

Block Transfer in the BC Transfer System

The Current State and Possible Future Directions

A BCCAT Special Report

Prepared by Dr. Fiona McQuarrie, Special Projects Coordinator, BCCAT

April 2014



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Introduction

Block transfer is an important part of the BC Transfer System, facilitating student transfer at a program level rather than at a course level. However, as the BC Transfer System and the BC post-secondary system have evolved, the conditions which formerly promoted the use of block transfer agreements have also evolved. Additionally, a number of operational factors pose barriers to accurately measuring the usage or effectiveness of existing block transfer agreements. The purpose of this report is to assess the current overall state of block transfer agreements in the BC Transfer System, and to identify areas for potential action.

Definition of “Block Transfer” in the BC Transfer System

In the BC Transfer System, “block transfer” is defined as “a predetermined number of credits...granted to students who have successfully completed a certificate, diploma, or cluster of courses that is recognized as having an academic wholeness or integrity, and that can be meaningfully related to a degree program or other credential” (BCCAT, 2013, p. 39). Block transfer agreements are negotiated between individual institutions, and usually involve the receiving institution agreeing to recognize a “block” of the sending institution’s courses as equal to a certain number of its own courses, a certain amount of course or program credits, or to a particular status (e.g., admission at a certain level in a program at the receiving institution). Block transfer agreements usually, but not always, involve programs in the same discipline. For example, an accounting diploma completed at one institution may receive block transfer credit toward another institution’s undergraduate degree in business.

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It is important to note that the BC Transfer System includes several types of transfer credit structures involving groups of courses rather than individual courses. These include, for example, flexible pre-major agreements, associate degrees, and subject-specific transfer grids. These could be considered “block transfer” agreements in that they involve transfer credit awarded for the completion of specified groups of courses. There are also block transfer agreements between individual institutions (e.g., memorandums of understanding, or MOUs) that may not be recorded in the BC Transfer Guide, and also different understandings of the meaning of “block transfer” at different institutions or within different programs. However, this discussion will focus on the set of agreements in the BC Transfer System explicitly identified as “block transfer” and listed as such on the BC Transfer Guide website (bctransfer-guide.ca/guides/block).

It is also important to note that many block transfer arrangements were established during the time when the BC Transfer System categorized institutions as either “sending” or “receiving”. In 2012, all BC Transfer System member institutions were enabled to

perform both sending and receiving functions in the articulation process. Thus, in this discussion, the terms “sending institution” and “receiving institution” do not describe an institution’s categorization; instead, they are used to describe an institution’s role in a specific transfer agreement.

History of Block Transfer in the BC Transfer System

The first printed version of the BC Transfer Guide, produced in 1990, included some block transfer agreements; for example, students completing a one-year social work diploma were guaranteed six units of credit upon entry to the University of Victoria’s School of Social Work (BCCAT, 1990). However, nearly all of the transfer agreements listed in the BC Transfer Guide involved individual courses. The few block transfer agreements that were included were mentioned in the receiving institution’s information in the “Transfer Notes” section, rather than in a specific section devoted to block transfer.

In 1996, the BC Ministry of Education, Skills and Training released a strategic plan which included the statement, “Block transfer agreements will be developed to allow transfer of credits between institutions, and eliminate the time-consuming process of course-by-course institutional credit assessment” (quoted in Finlay, 1997, p. 1). At that time, the BC Transfer Guide listed 155 block transfer agreements; 54% of those involved

business programs, and most of the rest involved professional programs. The majority of the agreements involved two-year diploma programs transferring into career and professional degree programs (Finlay, 1997). In response to the Ministry’s strategic plan, BCCAT undertook a block transfer project, guided by a steering committee and soliciting feedback on six potential models of block transfer (Finlay, 1997):

- **System-wide transfer:** all university-level courses at all BC Transfer System member institutions would be transferable to all other member institutions.
- **General education core curriculum/first year transfer program:** all BC Transfer System member institutions would offer a common first-year curriculum, based on the general education requirements included in most degree programs. The completed first year would transfer as a block to any one of a set of designated degree programs.
- **Standardized pre-major curriculum:** the common first-year curriculum and a set of courses within a discipline would be transferable to designated degree programs.
- **Flexible pre-major program:** an agreed-upon set of first- and second-year courses within a discipline would be accepted by BC Transfer System member institutions as fulfilling the subject-specific requirements of the first two years of a designated degree program.

