transfer and Do Not Re-Enrol

Thirty-six percent of Eligible Transfer Students from Fall 2006 did not re-enrol anywhere by Fall 2007— they did not stay at their own institution and they did not transfer to university or any other BC public post-secondary institution. They may, however, have enrolled in a private institution in BC or public or private institution outside BC. Part of the reason why students do not re-enrol is because they completed a credential, such as a diploma or an associate degree. This represents over one-third of this sub-group of non-enrollees.

The proportion of Fall 2007 non-enrollees who had completed a credential in Fall 2006 is higher at some institutions than others, such as BCIT (68%) with numerous short programs; and at many of the university colleges (ranging from 41% to 48%), where degree program offerings allow students to remain at their own institution to complete a degree without transferring elsewhere. Furthermore, some of the smaller institutions have relatively low rates of students re-enrolling, which can partly be explained by the fact that many of their non-returning students completed a credential, such as at College of the Rockies (44%), and Selkirk College (41%).

