

BC Report to the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer

*As prepared by BCCAT for submission at the PCCAT Conference, June 20-22, 2011,
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Overview

The *BC Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT)* oversees the BC Transfer System, enabling important links between the BC post-secondary institutions, education ministries, and public and private education sectors. BCCAT facilitates admission, articulation, and transfer arrangements among BC post-secondary institutions for the benefit of students. This involves:

- providing coordination and support for transfer and articulation throughout the BC system,
- promoting student mobility through system-wide collaboration and extensive research on student movement and credit transfer, and
- developing and managing online resources (BCTransferGuide.ca and EducationPlanner.ca) to assist students in their education planning.

Appointed by the Minister, members of the Council are selected from across the BC post-secondary system to serve the overall best interests of the system. For further information regarding the Council, including a list of current members, see bccat.ca/about/council.

The Council guides the work of five standing committees (see bccat.ca/about/committees), each devoted to different aspects of the Council's mandate. The work of the Council and committees is coordinated by nine staff members. (See bccat.ca/about/staff.)

BCCAT is a non-profit, public agency that is funded by the provincial government and operates by promoting collaboration among institutions in the BC post-secondary system. For more information regarding BCCAT, including a chart outlining major projects and activities, see bccat.ca/about/council.

2010-11 Priorities and Projects

BCCAT achieves its mandate by focusing largely on these five main priorities:

1. Collaborating with BC Post-Secondary Partners
2. Understanding Student Mobility and Success
3. Facilitating Admissions, Transfer, and Articulation
4. Supporting Students' Planning
5. Advancing Inter-Provincial Transfer

BCCAT's projects and activities are identified by their accordance with these priorities. The following are highlights of work undertaken by the Council in 2010-11. This information is presented more fully in the *2010-11 Annual Review*, which is available on the BCCAT website.¹

1. Collaborating with BC Post-Secondary Partners²

BCCAT interacts with a wide range of organizations and committees in the BC post-secondary system, consulting and advising on issues and projects as appropriate. BCCAT also liaises with ministry contacts to provide updates on Council activities and projects and to stay informed on developments within government that intersect and impact upon the work of the Council. Two examples are summarized below:

a) Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB)

Rob Fleming (Executive Director, BCCAT) sits on this board as a non-voting member. He also informs the Board of any relevant issues that arise pertaining to the approval of new private institutions becoming members of the BC Transfer System or of articulation-related issues that arise between institutions. As well, BCCAT staff members provide commentary on the DQAB's annual review of private institutions and seek and provide feedback on issues related to private-public articulation.

b) BCcampus

BCCAT and BCcampus work together as system partners. Staff members meet regularly to discuss technological issues, and BCCAT provides BCcampus access to data from BCCAT student-oriented websites. The Executive Directors meet to discuss matters of common interest, and Devron Gaber (Associate Director, BCCAT) is a member of the PASBC³ Steering Committee.

2. Understanding Student Mobility and Success

a) Student Mobility and the Student Transitions Project (STP)

The Council's work on student mobility research is conducted in close partnership with the Student Transitions Project (STP). The STP is a collaborative effort between BC's provincial education ministries and public post-secondary institutions to link data about students in the K-12 and post-secondary systems to answer questions on student transitions. Devron Gaber (Associate Director, BCCAT) chairs the STP Steering Committee and the Manager of the STP, Joanne Heslop, is seconded by BCCAT from SFU.

Several BCCAT projects on student mobility under the auspices of its Admissions Committee are conducted through the STP using STP data, including research on the movement of all students among public post-secondary institutions. BCCAT is broadening its view of the Transfer System, which has historically involved traditional transfer students moving from colleges to universities, to a Credit and Student Mobility System, which focuses on students moving between institutions in multiple directions.

A recent STP publication focusing on both the movement of all students and the movement of traditional transfer students in BC is available at the STP website: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions. Figure 1 provides a good summary of this multi-directional movement.