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- ***Learning outcomes:*** objectives or competencies that students should acquire at particular points in a program would be established. A collaboratively agreed-upon amount of block credit would be granted to students demonstrating achievement of those objectives or competencies.
 - ***Descriptive pathways:*** a transfer grid would be established, identifying courses within a discipline recommended or accepted for transfer at all participating institutions. The grid would illustrate to students or advisors how to plan programs so as to transfer full blocks of credit, or how to maximize the student's amount of transferable credits.
- The arrangements should optimize credit transfer opportunities for students;
 - Acceptance of the arrangements should be voluntary by both sending and receiving institutions;
 - Block credit should supplement, but not replace, course-by-course transfer;
 - Block transfer should complement efforts to improve course-to-course transfer arrangements;
 - Block transfer should provide greater flexibility to sending institutions in developing innovative curriculum;
 - Block transfer agreements should encompass as many institutions as possible in multi-lateral or system-wide agreements; and,
 - Block transfer agreements should be clear and understandable, and published in a form accessible to students and advisors (Finlay, 1998).

The feedback received for the project indicated that course-by-course transfer was “functional and essential” for transferring courses in the arts and sciences, and that any form of block transfer should be an incremental improvement to the system, rather than a radical departure (Finlay, 1998). Council passed a motion at the end of 1997 establishing the following principles for the development and promotion of block transfer arrangements for arts and science programs and courses:

Of the six models of block transfer that were proposed, the two with the most “appeal” to both sending and receiving institutions were the flexible pre-major model and the descriptive pathways model. Thus, following the publication of the report,

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BCCAT designated Transfer Innovations funding to support articulation committees wishing to explore or implement expanded transfer opportunities within their discipline. To date (December 2013), this funding has supported the completion of 48 transfer-related projects, seven of which involve block transfer agreements. (Flexible pre-major projects are categorized separately, and Transfer Innovations funding has supported 15 such projects.)

In 2009, BCCAT commissioned a project to evaluate the effectiveness of block transfer agreements. Data for the project (Bastedo, 2010) were collected from surveys of users of BCCAT's block transfer information; from surveys of institutional staff involved with administration of block transfer agreements; from interviews; from BCCAT's own website usage data; and from the websites of institutions involved in block transfer agreements. The project report concluded that while there was a great deal of interest within the BC Transfer System in block transfer agreements, the varied understandings of the term "block transfer" and the variations in block transfer models caused confusion for users. There also appeared to be relatively low usage by students of block transfer agreements (Bastedo, 2010). The report noted that the lack of clarity in the descriptions of many agreements, and conditions in agreements such as individual assessment of transcripts before awarding transfer credit, "increase[d] confusion and already heavy workloads of faculty and staff" (Bastedo, 2010, p. 21).

In 2010, BCCAT commissioned a research project to assess whether block transfer usage could be assessed using data from the Student Transitions Project (STP) and the Central Data Warehouse (CDW), BC's two databases tracking student mobility (BCCAT, 2011). The project report noted that tracking block transfer activity within these databases is difficult,

because there is no single variable or combination of variables within either database "that positively identifies block transfer recipients" (BCCAT, 2011, p. 7). The report recommended creating a block transfer variable in both databases that receiving institutions would use to report students who had transferred credit under the terms of a block transfer agreement. However, the report also noted that "the extent to which institutions are currently tracking block transfer in their own systems is unknown, as is the level of interest among institutions in expanding the transfer data elements [currently provided]" (BCCAT, 2011, p. 16).

