



Transfer Report

March 2011

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Transfer Report

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Transfer Report

Executive Summary

Washington is gifted with a strong community and technical college system. More than 70 percent of the students who access higher education in Washington do so first at a two-year institution. Washington's two-year colleges account for a higher percentage of public and private college student enrollments (49 percent) than in the United States in general (34 percent).

The Higher Education Coordinating Board's (HECB) ambitious degree attainment goals cannot be achieved without strong transfer rates between community and technical colleges and four-year institutions. In the *2008 Strategic Master Plan*, the Board stressed the importance of transfer as one of its four major strategies to raise educational attainment, calling for two special areas of foci: "align[ing] institutional policies and practice to ensure that students have flexibility in designing their path to a degree" and "get[ting] the right information to students at the right time."¹

A number of Washington statutes assign the HECB a coordinating role in transfer, including establishing and adopting transfer policies, improving educational transitions, and delivering a biennial report on transfer to the Legislature regarding progress on the development of transfer associate degrees and other improvements in transfer efficiency. (See Appendix B for a list of Washington laws addressing the HECB's role in transfer.) The HECB works closely with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and other partners to carry out its responsibilities regarding transfer.

Key policy questions addressed in this report that follow from both the Board's *Master Plan* and from Washington statutes guide the HECB's long-term agenda regarding transfer and include the following foundational questions:

- 1) Do students transfer?
- 2) Do they transfer without loss of credit?
- 3) Are they successful after they transfer?
- 4) Is student transfer awareness increasing?

¹ Higher Education Coordinating Board. (December 2007). *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Washington*. HECB: Olympia, Washington. P. 20.

A summary of key data is provided below, with greater detail following in the full report.

Do Students Transfer?

For the five-year period 2005-06 through 2009-10:

- 13 percent increase in all “vertical”² transfers, from 16,768 to 18,946 students.
- 1.3 percent increase in CTC transfers to public baccalaureate, from 10,426 to 10,563 students.
- 36.9 percent increase in transfers to private baccalaureates, from 4,293 to 5,875 students.

Do students transfer without loss of credit?

Evidence from a 2009 study suggests that the specialized transfer degrees for Science and Engineering (AS-T) and Major Related Programs (MRPs) for specific majors like Business were effective. Students who took advantage of these pathways completed their majors with fewer excess credits – saving students time and money.

How successful are students after they transfer?

- 8 percent increase in the number of students who graduate within three years after transferring to a public baccalaureate.
- 6.3 percent increase (13,973 degrees) between 2007-08 and 2009-10 in total transfer-designated degrees in Associate in Science-Transfer and Direct Transfer Associate.
- 41 percent increase (1,514 students) between 2007-08 and 2009-10 in students completing designated transfer degrees in major fields (Major-Related Programs).

Is student transfer awareness increasing?

- 5 percent increase in the number of students indicating an interest in transferring to a four-year institution.
- 59 percent increase (almost 38,000 to over 60,300 students) over the past five years in the completion of college-level courses by students who are still in high school and enroll in dual credit type programs, including Running Start, College in the High School, Alternative High School, and Tech Prep.

Other issues involving transfer processes that are addressed in this report include the following:

- Development of new transfer associate degree pathways in major fields (Biology).
- Results of a survey³ providing information on the effectiveness of the Major Related Programs transfer pathways.
- Development of documents addressing Transfer Student Rights and Responsibilities.

² “Vertical” transfer refers to traditional two- to four-year transfer. “Horizontal” transfer refers to transfer within the same sector of higher education, such as from a two- to two-year college or four- to four-year college or university. “Reverse” transfer refers to four- to two-year transfer. “Swirling” refers to multiple transfers (more than two) by the same student, such as from a community college to a four-year university and then back to a community college.

³ Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2010). Major Related Pathway Survey. Unpublished survey results presented to Joint Access Oversight Group (JAOG) May 7, 2010.

- Designation of a system-wide Transfer Liaison to help students address transfer concerns.
- Beginning work to develop a Transfer Network to improve communication among the various groups working on transfer in the state.
- The use of technology in the community and technical colleges to implement a system-wide Degree Audit System.
- Development of a collaborative process between SBCTC and HECB staffs to review new Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) degrees.
- Continued monitoring of the 1994 proportionality agreement between the public community colleges and the baccalaureate institutions.

Next steps to improve student transfer and increase baccalaureate degree attainment include:

1. Continuing assessment of the effectiveness of Major Related Programs (MRPs) in providing clear pathways for student transfer and the possible development of additional MRPs in majors where it makes sense to do so.
2. Evaluating the effectiveness of the current proportionality agreements.
3. Gathering system-wide information via the new Transfer Liaison to assess the effectiveness of transfer.
4. Developing the Washington Transfer Network to improve coordination and communication among the 20 statewide within-sector and cross-sector groups and offices involved in different aspects of transfer.
5. Implementing agreed-upon common transfer data in Washington to track progress and success with transfer, with a special attempt to employ the metrics adopted by the National Governors' Association "Complete to Compete" initiative.⁴
6. Establishing an HECB longitudinal transfer policy and research agenda that addresses the big, perennial issues surrounding transfer:
 - Do students transfer?
 - Do they transfer without loss of credit?
 - Are they successful after they transfer?
 - Is student awareness of transfer increasing?
7. Convening a work group to implement recommendations of the Prior Learning Assessment report to the Legislature.
8. Developing strategies to encourage students with some college to return and finish their degrees.
9. Combining the HECB's current mobility report, required by RCW 28B.76.330, with the biennial transfer report, required by RCW 28B.76.290, to address all transfer issues – vertical, horizontal and swirling - in a more comprehensive, effective report.

⁴Further information about this National Governor's Association initiative, led by Governor Gregoire, and other recommended metrics, is available at <http://www.subnet.nga.org/ci/1011/index.htm>

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Transfer Report

Introduction

Among the characteristics that have set apart U.S. higher education for over a century is the role that transfer between two- and four-year colleges and universities have played in providing access to generations of students. Our transfer function has been copied by countries like China and Scotland, countries intent upon expanding the knowledge base and skill levels of their citizens.

