

**Assessing Determinants of Academic Success
for
College to University Transfer
in the
Diploma to Degree Program, Woodsworth College
Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto**

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Introduction and Background

Woodsworth College in the Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto developed, with its college partners, a unique, student-success focused approach to support college to university transfer. Woodsworth College's facilitated transfer Diploma to Degree Program began as a pilot in 2007 with Seneca College and has now expanded to include George Brown College and Humber College. To date, 211 students have successfully transferred into degree studies. The Diploma to Degree Program supports college to university transfer for students in a two-year, liberal arts diploma program into the Faculty of Arts and Science with significantly enhanced transfer credits towards an Honours Bachelor of Arts.

Woodsworth College's model was developed in response to data indicating that college transfer students into the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) had retention and persistence rates significantly lower than other first entry undergraduates, including those admitted to the Faculty of Arts and Science. In fact, the overall numbers of students entering degree studies after college at the University of Toronto was low (see Figure 1).

The table below shows the number of students who transferred from Ontario college programs from 2007-2011 and the number who withdrew. These figures raised the initial concerns about exploring an articulated agreement. The students who transferred into FAS through the Diploma to Degree Program during the pilot program persisted in greater numbers, supporting the facilitated transfer model.

Transfer Student Withdrawal Ratios by Institution, 2007-2011

	Registered	Withdrawals	Ratio
Sheridan	56	18	32.1%
George Brown	43	14	32.6%
Seneca	24	8	33.3%
Humber	39	16	41.0%
Centennial	29	12	41.1%
Seneca Woodworth Facilitated Transfer Program	49	9	18.0%
All First Entry Undergraduates*	12,029	1,965	16.3%

Figure 1

*Includes Faculty of Arts and Science, Engineering, Music, Kinesiology, UTSC and UTM and includes transfer students from Ontario colleges.

Given the high withdrawal ratio of college transfers, Seneca's request to discuss the possibility of an articulated agreement with University of Toronto raised some concerns from faculty and administrators in FAS. Key questions were raised:

What supports would provide the best opportunity for academic success for students transferring from a two-year college program to degree studies at the U of T?

How many transfer credits should the University grant upon transfer?

In the Faculty of Arts and Science, direct-entry students complete one year of study in a general admissions stream such as humanities, social sciences, life sciences, etc. If significant transfer credit was granted in this case, students would enter into second year courses having taken the prerequisite course(s) in a college program. In addition, these students would enter into specific programs of study for which they would need to meet program admission requirements. This was somewhat controversial given perceptions on college education at the time. Despite the fact that college programs had evolved, there was still an institutional perception that college courses might not provide adequate preparation for university study (Skolnick 2010).

To address these concerns, faculty and administrators from Seneca College, FAS, and Woodsworth College set out to develop a pilot pathway from college to university that would significantly increase transfer credit but also ensure that students would be able to enter academic programs well prepared. All students admitted to FAS are also admitted to a college. Woodsworth College's experience and expertise supporting students entering university from many pathways, including the successful Academic Bridging Program, made it the obvious gateway for college students transferring from college to an Honours Bachelor of Arts Program.

Purpose and Scope of Study

Woodsworth College has collected data on students entering the Faculty of Arts and Science at the University of Toronto via the Diploma to Degree pathway since 2007. This study examines student academic success as well as the value of the facilitated model and its specific components.

The study examines data associated with 385 students who participated, in any capacity, in the Diploma to Degree Program since its inception in 2007. This includes students from the three partner colleges: George Brown College, Humber College and Seneca College. The study is not limited to students who have successfully made the transition to university studies, but rather any student who attempted to make this transition through the Diploma to Degree pathway.

For the purposes of this study, several existing data sources were consulted, including

- Student academic records
- Financial aid records
- Academic advising notes

In addition, the study highlights perspectives gained from interviewing staff at Woodsworth College. Also, all previous participants in the program were invited to participate in an anonymous survey and a subsequent interview.

The survey questions focused on five key areas:

- **Demographics – including parental educational attainment**
- **Motivation and post-secondary goals**
- **Financial need and work habits**
- **Access of support resources at the college and university level**
- **Positive interactions in the post-secondary environment**

The survey was sent via email to all previous participants of the program at their University of Toronto institutional email address. This resulted in a response rate just under 10%. This group of students was also invited to participate in a short interview to expand on the data covered by the survey. However, few individuals responded to this request. The interview data has been excluded from this study as there was not enough data to be included effectively.

Given the relatively small number of participants in the program up until this point, and the difficulty in contacting individuals who no longer have a relationship with the University of Toronto—due to graduation, withdrawal, etc.—the resulting survey data set is quite small. For this reason, this study examines the intersection of the various data sets to draw conclusions on effective student support for college to university transfer students.