The Current State of Block Transfer in the BC Transfer System

This section will review the demographic characteristics of the block transfer agreements currently in effect within the BC Transfer System, and provide an assessment of the effectiveness of these agreements.

Demographics of Block Transfer Agreements

As of October 2013, there were 948 block transfer agreements listed in the BC Transfer Guide. Table 1 shows the number of agreements for each participating institution as a sender and/or receiver. Institutions accredited by the Private Career Training Institutions Agency (PCTIA) that are not BC Transfer System members are included in this table if they have a block transfer agreement with a BC Transfer System member institution.

Table 1: Number of Block Transfer Agreements by Institution

	SENDING	RECEIVING
Acsenda School of Management*	1	0
Art Institute of Vancouver	0	1
Athabasca University	0	16
BC Institute of Technology	97	2
Camosun College	75	0
Capilano University	72	34
College of New Caledonia	50	0
Columbia College	7	0
College of the Rockies	73	2
Canadian Tourism College**	4	0
Dorset College**	3	0
Douglas College	87	4
Emily Carr University of Art + Design	0	13
Eton College**	2	0
Justice Institute of BC	4	0
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	47	8
Langara College	72	0
Native Education Centre**	4	0
North Island College	34	0
Northern Lights College	30	0
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	8	0
Northwest Community College	28	0
Okanagan College	38	36
Royal Roads University	0	99
Selkirk College	60	0
Simon Fraser University	0	16
Thompson Rivers University	44	29
Thompson Rivers University – Open Learning	1	407
Trinity Western University	0	1
University of BC	2	23
University Canada West	0	5
University of the Fraser Valley	29	11
University of Northern BC	0	115
University of Victoria	15	106
Vancouver Community College	32	1
Vancouver Island School of Art**	3	0
Vancouver Island University	65	18
Vancouver Premier College**	1	0
Yukon College	18	0

*Formerly Sprott-Shaw Degree College ** Accredited by the Private Careers Training Institution Authority (PCTIA)

NOTE: column totals exceed 948 because of block transfer agreements involving more than one sending or receiving institution.

Tables 2A and 2B list the disciplines and faculties with the highest numbers of sending and receiving block transfer agreements. This table does not include every discipline or faculty with block transfer agreements currently in effect; it is intended simply to identify the academic areas most often participating in block transfer agreements. The numbers in Table 2A and Table 2B include specialized areas of study within each subject; for example, technology management programs are included in the total for “management”.

Tables 3 and 4 list the numbers of each type of credential involved in block transfer agreements. Table 3 lists the credentials involved in the sending role in block transfer agreements; the table only includes those block transfer agreements where a credential, rather than a program, is specified as the source of the transfer credit. Table 4 lists the credentials awarded in programs that accept block credit transfer, along with some notes about the programs involved. These data indicate that one-or two-year credentials are generally the credentials that are transferred, and that bachelor’s degree programs are generally the programs that receive the transferred credentials.

Table 2A: Subjects with Highest Numbers of Block Transfer Agreements: Sending

Management	434
Business	239
Administration	182
Tourism	64
Support Worker	79
Early Childhood Care/Education	52
Social Service	44
Hospitality	35
Science	30
Arts	27

Table 2B: Subjects with Highest Numbers of Block Transfer Agreements: Receiving

Business/Commerce	563
Arts	158
General Studies	152
Social Work	90
Tourism	72
Science	52
Child and Youth Care	41
Health	38

21 block transfer agreements list a diploma program as the receiving program, and two block transfer agreements list an academic unit, rather than a program, as the receiver.

