Collaborative Partnerships in Higher Education

In this report, Hanover Research investigates common processes and protocols for establishing an inter-institutional collaboration at the postsecondary level. We begin with an overview of relevant literature, and then present several case studies of existing partnerships in Canada and the United States.
Introduction and Overview

The current state of higher education, with rising tuition costs and an increasingly competitive pool of university applicants, presents a unique opportunity for post-secondary institutions to establish joint ventures for collaborative degree programs. College and university partnerships allow competing institutions to combine resources and offer their services to a larger pool of students who might otherwise not be able to afford or qualify for access to higher education. These collaborations take many forms, and may constitute an agreement between two entities or a system-wide network of institutions.

In this report, Hanover Research explores the protocols and trends seen among post-secondary partnerships. A few basic questions informed our research for this project:

- What ideas and strategies are necessary for creating an inter-institutional collaboration?
- What kinds of policies and protocols exist in successful partnerships between institutions?
- What are the trends among college and university partnerships in Canada and the United States?

We begin with an overview of the relevant literature, including definitions of key terms, main challenges faced, best practices for implementation, and essential elements of successful programs. We then provide case studies for several successful partnerships in Canada and the United States. In our review of available information, we found several underlying trends and commonalities among partnerships in Canada and the United States:

- Early and explicit communication is often cited as one of the most important factors of a successful partnership
- A Memorandum of Understanding helps communicate expectations, goals, and capabilities, and is used in some form within most partnerships
- Resources and facilities from all involved institutions are usually available to students
- Students often must achieve a specific grade point average in order to maintain involvement in a program
- Student needs and opportunities for credit transfer remain at the forefront of all decision-making processes
- Partnering institutions must maintain open flows of communication in terms of curriculum changes, student data, and other crucial factors
The partnerships encountered in our research often differed with regard to several key components, an observation which implies that these aspects are open to interpretation within a university’s unique context:

- Joint or independent admissions process
- Tuition fees and financial aid
- Courses taken at different campuses within semesters or in succession
- Program graduates’ affiliation with individual institutions or both

The case studies portion of this report is divided into two main sections: partnerships that involve collaboration for program delivery, and partnerships that facilitate transfer from college to university. Concurrent and Joint/Integrated programs are featured in the first section, while Degree-Completion programs are presented in the second. Institutions were chosen based on two main criteria: first, we made every effort to profile partnerships that have received acclaim in reputable documentation. A secondary factor was the availability of high-quality information. The collaborations profiled in this report, by type of partnership program, include:

- Concurrent Programs:
  - Brock University and Lambton College
  - McMaster University and Mohawk College
  - University of Guelph-Humber
  - Vancouver Island University and North Island College
  - Oregon State University (U.S.)
  - Portland State University (U.S.)

- Joint/Integrated Programs:
  - University of Windsor and Lambton College
  - York University and Sheridan College
  - Seneca College and York University

- Degree-Completion Programs:
  - Seneca College and York University
  - University of Saskatchewan and Briercrest College
  - University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
  - University of Virginia (U.S.)
  - University of California and California State University (U.S.)

Main sources of information include the Ontario College University Transfer Guide, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, the College-University Consortium Council, the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer, the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, the Saskatchewan Post-secondary Online Transfer Guide, the Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium, and individual websites for colleges and universities.
Overview of Post-Secondary Collaborations

This section provides an overview of key terms, common challenges, guidelines and best practices for creating partnerships, and the potential benefits of successful collaborations.

Definitions of Key Terms

The three main types of collaborative programs that receive our attention in this report include:

- **Concurrent Programs**: Related programs are offered by two partnering institutions, one leading to a diploma and the other to a college degree. The partnership allows students to pursue both credentials simultaneously, and both institutions collaborate on functions such as timetables, funding, and curriculum.

- **Degree-Completion Programs**: A college and university negotiate an articulation agreement such that graduates of a diploma program (or students who have completed a predetermined amount of coursework) receive a specified amount of transfer credit toward a baccalaureate degree. Students then complete additional coursework at the university level. In order to qualify for university entry, the student’s performance within the college diploma (or college coursework) program must satisfy explicit conditions, such as a certain grade point average. This arrangement allows for seamless progression to the university’s degree program.

