

Movement Among BC Public Post-Secondary Institutions

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The Student Transitions Project has reported remarkably consistent transition rates of British Columbia secondary school graduates into BC public post-secondary education over the last five years, with roughly half of each grade 12 graduation cohort enrolling in BC public post-secondary education within one year of high school graduation. After five years, their participation in BC public post-secondary education increased to 72% (*STP Research Results, June 2008*), and further increased to 78% when attendance at other non-BC public and BC private institutions are accounted for¹.

The STP is now discovering and revealing more about the mobility of high school graduates within the BC public post-secondary education system². Some of these students register at multiple institutions over time, while others persist at the same institution; some register each year, while others stop out and return, or drop out without returning for the time being.

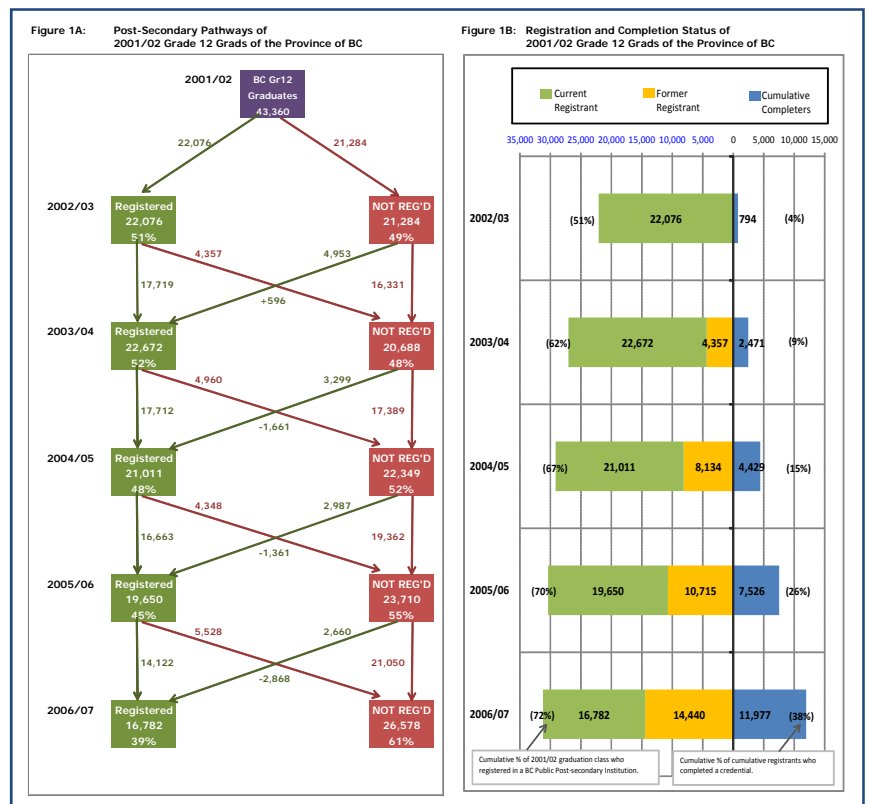
The STP followed a cohort of 43,360 BC secondary school graduates of 2001/02 over a five-year period (from 2002/03 to 2006/07) to track their movement into and among BC public post-secondary institutions and analyze their retention and credential completion outcomes. The primary research question of interest is: **What is the flow of Grade 12 graduates into and among BC public post-secondary institutions over a multi-year period?** A number of additional questions follow from this topic and each is addressed in *Research Report: Movement Among BC Public Post-Secondary Institutions* found on the STP public web site at: http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/. This newsletter provides the highlights of the research findings.

Figure 1: Student Flows and Credential Completion of BC Grade 12 High School Graduates of 2001/02 In BC Public Post-Secondary Education Over a Five-Year Period, 2002/03 to 2006/07

Student Flows and Credential Completion: Students flow into and out of the BC public post-secondary education system over the course of their studies.

Figure 1 shows the volume and direction of student flows between registration and non-registration states for the cohort of 2001/02 BC grade 12 graduates of 2001/02. After five years, 72% of this cohort entered the BC public post-secondary system, of which 38% completed a credential. A total of 11,977 students completed 13,039 credentials. The top three credential types awarded were Bachelor's or first professional degree (40%), certificates (31%) and diplomas (21%).