Literature Review

Student Success in College to University Transfer in Ontario

In the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the literature exploring issues and trends in post-secondary education within Ontario related to student mobility and academic success in college to university transfer. In part, this is a result of the support for research and data collection by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) founded in 2005 and the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) established in 2011.

The HEQCO sponsored study, *The Transfer Experience of Ontario College Graduates who Further their Education: An Analysis of Ontario's College Graduate Satisfaction Survey* (Decok, McCloy, Liu, & Hu, 2011) is comprehensive and provides data to help those working with students to assess and compare the success of articulated agreements and pathways. This analysis and research is especially valuable as it draws upon information provided by students. Students transferring from college to university value their college education. The majority are choosing a pathway from college to university prior to entering a college program.

In 2013, ONCAT released a *Summary of ONCAT-funded Pathways and Transfer Research*. Participating universities provided information on the demographics of transfer students and measured their success in comparison with students entering university directly from high school (Brown 2012; Drewes, *et. al.* 2012; Fisher, *et. al.* 2012; Stewart & Martinello 2012; Gerhardt, *et. al.* 2012). As the *Summary* notes, results are not consistent for many reasons (programs, populations, geographic areas) but the overview and findings are valuable for highlighting some of the challenges students face in transferring from college to university. There are clearly opportunities for collaboration and sharing information on how best to support students.

Research on when and why students transfer (Lang 2008; Lennon, Zhao, Wang & Gluszynski 2011; Lang & Lopes 2014) informs how we communicate with students about options and opportunities. This research is helpful for established pathways in strategic planning for recruitment, advising, and supporting students in transitioning from college to university. Analyzing the demographics of participants tells us who transfers from college to university, renewing interest in access and identifying barriers to participation (Finnie, Mueller, Sweetman & Usher 2010; Anisef, Brown, & Robson 2013; Doran, Ferguson, Khan, Ryu, Naimool, Hanson, & Childs 2015; Medovarksi, Sanders, & Visano 2015). Despite support and targeted recruitment strategies, the literature points to continued challenges of recruiting and supporting underrepresented groups (Stonefish, Craig & O'Neil 2015). However, the literature also suggests that clearly defined pathways for college to university transfer are making PSE more accessible for students (Kerr, *et.al.* 2010). With increased access, there is a focus on best practices for supporting transition, developing learning outcomes and supporting student learning in general (Carter, Coyle & Leslie 2001; Acai & Newton 2015).

Research exploring the effectiveness of institutional partnerships, specifically articulated agreements between colleges and universities (Skolnick 2001; Boggs & Trick 2009) are important as we begin to review, enhance and expand existing pathways.

Environmental Scan

Every university in Ontario admits college transfer students. Most institutions will consider applicants who have completed at least one year of a diploma program. Almost all institutions require the equivalent of a B average regardless of whether an applicant has completed 1, 2 or 3 years of a diploma or a certificate program. Most universities provide information on what an applicant can expect with respect to transfer credit but there is no consistency. Some indicate a maximum that can be awarded based on years completed in a college diploma program while others provide a range (3.0 to 5.0 credits awarded). Some grant transfer credit for 1 year of study at college, others do not. A number of institutions advise applicants that transfer credit will be assessed on a case-by-case basis or will be determined at some point during the admission process. Since universities have different grade point scales and credit values for courses, admission requirements and transfer credits awarded are not always comparable across institutions.

Students search for information about college and university programs on websites (Decok *et. al.* 2011). All Ontario universities provide information on admission for college transfer students on their sites. Details about admission requirements, the application process, deadlines, transfer credits and contact information are available. However, information on cost, funding available, academic advising and supports are often elsewhere on the website and often targeted for the overall population or for students coming directly from high school. Most information presented deals with the administrative process and less about the academic opportunities.

In contrast, there are a few universities that speak directly to transfer students. Noteworthy is Brock University's comprehensive *Guide for college transfer students* and Carleton University's *Opportunities for College and University Transfer Students Viewbook*. Each publication provides detailed information about transfer credit, specific pathways and tailored services and supports aimed directly at transfer students.

A number of universities have participated in studies measuring the success of college transfer students at their institutions and the results indicate that more are transferring especially into programs where a clear and delineated pathways are available (ONCAT 2013; Decock *et. al.* 2011).

The Facilitated Transfer Program Model (Diploma to Degree Program)

The facilitated transfer model was conceived as a series of academic, administrative, and financial supports that would alleviate or reduce the barriers and obstacles college diploma students might face in transferring to degree studies at the University of Toronto. In addition, once admitted to FAS, this facilitation would extend to degree completion to increase the opportunity for academic success.

In this case, facilitation meant that dedicated staff would engage with Diploma to Degree students at all stages of the transfer process. This means that the staff supporting students through the application and admission process continued to work with students as they developed course enrolment plans, selected appropriate academic programs and persisted to graduation.