- **Joint/Integrated Programs**: Two freestanding programs are integrated into one program for the purposes of joint admissions, enrollment, curricula, examination, and administration. The program is planned, maintained, and delivered by partnering institutions throughout the program’s duration and culminates in one degree. Courses may be offered at both institutions within terms or in alternating semesters.1

The method of delivery of each of these program types depends on the nature of the relationship between institutions. Andrew Boggs and David Trick, for the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, identify three main types of college-university arrangements for the delivery of collaborative programs:

- **Bilateral Agreements**: Students apply some portion of the credits earned over the course of a college diploma program toward a university degree in a related discipline. Agreements between two institutions are deliberately

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1“Glossary.” Ontario College University Transfer Guide. www.ocutg.on.ca/search/servlet/search?display=e-glossary
designed to coordinate this process, and students typically receive advanced standing based on the number of credits or courses completed or the attainment of an Associate degree or diploma.

- **Multilateral (or “Open”) Articulation Strategies:** A single university accepts diploma graduates from a select group of colleges into a specific degree program, with or without a formal agreement with the colleges sending students.

- **Concurrent Use Campuses:** Colleges in this model work in collaboration with one or more universities to provide joint diploma and degree programs or coordinated degree articulation opportunities. The main purpose of the concurrent use model is to combine the benefits of what is traditionally characterized as “applied” education from the college system with “academic” or “theoretical” knowledge at the university level.²

Table 1 below demonstrates common characteristics of each type of arrangement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Typology of College University Cooperation³</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sequential attendance at college followed by university</td>
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<tr>
<td>University uses college property or facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students complete baccalaureate degree at a campus other than the conventional university campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>University controls baccalaureate degree requirements</td>
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<td>Formal relationships between one college and one university</td>
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Source: Boggs and Trick, 2009.

Our research concentrates on the first and third models, because requirements for multilateral articulation strategies are generally established by the provincial higher education system or at least by the receiving institution. Conversely, bilateral agreements and concurrent use agreements can be initiated by the sending institution and are therefore more relevant for the purposes of this project.

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³ Ibid., 6.
Challenges Inherent in Partnerships

At the most basic level, colleges and universities are participants in an economic market: they produce goods and services for a fee, and employ common methods, such as hiring more employees, purchasing inputs, and opening new production facilities, to increase production. Especially when student enrollment determines government funding, a partnership between post-secondary institutions is essentially a joint venture between two competing, independent organizations. As joint ventures, institutions face several difficulties in forming and maintaining collaborations with peer institutions, which translate into steps that can be taken to mitigate the process. The list of common barriers to partnerships, as identified by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, is presented below, along with the corresponding recommendations for actions:

- ** Imperfect Formation:** The potential partners may be unaware of each other’s goals and capacities, and learning such information may be costly or impossible.
  - Goals and capacities should be explicitly stated from the outset in a formal Memorandum of Agreement, which provides structure to the relationship.

- **Uncertainty and Immeasurability:** The partners may not be able to accurately assess the quality of each other’s potential contribution and so may tend to undervalue it.
  - Partners should attempt to objectively value in-kind contributions from each participant.

- **Third-Party Effects:** A partner may be reluctant to conclude an agreement with a partner if the relationship negatively effects how the partner is perceived by customers or other influential actors and so causes losses for the partner exceeding the gains from the relationship.
  - Partners should make extensive efforts to ensure that the partnership will not diminish the partner’s reputation with prospective students.

- **Irreversibility:** The partners may be reluctant to make contributions to the relationship that cannot be reversed if the relationship ends (for example, the sharing of intellectual property).
  - Partners need to recognize that success may only come after early attempts are explored and then abandoned after learning more information about each other’s goals, capacities, and incompatibilities.
Absence of Focal Points: Partnerships are facilitated when the partners can see points of likely agreement even before they communicate with each other (e.g., precedents or common interests may make certain points of agreement seem natural or obvious but if there are no such points, agreements become less likely).

- Explicit declaration of focal points and precedents may ease the process of sharing resources.

Non-Unitary Actors: The governance processes of one or both parties may allow constituencies within the organization to veto arrangements that might otherwise produce a net benefit for the organization as a whole.

- Partners should strive to win the support of internal constituencies with potential veto power over the partnership, including governance bodies and organizations representing faculty and staff that may have concerns about reputation and sharing of resources or inputs.

Disincentives to Share Gains: Each partner may have an incentive to overstate the value of its contribution to the venture (as a way of claiming a higher share of the net gains); the aggregate effect of this behavior will be to overstate the costs of the venture, so the gains appear small or nonexistent.

- If partners each exhibit cooperative behavior and reward each other for reciprocation, each will fear that cheating may lead to the end of the partnership and a return to the former competitive relationship.

