

**Council of Ontario Universities**

**CREDIT TRANSFER**  
Presented to Ontario Universities  
Registrars' Association

MARCH 2011

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Outline**

- Context
- MTCU directions
- Ontario universities' involvement
- COU directions
- Ongoing work

2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Context**

- Provincial government preoccupation, driven by:
  - Anecdote,
  - Student concerns,
  - Efficiency concerns, and
  - Comparisons with other jurisdictions.
- Longstanding concern:
  - Port Hope Accord
  - Rae recommendations
  - HEQCO, including *Academic Transformations*.

3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Context** (continued)

- Significant current activity in Ontario:
  - Over 500 “pathways” listed in College University Transfer Guide.
  - Over 100 collaborative degree programs.
  - Active projects to develop and expand articulation agreements funded by College University Consortium Council (CUCC).
- Lack of consistent, comparable data concerning credit transfer activity.

4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**MTCU directions**

- MTCU Credit Transfer Steering Committee has discussed:
  - Types of pathways,
  - Role of a coordinating body,
  - Accountability framework, and
  - (In a preliminary way) performance indicators and funding approaches.

5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**MTCU directions** (continued)

- **Implicit** policy directions (so far):
  - Better and more consistent student supports, including better access to information.
  - More certainty about level of credit recognized.
  - More credit recognized.
  - More multilateral agreements.
  - Expanded role for a coordinating body.
- MTCU may release a policy framework shortly.

6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### MTCU directions (continued)

- In January 2011, MTCU announced a “new credit transfer system for Ontario.”
- \$73.7M over five years will support:
  - New web-based portal (including CUCC’s transfer guide),
  - Innovation fund (like the recent CUCC calls), and
  - Allocations to each college and university.
- CUCC released a new call for proposals for development or expansion of pathways.

7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### MTCU directions (continued)

- MTCU is also supporting creation of a new coordinating body.
  - The new body will replace and expand the mandate of the CUCC.
  - The new body is likely to be an incorporated entity receiving funding from MTCU through a transfer payment agreement.
- CUCC Council is developing governance options for review by MTCU, Colleges Ontario, and COU.

8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### MTCU directions (continued)

- MTCU to date has focused on pathways from college diploma to undergraduate degree.
- MTCU wants to see progress in other kinds of transfers:
  - College to college
  - University to university
  - College degrees to graduate programs.

9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Ontario universities' involvement

- Ontario universities are actively engaged in credit transfer issues.
  - MTCU Credit Transfer Steering Committee.
  - MTCU working groups.
  - CUCC governance.
  - Participation in CUCC-funded projects.
  - Credit Transfer Resource Group.
  - CUPA Accountability Committee.
  - Hundreds of programs and pathways.

10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## COU directions

- COU has been working with a Credit Transfer Resource Group to propose policy directions.
- These directions have been endorsed by Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) and Executive Heads.
- These directions are consistent with MTCU directions to date.
- These directions (like MTCU's) are focused on pathways from college diplomas to undergraduate degrees.

11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Starting point and end goal

- The starting point and end goal of COU proposals is student success.
- Student success means:
  - Graduating students have a valuable degree.
  - Transferring students receive credit recognition for relevant learning already achieved.
  - Transferring students can successfully complete degree requirements.

12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Four directions

- To improve credit transfer:
  - Build and expand pathways
  - Improve student experience
  - Establish a coordinating body
  - Align new resources

13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Build and expand pathways

Why “pathways” and not a course equivalency “system”?

10s of thousands of courses x  
Thousands of programs x  
Ongoing development and adaptation of courses x  
Ongoing development and adaptation of programs  
=  
Overwhelming complexity

14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Build and expand pathways

- Pathway means:
  - A way travelled by many (responsive to demand).
  - Predictable recognition of credit toward degree requirements.
  - Clear and accessible information to guide students.
- Pathways include:
  - Credit recognition policies about specific programs.
  - Articulation agreements.
  - Collaborative programs.

15

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Pathways (continued)

- Expand and improve the current dominant pathway model: Transfer between high-affinity programs, and collaborative programs.
  - High affinity means similarity in program content (for example, business diploma to business degree).
- Expand purpose-built pathways, designed as alternative entry points to degree programs.
  - For example, Seneca GAS diploma leading to advanced standing at U of T.