Washington is gifted with a strong community and technical college system. More than 70 percent of the students who access higher education in Washington do so first at a two-year institution. Transfer is key to increasing bachelor's degree production because a higher percent of public and private college students in Washington (49 percent) attend community and technical colleges than in the United States in general (34 percent).

The HECB's ambitious degree attainment goals cannot be achieved without strong transfer rates between community and technical colleges and four-year institutions. In the *2008 Strategic Master Plan*, the Board stressed the importance of transfer as one of its four major strategies to raise educational attainment, calling for two special areas of foci: "align[ing] institutional policies and practice to ensure that students have flexibility in designing their path to a degree" and "get[ting] the right information to students at the right time."⁵

By state law, the HECB is responsible for establishing transfer and articulation policies that ensure efficient transfer of credits and courses across public two- and four-year institutions of higher education (RCW 28B.76.240, RCW 28B.76.250, RCW 28B.76.290). The intent of these policies is to create a statewide system of articulation and alignment. The HECB's Policy on Inter-college Transfer and Articulation was established in 1986 and has been updated several times.

The primary group both guiding the creation and assessing the day-to-day effectiveness of transfer agreements has been the Joint Access Oversight Group (JAOG), in which the HECB participates. Transfer policy is implemented and maintained through the cooperative efforts of the state institutions of higher education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

⁵ Higher Education Coordinating Board. (December 2007). *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Washington*. HECB: Olympia, Washington. P. 20.

(SBCTC), and the HECB, with the support of approximately 20 statewide within-sector and cross-sector groups and offices involved in aspects of transfer. These groups meet regularly and the HECB directly participates in over half of these meetings. These groups provide a variety of transfer services, including recommending policy changes and coordinating activities across colleges. The work of these groups forms a loose, collaborative “Transfer Network” for Washington. (See Appendix A for a list of these groups.)

“The Big Picture:” Improvements in Transfer

As a system, higher education in Washington has made recent improvements in transfer, in the following areas:

- **Transfer Student Success**

- 8 percent increase in the number of students who graduate within three years after transferring to a public baccalaureate.
- 6.3 percent increase (13,973 degrees) between 2007-08 and 2009-10 in total transfer-designated degrees in Associate in Science-Transfer and Direct Transfer Associate.
- 41 percent increase (1,514 students) between 2007-08 and 2009-10 in students completing designated transfer degrees in major fields (Major-Related Pathways [MRP]).

- **Transfer Student Activity**

For the five-year period, 2005-06 through 2009-10:

- 13 percent increase in all “vertical”⁶ transfers, from 16,768 to 18,946 students.
- 1.3 percent increase in CTC transfers to public baccalaureate, from 10,426 to 10,563 students.
- 36.9 percent increase in transfers to private baccalaureates, from 4,293 to 5,875 students.

- **Transfer Student Awareness**

- 5 percent increase in the number of students indicating an interest in transferring to a four-year institution.
- 59 percent increase (almost 38,000 to over 60,300 students) over 5 years in the completion of college-level work by students who are still in high school and enroll in dual credit type programs, including Running Start, College in the High School, Alternative High School and Tech Prep.

⁶ “Vertical” transfer refers to traditional two- to four-year transfer. “Horizontal” transfer refers to transfer within the same sector of higher education, such as from a two- to two-year college or four- to four-year college or university. “Reverse” transfer refers to four- to two-year transfer. “Swirling” refers to multiple transfers (more than two) by the same student, such as from a community college to a four-year university and then back to a community college.

More students Are Transferring from CTC to Baccalaureate Institutions

A higher percentage - almost half - of students in Washington begin their college careers at two-year colleges than students in other states. Table 1 below shows the percent of FTE students attending two-year institutions in Washington compared to the Global Challenge States (both with and without California) and to the U.S. in general.

Table 1: Percent of Washington Students Beginning College at Two-Year Institutions, Compared to the U.S. and Other Regions, 2010

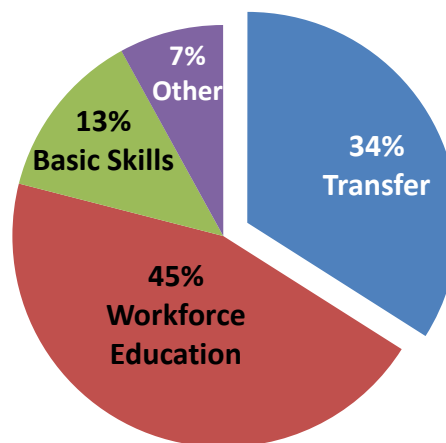
State/Region	Percent of Undergraduates Attending Two-Year Institutions
Washington	49 %
Global Challenge States (without California)	28 %
Global Challenge States (with California)	43 %
U.S. in General	34 %

Source: HECB staff analysis of IPEDS data, September/October 2010.

The first major question guiding this study is “How many students transfer?” During 2009-10, 34 percent of students (113,358) in the community and technical college sector reported that they intended to transfer. This is consistent with national data. It also represents a five percent increase in transfer over the previous year (2008-09). The CTCs serve many students whose primary purpose for attending college is to get a job - or a better job. Some of these students will transfer, but it is important to remember that many never intend to.

Chart A: Percent of Community College Students by Educational Goal, 2009-10

- 34% transfer -seeking
- 45% seek workforce education
- 13% seek basic skills



Source: State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2010). Headcount by Purpose of Attending – State Supported. SBCTC Data Warehouse. Academic Year Report 2009-10. Page 10. Retrieved March 7, 2011 from http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/studentsvcs/0entire_report-ayr0910.2.pdf.