Enforcement Difficulties: The nature of the relationship may be such that it cannot be fully described in a contract that could be enforced by an authoritative third party (such as a court); this means that the parties themselves must find ways to resolve disputes.

- Partners must make every effort to adhere to each university’s academic policies and procedures, and honor each other’s unique differences.

Uncertainty about External Authorities: An external authority (such as a regulator) may play a constructive role in creating incentives for cooperation, but an authority whose future behavior is unpredictable may have a dampening effect on cooperation as players fear changes in the rules of the game.4

- Partners may establish joint committees for decision-making.5

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4 Ibid., 3. (Italicized bullets quoted verbatim)
In the following paragraphs, we discuss guidelines and recommended actions that contribute to the successful implementation of post-secondary partnerships.

**Guidelines and Recommended Actions**

The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) presents one perspective on the elements that must be incorporated into collaborative partnerships in the early stages, in order to achieve the desired benefits:

- **Transfer of Courses** – A successful partnership includes the ability to apply credit for courses completed at the other institution toward a particular credential.

- **Electronic Data Interchange** – Student information needs to be exchanged quickly and frequently between institutions, so a platform on which student data is exchanged in real time is essential.

- **Student Financial Assistance** – The partnering institution must be officially involved in any financial aid allotments.

- **Formalizing and Maintaining Relationships** – Successful partnerships contain explicit agreements on each institution’s responsibilities, and these agreements are specified at the beginning of the arrangement. As the partnership evolves, formal and informal communication between institutions must continue.6

Another opinion comes from the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT), which outlines six best practices seen among successful block transfer arrangements. Although explicitly intended for transfer agreements, many of these best practices apply to partnerships that encompass more elements than simply course transfer. The list of best practices includes:

- **Strong leadership and administrative procedures**
  - Institution-wide support for the principle of articulation, from leadership through administration to academic experts
  - There is adequate resourcing of the administrative function to coordinate and track the processing of agreements
  - Training and support is provided within institutions to ensure consistency and efficiency

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Early planning for transfer
- Transfer considerations are built into the early development of new courses and other business planning

Sending institutions provide well-prepared and useful articulation requests

High level of trust and strong personal relationships
- Institutions build and support the trust on which articulation agreements depend
- Personal relationships are developed between individuals at sending and receiving institutions
- Have clear goals for both institutions in the process

Putting students’ interests first
- Clear student-centric philosophy
- Transfer processes are communicated to students, and student support is provided

Good maintenance of transfer agreements
- Systems and processes are established to maintain the integrity of transfer agreements as courses change
- Periodic evaluations of the usefulness of an articulation agreement

ACAT’s report on best practices also outlines the protocol for initiating and fostering a partnership. If a college seeks to establish a partnership for an existing degree program or course of study, the first step is to research potential partners. The most appropriate transfer collaborations are those that occur organically under normal circumstances, so the college should explore the universities to which its alumni frequently transfer. This may include universities that already have high rates of transfer, or universities that students would naturally choose if given the opportunity because of similarities in course offerings or geographic proximity. Once the college identifies a particular partner, a meeting is arranged to discuss the potential for transfer programs. Transfer agreements are generally negotiated over a period of six to 12 months.

If the college instead wants to create a new degree program or set of courses based on the collaboration, it begins by sending a proposal. In Alberta, this involves three inspection processes:

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Internally, most institutions have two processes for evaluating a transfer agreement proposal: one that assesses the viability of the proposal and the other that provides an academic review. As well, for most programs which an institution wishes the province to recognize there is an external vetting process through the Department of Advanced Education. Some institutions seek provincial approval after establishing viability; others seek approval after completing the full internal process. The province strongly prefers the latter process.\textsuperscript{9}

The potential for a new program’s compatibility within a transfer agreement must be assessed early in the approval process in order to avoid possible setbacks that include student disadvantages and institutional inefficiencies: First, although student-centric transfer arrangements intend to benefit students by aligning educational goals, participating students are disadvantaged if they do not receive complete transfer credit for courses completed. Second, a proposal that is missing pertinent details can delay the approval process and cause an increased workload and frustration among key players. Therefore, the program and course information must contain all relevant information including instructor level qualifications, course outlines, prerequisite courses, and desired transfer outcomes in order to promote institutional efficiency in the process.\textsuperscript{10} ACAT recommends two processes that ensure transfer remains a central consideration of program development:

- **Committee Processes**, including consideration in formal committee reviews to reinforce transfer as an institutional priority.