Table 3: Types and Numbers of Credentials Sending Block Transfer Credit

Certificate	109
Diploma	731
Certificate or diploma	26
Associate of Arts	9
Associate of Science	6
Associate of Arts or Associate of Science	1

Table 4: Types and Numbers of Credentials Receiving Block Transfer Credit

Bachelor of General Studies	148	Thompson Rivers University - Open Learning is the receiving institution in 144 of these agreements.
Bachelor of Commerce/Bachelor of Management	143	Thompson Rivers University - Open Learning and Royal Roads University are the receiving institutions in the majority of the Bachelor of Commerce Agreements.
Bachelor of Arts	116	
Bachelor of Social Work	90	The University of Northern BC and the University of Victoria are the receiving institutions in all of these agreements.
Bachelor of Tourism/Bachelor of Tourism Management	72	Thompson Rivers University, Vancouver Island University, and Capilano University are the receiving institutions in the majority of these agreements.
Bachelor of Commerce (Entrepreneurship)	54	
Bachelor of Child and Youth Care	41	The University of Victoria is the receiving institution in all of these agreements.
Bachelor of Health Sciences	38	Thompson Rivers University - Open Learning is the receiving institution in all of these agreements.
Bachelor of Business Administration	38	Okanagan College is the receiving institution in 34 of these agreements.
Bachelor of Science (environmental & natural resource majors)	19	
Bachelor of Science	17	
Bachelor of Fine Arts	11	
Bachelor of Science in Nursing	10	

Only credentials involved in 10 or more block transfer agreements are listed in this table.

868 agreements have conditions that must be met in order for a transferring student to receive the block transfer credit in the receiving program or institution. Table 5 lists the types and numbers of these conditions.

Tables 6 and 7 list the amounts of credit granted in block transfer agreements. Table 6 outlines the amounts of credit granted in block transfer agreements that specify the amount of credit that will be awarded. Table 7 outlines the maximum amount of credit granted in transfer credit agreements that include a range of potential credit amounts rather than a specific amount.

Table 5: Types and Numbers of Conditions Associated with Block Transfer Agreements

Individual assessment	565
Minimum GPA requirement	109
Completion of specified course, group of courses, program, or credential	48
Other (includes, e.g., consulting institution's current calendar for details; credit only granted after admission to program; audition or portfolio assessment; multiple conditions)	146

Table 6: Amount of Credit Granted in Transfer Credit Agreements with a Specified Credit Award

2 years of credit	106
30 credits	21
12 credits	9
24 credits	8
18 credits	7
1 year of credit	6
Acceptance into 3 rd year	6
48 credits	1
60 credits	1
Other (includes e.g. credit for specific course(s), multiple forms of credit [e.g. acceptance + course credit], different amounts of credit for different program options)	121

Table 7: Maximum Amount of Credit Granted in Transfer Credit Agreements without a Specified Credit

Up to 60 credits	308
Up to 30 credits	121
Up to 72 credits	43
Up to 15 credits	17
Up to 90 credits	12
Up to 57 credits	10
Up to 24 credits	7
Up to 12 credits	2
Up to 75 credits	1
Other maximum amounts	36

The theoretical ideal of a block transfer agreement is an agreement specifying the number of credits that will be awarded to the transferring student, with no conditions on the granting of those credits. Table 8 lists the amount of credit awarded in the 36 agreements of this type; the most common transfer credit award is 60 credits, which in most four-year undergraduate programs equals two years' worth of credit. It is worth noting that these agreements represent only 4% of the total number of block transfer agreements in the BC Transfer System.

Finally, a very rough approximation of the popularity of block transfer agreements across time can be made by looking at the dates when block transfer agreements were implemented. Table 9 shows the number of new agreements added each year to the BC Transfer Guide website. BCCAT did not start recording the effective date (the date on which an agreement begins) of block transfer agreements until 2004. However, even with that restriction, it can be seen from Table 9 that just over 60% of the block transfer agreements in the BC Transfer System are more than a decade old. The exceptionally high number of agreements imple-

Table 8: Credit Awarded in Block Transfer Agreements with No Conditions and Specified Amounts of Credit

60 credits	18
30 credits	7
Credit for specified courses	4
12 credits	2
Two years	2
78 credits	1
90 credits	1
Acceptance into 3rd year	1

Table 9: Years of Effective Dates of Block Transfer Agreements in the BC Transfer System

Undated (pre-2004)	599
2004	7
2005	8
2006	1
2007	124
2008	44
2009	26
2010	33
2011	52
2012	35
2013	19

mented in 2007 is attributable to program expansion at Thompson Rivers University-Open Learning and at Royal Roads University, in addition to the creation of 41 block transfer agreements leading into the Bachelor of Social Work program at the University of Northern BC.