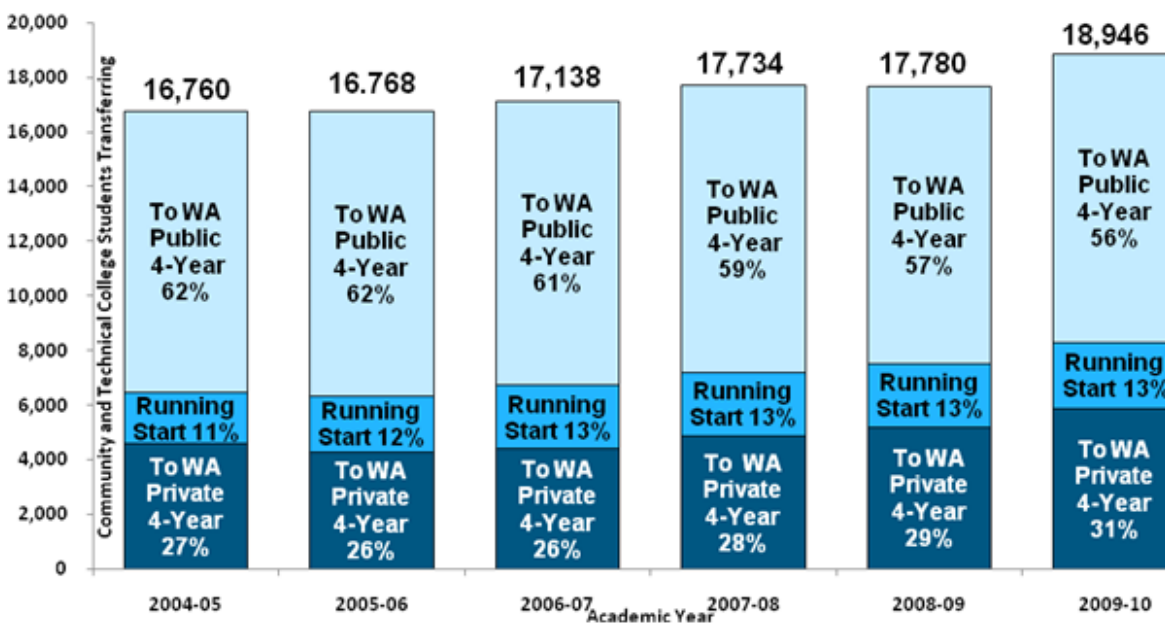
Of the One-third of CTC Students Who Say They Intend to Transfer, How Many Actually Do So?

In Washington, transfer is growing in all sectors, with the most growth in the number of students who transfer to independent and for-profit institutions and those who take Running Start courses while in high school before directly entering a public university.

A new category in the past two years is students admitted to applied bachelor’s programs at the community and technical colleges after completing lower division course work at the same college or elsewhere in the college sector.

It is important to keep in mind that not all transfer students complete associate degrees before transferring, and not all students with two-year degrees transfer.

Chart B: Transfer Students from Community and Technical Colleges by Destination (in Washington) 2004-05 to 2009-10



Notes: Washington private four-year includes Portland State University. Totals may not add to 100 percent, due to rounding.

Source: State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2010). Transfers to Baccalaureate Institutions in Washington (includes Running Start Transitions). SBCTC Academic Year Report 2009-10. Page 52. Retrieved March 7, 2011 from http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/studentsvcs/0entire_report-ayr0910.2.pdf.

As shown in Chart B, almost 19,000 students transferred credits from community and technical colleges to public and private baccalaureate programs in Washington in 2009-10. This is an increase of almost 2,200 students from just five years ago, and a total percentage increase of 5.7 percent in just one year (2008-09 to 2009-10).

In 2009-10, the majority of students (56 percent) transferred to the public four-year institutions -- a total of 10,600 students. Thirty-one percent, or about 5,900 more students, transferred to private four-year institutions. An additional 13 percent, or 2,400 students, transferred to public baccalaureates from Running Start programs that are held on community college campuses. Not shown on the chart is an additional 3,000 Washington students who transferred to out-of-state institutions in 2008-09, the last year for which we have completed data for out-of-state transfers.

Table 2 below shows the progression in terms of actual numbers of students who transferred and the percent change in transfer among all sectors in Washington higher education. Transfer is increasing in all sectors, with the largest increase (12.9 percent) occurring last year in transfers to private baccalaureate institutions. Transfer has also increased 2.4 percent for the public baccalaureates and 4.6 percent for Running Start students.

Table 2: Trends in Student Transfer in Washington, 2005-06 to 2009-10

	Class of 2005-06	Class of 2006-07	Class of 2007-08	Class of 2008-09	Class of 2009-10	5-Year Percent Change
Transfer to Public Baccalaureates	10,426	10,419	10,500	10,319	10,563	1.3%
Running Start Transfer to Public Baccalaureates	2,049	2,312	2,317	2,303	2,408	15.7%
Transfer to Independent Institutions	4,293	4,407	4,876	5,206	5,875	36.9%
Transfer into CTC Applied Baccalaureates	-----	-----	41	103	100	*
TOTAL Transfers	16,768	17,138	17,734	17,931	18,946	13.0%
Total Percent Change	-1.5 %	2.2 %	3.5 %	1.1 %	5.7 %	

*Applied Baccalaureates (B.A.S. degrees) too new to establish trend.

Source: State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2010). Trend in Transfers and Transitions to Washington Baccalaureate Institutions. SBCTC Academic Year Report 2009-10. Page 52. Retrieved March 7, 2011 from http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/studentsvcs/0entire_report-ayr0910.2.pdf.

Transfer to private institutions is worth special note. The University of Phoenix is one of the top two transfer destinations – on par with University of Washington’s Seattle. At least part of this development is due to the University of Phoenix’s transfer-friendly policies. One way of improving the traditional two- to four-year transfer rate is to locate baccalaureate programs on CTC campuses. Several independent colleges of Washington (ICW) schools have done just that. For example, Heritage University has programs at Columbia Basin, Big Bend, and South Seattle Community Colleges. St. Martin’s University has programs at Centralia and Olympic Colleges.

Other off-campus programs also demonstrate a transfer-friendly orientation. Helping working adults complete bachelor degrees sometimes involves taking programs to them. For example, Whitworth University has a degree completion program for returning adults located in downtown Spokane; Seattle Pacific University has an evening electrical engineering degree and offers a degree at the Boeing plant in Everett; St. Martin’s University offers courses at Joint Base Lewis-McChord and provides on-line courses in case of deployment.

Do Students Transfer Without Loss of Credit?