- **Administrative Processes** supply information from other service departments to ensure they can accommodate the program’s requirements.\textsuperscript{11}

The content of a program proposal should include three elements:

- **Quality control** – All pertinent information is provided, specifying as clearly as possible desired transfer and instructor requirements.

- **Consideration for intellectual property** – The sending institution must make sure not to infringe on intellectual property by modeling courses too closely on those of the main trading partner.

- **Historic course outlines** – Course outlines from previous years should be considered so that retroactive transfer agreements are possible.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 17, 19.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 20.
Benefits of Successful Partnerships

In addition to adhering to these guidelines and avoiding common pitfalls among joint ventures, partnerships tend to be most successful when they occur under certain circumstances and incorporate essential elements. As identified by the College-University Consortium Council, the following six elements generally signify a successful partnership:

- Student satisfaction
- Program affinity between the college and the university
- A shared vision of university executive heads and college presidents
- Mutual respect between the professoriate at both institutions
- Geographic proximity
- Clearly defined articulation agreements\(^{13}\)

Ultimately, well-organized implementation of a post-secondary partnership provides a guarantee to students who maintain adequate grades in their current college program that they will be able to continue their degree studies at another institution. Other benefits of partnerships include:

- Helping students by giving them more guaranteed and varied options for starting and completing a baccalaureate degree
- Providing a means of recruiting and serving students who begin their guaranteed degree path at a college, assuming that adequate marks are maintained
- Addressing recent concerns held by many college officials that enrollment in their university transfer programs was being curtailed because of a perception among students of a lack of spaces at universities for degree completion
- Ensuring a predictable supply of qualified transfer students for universities and colleges
- Meeting growth targets established through the recent expansion of post-secondary seats in the province
- Allowing colleges and universities to take advantage of different institutions’ areas of expertise in the development and delivery of programs
- Ensuring more effective use of resources, both in terms of reduced duplication of effort at institutions and of students getting full credit for previous learning\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) “College-University Partnership Successes.” The College-University Consortium Council, 1.
Partnerships Involving Collaborative Programming

Due to the unique nature of partnerships that involve collaborative programming and either a single, integrated degree or the synchronized conferral of separate credentials, it is best to let each program speak for itself. In this section, we provide information on six Canadian partnerships and two U.S. collaborations.

Brock University and Lambton College
Type: Concurrent Program

This four-year program allows students to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree in Community Health from Brock University and a Pharmacy Technician diploma from Lambton College. Students complete their first year of study at Brock, and apply to the Pharmacy Technology program at Lambton after acquiring a sufficient grade point average. The second and third years are then completed at Lambton’s Sarnia campus, and after attaining an adequate grade point average, students return to Brock for the fourth year. The degree and diploma are granted simultaneously at the Brock University Convocation. The institutions established a joint admissions committee to determine admissions standards for the program, and Lambton reserves a minimum of ten spaces each year for program participants from Brock.\(^\text{15}\)

McMaster University and Mohawk College
Type: Concurrent Program

The Mohawk and McMaster Joint Venture includes several components, most recently a Bachelor of Technology four-year degree program. Students take classes during the first year at McMaster, with upper level labs in subsequent years either at McMaster or Mohawk, depending on the laboratory facilities required.\(^\text{16}\) Prospective students apply through and pay tuition fees to McMaster,\(^\text{17}\) and have access to information resources and library facilities at both campuses. Successful completion of the program results in a Bachelor of Technology degree from McMaster and a Diploma in Technology from Mohawk.\(^\text{18}\) Other joint offerings from the McMaster-Mohawk partnership include a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and an Advanced Diploma/Bachelor in Medical Radiation Services.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{14}\) Gaber. Op. cit., 1. (Quoted with slight variation)
\(^{16}\) “Program Structure.” McMaster-Mohawk Joint Venture.
www.mohawkcollege.ca/Schools/fet/MeMoPartnership/programs/fourYear/Program_Structure.html
\(^{17}\) “Information for Students.” McMaster-Mohawk Joint Venture.
www.mohawkcollege.ca/Schools/fet/MeMoPartnership/proStudents/prospectiveFourYr.html
\(^{18}\) “Bachelor of Technology Concept.” McMaster-Mohawk Joint Venture.
www.mohawkcollege.ca/Schools/fet/MeMoPartnership/concept.html
University of Guelph-Humber
Type: Concurrent Program

University of Guelph-Humber is a joint venture between the University of Guelph and the Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning. Through four years of full-time study, graduates earn a university honors degree from Guelph and a college diploma from Humber, which together “represent the theoretical knowledge and practical experience gained at the University.”20 Students choose from seven undergraduate programs including:

- Business
- Early Childhood
- Family and Community Social Services
- Justice Studies
- Kinesiology
- Psychology
- Media Studies

Prospective students apply through a unified admissions process at the University of Guelph-Humber. The campus is located adjacent to Humber’s North campus, so students have access to all facilities and resources offered at both institutions.21

University of Windsor and Lambton College
Type: Joint/Integrated Program

Through the Windsor@Lambton BA degree program, students obtain a three-year Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Windsor, while taking courses taught by Windsor professors on the Lambton College campus. Students may also apply to transfer to one of several BA General programs or Honors BA programs at Windsor’s campus without losing any credits.22

Vancouver Island University (VIU) and North Island College (NIC)
Type: Concurrent Program

VIU and NIC offer Bachelor of Arts degrees through two methods of delivery:

- **VIU/NIC Partnership Program:** This option allows students to obtain an interdisciplinary BA degree from VIU while studying at NIC’s Comox Valley
Campus. Courses are delivered by a team of professors from both institutions. The normal residence requirement – 60 credits of VIU courses – is replaced by a minimum of 42 credits of upper level NIC courses and the remaining 18 through either NIC or Open Learning. Students apply for entry to VIU for Year 3 after completion of an Associate degree or the 54 credit minimum of coursework.

- **VIU/NIC Co-Admission Option**: Beginning in fall 2010, the partnership allows for completion of the BA by completing degree requirements at both NIC and VIU. Students “move freely and easily” between campuses, within semesters or in separate semesters. The registrar’s offices at both institutions track students’ progress, and grades are automatically passed to the partner school at the end of each term. Students have access to both institutions’ support services, and loan funding is based on the combined credits at both institutions. Potential students apply directly to VIU and must meet VIU’s general admissions requirements. Those admitted receive an offer of admission from VIU, followed by a second offer from NIC.

**York University and Sheridan College**

Type: Joint/Integrated Program

The York University/Sheridan College Joint Program in Design offers students a four-year Bachelor of Design Honors degree. Design-related courses are taken on both the Sheridan and York campuses, while all other liberal arts courses, including humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, are taken at York. Financial aid is obtained through York and additional scholarships may also be available from Sheridan. Prospective students apply to the joint program through either York or Sheridan, but not both.

**Oregon State University (OSU) and Portland State University (PSU)**

OSU’s Degree Partnership Program (DPP) and PSU’s Co-Admission policy share the mutual goal of increasing access to university degrees for community college students. Table 2 lists all current partners of each university’s concurrent enrollment program.

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23 “VIU/North Island BA Partnership Program.” Vancouver Island University. www.viu.ca/liberalstudies/Program%20.Info/nic%20/regulations.asp
24 “Bachelor of Arts Degree in Liberal Studies.” North Island College. www.nic.bc.ca/program/liberal_studies
25 “Bachelor of Arts Degree – VIU/NIC Co-Admissions Option.” North Island College. www.nic.bc.ca/program/bachelor_of_arts_vancouver_island_university_north_island_college_co_admissions_optio
27 “About YSDN,” YSDN. design.yorku.ca/bdes/about-ysdn.php
28 “Application FAQs,” YSDN. design.yorku.ca/bdes/app-faqs.php
Table 2: Current Community College Partners of OSU\textsuperscript{29} and PSU\textsuperscript{30}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OSU Partners</th>
<th>PSU Partners</th>
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<td>Blue Mountain Community College</td>
<td>Chemeketa Community College</td>
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<td>Central Oregon Community College</td>
<td>Clackamas Community College</td>
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<td>Chemeketa Community College</td>
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<td>Clatsop Community College</td>
<td>Mt. Hood Community College</td>
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<td>Columbia Gorge Community College</td>
<td>Portland Community College</td>
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<td>Hawaii Community College (Big Island)</td>
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<td>Lane Community College</td>
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<td>Linn-Benton Community College</td>
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<td>Oregon Coast Community College</td>
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<td>Portland Community College</td>
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<td>Southwestern Oregon Community College</td>
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<td>Tillamook Bay Community College</td>
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<td>Umpqua Community College</td>
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Source: OSU Degree Partnership Program and PSU Co-Admission

Oregon State University – Degree Partnership Program

OSU’s program was implemented in 1998 as a partnership between the University and Linn-Benton Community College. The two institutions are geographically close, and 85 percent of Linn-Benton transfer students were already transferring to OSU. Many of these transfer students began taking university level courses while still enrolled at Linn-Benton. The DPP was essentially created to assist students in navigating barriers to concurrent enrollment in both programs, and the first three degree programs within the partnership were those that already had high levels of dual enrollment. These so-called “high-swirl” subject areas had sufficiently similar curriculum, prerequisites, and graduation requirements, so enrolling in both programs concurrently was a natural method of saving money for many students.