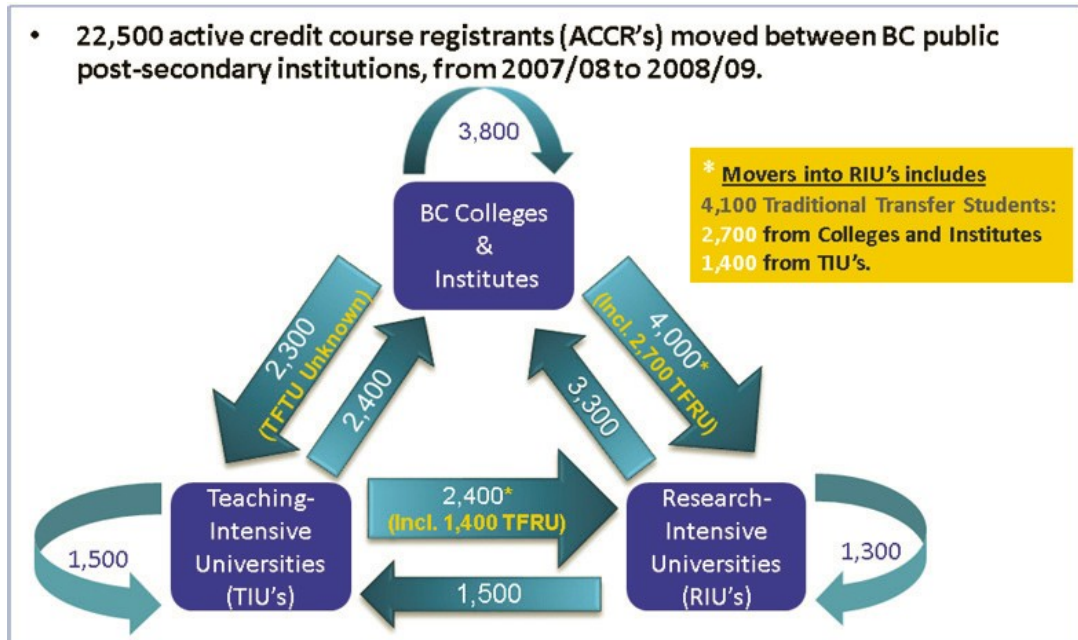
¹ BCCAT publications and resources are provided at bccat.ca/publications.

² Another important aspect of BCCAT's collaborative work in the BC context is its partnership with the STP, as described in section 2 a) below.

³ Post-Secondary Application Service of BC.

Figure 1: Student Mobility in the B.C. Public Post-Secondary System, 2007/08 to 2008/09

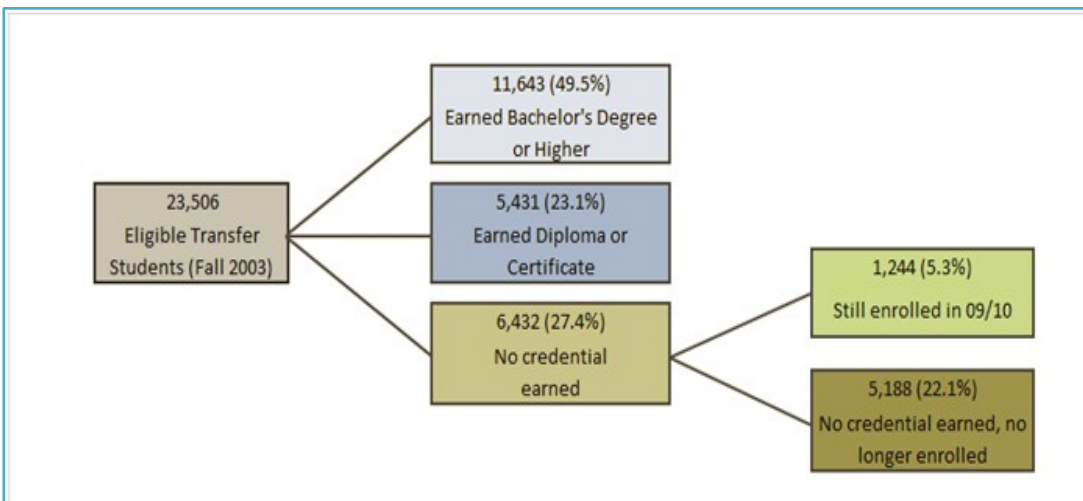
Source: Student Transitions Project. www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/PSM-Newsletter-2011.pdf



BCCAT sponsored research, overseen by Associate Director, Devron Gaber, and Research Coordinator, Jean Karlinski, also produced two published reports: one on students who leave research universities to attend other post-secondary institutions in BC (see bccat.ca/pubs/footsteps.pdf) and another following a cohort of eligible transfer students (ETR) from 2003 to 2009-10 (see Figure 2). The full report is available at bccat.ca/pubs/timeittakes.pdf.