The second major question guiding this transfer study is “Do students transfer without loss of credit?” To answer this question, in 2009 the HECB contracted with the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) at Washington State University. The researchers reviewed transcripts of nearly 20,000 students who graduated in 2005-06 to analyze the effectiveness of designated transfer degree pathways and to provide information on one of the most popular majors - Business.

Washington has developed several specialized transfer degrees:

- Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA): a general, all-purpose transfer degree for students who aren’t sure what they will major in
- Associate in Science – Transfer: a specialized transfer degree for students in science fields, such as engineering and biology/chemistry
- Major-Related Programs (MRP): a specialized transfer degree for students majoring in a handful of popular majors, such as business, nursing, or elementary education

During 2009-10, 13,242 students completed the DTA degree. This number is a 5.8 percent increase over 2007-08. An additional 731 students completed the science-related transfer degree (AS-T) during 2009-10, which is a 17 percent increase over 2007-08. Of the students who completed a transfer degree pathway, 12 percent (1,514 total students) also completed the specialized MRP transfer pathway in particular majors. The overwhelming majority (almost 90 percent) of these specialized transfer pathways for the major were in business, nursing, and elementary education. The MRPs, first developed in 2003, assure that transfer students complete requirements in a manner parallel to university freshmen and sophomores in specific major fields.

Table 3 below shows the increase in students following pathways particularly developed for transfer. Students completing transfer degrees in specific majors (MRPs) also complete an underlying DTA or AS-T and are therefore a sub-set of the total in Table 3 below and are noted separately so that they are not double-counted.

Table 3-A: Community College Students Following Designated Transfer Degree Pathways

Transfer Pathway	# of Completers 2007-08	# of Completers 2009-10	Percent Increase
Direct Transfer Agreement (generic transfer pathway)	12,519	13,242	5.8 %
Associate of Science-Transfer (science degree transfer pathway)	625	731	17.0 %
TOTAL Transfer Degree Pathways	13,144	13,973	6.3 %

Table 3-B: Community College Students Completing Major Related Programs Transfer Pathways, 2009-10

Business	1,169
Nursing	124
Elementary Education	49
Other MRP/Local Agreements	172
Major Related Programs (transfer pathway for specific majors)	1,514

Source: State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2010). Academic Transfer Degrees. SBCTC Academic Year Report 2009-10. Page 47-48. Retrieved March 7, 2011 from http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/studentssvcs/0entire_report-ayr0910.2.pdf.

At the request of the HECB, the Social and Economic Services Research Center (SESRC) at Washington State University completed a study in 2009 that examined several characteristics of 2006 baccalaureate graduates, as listed below:

- Campus type (main, branch, and center)
- Percent of transfer vs. direct entry students
- Type of two-year degree earned
- Student enrollment in pre-college English or math
- Successful degree completion (by six broad major areas)

The SESRC study was limited by several factors, including variables that were not available in the developing database (e.g. earned credits), missing data, and transfer of credits from institutions other than Washington community and technical colleges. Results also cannot be compared to other national studies. HECB staff is working with the Educational Research and Data Center (ERDC) to address these limitations. Even with these data limitations, however, the SESRC report does provides solid information on a number of important transfer issues.

Results from the study ⁷suggest the following:

- Most graduates from public baccalaureates enrolled in more than one college. Among graduates of the Class of 2006, at least 70 percent had enrolled in two or more colleges, up slightly from 66 percent in 2001.
- Almost 40 percent of freshmen entry students had some transfer credits. Just over half (51 percent) of graduates of the Class of 2006 took at least one course from a CTC, down slightly from 55 percent in 2001.

Data from the SESRC study showed that specialized transfer degrees help students complete their majors with fewer excess credits, saving students time and money. Evidence from the study show that the specialized transfer degrees for Science and Engineering (AS-T) and Major Related Programs (MRPs) for specific majors like Business were effective.

Table 4 below provides detail from the SESRC study for business majors, suggesting that specialized transfer degrees do indeed provide good “road maps” for students so that they transfer without loss of credit.

Table 4: Number of Credit Hours Earned by UW Business Majors by Transfer Pathway

Student Pathway to a Business Major	Number of Credits at Graduation
Transfer Business DTA students	199.5 avg.
Transfer Business students with generic DTA	207 avg.
Transfer Business majors without DTA	211 avg.
UW 2006-07 “native” Accounting majors	201 avg.
UW 2006-07 “native” Finance majors	194 avg.
UW 2006-07 “native” Management majors	198 avg.

Sources: WSU Social and Economic Services Research Center. (2009, June). *The Role of Transfer in the Attainment of Bachelor's Degrees at Washington Public Baccalaureate Institutions, Class of 2006*. Pp. 30-31. University of Washington Factbook, Table B-15, Academic Year 2006-07.

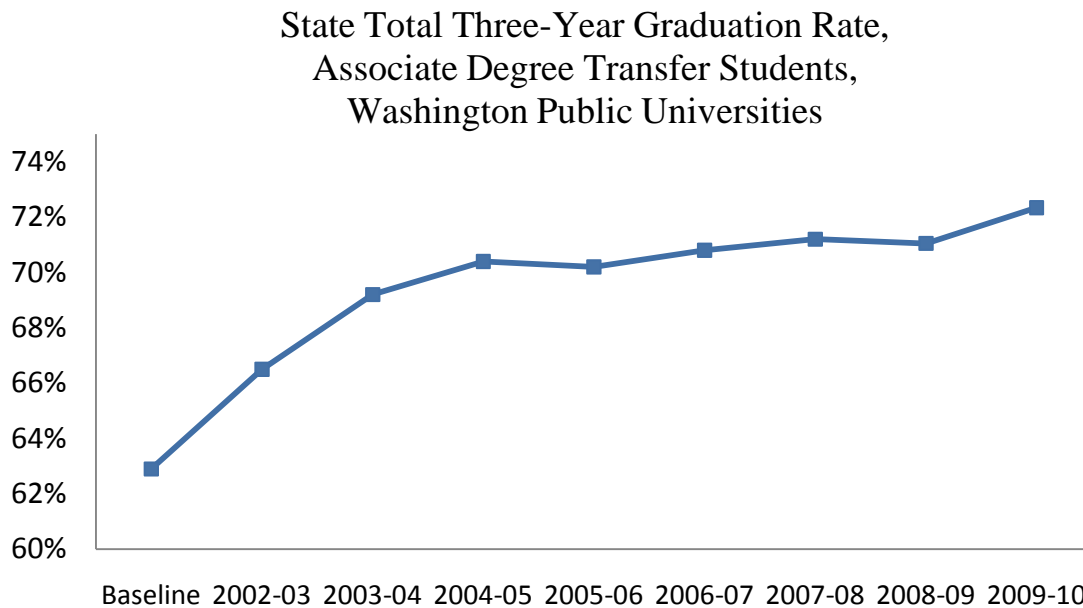
Table 4 provides a specific example comparing the number of credits earned at graduation by University of Washington Seattle (UW) transfer students compared with UW “native” students in business fields. The results shows that transfer students who completed the business transfer degree pathway graduated with 199.5 average credit hours, which is very close to what “native” UW business field majors earned. Students who completed the designated Business Direct Transfer Agreement earned fewer credits upon graduation than transfer students who majored in Business but didn’t complete the designated major pathway. The bottom line is that transfer agreements help students graduate without excess credits, and transfer agreements in particular majors are especially helpful.

