

# Paddling Down the River from Diploma to Degree: Notes from the Voyage



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# St. Clair CYW: 1996



The first graduates of:

- Revamped CYW 3-year, advanced diploma program
- Apply for positions in social service agencies (e.g., CAS, CMHA)
- Or apply for admission to UWindsor BA/BSW programs



# UWindsor: 1996



- Possible transfer credit for CYW graduates was covered by
- One sentence in UWindsor Undergraduate Calendar:  
  
“Applicants who have graduated from a three-year program with a cumulative average of B will be considered for admission to Second Year of an appropriate program.”

# St. Clair-UWindsor: 1996-2003



- Despite lack of transparency and consistency
- Most CYW grads received credit for ~10 courses
- Not always 10 and not always the same courses
- But best not to rock the boat

# St. Clair-UWindsor: 2003-2009



- Suddenly, in 2003, most CYW graduates enrolling at UWindsor
- Had their transfer credits cut in half
- Given credit for ~5 instead of ~10 courses
- And for general elective courses instead of specific courses

# UWindsor 2003 Undergraduate Calendar



Lambton College CYW agreement:

“Students who have completed the 2-year CYW program with a cumulative average grade of B or better may receive up to five university credits from a specific list of courses...”

By 2005, this inaccurate agreement had “migrated” to multilateral (all CAATs) section of Undergraduate Calendar.

# Ministry to the Rescue: 2007



- MTCU funded Smoothtrack Consortium (UWindsor-St. Clair-Lambton)
- One of 12 Change Fund Initiative projects to build pathways between high affinity diplomas and degrees
- Among other activities, Smoothtrack reviewed existing agreements; spotted the “5 instead of 10 course” clerical error
- AND, developed St. Clair CYW degree completion programs



# St. Clair CYW degree completion programs: 2009 Good News!



- June 2009: UWindsor Senate approves St. Clair CYW degree completion agreement!
- St. Clair CYW graduates can enrol in and complete General Psychology BA in 1 ½ years
- Can enrol in and complete Disability Studies and Psychology Honours BAs in 2 years
- Can apply for admission to BSW Professional Years and, if accepted, complete BSW in 2 years

# St. Clair CYW degree completion programs: 2009 Bad News!



- Degree completion agreement was written to apply to current students (hurt by clerical error) as well as future transfer students
- Especially important for CYW graduate working professionals completing degree part-time
- But version approved by Senate applied only to future transfer students
- Result: Students who had taken even one UWindsor course were not eligible for the agreement

St. Clair CYW degree completion  
programs: 2009/2011  
Back to the Drawing Board



- Argued case for extending degree completion agreement to current as well as future transfer students
- May 2011: Senate approves revised degree completion agreement to apply to all post-1996 St. Clair CYW graduates currently enrolled at UWindsor
- Change particularly benefits part-time students



# St. Clair CYW degree completion programs: 2009 More Bad News!



- Degree completion agreement was intended to apply to all qualified St. Clair CYW graduates
- But in Fall 2009, discovered that UWindsor did not regard accelerated diploma programs as equivalent to non-accelerated programs
- So qualified graduates of St. Clair Accelerated CYW program were being denied entry

# St. Clair Accelerated CYW Program: Thames Campus



## Program History

- St. Clair graduates working as Early Childhood Educators (ECE) or Developmental Services Workers (DSW)
- Looking for opportunity to further their education on a part time basis
- Particular interest in supporting youth with behavioural or emotional concerns

# St. Clair Accelerated CYW Program: Thames Campus



- Began as part-time program through Continuing Education
- Introduced full-time in 2004
- First year 25 students to 36 students currently



# St. Clair Accelerated CYW: Program Design



- Not a fast track program whereby complete program is offered in shortened time
- Build on students' prior education and work/ placement experiences and add the core courses of the three year CYW Program offered on Windsor campus

# St. Clair Accelerated CYW: Students' Past Education



- ~50% have BA in related discipline:  
Psychology, Sociology, Criminology,  
Family Studies, Bachelor of Education,  
BSW, Child and Youth Studies
- Intro Psychology and Developmental Psychology  
courses required for admission
- ~50% have a combination of DSW and ECE
- New: Educational Support Program grads

# St. Clair accelerated CYW: Interesting Trends



Motivation for enrollment

Students hope that CYW will be pathway to:

Bachelor of Social Work

Bachelor of Education

Masters Program (MSW or Sociology)

Students hope that work related experience will be considered at interviews for positions in their chosen career



# St. Clair accelerated CYW: Post Diploma



- Students attracted by 2 diplomas in 3 years
- Choose college to remain close to family, friends
- Often have anxiety about success away from home or at university level
- Once they've completed 2 diplomas, ready for challenge of university
- Students who entered CYW program with BA express interest in master's degree