One of the most unique features of the model is the “visiting student component.” Students are required to complete at least a 0.5 full-course equivalent (FCE) in FAS with a minimum grade of 60% as a non-degree visiting student to be eligible for transfer. This course can be taken at any time after the student has completed their second semester in the two-year college program if their overall average thus far is in the B range and is accompanied by a recommendation from their college program advisor.

Completed course(s) taken as a visiting student can be transferred back to their diploma program for credit in a dual-credit model. Students are eligible for bursary funding for the FAS course and are given access to all of the facilities and services on the University of Toronto campus. The purpose of this component is to give students an opportunity to have a

university experience and make an informed decision about whether transfer is the right decision.

Components of the Diploma to Degree Program

In reviewing the literature and consulting with those doing research in the area, staff developed the Diploma to Degree Program while considering various perspectives, including recruitment; admissions, academic advising; transfer credit assessment; financial aid & advising; transition & student support services; program choice; and academic success.

1. Recruitment

Historically, the Faculty of Arts and Science's recruitment strategy did not include efforts targeted at college transfer students. Seneca College, however, saw an articulation agreement with the University of Toronto as part of a strategy to recruit to their Liberal Arts Diploma Program. Research suggests college students recognize the value added of a program that offers a pathway to degree studies (Lang 2008). For Seneca, a partnership with the University had the potential to enhance international recruitment, providing a pathway that would help build academic skills, including language skills. Moreover, international students interested in pursuing degree studies at the University of Toronto but were not directly admissible might be recruited to the Diploma to Degree program.

Both institutions recognize that colleges often recruit students from different applicant pools than universities (Lang 2008). Thus, it was appropriate and effective to give Seneca (and later George Brown and Humber) responsibility for marketing and recruitment to their diploma programs, highlighting the opportunity to transfer to degree studies at the University of Toronto. Consultation and review of published material was coordinated to ensure information was clear, accurate, and encouraging.

As part of the agreement, teams of FAS advisors meet with students at their home college. The purpose of the college visits is to provide early academic advising to help students

determine if pursuing a degree at the University of Toronto in the Faculty of Arts and Science is the “best fit” (Medovarski *et. al.* 2015). A general overview of the program is given to the group, including a detailed description of transfer credits. An opportunity for students to chat individually with an advisor is also offered.

Faculty at the colleges have noted that students appreciate the fact that the University comes to them. Speaking to an advisor early is helpful, especially for those students with previous post-secondary experience, those with international status and/or students with disabilities.

The opportunity for students to interact with an academic advisor rather than an admissions or recruitment staff was a key element of the program’s development. The difference between contact with a recruitment officer and an academic advisor is depth of information pertaining to the academic opportunities that connect to an individual student’s goals, experiences and skills. Students with unique or complex issues have an opportunity to work through these by connecting with someone who can provide comprehensive information about pathways to achieve academic goals.

2. Admissions

One of the barriers for students transferring from college to university is managing the bureaucracy and administration. This can be especially daunting for students who are the first in their family to attend post-secondary studies or students with disabilities (Finnie *et. al.* 2010; Kerr, *et. al.* 2010; Drotos 2011; Stewart, *et. al.* 2012; Opidee 2015). This is especially true with respect to the University of Toronto where students face a myriad of options, including admission stream, program, campus and college choices. Woodsworth’s experience with students entering FAS via multiple pathways indicates that a less bureaucratic, supportive and streamlined admission process can help reduce stress amid the various administrative challenges.

Building upon Woodsworth College's existing, internal admission processes and with support from the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer, Woodsworth developed an online application system for college students in our Diploma to Degree Programs. Staff work with college partners to facilitate receipt of transcripts and academic records. As part of the articulated agreements, application fees are waived, removing yet another administrative step and possible barrier in the admission process.

As mentioned, the dedicated staff person responsible for the admission process is also the primary academic advisor for Diploma to Degree students. As a result, the applicants know exactly who to contact if they encounter difficulties or have questions about their application. The faculty and staff at the colleges also know who they can contact if questions or concerns arise at their end. Information gathered and shared during the admissions process helps connect students to appropriate supports earlier and more effectively.

3. Transfer Credit

Increasing the number of transfer credits for college transfer students into FAS was at the heart of the articulated agreements. FAS went from awarding a maximum of 2.0 FCE's to a maximum of 6.0 plus any "retained" courses taken as a visiting student as part of the articulated agreement. Courses completed at another university can also be assessed for credit.

In discussions with faculty and students, it became clear that the two-year diploma programs were greater than the sum of their parts. In college programs, students work closely with instructors and each other. Content courses are complimented by skills development courses, better preparing students to make the transition into university level work. While the FAS does not grant credit for skills-based courses, it recognizes their value. Thus, students who successfully complete a two-year diploma program as part of the articulated agreement are considered to have met the English Facility Requirements which normally require an applicant to have successfully completed four years or more of study in a country

where the dominant language is English. In addition, the combination of transfer credits awarded fulfill the breadth requirements necessary for an undergraduate degree, leaving students free to take courses necessary for completion of their program of study.