16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Pathways (continued)

- *Increasing* the amount of credit recognized in pathways requires:
  - Careful assessment of specific content and learning outcomes to determine relevant learning in the college program;
  - Changes to curriculum in college programs (and, potentially, university programs) to ensure that transferring students have required knowledge and skills– always maintaining the value of the diploma and degree.

17

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Improve student experience

- Access to information
  - About policies and pathways,
  - At each institution and in a central portal,
  - Using consistent language.
- Access to credit transfer advice.
- Access to resolution of concerns.
- Tailored student supports.

18

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Coordinating body

Mandate (consistent with MTCU directions):

- Analysis and advice re capacity and demand for pathways.
- Guidance on best practices for development and maintenance of pathways.
- Guidance on best practices for student supports.
- Maintain web portal for information about pathways and credit transfer.

19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Coordinating body (continued)

Mandate (continued):

- Facilitate communication and training for institutions' staff.
- Allocation of ongoing resources to support development of new pathways:
  - Develop evaluative criteria to assess proposals;
  - Review institution-driven proposals;
  - Allocate funding in transparent and credible process.
- Accountability reports at system level.
- Research?

20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Coordinating body (continued)

Administration:

- Consistent with current CUCC model (funded by MTCU, at arms length from government and specific institutions).
- No statutory or regulatory authority.
- Replacing current CUCC.

21

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Resources

### Costs to support credit transfer:

- Assessment of students' prior learning to support credit recognition at application/registration.
- Effort and system costs to provide information to students.
- Student advising.
- Higher costs of delivery in upper years of programs.
- Higher curricular costs of multiple entry points.
- Bridging programs.

22

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Resources (continued)

### More costs to support credit transfer:

- Tailored student supports.
- Time for development and maintenance of agreements and policies (curriculum review and adaptation).
- Time and information system adaption for accountability measures.
- Management of institutional relationships.

23

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Resources (continued)

### Proposed approach:

(Recognizing limited resources)

- Funding for development and expansion of agreements through coordinating body (Innovation Fund).
- Additional funding for each university to provide credit transfer services and supports, allocated on a per-transfer-student basis.

24

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Accountability**

- COU has recommended data and performance indicators to support credit transfer.
- A small set of indicators (in a much larger reporting and accountability context).
- Data linked to key policy and funding directions.

25

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

**Accountability** (continued)

Indicators, from each university, focused (as a first step) only on transfers from Ontario colleges.

- Enabling environment:
  1. Detailed description of pathways (pathways by agreement and by policy).
  2. Description of credit transfer policies.
  3. Number of collaborative programs.

26

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

**Accountability** (continued)

- Demand:
  4. The total number of students applying to the university seeking recognition of credits from an Ontario college.
  5. [Provincial indicator only, developed with colleges] Applying transfer students as a percentage of students who are potential transfers from Ontario colleges.

27

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

## Accountability (continued)

- Credit transfer activity:
  6. The number of registrants transferring from an Ontario college to the university.
    - a. Total number;
    - b. Number registering into a pathway.
  7. [Provincial indicator only, developed with colleges] Registering transfer students as a percentage of students who are potential transfers from Ontario colleges.
    - a. Total percentage;
    - b. Percentage registering into a pathway.

28

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

## Accountability (continued)

- Outcomes:
 

Aggregated and non-identifying information for students who have transferred from an Ontario college:

  8. Graduation/completion rates compared to non-transferring students (that is, students who registered with the reporting university from the outset of their degree program):
    - a. For all transferring students;
    - b. For students transferring through a specific pathway.

29

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Ongoing work

- MTCU's technical working group, re:
  - Method for institutional allocations, and
  - Data and performance indicators.
- Another MTCU working group, on functionality, content and design of the web-based credit transfer.
- CUCC Council development of governance options and establishment of new coordinating body.

30

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Ongoing work** (continued)

- Ongoing policy discussions with Colleges Ontario.
- Development of options and recommendations to improve university to university transfers, with COU's Credit Transfer Resource Group.

31

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Comments and questions?

For further information, please contact Peter Gooch  
[pgooch@cou.on.ca](mailto:pgooch@cou.on.ca)  
(416) 979 2165 ext 209

32

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---