Effectiveness of Block Transfer Agreements

As indicated by the BCCAT research reviewed earlier in this document, it is difficult to quantitatively assess how frequently students use block transfer agreements to move between institutions and/or programs, because transfer using a block transfer agreement is generally not recorded as such. At most BC Transfer System member institutions, any credits awarded to an incoming transfer student would simply be recorded on the student's transcript as the amount of transfer credit awarded; the basis for the transfer credit – which could be course-to-course transfer, block transfer, or any other form of transfer agreement – would not be noted. A recent BCCAT report on credentialing practices for jointly operated programs (Duklas, 2013) mentioned 15 block transfer agreements reported by the respondent institutions; however, only four of those agreements included formal notation of the transfer credit or the names of the participating institutions on the student's transcript or parchment.

As also indicated, it is not possible to accurately track block transfer usage with the data in the two provincial databases collecting information on student mobility. There are data within these two sources that could be interpreted as representing block transfer activity - for example, if a student moves between

a sending and a receiving institution and moves between programs which have a block transfer agreement, and the receiving institution awards the transferring student the amount of credit stated in the block transfer agreement, those three pieces of data could collectively be interpreted as the student using the block transfer agreement. But it is also entirely possible that the receiving institution could grant the student that amount of transfer credit based on a course-by-course assessment of the student's transcript or on some other process. Thus, without being able to determine specifically if a block transfer agreement was involved in the transfer, this evidence is not definitive proof of block transfer activity. It is possible that individual institutions or programs may keep records of when or how students use block transfer agreements to move between institutions or programs, but there is no indication that this is a common practice within the BC Transfer System.

Because of the difficulties in obtaining reliable quantitative data on block transfer usage, in 2013 BCCAT staff attempted to qualitatively assess awareness and usage of block transfer agreements. Two sending institutions and one receiving institution involved in block transfer agreements in business administration were identified; these institutions worked with BCCAT in attempting to conduct focus groups with students intending to use block transfer, and students who had used block transfer. Unfortunately, despite excel-

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lent cooperation and support from the participating institutions, it proved to be impossible to identify or assemble enough qualified students to conduct focus group sessions. Subsequently, a web-based survey was circulated to qualified students at one of the sending institutions, using the same questions that would have been asked in the focus group, but only one response was received. BCCAT also circulated a web-based survey to the members of two articulation committees in a discipline with a large number of block transfer agreements. The survey was intended to ascertain the committee members' knowledge of the block transfer agreements at their institution, and the usage of those agreements. However, a low response rate and a low number of usable responses made it difficult to draw any meaningful information from the results of this survey.

Anecdotally, there also seem to be a number of concerns around the ongoing usefulness or feasibility of block transfer agreements. Many block transfer agreements were established when there was a much clearer distinction in the BC Transfer System between sending and receiving institutions. Sending institutions (primarily colleges and university-colleges) matched their curricula as closely as possible to that of receiving institutions, in order to maximize student transfer opportunities and to attract students who intended to transfer elsewhere to continue their education. However, since then the BC post-secondary system

has evolved in different and significant ways. Many colleges can now grant degrees of their own; the university-colleges have become teaching-intensive universities with the authority to grant undergraduate and graduate degrees; and the range of programming at many institutions has greatly expanded. One effect of these changes has been more curriculum variability within individual programs. This makes the “pure” block transfer model, with a guaranteed amount of transfer credit and no conditions attached, more difficult to use, since students in the same program may have received the same credential but may have taken different electives or other curriculum options within the program. There is also less incentive for those institutions formerly classified as sending institutions to match their curricula to that of other institutions, since those institutions may now be able to offer degrees or other credentials themselves, and students no longer have to transfer to other institutions to achieve those credentials.

