What is Reverse Transfer?

- The process of retroactively granting associate degrees to students who have not completed the requirements of an associate degree before transferring from a two to a four-year institution.

- Degree is awarded by the community college, but information exchange is required of both the senior college and the community college.
Benefits of Reverse Transfer

- Awards associate degrees to students who have earned them
  - An associate degree, on average, increases the lifetime income of graduates by $180,000 compared to those with just some college¹

- Improves community college graduation rates, and provides a more accurate depiction of degree completion than now accounted for by IPEDS data

- Contributes to state & national degree completion efforts

¹. The College Payoff,” Anthony Carnevale, Stephen Rose, and Ban Cheah, The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
2003-04 University of Texas at El Paso and El Paso Community College- Title V funded grant to develop a fully automated reverse transfer system using degree audit and student information system

- 1st year (2006-07) 228 degrees awarded (still manual system)
- 2nd year 244 degrees awarded
- 3rd year 344 degrees awarded
- 4th year 1166 (2009-10) (year automated system came online)
2011/12 “Credit When its Due” CWID initiative -funded by Lumina, Gates, Kresge, Helios & USA Funds. Up to $500K grants to develop reverse transfer programs

National demonstration project to determine if 12 state-wide systems can facilitate reverse transfer process: Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Oregon

- By 2014 four states yielded significant numbers during pilot phase
  - Hawaii (732); Ohio (594); Maryland (452); Minnesota (924)

Evaluation underway by Office of Community College Research and Leadership at University of IL [updates on CCRL Web site]
Ten states have reverse transfer legislation and policies that require public institutions to retroactively award associate degrees to eligible students.

By 2014 statewide reverse transfer policies were in effect in 20 states – allowing or requiring RT:

- Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia.
New York Efforts

- SUNY- Awarded $500K Lumina grant to develop automated RT infrastructure using Degree Works

- SUNY identified 6000 students that transferred from community colleges in fall 2011 that met minimum eligibility requirements for RT

- Approximately 2000 students will meet degree requirements at their CC or origin

- SUNY tries to match credits earned with any associate degree (based on student focus groups)
New York Efforts
SUNY

- Developed list of “mobility courses”- introductory/lower level courses that frequently transfer

- Student transcripts from senior college are sent to community college to be integrated with their data for a local degree audit

- Employs an “opt out” consent policy to allow student information to be transmitted across campuses

- No data yet available on actual numbers of degrees awarded
Key Features of Reverse Transfer

- **Student Identification**: ability to identify eligible students, establish eligibility criteria, determine scope and create a centralized data mining operation that does batch processing to select students.

- **Consent**: FERPA issues to be considered with student record exchange- students opt-in or opt-out models in play.

- **Transcript exchange**: methods range from fully electronic to manual. the more manual, the less effective.

- **Degree Audit system**: effective technology infrastructure and support- ability to automate degree audit function, currency and maintenance of course equivalency systems and tables

- **Degree Conferral and Advising**: Strategy for who confers the degree, how and when students are advised
Balcony View
Implementation Issues

- Involves multiple factors- policy oversight structure, technology, funding and student identification
- Technology infrastructure- critical to success and key component to implementation and degree conferral
- Long-term funding and staffing- consider means to institutionalize the process
CUNY Efforts
Bronx Initiative

• In 2013, Lehman College, Hostos Community College, & Bronx Community College began a joint initiative to implement reverse transfer

• In the two academic years since then, Hostos and BCC have awarded a total of 38 and 39 associate degrees via RT
  • Students who are in good academic standing and who have earned at least 60 credits, including at least 30 credits at Hostos or BCC, are eligible
  • Lehman electronically transmits the list of eligible students to BCC and Hostos who evaluate student records to determine graduation eligibility
  • Students who have met the degree requirements are contacted (by mail, email, and phone) and are invited to apply for graduation though a simple electronic form
  • Students apply for graduation, and degrees are granted at the end of the term
CUNY Efforts
Queens Initiative

• Queensborough Community College also began a reverse transfer initiative in 2013

• In the first two academic years, QBCC awarded 63 associate degrees through reverse transfer. It has awarded another 55 in 2015
  – QBCC uses a similar process to that of Lehman, Bronx, and Hostos, but the primary difference is the process for identifying eligible students is initiated at the community college rather than the senior college (allowing QBCC to identify students at multiple senior colleges, including Queens, Baruch, Hunter, York, John Jay, City College, and Brooklyn)
Bringing Reverse Transfer to Scale - Opportunities at CUNY

As a unified system of community colleges and senior colleges, CUNY is uniquely positioned to bring reverse transfer to scale:

- We can leverage commonly shared data systems such as Degree Works and CUNY first.
- Course equivalencies have already been established throughout the system (although these have typically been established to accommodate the transfer of credits from community to senior colleges (see “Challenges”)).
- Pathways Common Core and Major Gateway courses mean that coursework taken to fulfill general education and early major requirements at one CUNY college will automatically satisfy those requirement at another college.
- CUNY’s comprehensive colleges have associate programs that perfectly articulate to related bachelor’s programs; thus it should be a simple matter to award an associate degree to a transfer student en route to his or her bachelor’s degree.
Bringing Reverse Transfer to Scale - Issues and Challenges at CUNY

- Course equivalencies (which are one-to-one) can limit credit transfer opportunities
  - Since senior colleges tend to offer more courses than community colleges, many courses taken at the senior colleges have no equivalent at the community colleges—requires waivers, manual reviews.

- Specified curriculum in community colleges—need more flexible requirements or develop a generic CUNY AA/AS.

- Currently, reverse transfer relies on a time-sensitive manual review
  - The planned upgrade to Degree Works should mitigate much of this.
  - The Central Office can perform data mining and matching to identify likely reverse transfer candidates for the community colleges.
Bringing Reverse Transfer to Scale - Issues and Challenges at CUNY

- Publicizing should be considered carefully so that it does not encourage early transfer from the community colleges
  - So far, early transfer initiatives at CUNY have only been marketed to students who have already transferred
  - No evidence suggests that existing initiatives have encouraged early transfer

- Currently, CUNY students must apply for the degree once they are notified that they are eligible (i.e. they must opt into the program)
  - At SUNY, students who transfer from a community college to a four-year institution are automatically enrolled in the reverse transfer program unless they opt out of it
  - We should consider what policy makes most sense at CUNY
Discussion & Next Steps

- University-wide planning group convened to develop guidelines and implementation procedures
- Central Office will provide master files for each college with potentially eligible students
- Receiving colleges will review files to determine eligibility and contact eligible students