Sources: ⁷ Washington State University, Social and Economic Services Research Center. (2009, June). *The Role of Transfer in the Attainment of Bachelor's Degrees at Washington Public Baccalaureate Institutions, Class of 2006*. State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Research Report No. 08-2. (2008, March). Associate in Science – Transfer: What We Know After Six Years of Awarding the Degree. State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (June 2003). Role of Transfer in Bachelor's Degree - 2003 Study. Retrieved March 7, 2011 from http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/d_transfer.aspx.

Are Students Successful After They Transfer?

The third important research question guiding this report is “How successful are students after they transfer?” Chart 3 below shows that the number of students who graduate within three years after transferring to Washington’s public baccalaureate institutions has increased by nearly 8 percent from a five-year baseline period of 1997-98 to 2008-09.⁸ This measure represents the performance of the higher education system as a whole, not just the two-year college system.

Chart C: Trend in Student Three-Year Graduation Rate After Transferring, Associate-Degree Recipients, Baseline Period of 1997-98 through 2001-09 to 2009-10



Note: Baseline is defined as the annual average over the period from 1997-98 through 2001-02.
Source: HECB, compiled from data submitted by institutions.

Source: Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2011). Higher Education Accountability Report, 2009-10. Page 11. Retrieved March 5, 2011 from <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/documents/AccountabilityReportBinder.pdf>

Completing degrees in a timely manner is important – doing so launches students’ careers more quickly, allowing them to become productive members of the workforce sooner and over a longer period. Timely completion also frees up space at colleges to serve more students. It is difficult to improve outcome measures like graduation rates, but Washington institutions are doing just that.

⁸ Higher Education Accountability Report, 2009-10. (January 2011). Retrieved March 4, 2011 from <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/boardmtgs/documents/AccountabilityReportBinder.pdf>

Is Student Transfer Awareness Increasing?

Important to any system-wide efforts to promote transfer is the need to make sure that students are aware of transfer possibilities. Two places in which Washington's students are showing an increasing awareness of transfer is in the high schools, via dual credit programs, and in the community and technical colleges, via the Associate of Applied Science to Baccalaureate of Applied Science (A.A.S. to B.A.S.) pathway.

More Students Indicating an Interest in Transfer via Applied Baccalaureate Degree Pathways⁹

Seven of Washington's 34 public community and technical colleges were authorized to award eight applied baccalaureate (B.A.S.) degrees as part of a pilot program in 2005. The new B.A.S. degrees were designed to provide advanced training in specific fields, building upon underlying technical associate degrees (A.A.S.) in which there was employer or community demand for the degrees. The degrees target a non-traditional, returning adult student population that might be less interested in pursuing more traditional bachelor's degrees. The new B.A.S. degree programs provide clearly articulated pathways for certain A.A.S. degrees where career pathways are evident.

The pilot status of these B.A.S. degrees was removed during the 2010 legislative session, as part of the System Design Plan legislation (SSB 6355). The staffs of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the HECB have worked hard to develop a program approval process for applied baccalaureate degrees that is as collaborative as possible. The goal is to achieve efficient review of the new B.A.S. degree proposals and avoid asking two-year institutions to submit to two separate and intensive state-level program approval processes. The first of the new B.A.S. proposals to go through regular program approval process, rather than to be approved as "pilots," has begun in 2011.

The first students enrolled in these programs are beginning to graduate. Although there are too few of these graduates to track time-to-degree completion or other measures gauging the effectiveness of this new transfer pathway, it is important to monitor B.A.S. enrollments and completions over the next few years.

Transfer Awareness via Dual Credit Opportunities for Students Still in High School

Washington's dual credit programs are also critical in raising transfer student awareness. Several programs allow high school students to earn college credit before they graduate from high school. Some programs, like Running Start and Alternative High School, do this by allowing students to enroll in and take courses on a college campus. Other programs, like College in the High School and Tech Prep, provide college-level courses at students' home high schools.

⁹ State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Applied Baccalaureate Degrees at Community and Technical Colleges. Retrieved March 8, 2011 from http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e-transfer_appliedbaccalaureates.aspx.

Table 5 lists the programs that allow students to earn college credit before they graduate from high school. The largest program is Tech Prep, followed by Running Start. In 2009-10, almost 4,000 Running Start students continued at community and technical colleges once they graduated from high school, and 2,408 Running Start students transferred to four-year public institutions. The CTCs have experienced a 16 percent increase in students participating in Running Start over the past five years.¹⁰

Table 5: Increasing Transfer Awareness and Credits--Dual Credit Programs

Type of Program	2005-06	2009-10	Percent Five-Year Change
Running Start	16,166	18,799	16 %
College in the High School	1,884	2,887	53 %
Alternative High School	2,799	3,575	28 %
Tech Prep	17,133	35,060	105 %
All Dual Credit Type Programs	37,982	60,321	59 %

Source: State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2010). Student Headcount in Dual Credit and High School Enrollment Programs. SBCTC Academic Year Report 2009-10. Page 25. Retrieved March 7, 2011 from http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/studentsvcs/0entire_report-avr0910.2.pdf.