# St. Clair accelerated CYW: Post Diploma (cont'd)



- 10 students have continued education either at Bachelor's or Master's level immediately after CYW Accelerated Program
- Many others plan to work and attend university at later date
- All but 3 have chosen University of Windsor

# St. Clair accelerated CYW: Difficulty



- Without a designated pathway, students' were getting transfer credits only for their ECE or DSW diplomas
- Could not predict what courses or how many courses they will receive credit for before they enroll

# St. Clair accelerated CYW: Left out of 2009 Degree Completion Program



- Accelerated CYW graduates looked forward to UWindsor approval of St. Clair CYW degree completion programs (into Disability Studies, Psychology, Social Work) in 2009
- Students and faculty disappointed to discover that they were excluded



# St. Clair accelerated CYW: Back to the Drawing Board!



- ECE and DSW program coordinators provided detailed curriculum maps to demonstrate students' readiness for CYW Accelerated Program
- Demonstration of equivalency between 3-year and Accelerated CYW Programs and the CYW Accelerated Program in combination with prior diploma or degree

# St. Clair accelerated CYW: 2013: Victory at Last!



- April 2013: UWindsor Senate approves amended degree completion program agreements
- St. Clair Accelerated CYW program students are now included
- More students expressing interest and taking advantage of pathway to university
- Two students have gone through new process and report it is very streamlined and user friendly
- This year at least three students are pursuing or seriously considering this pathway for next year

# Ministry to the Rescue (Again): 2009-2014



- In 2009, MTCU funded multi-institutional project led by UWindsor to develop multilateral learning outcomes-based transfer agreements for CYW, DSW, ECE and SSW programs
- 2013: UWindsor Senate approved agreements giving graduates of all CYW programs a block transfer of minimum 15 one-semester credits into all BA and BSW programs, with possibility of additional credits for specific CYW programs

# Ministry to the Rescue (Again): 2009-2014(cont'd)



- 2014: Psychology, Social Work, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Program Development Committee approved agreements extending St. Clair CYW degree completion programs to ALL Ontario CYW program graduates.
- Next stop – Senate: If approved, ALL Ontario CYW program graduates will be able to enter all Disability Studies, Psychology and Social Work degree completion programs in Fall 2014.



# Lessons Learned: Ministry Support



Ministry Support is important and appreciated

- Frequent and public MTCU endorsement of post-secondary mobility is a (gentle) stick to persuade colleges/universities to build pathways
- And financial support is the carrot that can lead college/universities to support staff and faculty in maintaining existing pathways and developing new ones

# Lessons Learned: Institutional Support



**BUT institutional support is CRITICAL**

- Colleges/universities are comprised of multiple stakeholders with different perspectives on institutional goals
- Genuine institutional commitment to post-secondary student accessibility and mobility

Requires...

# Lessons Learned: Institutional Support(cont'd)



- Identification and elimination of institutional barriers to student accessibility and mobility
- Active support and encouragement of credit transfer initiatives across all academic and administrative stakeholder constituencies
- From recruitment to admission to retention to graduation

# Jennifer's Story: 2007



- Received offer of admission from University of Windsor for BA Program
- Declined offer
  
- Received offer of admission from St. Clair College for Child and Youth Worker Program
- Accepted offer



# Why Did I Choose St. Clair instead of UWindsor?



- Financial Constraints
  - College less expensive
- Lack of Confidence
  - Personal competency
- Comfort level
  - First generation in family to potentially attend university
- Lack of guidance

# St. Clair College: 2007-2010



- Practical Experiences
  - 2008: Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School
  - 2009: Choices, Child and Adolescent Services
  - 2010: Exempted due to employment at Choices
- Expectations
  - Work load
  - Competition
  - Grading methods/scales
- Environment
  - Smaller
  - Less intimidating to navigate

# UWindsor: 2010-2012



- Admitted to B.A. (Honours) Disability Studies Degree Completion Program
- Program recommended by St. Clair CYW Program Coordinator (Lynne Sibley)
- Navigated St. Clair College & UWindsor websites
- Would have been helpful to have direct St. Clair-UWindsor link to individual transfer agreements

# UWindsor: 2010-2012 (cont'd)



- UWindsor Disability Studies website was beneficial in outlining the required courses
- Linking with other transfer students and other University students provided support
- Unaware of transfer entrance bursary  
Had to seek individually

**Side note:** Two friends with Lambton CYW diplomas got fewer transfer credits than I did.



# UWindsor: 2012-2014



- Master of Social Work – Regular Track
- Lack of communication about potential admission scholarships (missed scholarship by 1-2%)
- Navigated UWindsor website to determine admission criteria/guidelines
- Benefited again from Lynne Sibley's support/guidance
- Linking with other transfer and UWindsor students provided support

# CYW-Disability Studies BA - MSW



## Overall Experience Provided...

- a diverse educational background
- a variety of practical work experiences
- a variety of networking experiences
- a flexible education path
- an opportunity to develop personally and professionally at an individual pace

Thanks for listening!