Prospective students apply to both programs through a joint, online process with one application fee, but must meet the admissions criteria for OSU in order to enroll in the DPP. Students then enroll in courses separately at OSU and the desired community college partner and pay tuition fees to each institution. Student records are shared between partners. The original OSU and Linn-Benton collaboration has been identified as a leader in the area of dual-enrollment partnership programs. Stakeholders from the partnership have identified the following actions as guidelines for achieving a successful collaboration:

\textsuperscript{29} “OSU’s DPP Partners.” Oregon State University. oregonstate.edu/partnerships/students/partners.html
\textsuperscript{30} “Co-Admission.” Portland State University. www.pdx.edu/admissions/coadmit.html
Establish at the outset a Memorandum of Understanding that is explicit about all aspects of the partnership

Begin with a manageable pilot project, preferably in a “high swirl” program area

Use only a single application process that is web-based

Make use of electronic data interchange technology to share student transcripts, records, and financial aid information quickly and efficiently

Do not create add-on processes for a partnership program but integrate into current systems whenever possible

Develop and record transfer and articulation arrangements

Maintain regular communications among staff and faculty at both institutions

Portland State University – Co-Admission

PSU’s co-admission policy was also implemented to facilitate concurrent enrollment processes that were already occurring among students. Within the PSU Consortium, students who meet all of the admissions criteria set forth by PSU gain entrance into all five of the participating institutions. A Coordinating Council of presidents of each institution governs the Consortium, and staff members conduct ongoing policy analyses to determine the student impacts of various institutional practices.

PSU touts the following student-oriented benefits of its co-admission program:

Most affordable route to your degree
One application for both the community college and Portland State
Portland State academic advisers available at all campuses
Library privileges at both the community college and Portland State
Coordinated financial aid and scholarship opportunities
Free transcripts sent to Portland State by the community college each term
Increased opportunities for study abroad and internships
Computer lab access at both the community college and Portland State
Optional access to a variety of services at the community college and/or Portland State

32 Ibid., 2.
Partnerships Emphasizing Transfer Agreements

Transfer agreements are widespread in Canada and the United States, and it is therefore much easier to find information about standard protocol and best practices for these initiatives than for the more collaborative arrangements profiled in the previous section.

There are two main kinds of transfer agreements. The first type is known as credit transfer, and may be based on either transfer courses or transferable courses:

- **Transfer courses** are developed by the sending institution in order to accomplish the main objective of transferring to a receiving institution. Curriculum may be modeled after similar courses at the receiving institution, and generally ensure specific course equivalence.

- **Transferable courses** may be developed as a component of the sending institution’s diploma or degree program, and provide sufficient similarity to comparable coursework at receiving institutions. Specific course equivalence may be granted in some cases, or clusters of courses may fulfill general institution or degree requirements.34

The second type of transfer agreement involves program articulation, such that the first year or years of a program ladder into the second or third year of another institution’s degree program. These are often called “One Plus One” (1+1) or “Two Plus Two” (2+2) agreements, and transfer credit may be awarded either as advanced standing within the receiving institution or through what is known as a block transfer. A block transfer is defined as the process through which a block of credits is granted to students upon successful completion of a certificate, diploma, or sequence of courses, such that the completed coursework is recognized for its academic wholeness, integrity, or relevancy for a specific degree program or credential.35 The BCCAT identified six models of block transfer systems that can provide inspiration for developing a bilateral, inter-institutional partnership:

- **Model 1: System-Wide Transfer** – The transfer process is more systemic than bilateral, such that all first and second year courses from all member institutions form the inventory of transferable courses within the province. Program outlines are reviewed for equivalency but individual courses are assumed to be worthy of credit.

- **Model 2: General Educational Core Curriculum (GECC) and the “First Year Transfer Program”** – Institutions determine the skills and knowledge

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that should be attained through GECC and then create an outline of the courses or the types of courses that help students reach those outcomes. Such a program would incorporate the liberal ideals of GECC and be flexible enough to accommodate the exploratory function of first year coursework, and each receiving institution specifies the degree programs that accept transfer students.