Figure 2: Overall outcomes by 2009-10 for fall 2003 ETR cohort

This report available online at www.bccat.ca/pubs/timeittakes.pdf.



b) Credits to Graduation

This report outlines a study comparing the number of credits undertaken towards degree completion by students admitted on the basis of secondary school graduation and those admitted as BC transfer students to the four research universities (SFU, UBC, UVIC, and UNBC). The study found that transfer students are able to graduate with approximately the same number of credits as secondary school students. This takes into account credits awarded for previous coursework plus credits earned at the four universities. UBC also includes all previous credits completed at other institutions.

The report also shows that transfer graduates perform as well academically as secondary school graduates with very small variations in GPA by university and program. This study contributes to a growing body of research underscoring the success of the transfer system in BC.

Full Report: bccat.ca/pubs/creditstograduation.pdf Newsletter: bccat.ca/pubs/rr_dec10.pdf

3. Facilitating Admissions, Transfer, and Articulation

a) Overview of Admissions Practices in BC

This new resource is intended as a reference for post-secondary personnel and anyone who has an interest in admissions practices. It presents an overview of a wide range of admissions policies and practices at BC post-secondary institutions. The *Overview* is available at bccat.ca/pubs/admissionoverview.pdf.

b) English Proficiency Requirements at BC Post-Secondary Institutions

The findings from this project have been summarized in a newsletter. This publication presents key observations from a review of BC post-secondary institutional websites undertaken to assess differences in admission requirements for entry into standard First Year English courses and in institutional English admission requirements. Recommendations are made on possible actions that could be taken to clarify English proficiency requirements for the benefit of students. (See bccat.ca/pubs/englishproficiency.pdf.)

c) New Members' Resource Book

An important aspect of BCCAT's work is assisting new member institutions as they seek to build transfer and articulation relationships with other institutions. The *New Members' Resource Book* is a reference for new member institutions, which are those private institutions admitted to the BC Transfer System as a result of having one or more programs reviewed by the Degree Quality Assessment Board and given Minister's consent. It describes the culture and norms of the BC Transfer System and the rights and obligations of membership; an overview of articulation tools, resources, and processes is also included. (See bccat.ca/pubs/newmembersbook.pdf.)

d) Articulation Committee Support

i) Joint Annual Meeting (JAM)

On Friday, November 5th, 2010, BCCAT hosted the Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) of Articulation Chairs, System Liaison Persons and Institution Contact Persons (ICPs). Working with Articulation Coordinator, Raili McIvor, all BCCAT staff support this event, which brings together groups from the

administrative and academic sides of the articulation process, representing member institutions of the BC Transfer System, to raise awareness, promote understanding, and encourage dialogue on matters of mutual interest. Check out this link for details: bccat.ca/articulation/jam/.

ii) Articulation Committee Companion (2011 Edition)

The *Articulation Committee Companion* is designed to serve as both an introductory resource for new articulation committee members and as an ongoing reference for committees. The *Companion* includes a brief overview of the province's articulation committees and their essential role in the post-secondary system. In addition, it outlines key roles and responsibilities of articulation committee members and suggests best practices for articulation meetings and activities.

iii) Transfer Innovation Projects

Under the leadership of the Special Projects Coordinator, Jennifer Orum, and Associate Director, John FitzGibbon, BCCAT continued to support Flexible Pre-Majors (FPM) as a supplement to course-to-course and block transfer agreements with FPM projects in Computer Education, English, Psychology, and Economics. BCCAT also supported block transfer in areas such as Tourism Management; development of transfer grids and matrices in areas such as Early Childhood Education, Drafting Technologies, and Medical Office Assistant; and use of Canadian Language Benchmarks for ESL.