Other System Improvements in Addressing Transfer

Although a focus on outcomes is the best way to gauge system-wide improvements in student transfer, other improvements in processes and procedures surrounding transfer are worth mentioning in this report. Among the process-based improvement is the development of a new transfer pathway in a major field, a focus on better communication about transfer for students and among the 20 groups working on transfer, better use of technology, and monitoring of existing proportionality agreements.

New Transfer Pathway for Biology Majors

A new transfer pathway in Biology was approved and implemented in Summer 2009. A previous transfer pathway developed for sciences worked well for engineering and math, but not for biology due to the extensive math requirements, which discouraged prospective Biology majors. The new MRP was developed by statewide faculty members who were able to better define the courses required for entry into the major, while framing it within the DTA, which also insures completion of lower-division general education requirements.

¹⁰ State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2010). SBCTC 2009-10 Running Start Progress Report retrieved April 7, 2011 at http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/s_runningstart.aspx.

Survey of Effectiveness of Existing Transfer Pathways in the Majors

The first MRPs were implemented in 2003. As of December 2010, there were 19 different MRPs to improve transfer in Washington, especially for business, education, and nursing. The Joint Access Oversight Group was interested in determining whether the MRPs were working as intended to provide clear direction to students and to reduce credits to graduation, to identify what might not be working, and how could these pathways might be improved.

During 2009-10, HECB staff distributed an e-survey to faculty, staff, and administrators on CTC and public/private baccalaureate campuses. Of the 396 responses, 237 of which were from CTCs and 159 from the baccalaureates, most respondents reported familiarity with the MRPs, although typically only with the most popular ones in a few majors.

- 77 percent of CTC respondents were familiar with MRPs, with the majority familiar with 3 or fewer.
- 55 percent of baccalaureate institutions respondents were familiar with MRPs, again with the majority familiar with 3 or fewer.
- Business, Pre-Nursing, and Elementary Education were the most frequently cited MRPs by respondents from both sectors (90 percent CTC respondents, 80 percent baccalaureate institutions, with Business cited the most frequently.)
- There were only 20 total responses regarding all other MRPs combined.

Respondents also provided useful feedback and suggestions for improvement through open-ended questions on the following areas:

Communication. Colleges and universities need to increase internal and external communication - with students, within institutions, and between CTCs and baccalaureate institutions. In addition, *intra-sector* communication improvements would help students who transfer move horizontally, that is, from one CTC to another or from one four-year institution to another.

Advising. Clear advising guides must be developed for students, and professional development targeting DTA/MRPs for college advisors and faculty must be initiated.

Usefulness and Uniformity. The generic DTA has been valuable because of its uniformity, flexibility, and applicability across the system. Problems with the MRPs, however, are that they often seen as too complex, that not all CTCs sign on to the agreements, and that there are too many provisos that are college-specific. More uniformity across all colleges – from CTC to CTC as well as from CTC to four-year institution – would improve the usefulness of MRPs.

Communicating to Students about Transfer

The Joint Access Oversight Group formed a work group consisting of students and cross-sector representatives to develop a document entitled *Transfer Student Rights and Responsibilities*.¹¹ The HECB disseminated the document broadly, and it is now available on college websites and referenced in college publications. This document clearly outlines both student and institutional rights and responsibilities and mirrors concepts delineated in the *1986 Policy on Intercollege Transfer and Articulation among Washington Public Colleges and Universities (Umbrella Policy)*.¹²

The same work group created an FAQ document to inform students, in clear language, about the transfer process and the information they need to continue their educational careers, including answers to frequently asked questions. The document was completed in 2009 and is posted to the HECB Transfer website (<http://www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/transfer.asp>).

Transfer Liaison and Transfer Network

Those working with transfer in Washington often hear anecdotal reports of how the transfer system “is broken” and does not work for some students. Specific information on what exactly is broken, however, is often not provided to institutions or educational agencies. For example, is a student complaining that credits didn’t transfer at all - or is the student complaining that the credits didn’t count in the major field expected? In order to help students and address transfer concerns, we need better information.

The HECB has designated a staff person to serve as a “Transfer Liaison.” Beginning in early 2011, the HECB will publicize the new Transfer Liaison staff contact information to alert students and institutions whom to contact for issues related to transfer. Student and stakeholder concerns will be collected and addressed for JAOG’s use in continuously improving our transfer system.

To monitor transfer policy implementation and improve communication across the Transfer Network in Washington, the HECB is participating both directly and indirectly with many Network groups through meetings and list serves.

Prior Learning Assessment

Substitute Senate Bill 6357, passed by the 2010 Legislature, directed the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to consult with a variety of specific stakeholder groups and “develop policies for awarding academic credit for learning from work and military experience, military and law enforcement training, career college training, internships and externships, and apprenticeships.”

Prior learning assessment can reduce the time-to-degree for students with significant real world experience. Assessing the extent and quality of this experience, however, is not an easy task. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges took the lead in putting together a work

¹¹ A copy of Transfer Rights and Responsibilities can be found on the HECB Transfer website at - <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/transfer.asp> and on the website of each college and university in the state.

¹² ICRC Handbook, updated July 2008, available at <http://www.washingtoncouncil.org/icrcdocuments.htm>

group to study the issue of prior learning during 2010.¹³ Among the recommendations of this study group was the establishment of an ongoing work group, with the HECB to be responsible for convening this workgroup. The purpose of the new work group will be to assess the impact of implementing the revisions recommended in the report, and recommend further revisions to policy and practice, as needed.

The work of the Prior Learning Assessment group is important to any discussion of transfer because of the need to track number of students attempting and completing prior learning assessment, the number of PLA credits being awarded annually, and the eventual transfer of students with prior learning assessment credits to other institutions.

Use of Technology: Degree Audit System

All 34 community and technical colleges in Washington have either implemented or are in the process of implementing a system-wide Degree Audit system for advisors. Colleges are in the process of making the Degree Audit System available to students. Common course numbering has assisted in course evaluation for credential evaluators. A degree audit will make it possible to find problems before they actually *become* problems for students, providing faster turnaround for credential evaluations. Some colleges have set up web-based orientation sessions for veterans as a means to help them through the process of integrating into the college environment.