On average, Diploma to Degree students complete 1.0 FCE prior to transferring into degree studies. A fair number do the minimum required (0.5 FCE) while some do as many as 5.0, significantly reducing the time it takes to complete an undergraduate degree.

As part of the articulated agreements, specific transfer credits are pre-approved and this information is available to students on the program website. The programs across the three colleges are all different and available transfer credits vary. Since students need to transfer into specific programs within FAS, having more specified credits rather than general or block transfer credits is preferred. This is, in fact, why there are multiple bilateral agreements—the number of transfer credits is consistent but the specific courses vary.

4. Academic Advising

The facilitated model provides academic advice as early as the first semester of a two-year diploma program. The on-site advising sessions highlighted that many college students were either undecided about what to study at university and/or were making inappropriate choices given their academic background. Many college students in a liberal arts diploma program indicated an interest in studying commerce or life sciences but few had the necessary required high school courses to pursue such programs. Their college programs also did not offer courses in these areas. As a result, advising usually focuses on identifying interests, usually with reference to students' successes in specific courses in their college program. Early academic advising addresses short-term and long-term academic goals as well as financial planning.

5. Program Choice

Students transferring into degree studies can choose from what seems like an endless combination of Specialists (10 to 14 courses), Majors (6 to 8 courses) and Minors (4 courses) to satisfy degree requirements. The advantage of choice for students is that their final transcript can be truly reflective of multiple academic interests and strengths. The challenge is the choice itself.

In the development of the Diploma to Degree Program, there was concern that transfer students from college would be disadvantaged with respect to program choice or that they would need to take many more courses in order to satisfy program requirements and incur additional cost and time to degree completion.

6. Financial Aid and Advising

Financial concerns are often cited as one of the challenges for students in PSE, especially those from underrepresented groups (Finnie, *et. al.* 2010, 2008). Students are advised that there is a cost savings given that college tuition is considerably less than tuition at university. Diploma to Degree students are encouraged to meet with a financial advisor to prepare a budget, discuss the value and challenges of part-time employment, and to review financial resources that can be accessed. Bursary funding is available when taking university courses as a visiting student.

Results and Findings

Role and importance of academic advising

The survey specifically asked students to answer questions about academic advising. Just over 60% of respondents indicated that they had accessed academic advising while in college. This compares with just over 70% who indicated that they accessed academic advising while at university. Just over 30% of the respondents indicated that they met with an advisor only when necessary. The highest percentage (45.5%) indicated they met with an advisor “a few times” (Appendix A).

To understand the role and effectiveness of academic advising we reviewed advising notes and interviewed the primary academic advisor for the Diploma to Degree Programs. The advisor identified the following transition challenges:

Program selection and timetable planning

- Students in liberal arts or general arts and science college programs are usually required to study full-time and most courses are required.
- There are limited options for electives.
- Upon transferring into degree studies, students are often overwhelmed by choice. T
- The flexibility of university, including building a timetable, choosing appropriate courses to keep program options open, and even course load is often daunting without advising support.

Managing increased pressure and workload; time management

- After transferring, students describe feeling more anxiety in university and note an increase in workload.
- Many discover that they cannot work as many hours and as a result, express concerns about finances.
- The additional pressures often trigger or exacerbate health issues that need to be addressed.

- Students entering university via non-tradition pathways may have done so because they faced challenges such as a learning disability, chronic health problem or other personal difficulties.
- It is not unusual for the Diploma to Degree Program to be considered an option for students who have tried university and failed or who did not do as well as they might have in high school. For some students, the Diploma to Degree Program can be a second chance for a degree.

The academic advisor connects with students numerous times during their time as a visiting student and when they transfer into degree studies. Advising with this group is much more deliberate than with other populations. Connections are one-on-one, by email and by phone. Except for the on-site visits, Diploma to Degree students usually need individual advising. Information about choosing programs that is given to the overall FAS population needs to be more explicit for the Diploma to Degree population in general because some programs are limited, depend on specific prerequisites and level of performance. Contact with the departments sponsoring some programs is often necessary to determine eligibility and/or to advocate on a student's behalf. Throughout the academic session, the academic advisor "checks-in" with students, keeping the lines of communication open and monitoring student progress.

Program Choice

The data to date shows that College transfers are choosing program combinations similar to those of the overall FAS student population.

Figure 2 shows the program combinations for students graduating with an HBA in June 2015 in the Faculty of Arts and Science, St. George Campus alongside the program combination for 155 students who have completed or are completing a degree via the Diploma to Degree pathway. For FAS the percentage of combinations has been relatively steady over the past few years.

