Recent Trends in Student Mobility in Ontario: Implications for Policy and Practice

Henry Decock and Ursula McCloy
Presentation to CICAN Conference, Winnipeg, MB
May 24-26, 2015
Presentation outline

• Introduction to Seneca’s new Centre for Research in Student Mobility
• Examples of our research projects that link research, policy and practice
• Discussion on how the research can inform institutional, provincial and national policies and practices.
About the Centre for Research in Student Mobility (CRSM)

CRSM is a newly established research centre at Seneca College in Toronto, with a focus on student mobility.

Goals include:
- to conduct primary research which informs and is informed by policy and practice
- to be a resource for matters related to transfer provincially, nationally and internationally

Funded primarily through external sources (current major funder is the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer)
Research Team

• Henry Decock, PhD, AVP, Academic Partnerships
• Ursula McCloy, PhD, Research Project Manager
• Mitchell Steffler, MA, Research Analyst
• Matthew Duncan, Office/Research Assistant
Interrelationship of Research, Policy and Practice at CRSM

Research: is informed by and informs policy and practice

Knowledge Mobilization: Website, conferences, briefing notes

Policy: Institutional, provincial, professional impacts on mobility, and vice versa

Practice: e.g. Track partnerships; credit transfer office users
Research agenda

Provincial and institutional level
Current Funded Projects

Provincial (Ontario):
• Mobility Pathways and the Transfer Experience of Ontario College Graduates, 2006-2014

Regional:
• Mobility Pathways of International Students from Metro Toronto Colleges after Graduation

Seneca-York:
• Qualitative Study on Inter-institutional Student Experience
• Transfer Pathways in Higher Education: York University and Seneca College as a Case Study

Institutional:
• Aspirations to Reality: Tracking Early Childhood Education and General Arts and Science students into Degree programs
• Mobility Pathways of Seneca College's First Generation and Mature Students After Graduation
• Seneca’s Degree and Credit Transfer Office: A Profile of Users and an Evaluation of Outcomes
Research: Dataset creation

1. Provincial dataset
   • Ontario Graduate Satisfaction Survey, 2006-07 to 2013-14 (596,740 graduates; 398,207 respondents). Consists of detailed labour market, satisfaction, and further education questions.
   • Used for regional and provincial analysis
   • Also contains movement of graduates outside of Ontario

2. Seneca’s linked dataset
   • Primary focus of Centre to date
   • Track entering students to graduation, 2001-2015 (~140,000 students); HS grades, college performance, entering and graduating surveys

3. Goal in future is to work with other jurisdictions and institutions
Research: Creation of Seneca’s linked dataset

- **High School Transcripts**
- **Entering Student Survey & Placement Testing**
- **2006 Census Neighbourhood characteristics**
- **Seneca Student Information System**
- **Linked Student Level Seneca Dataset, 2001-2015**
- **KPI Graduate Satisfaction Survey**
  - Employment and transfer status
Research and policy

Examples
Example 1: The Ontario government’s credit transfer system

Vision from Ontario’s Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities’ “Policy Statement for Ontario’s Credit Transfer System,” 2011:

Ontario will have a comprehensive, transparent and consistently applied credit transfer system that will improve student pathways and mobility, support student success and make Ontario a postsecondary education destination of choice. The credit transfer system will assist qualified students to move between postsecondary institutions or programs without repeating prior, relevant learning.
STUDENT MOBILITY MILESTONES IN ONTARIO
Key milestones in Ontario Government’s credit transfer system development

2009 A Ministry & inter-sectoral credit transfer steering committee was established

2010 Credit transfer system system-wide indicators for colleges and universities included in multi-year accountability agreements

2011 A new provincial credit transfer framework was announced, committing $73.7 million over five years

2011 Creation of the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer

2013 Ontario's Differentiation Policy Framework. One of the six key components included Institutional Collaboration to Support Student Mobility, with system-wide metrics established for all institutions.
Evidence of policy impact?