Continued Monitoring of Proportionality Agreements

In 1994, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) adopted as policy the proportionality agreement reached between the public community colleges and the public baccalaureate institutions.¹⁴ The proportionality agreement required each public baccalaureate institution to admit a certain percentage of community college transfer students as a proportion of its newly enrolled students, based on its 1992-93 transfer levels. Goals are specific to each institution. The purpose of this agreement was to ensure that students from the community and technical colleges wishing to transfer would be accommodated.

The HECB continues to monitor proportionality agreements established by the institutions, and compares actual transfer numbers with the goals established for campuses in both the 1992 and 2005 agreements, especially in light of declining state resources to support FTE enrollments and increasing numbers of students who are staying in school because of the poor job market.

In 2008-09 all public universities continued to meet their proportionality goals with the exception of The University of Washington Tacoma. Their goal of 72 percent is substantially higher than any other institution, and although they did not meet this level, their 66.6 percent proportionality was the system's highest for 2008-09.

¹³ Light, N; Moore, W. *Academic Credit for Prior Learning in Washington Postsecondary Education: Proposed Policies and Recommendations*. A report submitted to the Washington State Legislature by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. December 2010.

¹⁴ This agreement is available at <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/transfer.asp>.

Table 6: Community College Transfer Students as a Proportion of Public Baccalaureate Newly Enrolled Students

Institution	Goal in Proportionality Agreement (1992-93)	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
CWU	30 %	32 %	44 %	44 %	42 %	43 %	43 %	42 %	38.8 %
EWU	29 %	34 %	29 %	34 %	31 %	31 %	29 %	29 %	32.2 % ¹⁵
TESC	29 %	45 %	45 %	45 %	49 %	49 %	45 %	43 %	42.8 %
WWU	32 %	33 %	35 %	35 %	34 %	34 %	37 %	32 % ¹⁶	31.3 % ¹⁷
UW Seattle ¹⁸	30 %	29 %	32 %	33 %	35 %	32 %	31 %	33 %	30.5 %
UW Bothell	52 %							63 %	60.9 %
UW Tacoma	72 %							65 %	66.6 % ¹⁹
WSU Pullman*	27 %	29 %	33 %	30 %	29 %	29 %	35 %	32 % ²⁰	31.0 % ²¹
WSU Tri-Cities*	NA							69 %	66.1 %
WSU Vancouver*	NA							64 %	62.7 %

* WSU Spokane is included in WSU Pullman calculations. Two WSU system campuses – WSU Vancouver and WSU Tri-Cities – requested they not be required to set proportionality targets, but rather agreed to accept all students in their special feeder CTC programs that assure joint advising. The SBCTC and HECB agreed to use this approach and to monitor outcomes.

¹⁵ EWU's proportionality calculations for 2007-2009 use data drawn from Table 7 (includes Distance Learning) of the HEER report, excluding summer term. (Running Start included in transfer counts, state funded only)

¹⁶ WWU proportion is decreasing for several reasons: transfer applications have decreased; freshman applicants with Running Start credit have leveled off; significant growth in freshman applicants with AP credit; and significant growth in the entire freshman applicant pool.

¹⁷ Includes all transfer students from a Washington state CTC as well as Running Start students with 45 or more credits.

¹⁸ UW Seattle identified proportionality numbers by reviewing records to assure all Running Start students with 40 or more credits were included. Four-year exchange students were eliminated (i.e., they are not degree-seeking students) from the total number of entering students. Revised calculations are reflected. In general, census day data was used except in the identification of Running Start students. For Running Start, data was collected from later in each term to ensure that all transfer credit was entered in their transfer records.

¹⁹ UW-T provided this percent based on the following parameters: a student is selected from the first instance of a census day snapshot where the student is a degree-seeking undergraduate with a major from the Tacoma campus and is taking at least one course for credit at any of the three campuses. Running Start is determined by student's current record and not from the census day snapshot.

²⁰ A WSU Pullman proportionality query for 2007-08 produced a calculation of 32 percent compared to a HECB calculation of 33 percent. The criteria differ from the HECB set by eliminating "unclassified" and summer. New students in summer that enroll in fall are counted as new students in fall; therefore, inclusion of summer would produce duplication.

²¹ Figures eliminate duplication of headcount between Pullman/Spokane, do not count unclassified (have already earned an undergraduate degree) or non-matriculated students.

Summary of Transfer Activity -- and Where We Need to Go from Here

At the beginning of this report, four major questions were listed which summarized the major issues in monitoring the effectiveness of transfer.

- Do students transfer?
- Do they transfer without loss of credit?
- Are they successful after they transfer?
- Is student awareness of transfer increasing?

The higher education system has made progress in improving transfer, but there are some areas which merit further attention. In sum,

- Transfer is increasing—in all sectors.
- Future capacity for transfer students may be an issue.
- Because Washington's 2-year college sector is so successful, transfer as a mechanism to increase bachelor's degree production is even more important than in almost every other state in the U.S.
- Transfer agreements are working to help students save time and money.
- We need to be more assertive in developing and promoting transfer pathways.

As this report shows, transfer is increasing everywhere and future capacity to accommodate students is a concern. The agreements we have are working and we need to continue to study their effectiveness as a *system*.

Next Steps

To maintain the current momentum in student transfer and continue to make good progress, we need to pay attention to the following areas involving policy and practice:

1. Continue to assess the effectiveness of Major Related Programs in providing clear pathways for student transfer and consider developing more MRPs in majors where it makes sense to do so.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current proportionality agreements.
3. Use the Transfer Liaison to gather system-wide information concerning the effectiveness of transfer.

The HECB will become a single point of contact for all student concerns and complaints regarding transfer to assist students and gather information about any systemic and institution-specific issues.

4. Develop the Washington Transfer Network.

Transfer policy is implemented and maintained through the cooperative efforts of the state institutions of higher education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the HECB with support of approximately 20 statewide within-sector and cross-sector groups and offices involved in different aspects of transfer. The HECB participates with many of these groups as they meet regularly to maintain and improve transfer in Washington. The HECB needs to work toward improving communication among and between these groups to address the impression by some external stakeholders that transfer efforts are fragmented and disorganized.