- **Model 3: Standardized Pre-Major Curriculum** – Each institution agrees on the common curricular elements that must be incorporated into the first and second year, often using a specialized task force to discuss alignment of curriculum. A sending institution may reconfigure its associate degree to emphasize a combination of both the first year transfer program and a standardized concentration in a given discipline.

- **Model 4: Flexible Pre-Major Program** – This model provides an alternative to standardization, and allows collaborative committees to agree on what constitutes an acceptable set of lower division courses for entry into a degree program in the third year. For example, a six-course lower division, flexible pre-major program may include two or three common required courses and a list of acceptable alternatives for the remaining courses. Conversely, the committee may simply establish a list of acceptable courses with no standard requirements, or just a set of principles to govern the selection of courses.

- **Model 5: Learning Outcomes Model** – Outcomes of the sending program are compared with the entry requirements of the receiving program through an established set of desired learning outcomes. Transferability may be determined by the sending or receiving institution or it may be collaboratively agreed upon. It may constitute desired knowledge, skills, abilities, and even the attitudes of students, and assessment may occur through examinations, portfolios, or interview.

- **Model 6: Descriptive Pathways Model** – The final model provides a method of informing students of the most efficient paths to full transfer. Institutions collaborate to produce what is known as a “transfer grid” listing all recommended or acceptable courses for each institution. The grid provides the benefit of allowing students to know exactly how to transfer two full years of credit to the intended degree program.36

In the following paragraphs, we provide detailed information about three Canadian partnerships and two U.S. arrangements, as well as a table demonstrating general trends among transfer agreements in Canada.

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Seneca College and York University
Type: Degree-Completion Programs, Joint/Integrated Program

The purpose of Seneca’s partnership with York University is to provide additional access to degrees for college students. According to the College-University Consortium Council, the York-Seneca collaboration is a

…ground breaking and unique articulation agreement [that] has facilitated a seamless transition into a baccalaureate degree for aspiring college students. The model continues to be cited as an excellent example of joint college-university programming and forms the basis for the development of future transfer agreements between programs and their respective institutions.

Seneca graduates are eligible for transfer after completing two full semesters or a four-semester academic diploma with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0, although some programs have additional requirements. Table 3 lists some of the individual collaborations between Seneca and York.

Table 3: Degree Completion Agreements between Seneca College and York University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seneca Program</th>
<th>York Degree</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineering Technology</td>
<td>Bachelor in Environmental Studies</td>
<td>Graduates who meet admission requirements are eligible to enter the third year of the four-year Bachelor in Environmental Studies program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
<td>Graduates who meet admissions requirements are eligible for a maximum of 30 transfer credits (5 university courses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting and Finance</td>
<td>Bachelor of Administrative Studies</td>
<td>Graduates who meet admission requirements are eligible for a maximum of 45 transfer credits (7.5 university courses) for the General BAS degree and 48 transfer credits (8 university courses) for the Honors BAS degree. For admission to the BAS, students must also complete relevant mathematics and statistics courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Health Science</td>
<td>Any relevant major</td>
<td>Up to 12 transfer credits (2 university courses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism – Broadcast</td>
<td>Any relevant major</td>
<td>Up to 24 transfer credits (4 university courses)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Seneca College, Degree Transfer Guide

In addition to these and other articulation agreements with York, Seneca has a joint Liberal Arts degree that involves concurrent enrollment at both institutions and results in a BA from York University. After completing the first year of the Liberal Arts program with a minimum 3.0 GPA and two York-approved Seneca courses,

students are eligible to take a summer course at York as part of their degree studies.\textsuperscript{40} Students continue by taking another summer course at York and then enter the University in the third year of the Bachelor of Arts program.\textsuperscript{41}

**University of Saskatchewan (U of S) and Briercrest College**

Type: Degree-Completion

The transfer agreement between U of S and Briercrest College represents an example of a partnership between public and private entities. Students who complete at least one year (a minimum of 30 credit units) of a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or program at Briercrest, with an average of at least 60%, will be accepted into the U of S College of Arts and Science with at least 50% of their eligible Briercrest credit units applied as block transfer credit. This agreement does not cover Bible Certificates and Discovery Certificates. Transferable courses satisfy distribution requirements (Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, or Fine Arts), major requirements, or electives. The written transfer agreement provides recommendations for aligning coursework as well as a list of Briercrest transferable courses by distribution area.\textsuperscript{42}