• What has been the effect on transfer rates or numbers during this time in Ontario?
• Is there any evidence duplication has decreased and alignment increased?
• Are students reporting an improved transfer experience?

❖ Provincial analysis: KPI Graduate Satisfaction Survey for years 2006-7 to 2012-13, telephone survey 6 months after graduation
Transfer rates to degrees declining; overall numbers increasing

Percentage and estimated number of Ontario college graduates furthering their education in a degree program, 2006-07 to 2012-13
Transfer to university differs by student funding status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ministry Funded</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceived program relatedness is increasing

How related is your current program to the program at the university? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Not Related</th>
<th>Somewhat Related</th>
<th>Very Related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Not Related
- Somewhat Related
- Very Related
## Estimate of amount of credit received increasing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Year</td>
<td>3 Year</td>
<td>2 Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than half a year</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half a year</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to two years</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years or more</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increase in alignment: Reasons for further education (% major/ minor)

There was a formal transfer agreement between your previous and your current program

Interest in pursuing a different field of study
Satisfaction with transfer experience and academic preparation stable over time
Evidence of policy impact?

• What has been the effect on transfer rates or numbers during this time in Ontario?
  • Decrease in overall percentage of transfer to degrees, particularly to university. However, numbers of transfer is increasing.

• Is there any evidence duplication has decreased and alignment increased?
  • an increased relatedness of college and university programs,
  • more transfer credit,
  • a reduced interest in entering a different field of study, and slight increase in a transfer agreement as a reason for continuing

• Are students reporting a better transfer experience?
  • Satisfaction with academic preparation and the transition experience, remains consistently high.
What are the appropriate outcomes to measure?

Roksa and Keith (2008) argue that the stated purpose of legislated articulation policies is simply to preserve credits for students who choose to transfer, rather than to increase transfer rates; these policies do not address societal factors that may affect transfer, such as high school preparation, family responsibilities, and factors that prevent full-time and continuous study.

From Trick, 2013, report for HEQCO
Example #2: The impact of labour market and policy changes on university transfer: the case study of Early Childhood Education

• In 2007, the Ontario government passed the *Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*, establishing the College of Early Childhood Educators (the College) in 2008.

• 2010-2011, Ontario introduced full-day kindergarten, increasing the demand the registered Early Childhood Educators.

• Reduced demand for certified teachers in K-12. This likely reduces the demand for ECE graduates to use the university transfer pathway to ultimately attend Teacher’s College.

• 2008 to present: The introduction of related college degrees across several Ontario colleges.
University transfer rate for Ontario’s ECE graduates decreased

Percentage of ECE graduates who attend university, 6 months after graduation

Source: MTCU KPI Graduate Satisfaction Survey
Research Questions

Why has transfer to university decreased so sharply for ECE?

1. Provincial analysis
   • What are significant changes in the profession and programs?
   • How has the labour market responded?

2. Institutional level (Seneca case study)
   • What are the academic and socio-demographic backgrounds of ECE graduates who transfer to university?
   • What is the role of aspirations for university?
   • Is the decrease in transfer to university a result of a changing student profile, or are there other external factors?

Project funded by ONCAT
Results: Potential impact of external policy and labour market

• Even when controlling for socio-demographic and academic factors and changes over time the amount of transfer has dropped significantly for Seneca’s ECE graduates since 2009, relative to 2007-2009 graduates.

• The timing of decrease in transfer aligns with the changes the ECE profession has undergone in the late 2000’s.
  • Job prospects have improved, the profession has attracted older students with previous education, and interest in transfer to university has decreased.

➢ Overall, when observing student mobility trends need take into account both the labour market and surrounding policy considerations.
Research to inform practice
Current and potential examples
Example 1: Seneca’s Degree and Credit Transfer Office

• Seneca College was the first, and remains one of the few Ontario colleges with a dedicated Degree and Credit Transfer Office (DCTO).