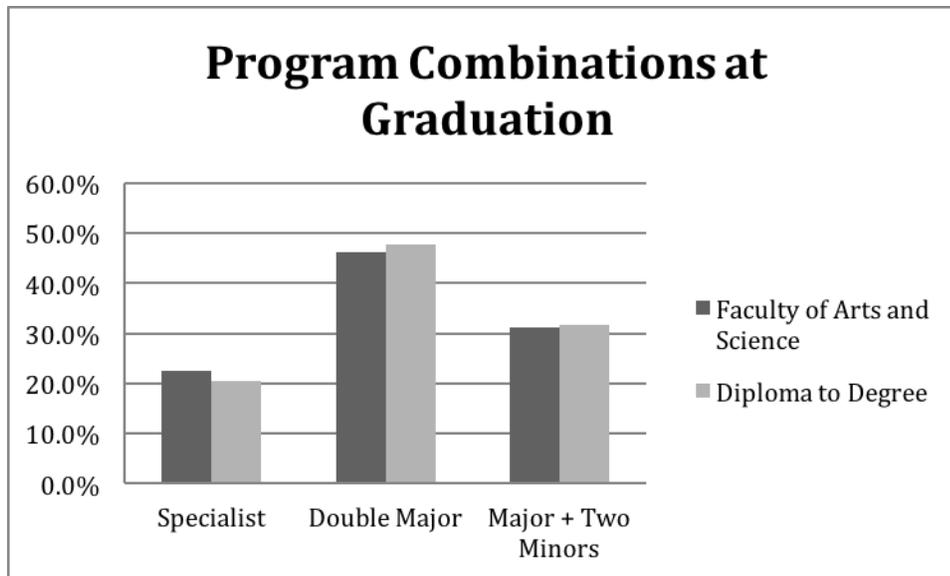


Figure 2

An undergraduate degree is comprised of 20.0 credits. The average number of credits at the time of graduation for the general FAS population is 20.5. The average number of credits at the time of graduation for the Diploma to Degree population is 20.8 (this includes the transfer credits awarded). In other words, students transferring from college are not taking a greater number of credits to complete their undergraduate degree than the overall population. As previously noted, the Diploma to Degree students take on average 3 years to complete a degree after transferring.

Transfer students tend to choose at least one of their programs in a subject area where they received a specified transfer credit, suggesting that the disciplines they explore at the college level and the transfer credits awarded are strong predictors of what a student is likely to study at University. Thus for students transferring from Seneca (our largest data pool at present), the top program choices are Philosophy, English and Sociology. A great many students gravitate towards multidisciplinary programs as well, including Criminology and Sociolegal Studies, Equity Studies, Women and Gender Studies, Employment Relations and Urban Studies.

Funding and Finances

Advising notes for students considering the Diploma to Degree program highlight the importance that work plays for college students. A review of the advising files indicate 43% of the students worked on average 16 hours a week while studying full-time in their college program.

This study found that 65% of the survey respondents worked during their college program. Most worked in retail or in the service industry and just under 30% worked just under 20 hours a week.

The financial equation for college students is complicated. A significant number access OSAP while in college and in addition, they are often employed. When they make the transition to university, the cost of tuition increases significantly and students quickly discover that they cannot work as many hours and still do well academically. University students in general work less than students in college—Diploma to Degree students move from an academic culture where more than half of the students work while studying to a world where fewer than 10% of the population are employed while pursuing their degree (University of Toronto NSSE data, 2014).

Data shows that 66.5% of Diploma to Degree students who transferred into degree studies accessed OSAP. Of this group, 48% get maximum OSAP and qualify for the University of Toronto Advance Planning for Students (UTAPS) which essentially provides a bursary to cover the difference between OSAP and demonstrated need. In addition, there is bursary funding available from Woodsworth College. Figure 4 below identifies the funding sources for Diploma to Degree students.