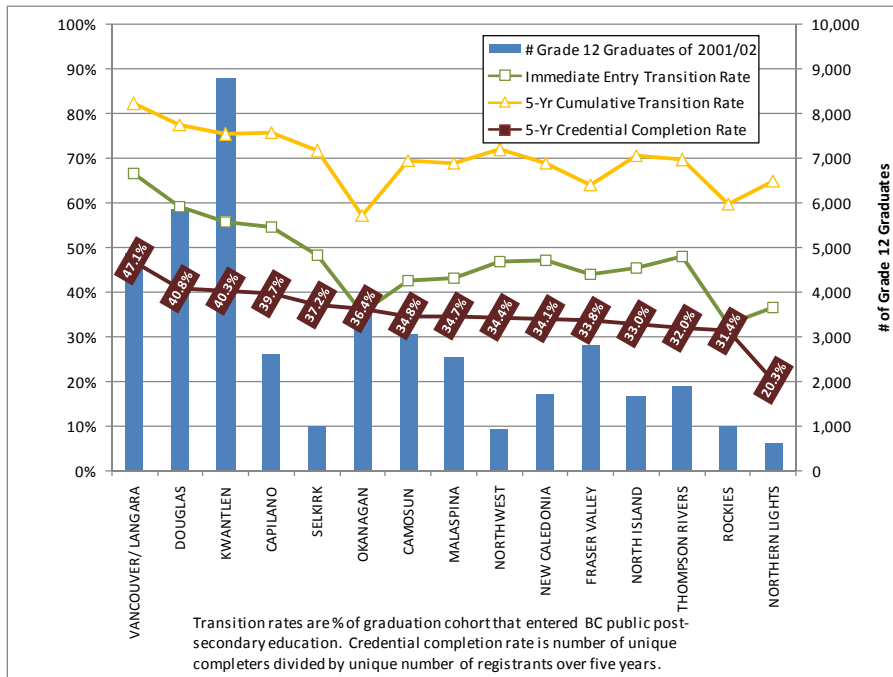
Credential Completion: Credential completion rates were much higher (49%) among those who graduated from high school with GPA's of at least 75% (see full report) and among graduates from many of the college regions in the Lower Mainland (see **Figure 2**).



¹ STP linked the Personal Education Number (PEN) to StudentAid BC and Passport to Education data sets to obtain other post-secondary institution destinations outside of the BC public system. Not all students apply for StudentAid and/or redeem Passport stamps for their post-secondary education, so these other data sources only reveal some of the student transitions outside of the BC public system.

² Institutional designations in this study are those that were in place for the period of this study, 2002/03 to 2006/07.

Figure 2: Transitions Rates and Credential Completion Rates of 2001/02 BC Grade 12 Graduates, by College Region of Graduation High School



Student Transitions Project (STP): STP is managed by a steering committee with representation from the two ministries, public institutions and BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT). Three subcommittees are established to address key areas of research: mobility of transfer students, data management and applicant research. The ministries and institutions are equal partners in this undertaking.

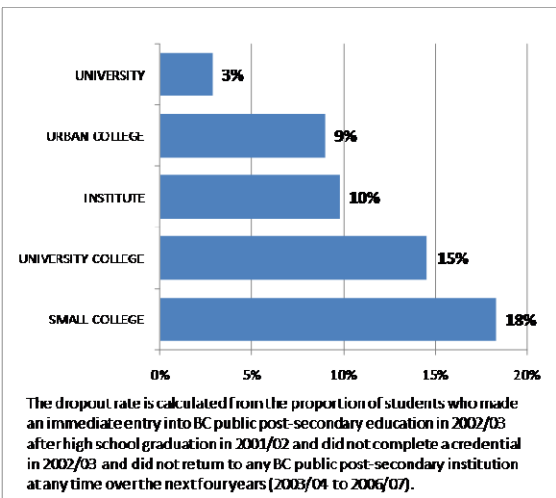
Devron Gaber, STP Chair, Associate Director, BC Council on Admissions and Transfer.
Bob Cowin, Director, Institutional Research, Douglas College.
Gerald Morton, Director, Information Department, Ministry of Education.
Jacqui Stewart, Director, Planning and Data Management Branch, Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.
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Stop Outs: The post-secondary education system allows students to stop out for a period of time during their studies. Each year, the number of stop outs without a credential significantly outnumbers the stop outs with a completed credential. Some of these stop outs might never return (ultimately becoming dropouts), but we do not know for certain if and when they will return. Of those that did return within the five-year study period, the proportion of stop outs (without a credential) who returned declined from 27% in 2004/05 to 19% in 2005/06 and 13% in 2006/07.

Drop Outs: Dropout behavior is more common among students who completed high school with low GPA's and among those enrolled in small colleges and university colleges (see dropout definition and statistics in Figure 3). A collaborative survey of BC's public post-secondary leavers, planned for 2009, might reveal some of the underlying reasons why students leave before completing their post-secondary education.

Figure 3: First Year, Immediate-Entry Dropout Rate from BC Public Post-Secondary Education, by Type of Institution Last Attended



Multiple Institution Attendance: Of the 2001/02 grade 12 graduation class who attended BC public post-secondary education, 40% attended more than one institution, attending an average of 1.6 institutions over a five-year period. Only 5% to 9% of students attended more than one institution in the same academic year.

Continuous Enrollment: Among immediate-entry students who entered post-secondary education in 2002/03, 83% enrolled continuously for a period of one to five years. The largest proportion (51%) of continuous enrollees remained registered in the BC public post-secondary system for five years. For others continuously enrolled, 13% stayed in the system for just one year, 11% for two years, 8% for three years and 17% for four years. Of these continuous enrollees, the longer they remained enrolled, the more likely they were to move among institutions. On average, regardless of their length of continuous enrollment, 64% remained at the same institution for the duration of their stay.

Movement Among Institutions: BC's public post-secondary education system appears to work well in allowing the transition of students between different institutions and different sectors (universities, university colleges, urban colleges, small colleges and institutions) and in multiple directions over time. Transition matrices were used in this study to track the flow of students between sectors and between institutions over a multi-year period. While these matrices are too detailed to present in this newsletter, on average, 20% of registrants switched institutions from one year to the next, and the vast majority (roughly 80%) of the switching occurred between sectors. The flow of students between institutions within the same sector was far less frequent, but when it did occur, the movement between Lower Mainland urban colleges was especially pronounced.