**University of Saskatchewan (U of S) and Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST)**

Type: Degree-Completion Program

Students who complete the SIAST Chemical Technology diploma program may transfer to the four-year or honors chemistry programs at the U of S with advanced credit standing (full block transfer credit of 60 credit units, corresponding to third-year standing). The written articulation agreement lists requirements for completion of the remaining credit units at the U of S, as well as the limit for lower level credits. It also contains the complete list of courses that must be completed for block transfer.\textsuperscript{43}

In order to better illustrate differences in transfer agreements within institutions and specific courses of study, Table 4 provides examples of typical block arrangements between institutions in Canada’s Atlantic provinces.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{41} “Liberal Arts.” Seneca College. www.senecac.on.ca/fulltime/LAT.html

\textsuperscript{42} “Articulation Agreement Between the College of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan and Briercrest College.” 2006. University of Saskatchewan, 1, 3-9. www.saskcat.ca/transferguide/UploadedFiles/ProgramAgreementDocs/5111/1_Briercrest_Agreement_Final.pdf

\textsuperscript{43} “Articulation Agreement Between the College of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology.” 2007. University of Saskatchewan, 1, 3. www.saskcat.ca/transferguide/UploadedFiles/ProgramAgreementDocs/5113/1_Siast%20Chem%20Tech%20Arctic%20Agreement.pdf
Table 4: Examples of Block Transfer Agreements among Institutions in Atlantic Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sending Institution</th>
<th>Transferrable Program or Block</th>
<th>Receiving Institution</th>
<th>Block of Credit Granted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of the North Atlantic</td>
<td>College/University Transfer Year</td>
<td>Memorial University</td>
<td>One-for-one credit transfer equivalent to first year university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of the North Atlantic</td>
<td>Common First Year for Technology Programs</td>
<td>Nova Scotia Agricultural College</td>
<td>12 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of the North Atlantic</td>
<td>Journalism (1 year)</td>
<td>Athabasca</td>
<td>30 credits toward Bachelor of Professional Arts – Communication Studies degree. Students are required to present an additional 30 credits prior to admittance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland College</td>
<td>Computer Engineering Technology</td>
<td>Northern Alberta Institute of Technology</td>
<td>May receive two years of credit toward Bachelor of Applied Information Systems Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland College</td>
<td>Computer Engineering Technology</td>
<td>Memorial University</td>
<td>Transfer to fourth year of the Bachelor of Technology Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland College</td>
<td>Journalism (2 years)</td>
<td>Royal Roads University</td>
<td>Entrance into the third year of the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Communication Degree Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick Community College</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>UNB – Saint John</td>
<td>2 years credit toward a Bachelor of Applied Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia Community College</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>Royal Roads University</td>
<td>Grades with “B” average will be admitted with full block transfer to Bachelor of Commerce in Entrepreneurial Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia Community College</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>Acadia University</td>
<td>Granted maximum of 60 credit hours toward 120 credit hours degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Guide to Block Transfer Agreements, Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium

The U.S. examples provided in the following paragraphs are slightly different from those profiled previously in this section. These examples illustrate a multilateral relationship between community colleges and universities within each state’s public higher education system, rather than the bilateral arrangements presented in the Canadian examples.

University of Virginia (UVa)

UVa’s Guarantee of Admission does not allow dual or concurrent enrollment, but instead provides a guarantee of admission for Virginia community college graduates who meet stringent criteria. Admissions requirements include:

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An Associate Degree, completed in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) within the two-year period prior to applying to the university

> At least 54 transferable credit hours with at least 34 of them from the VCCS

> A minimum GPA of 3.4 in VCCS coursework

> At least a B grade in VCCS English courses and at least a C in all other VCCS courses

> Specific course requirements for admission to the College of Arts and Science

Upon satisfying all criteria, students enroll in the third year at UVa. A four-year degree requires 120 credits, 60 of which must be completed at the university level.

University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) Systems

The transfer role of each campus within the UC and CSU systems is determined by state legislation, and receiving universities are required to give qualified transfer students priority over new first-year students. General education courses are articulated for transfer at a system-wide level, through the Chancellor’s Offices of the two public university systems. Pre-major requirements for specific programs are articulated at the institution level. The California Intersegmental Articulation Council facilitates the progress of students between and among the various legs of California’s postsecondary education system, including community colleges, public universities, and private universities. The highly detailed system of communicating articulation requirements ensures that graduates of California community colleges are able to transfer credits to university degree programs with no loss of completed coursework. Prospective students apply to universities of their choice upon completion of an Associate degree program.

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45 Gaber. Op. cit., 2. (Quoted verbatim)

46 “Guaranteed Admission Agreement.” University of Virginia and Virginia Community College System.


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