4. Supporting Students' Planning

a) BCCAT Web Resources

The development and improvement of BCCAT web resources is an ongoing process. This year, Transfer and Technology Manager, Mike Winsemann, working with many others, facilitated the "refreshing" of BCCAT's three websites: BCCAT.ca, EducationPlanner.ca, and BCTransferGuide.ca. The updated sites offer more streamlined and accessible content in a new visual format.

BCTransferGuide.ca was expanded to enable BC's four research universities (UBC, UNBC, UVic, and SFU) to begin functioning as both "receivers" and "senders" in the course-to-course database. This is an important step towards enabling *all* institutions as senders or receivers, as appropriate. BCCAT also made further improvements to the Transfer Credit Evaluation Service (TCES).

EducationPlanner.ca continues to be highly used and is a well-regarded resource for students exploring programs in BC. This year saw improvements to the search functionality, addition of trades programs at private institutions, and creation of videos to assist users with different aspects of planning.

b) Marketing and Communications

BCCAT makes it a priority to increase awareness of BCCAT web resources to assist and encourage students in their post-secondary planning. This year, we launched a new transit ad campaign promoting our student-focused sites, EducationPlanner.ca and BCTransferGuide.ca. This campaign began during the 2010 Olympics and is ongoing throughout the current year. The ads are displayed on the SkyTrain, Canada Line, and buses throughout the Lower Mainland and the rest of the province.

In addition, we also undertook a number of other advertising initiatives, participated at career and education fairs, and delivered presentations and demonstrations to assist students, counsellors, and career practitioners in the use of BCCAT web resources.

As part of these efforts, Communications Coordinator, Val Yorkston, designed a brochure to provide an overview of the BC Transfer System and BCCAT online planning tools for distribution to students. (See bccat.ca/pubs/brochure.pdf.) It is possible that the brochure may be translated in the future for international recruitment purposes.

5. Advancing Inter-Provincial Transfer

BCCAT works in collaboration with provincial and national post-secondary partners to improve transfer and student mobility within and across provincial borders. Examples are provided below.

a) Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC)

The Executive Director, Rob Fleming, participates with the CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer on a regular basis. He represents the Province of British Columbia on this national committee, which facilitates pan-Canadian dialogue and collaboration on credit transfer matters. Each year, BCCAT submits an annual update on transfer activities in BC for the CMEC Credit Transfer report. The report for 2010-11 is available at bccat.ca/pubs/CMECReport_March11.pdf

b) WestCAT

Representatives from the four western provinces (BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) have formed a group called the Western Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (WestCAT). WestCAT is a voluntary consortium established to encourage and facilitate inter-provincial access, mobility, and transfer of credits for students moving among BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The group met in fall 2010 in Edmonton with BCCAT staff Rob Fleming and Devron Gaber representing the BC Transfer System. Since then, the Terms of Reference have been finalized, and members are exploring the potential posting of inter-provincial transfer information on their respective websites.

c) PCCAT

In June 2010, BCCAT hosted the fifth annual meeting of the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer (PCCAT) in Vancouver. The theme of the meeting was *Best Practices in Student Mobility: Transforming Higher Education in Canada*. The meeting and conference concluded with a discussion on the future direction of PCCAT as a national organization and resulted in the formation of the sub-committee tasked with exploring ways of maintaining a viable structure into the future.

BCCAT continued its involvement in 2010-11 in the work of PCCAT's Research Sub-Committee, both by chairing it and providing secretariat support. The sub-committee released in advance of the June PCCAT conference its first research report entitled *A Profile of Out-of Province Transfer Students Admitted to Four Universities: The University of Alberta, the University of British Columbia, the University of Saskatchewan, and York University* available at pccat.ca/files/pccat-2010 under PCCAT Research Study 2010. The report was funded by BCCAT on behalf of PCCAT.

PCCAT members agreed that the sub-committee should seek funding from various sources to undertake a second project which would involve a survey of all universities in Canada to determine the numbers and sources of out-of-province post-secondary transfer students. The sub-committee drafted the survey and received a commitment of funding from the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), the College University Consortium Council (CUCC) of Ontario, and the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC). The project will be carried out in 2011-12.

BCCAT will continue to play a key role on the national scene by promoting the importance of achieving a pan-Canadian system of student mobility and transfer. Our work will focus on providing advice and support to Canadian provinces seeking to develop and implement their own transfer systems and encouraging support for such activities at the ministerial level.