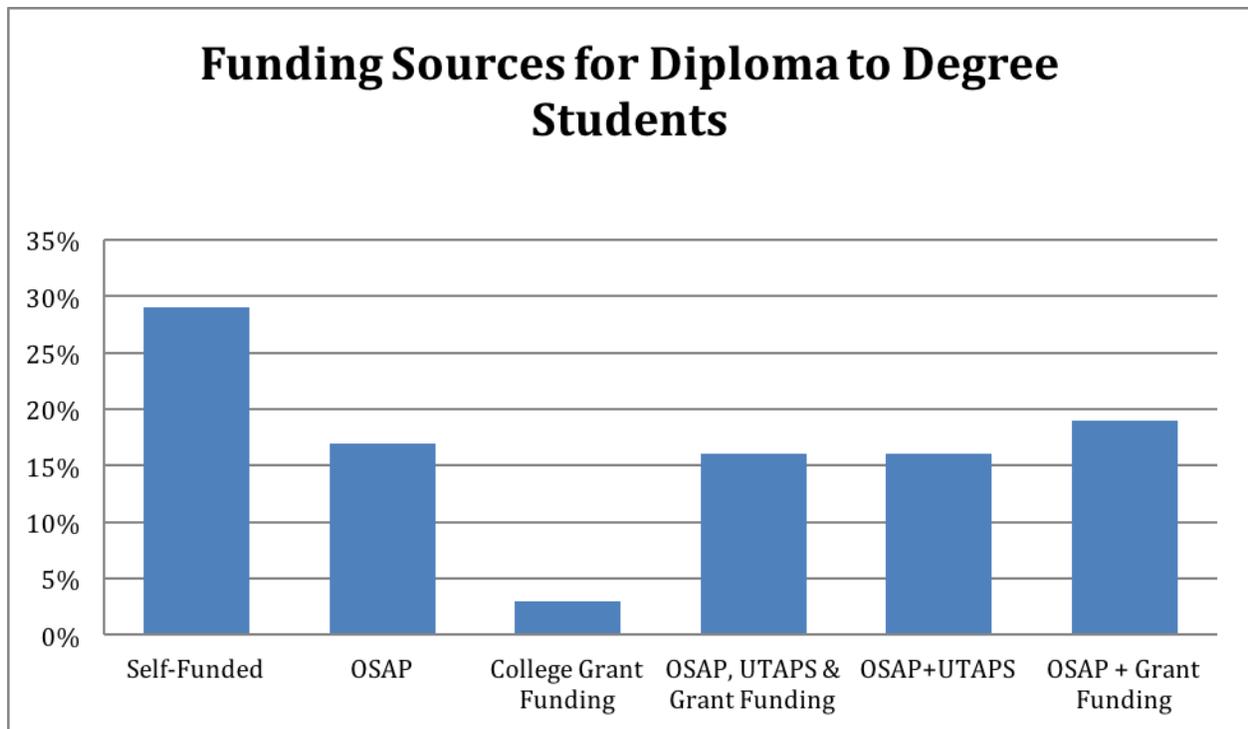


Figure 4

In 2013-14, 46% of the students registered in FAS received OSAP. The data collected thus far shows that 66.5% of the Diploma to Degree students receive OSAP, indicating that this population has significantly greater financial need than the FAS population.

A recent study by Alexander Bowman and Mesmin Destin (2015) provides a conceptual framework for examining how an institution can best support students from low socioeconomic status (SES). The study uses the descriptors “warm” and “chilly” to describe how students feel about how their educational institution supports socioeconomic diversity. The study concludes that the recognition and the offer of support can have a positive impact on academic motivation and success for students with financial need. The deliberate messaging about the availability of funding for Diploma to Degree is one of the program’s strengths. In recent years, Woodsworth College has also attracted donor funding to support this group and can highlight this for students in the program.

Figure 5 below shows the demographics of the Diploma to Degree receiving OSAP transferring into degree studies.