5. Improve Transfer Metrics in Washington

With the state's public institutions and education partners, work with the National Governors' Association "Complete to Compete" initiative²² to use common metrics to measure improvements in success in transfer.

6. Establish a longitudinal transfer policy and research agenda that addresses the big, perennial issues surrounding transfer and that provides external and internal stakeholders with clear information necessary to make wise decisions. Questions must include the four basic questions that guided this report:

- Do students transfer?
- Do they transfer without loss of credit?
- Are they successful after they transfer?
- Is student awareness of transfer increasing?

7. Convene a work group to implement recommendations of the Prior Learning Assessment report to the Legislature.

8. Develop strategies to encourage students with some college to return and finish their degrees.

Work with Transfer Network partners to develop strategies to encourage the more than 472,000 Washington residents age 18-44 who had earned "some college but no degree" by 2009 and who were not currently enrolled in higher education.

9. Combine the HECB's current mobility report, required by RCW 28B.76.330, with the biennial transfer report, required by RCW 28B.76.250, to address all transfer issues – vertical, horizontal and swirling -- in a more comprehensive, effective report.

²²Further information about this National Governor's Association initiative, led by Governor Gregoire, and other recommended metrics, is available at <http://www.subnet.nga.org/ci/1011/index.htm>

A combined transfer report will help the HECB and its education partners and public institutions to monitor all aspects of transfer, to reduce external stakeholders' perception that transfer initiatives are fragmented, and to provide better information regarding progress in transfer.

Washington's transfer system, while arguably not as centralized as transfer and articulation in other states, is nevertheless effective in helping students to transfer. That is not to say, however, that improvements aren't needed. Improvements are needed especially in the areas of communication, reduction of complexity, and greater uniformity of agreements among all public institutions, both two- and four-year.

The students are here. They are in the pipeline and they are interested in transfer. The silver lining in the current economic downturn is that more students than ever are interested in transfer and baccalaureate degree completion opportunities. When asked whether the current recession affected their plans for college, over 10,000 more Washingtonians reported enrolling in college and *staying* in college than leaving college or not enrolling at all.²³ Now, more than ever, Washington's higher education system needs a strong, effective transfer function.

²³ Source: HECB analysis of 2010 State Population Survey Data.

Appendix A

Washington Groups and Offices Involved in Transfer and Articulation²⁴

Transfer in Washington is directed by several statutes and follows the HECB's *Policy on Intercollege Transfer and Articulation among Washington Public Colleges and Universities (Umbrella Policy)* adopted in 1986 and the *Transfer Task Force Transfer Agreement (Proportionality Agreement)* adopted in 1994.

Transfer policy is implemented and maintained through the cooperative efforts of the state institutions of higher education, the SBCTC, and the HECB with support of approximately 20 statewide within-sector and cross-sector groups and offices involved in different aspects of transfer. The HECB participates with many of these groups as they meet regularly to maintain and improve transfer in Washington.

Beginning in March 2011, the HECB will act as a clearinghouse for communication across these groups, forming a 'Transfer Network' to improve transfer in Washington. HECB staff will post meeting minutes to a single online location, highlight shared work, and collect best practices and current research on transfer.

List of Transfer Network Groups

(The HECB participates directly with groups indicated by an *)

Statewide cross-sector groups and offices involved with transfer

1. *Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB)
2. *Joint Access Oversight Group (JAOG)
3. *Washington Council on High School-College Relations (WCHSCR)
4. *Intercollege Relations Commission (ICRC)
5. Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers (ICAO) and the Instruction Commission (IC)
6. *Baccalaureate and Community and Technical College Transfer Group (BACC/CTC)
7. *Washington Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (WaACRAO)
8. *Running Start Coordinators
9. *Prior Learning Assessment Work Group

²⁴ For an explanation of the work of each group, please access <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/documents/OrganizationsandOfficesAddressingTransferIssuesinWashington2011.pdf>

Within-sector groups or offices involved with transfer initiatives

Public Baccalaureate Sector

10. Council of Presidents (COP)
11. Interinstitutional Committee of Academic Officers (ICAO)
12. *Interinstitutional Committee of Registrars and Admissions Officers (ICORA)

Public Two-year Sector

13. *State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)
14. Instruction Commission (IC)
15. Washington State Student Service Commission (WSSSC)
16. Articulation and Transfer Council (ATC)
17. Advising and Counseling Council (ACC)
18. *Admissions and Registration Council (ARC)

Independent Baccalaureate Sector

19. Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW)
20. Private Registrars of Washington (PROW)

Appendix B

List of Washington Laws Addressing HECB Roles and Responsibilities Regarding Transfer

HECB is directed by statute to engage in the following activities relative to transfer:

- RCW 28B.76.200 (7), the *Strategic Master Plan* statute, also requires the HECB staff to review transfer as part of plan development.
- RCW 28B.76.240 requires the HECB to adopt statewide transfer and articulation policies that ensure efficient transfer of credits and courses across public two and four-year institutions of higher education.
- RCW 28B.76.250(7) requires the HECB to report on the development of transfer associate degrees, to provide measurable indicators of the effectiveness of those degrees, and to provide other measures that assess transfer efficiency. Reports are due to the legislature by January 10 in odd-numbered years.
- RCW 28B.76.270 (4) (6), the accountability statute, requires HECB to report on statewide goals, which currently includes a time-to-degree measure for transfer students.
- RCW 28B.76.290 requires the HECB to coordinate educational activities among all segments of higher education taking into account the educational programs, facilities, and other resources of both public and independent two and four-year colleges and universities. In addition, the HECB is responsible for promoting interinstitutional cooperation and establishing transfer policies.
- RCW 28B.76.330 requires the HECB to address coordination, articulation, and transitions among all of the state's systems of education. Reports on completed and planned initiatives are due to the legislature in odd-numbered years.

In 1994, HECB also committed to monitoring the proportion of transfer students admitted to the public baccalaureate institutions each year.