• 43% of Seneca graduates who transferred to a university used credit advising services, ranking Seneca near the top in Ontario.

• A database of users started in 2003, and contains over 3700 students as well as their student ID.

• By linking to the CRSM Seneca database via student ID:
  • Can create a profile of students who are using Seneca’s DCTO.
  • Compare those with aspirations for transfer upon college entry but who did not use the DCTO. In this way the impact of the DCTO on transfer outcomes and experiences can be analyzed.

Project funded by ONCAT, complete 2016
About Seneca’s Degree and Credit Transfer Office

Seneca’s centralized office acts as a hub for pathways and transfer credit information and advocates for not only the student, but the academic area and our partners at large when it comes to the dissemination of transfer information.
Example 2: Track student movement and success within college-university partnerships

Data sharing between partners to track progress of transfer students:

• Redirect project with York: Applicants to York’s BA program who do not meet entry requirements to York (63-67%) can be redirected to Seneca’s Liberal Arts diploma program. Upon completion, students can transfer credits (almost 2yr) to York.

• Transfer Pathways in Higher Education: York University and Seneca College as a Case Study (HEQCO funded, submitted)

• Seneca/ University of Toronto Liberal Arts transfers

• Early discussions with other partnerships, plan to make data sharing a part of future agreements
Knowledge Mobilization

“Moving available knowledge into active use”
How is CRSM engaging in knowledge mobilization (KMb)?

“KMb involves knowledge sharing between research producers and research users (including professionals or others whose work can benefit from research findings), often with the help of third parties or intermediaries”

Website:
- Contains research conducted by the Centre
- recent announcements, hot topics about mobility
- key external research reports, provincially, nationally, internationally (reviewed for quality & relevance)

- Social media: engaging in Twitter
- Regular briefing notes: summary of topic of interest
- Conference presentations: Academic, administrative, professional groups
Examples of knowledge mobilization

Centre for Research in Student Mobility

Seneca has established a first-of-its-kind research centre dedicated to student mobility, which will become a hub for ongoing research and strategic initiatives within the post-secondary education sector.

The Centre will investigate how and why students transfer between post-secondary institutions and programs. The research will enable student movement within the sector, provincially, nationally, and internationally to help inform policy, program, and pathway development, student support services, and institutional partnerships.

Seneca in Ontario’s leader in credit transfer and college-university collaboration. The College holds hundreds of students each year pursue further education at other colleges and universities.

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BRIEFING NOTES

Welcome!
In the summer of 2014, the Centre for Research in Student Mobility at Seneca was established to become a hub for ongoing research and strategic initiatives within the post-secondary education sector.

The Centre will investigate how and why students transfer between post-secondary institutions and programs to help inform policy, program, and pathway development, student support services, and institutional partnerships.

The Centre will be at the forefront of research in student mobility, which will include updates on current research projects, including initiatives to advance student mobility, support partnerships and initiatives.

Student Mobility Milestones in Ontario: A Brief Timeline

1993 The Student Task Force on Advanced Transfer was formed under the leadership of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, to look into ways to develop a system of advanced transfer.

1995 The Ministry of Education the transfer of students to demonstrate the compatibility of credit courses with other institutions.

1996 The Ontario University and Colleges Joint Education Association (OUC) signed an agreement to develop a credit transfer system for students moving between colleges.

1999 The Council of Ministers of Colleges and Universities (COCU) established the Joint Education Association (OUC) to develop a system of credit transfer for students moving between colleges.

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Discussion....

• How are you tracking student pathways in your institution/jurisdiction?
• What measures, metrics or outcomes do you use?
• What trends do you see?
• How are some ways to share research findings to broader community including government, institutions, professionals, media.....
• Opportunities for collaborative work? Common research questions?
Thank you!

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http://www.senecacollege.ca/mobilityresearch