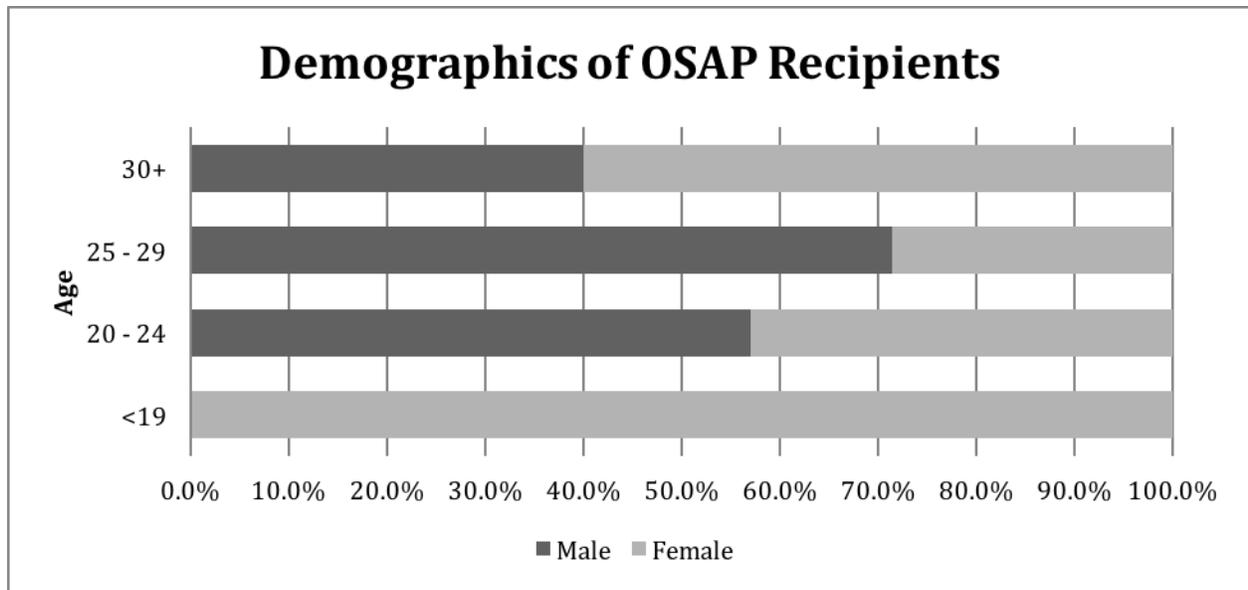


Figure 5

The majority of Diploma to Degree students receiving OSAP are between the ages of 20 and 29 and of this group, most are male.

Academic Success

A program that facilitates the academic success of students transferring from college to university can be measured in many ways. As noted above, Diploma to Degree students take similar combinations of programs and take on average the same number of credits to fulfill degree requirements as the general FAS student population. In other words, they behave similarly to the general student population. Since the potential for making poor program choices and/or of having to take additional courses is much greater without purposeful and targeted academic advising for the Diploma to Degree students we highlight this as an indication of student academic success.

Students transferring from the Diploma to Degree Program do as well as other students academically. The average CGPA of the Diploma to Degree students who have graduated

with an HBA is 2.87 in a 4.0 scale (B range). This compares well with the overall graduation class for Woodsworth College in June 2015 where the average CGPA at graduation was 2.88.

Retention is more difficult to measure. There is no time limit for degree completion in FAS at the University of Toronto and students “step out” for many reasons, sometimes returning years later to continue their studies. In addition, students do not have to formally advise the institution they are withdrawing. To date 71.5% of the students who have transferred into degree studies have either graduated or are persisting towards their degree. The University of Toronto reports a retention rate of 72.5% “which is the proportion of first-time, full-time registrants of a four-year program graduating by the end of their sixth year” (University of Toronto Performance Indicators 2014). As previously noted, Diploma to Degree students graduate on average, 3 years after transferring from a two-year college program.

First Generation Students

When it comes to measures of success, one key indicator in the Diploma to Degree Program has been the ability to engage students in degree studies who may not otherwise pursue university. This study found that just under 30% of student respondents’ mothers had completed a university degree and approximately 42% of respondents had a father who had completed degree studies. This highlights that the majority of students pursuing this pathway can be considered first-generation post-secondary students. This group has been identified as underrepresented in universities across Ontario and there have been many targeted efforts to increase this group’s educational attainment. The fact that the program provides another point of entry for these students is significant.

Student Motivation

Amongst the survey respondents, 82% indicated that they entered their college program with the intention of transferring to degree studies. This supports the claim that this pathway provides an opportunity for colleges to recruit and attract a specific demographic of students. This also addresses the goal of broadening the spectrum of students who may access university programs.

Interestingly, about 73% of respondents indicated that they entered the program to pursue higher education for personal interest. This supports the notion that this group of students may not enter with clear goals in mind. This makes early advising even more significant as risk of error when it comes to program and course selection is high. The fact that the data collected from student academic records indicates that students do not take longer to complete their degree and their program combination patterns are similar to direct-entry students suggests that the advising model of the program works to help students without specific academic goals at the onset make informed choices throughout their studies.

Approximately half of respondents indicated that they entered the Diploma to Degree Program to pursue professional or career goals and/or to gain credentials to enter the workforce. The opportunity for advisors to identify these goals early through the high frequency of contact with students in the program contributes to students reaching their goals through the program.

Overall, students seem to be happy with the options presented to them as 79% of respondents felt that they were able to pursue courses that matched their initial interests in the Diploma to Degree pathway.

Gender Balance

In 2014, the University of Toronto reported that 59% of the undergraduate population in FAS was female (*Facts and Figures 2014*). In comparison, the percentage of females in the Diploma to Degree population is 50.8%. Of those who have completed an undergraduate degree via Diploma to Degree pathways, 48% are female.

The Diploma to Degree Program is serving male students well, offering them a pathway to degree studies. The majority of Diploma to Degree students are between the ages of 20 and 29, suggesting that most have not entered their college program directly from high school.

Access to Support Services

Notably, with the exception of personal counselling, respondents indicated that they accessed the various types of support services at the university in greater numbers than they did at the college level. In particular, more than twice the number of students sought support from a learning skills strategist while in university. This is significant as this is one of the embedded services Woodsworth College offers to students in-house.

Student Experience

Respondents to the survey indicated that they had more positive interactions with professors and course instructors at the college level. This is an area that may be addressed through programmatic efforts such as opportunities for students to develop skills they can use when communicating with their instructors. This result is unsurprising, given the differences of size and structure in the university and college environments, but this does provide an opportunity for further development of the program to address this particular student need.