There also appear to be concerns about difficulties for students resulting from the practice of awarding a set amount of transfer credit or a particular status in a program (e.g., admission to the third year of a four-year program) rather than awarding credit for specific courses. If upper-level courses at the receiving institution have course pre- or co-requisites, a student who has used block transfer to enter the program may not be admitted to those courses,

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because his or her transcript will not indicate that she or he has taken the pre- or co-requisite courses. Students may have to request a waiver to be admitted into these courses, or undertake some other process to formally establish that they have qualifications equivalent to the pre- or co-requisite courses. Alternatively, there is the possibility that students using block transfer may end up taking more than 120 credits to complete an undergraduate degree. This could happen if a student's block transfer credits are not accepted as meeting pre- or co-requisites for upper-level courses, and they are required to take pre-requisite lower level courses at the receiving institution. Thus, block transfer may facilitate students' admission into a program, but it may not facilitate their progress once they are in the program if the block transfer agreement does not include specifically matched curricula, courses, or outcomes.

Another concern that has been expressed anecdotally involves the ongoing administration and maintenance of block transfer agreements. As noted previously, slightly more than half of the block transfer agreements currently in effect were established before 2004, but it is unclear how often or how regularly block transfer agreements are reviewed. Prior to 2011, BCCAT sent an annual report to institutions listed in the BC Transfer Guide as participating in block transfer agreements, and asked these institutions to submit any updates and additions to the block transfer information in the Guide. If no response was received, it was assumed that the institution did not have any changes to its agreements. In 2011, BCCAT moved the maintenance of block transfer agreements into its Transfer Credit Evaluation System (TCES); this allowed institutions to submit changes to agreement or to add new agreements at any time during the year. However, the amount of updating and revision to block transfer agreements has not changed

significantly even though it is now simpler and faster for institutions to make adjustments to their block transfer agreements.

BCCAT's *How to Articulate* handbook (BCCAT, 2013) indicates that sending institutions revising a transferable course should consult with the receiving institutions accepting the course, to ensure the course's ongoing transferability or to revise the articulation agreement to reflect the course's new form. However, it is less explicitly indicated that block transfer agreements and other forms of transfer agreements should also be reviewed if courses or curricula change at either the sending or receiving institution. An additional complication related to older block transfer agreements is that the faculty members or program administrators involved in establishing the agreement may no longer be in those roles, which may cause difficulties for subsequent institutional representatives attempting to interpret or to apply the terms of the agreement.

Other concerns about block transfer agreements relate to the workload associated with the "individual assessment" condition. As indicated above, 565 (59%) of block transfer agreements require an individual assessment of the student's transcript or other documentation in order for transfer credit to be granted. The prevalence of "individual assessment" is understandable, given the increased variation in programming at many institutions, but it also has the effect of removing one of the main advantages of block transfer - that is, seamless transition. If a block transfer agreement is rarely utilized, then the "individual assessment" requirement may not significantly affect workloads at the receiving institution. However, if a block transfer agreement requiring "individual assessment" is frequently utilized, or if a receiving program has multiple block transfer agreements all requiring "individual assessment", administering the agreements can considerably increase the transfer-

BCCAT could establish a deadline date on which all block transfer agreements currently in the BC Transfer Guide would be removed, unless the institutions involved notified BCCAT of their intention to continue the agreement.

related workload at receiving programs or institutions. It is also often unclear whether the responsibility for “individual assessment” lies with a faculty member, the program chair, the program administrator or staff, the registrar’s office, or another part of the institution.

Possible Future Directions

Based on the demographic characteristics of the block transfer agreements currently in the BC Transfer System, and on the identified issues around those agreements, there are several potential actions that could be pursued to improve the relevance and usefulness of block transfer agreements.