Implications for the Diploma to Degree Program

- The Diploma to Degree program's facilitated model provides early and deliberate academic advising to support students in making the decision to transfer to degree studies. Financial advising should be comparably early, focused and deliberate to help students access all available funding. Given that this population is more mature when they begin degree studies and will spend less time at university, maximizing funding as quickly as possible could enhance the student's overall experience. Working fewer hours could result in higher grades and better academic performance. Planning early could open doors to internships (paid or unpaid) or an international experience such as Summer Abroad.
- Currently, recruitment rests with college partners but profiling successful degree students on the Diploma to Degree site could enhance visibility of the pathways available, increasing participation.

- The Diploma to Degree program's communication with students may benefit from some of the best practices of messaging to college transfers identified in the environmental scan.

Appendix A

Survey Protocol

1) Please indicate which best describes your current status in the Diploma to Degree Program?

_____ registered in a two-year college program

_____ registered in degree studies

_____ currently completing a visiting student semester

2) Are you the first in your family to attend college or university?

Yes

No

3) If no, please indicate the highest level of education for your mother, father or guardian below:

Mother:

_____ high school

_____ college

_____ undergraduate degree

_____ graduate degree

_____ other: _____

Father:

_____ high school

_____ college

_____ undergraduate degree

_____ graduate degree

_____ other: _____

Other Guardian:

_____ high school

_____ college

_____ undergraduate degree

_____ graduate degree

_____ other: _____

- 4) What was your initial motivation for pursuing degree studies?
- a. To pursue higher education for personal interest
 - b. To meet parental or familial expectations
 - c. To gain credentials necessary to achieve career goals
 - d. To gain credentials necessary for graduate or professional degree programs
 - e. Other: _____
- 5) What were the academic programs you had initially wanted to pursue when you were first interested in degree studies?
- 6) Were you able to pursue courses that matched your initial interests?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 7) Did you access OSAP or other government funding as a college student?
- Yes
- No
- 8) Have you or are you planning to access OSAP or other government funding while attending university?
- Yes
- No
- 9) Did you receive funding from other sources of financial assistance such as bursaries or grants?
- Yes
- No

10) Did you work while attending college?

Yes

No

If yes, how many hours per week did you work?

5 – 10

10 – 15

15 – 20

More than 20 hours

11) Indicate the best description of the kind of work you were doing:

Labour (construction, landscaping, mechanical, etc.)

Retail (sales clerk, customer service, stock, etc.)

Service (food and drink, hospitality, call centre, etc.)

Domestic work (childcare, eldercare, housekeeping, etc.)

Business and Financial (banking, consulting, resource industry, etc.)

Healthcare (medical office work, hospital staff, medical testing and/or imaging, etc.)

Other:

12) What do you hope to do upon completing your degree?

- Enter the workforce
- Pursue further education (graduate or professional program)
- Other: _____

13) What services did you access in college?

- Accessibility or disability support services
- Career services
- Academic advising
- Personal counselling
- Health services
- Library and research services
- Learning skills support
- Writing or academic learning centre
- Other: _____

14) What services did you access in university?

- Accessibility or disability support services
- Career services
- Academic advising
- Personal counselling
- Health services
- Library and research services
- Learning skills support
- Writing or academic learning centre
- Other: _____

15) How often did you meet with an academic advisor at Woodsworth College?

- a. Not at all
- b. Only when necessary
- c. A few times
- d. Somewhat regularly
- e. Frequently

16) How would you describe your interactions with professors and course instructors?

- a. Exceptionally negative
- b. Negative
- c. Neutral
- d. Positive
- e. Exceptionally positive

17) How would you describe your interactions with Woodsworth College Registrar's Office staff?

- a. Exceptionally negative
- b. Negative
- c. Neutral
- d. Positive
- e. Exceptionally positive

Interview Protocol

- 1) When did you decide that you wanted to pursue degree studies?
 - a. Before applying to college
 - b. While completing your college program
 - c. Upon learning of the Diploma to Degree program during your studies

- 2) What factors impacted your decision to pursue degree studies? If this was not your initial goal, what caused you to consider this option? Did you change your mind about pursuing degree studies at any point?

- 3) What were the advantages of transferring into degree studies through the Diploma to Degree program?

- 4) What were some of the disadvantages of transferring into degree studies through the Diploma to Degree program? What were some barriers or challenges you encountered?

- 5) How did you overcome or confront these challenges?

- 6) Based on your experience, what are the primary differences between studying at a college compared to university?

- 7) What could the Diploma to Degree program do to help make the transition from college to university easier for students?

- 8) Are there particular services that could be put in place to better support Diploma to Degree students? Please describe.

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