1) BCCAT could establish a deadline date on which all block transfer agreements currently in the BC Transfer Guide would be removed, unless the institutions involved notified BCCAT of their intention to continue the agreement. BC Transfer System members would be notified of the deadline well in advance, and the date would be chosen to give institutions or programs sufficient time to review their agreements. Institutions wanting to maintain an agreement in the BC Transfer Guide would be expected to review the terms of the agreement, to ensure that the terms reflected the current curricula in both participating programs, and to contact BCCAT to indicate the continuation of the agreement, along with any changes, revisions, or updates.

This course of action would address the issue of the large number of older and potentially out of date agreements currently in the system, and would ensure that the agreements retained in the system had been recently reviewed and updated if necessary. Once the deadline date has passed, BCCAT could also encourage more regular reviews of the continuing agreements by sending out yearly reminders to participating institutions, as was done prior to 2011.

2) Institutions and/or programs participating in block transfer agreements could be encouraged to examine the workload associated with the agreements’ maintenance and usage, and to decide if the net benefit of the agreements to the institution or program justifies the use of resources associated with establishing or maintaining the agreements. For example, if very few students use block transfer to move to a receiving institution, and there is minimal variation in the sending institution’s program(s), it may be straightforward to administer the agreement and the transfer activity associated with it. However, if curriculum regularly changes at the sending or the receiving institution, and/or there are insufficient resources at either institution to regularly review or update agreements – or if “individual assessment” requirements are creating an excessively large workload at the receiving institution - it may be more problematic than worthwhile to continue the agreement.

- 3) BCCAT could encourage institutions/programs to track students' usage of block transfer agreements. More accurate tracking could be accomplished, for example, by noting block transfers on students' transcripts at receiving institutions, or by encouraging sending and receiving institutions or programs to keep internal records of students' use of block transfer to move between programs.

It may now be possible to track block transfer activity more accurately through recent additions to the CDW database. In September 2012, the "Student_Course_Transfer" table was added to the CDW database. This table includes a variable for "credit assignment type" which would indicate whether the transfer credit was assigned, unassigned, or block transfer. BCCAT's Admissions Committee is currently assessing the quality of the data collected through this new table. The addition of this data element does not address transfer credit granted by non-CDW institutions, including BC's public research universities; however, data for these institutions could be drawn from the STP submission made by these institutions.

More accurate data on block transfer activity would be extremely useful in determining the actual extent of block transfer usage within the BC

Transfer System, and would also assist institutions and programs in making informed and evidence-based decisions around block transfer issues.

- 4) BCCAT staff could undertake survey or interview-based research including the programs and institutions with the greatest number of block transfer agreements, as indicated in Tables 2a, 2b, and 7. Such research might be able to produce more precise data on block transfer usage and on the workloads associated with maintaining and administering block transfer agreements.
- 5) Block transfer, as noted, is structured as an institution-to-institution agreement. However, the same goal of seamless transfer for students could be accomplished through the use of program-to-program agreements such as flexible pre-majors. Articulation committees representing programs involved in many block transfer agreements could investigate whether a flexible pre-major or similar type of agreement could replace some or all of the block transfer agreements in the discipline or subject, while maintaining transfer pathways for students.

It may be time for BCCAT and BC Transfer System member institutions to undertake a formal evaluation process to consider whether block transfer still serves the purpose it was originally intended to serve within the system.

Conclusion

This report has identified a number of structural and operational issues related to block transfer in the BC Transfer System. Therefore, it may be time for BCCAT and BC Transfer System member institutions to undertake a formal evaluation process to consider whether block transfer still serves the purpose it was originally intended to serve within the system.

This process could consider, for example, whether block transfer agreements involving “individual assessment” should continue to be identified and listed as block transfer in the BC Transfer Guide when, in practice, the assessment requirement actually makes the agreement function as course-by-course articulation.

This is not to say that block transfer does not or should not continue to have a role within the BC Transfer System. However, there has been considerable change within the system since the time when the majority of block transfer agreements were established. It may be worth questioning whether the model of “pure” block transfer is still relevant to the BC Transfer System in its current form.

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