Reverse Transfer/En Route
Associate Degree

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT
2016-17

Reverse Transfer Council
October 16, 2017
A. BACKGROUND

The Reverse Transfer Task Force first met on October 5, 2015 at the request of Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost Vita Rabinowitz. Chancellor Milliken had identified the implementation of a system-wide Reverse Transfer initiative as a University priority. Although CUNY strongly encourages students to fulfill associate degree requirements prior to transferring from community colleges, students still choose to transfer before conferral for many reasons. CUNY wants to ensure that those students receive the credentials they have earned.

In the first year (2015-16) of the Reverse Transfer initiative, the task force was charged with creating policies and implementation procedures. Working groups developed implementation models and prepared concrete guidelines, work plans, and processes. The task force comprised college provosts, deans, and administrators, as well as central office deans and administrators.

In the second year (2016-17), with policies and procedures in place, the task force evolved into the Reverse Transfer Council, with a focus on incorporating Reverse Transfer into normal business practices at the colleges. This is the second annual report, covering Year Two (2016-17).

Please note that En-Route degrees are defined as associate degrees earned via Reverse Transfer at the CUNY comprehensive colleges (see page 8).

B. PROJECT GOALS

The Reverse Transfer Council began 2016-17 by determining four goals for the year, as well as Expected Tasks, Milestones/ Deliverables, and Project Metrics for each. The Status under each goal illustrates the progress made over the year.

Goal 1: Review Opt-in approaches and implement standard policy CUNY-wide. The Reverse Transfer Task Force decided that the CUNY-wide policy should be an “opt-in” policy (as opposed “opt-out”). Therefore, students must affirm that they want an associate degree. During Year One, different colleges sought student consent in different ways, with varying success. Our goal is to make the process of consent as smooth as possible, while at the same time ensuring that students are informed of their choices.

2016-17 Expected Tasks: Assess various ways colleges have gathered student consent (website, emails, etc.) and determine the best method to be deployed CUNY-wide. For example, consider the logistics and implications of adding language to the CUNY-wide application so students can opt in at the point of admission. Work with registrars/admissions/CIS to implement.

2016-17 Milestones/Deliverables: Opt-in method determined; language developed and approved (legal, etc.); opt-in method implemented CUNY-wide.
Progress Metric(s): Feedback from colleges—is the opt-in process smoother? Increase in number of student numbers opting in.

Status: In Progress. We assessed the ways in which colleges gathered student consent (website, emails, etc.) during the first year and found that the most effective methods were labor-intensive (combining several of said methods) and still resulted in too many students who did not receive their earned degrees simply because we were unable to get their consent (many failed to respond). It is clear we need a more proactive and far-reaching approach.

After discussing options, we determined that the best method would follow the opt-in model used for Pathways within CUNYfirst, allowing students to provide consent for Reverse Transfer at the point of transfer.

The next technical steps (expected to be completed in late November 2017) are:

- CUNYfirst Student Center – Checklist will be linked to an opt-in form, to be developed by repurposing the Pathways opt-in form. It will appear in the To Do list of every new transfer student.
- Via form – Opt-in will mark the checklist Complete – decline will mark the checklist Cancelled – and remove from student self-service in CUNYfirst.
- Colleges will be able to run queries based on these checklists to do extra communication if needed.

Goal 2: Hone roles and processes so that Reverse Transfer is “business as usual.” In Year One, we developed models—able to be implemented immediately—to get the initiative off the ground. In Year Two, the Reverse Transfer Council will assess and revise the processes.

2016-17 Expected Tasks:
A. Improve the workflow and communication processes at and among colleges.
   - Define a more active role for the senior colleges (proactive advisement, sharing lists of eligible students, student communication).
   - Alleviate labor-intensive processes by making decisions up-front. There are many student-by-student considerations (requirement terms, waivers/substitutions, overlays and writing intensive courses, residency requirements, etc.). Colleges can be pro-active and leverage faculty expertise to determine guidelines for these issues, document those guidelines, and fold them into normal practice.
   - Nail down roles/who needs to be involved. Figuring out how best to serve individual students requires managing logistics across several offices/departments.

B. Continue to assess and revise policies.
   - Continue periodic meetings of the Reverse Transfer Council.

2016-17 Milestones/Deliverables: Annual Report

Progress Metric(s): Feedback from colleges—are processes in place and less labor-intensive?
**Status: Completed.** This is an ongoing goal, and we will always seek to improve processes, but colleges have successfully advanced the goal of making Reverse Transfer “business as usual.”

In Year One, we emphasized the roles of community and comprehensive colleges. In Year Two, senior colleges became more involved via practices including: communicating with community colleges about lists of students and pre-approved substitutions, waivers, and equivalencies; adjusting students’ baccalaureate degree requirements in CUNYfirst and Degree Works according to CUNY Pathways policies; and tracking graduations of Reverse Transfer students. All colleges now have select users with view only access to all instances (all colleges) in Degree Works, which helps with advising.

Colleges have further defined their internal roles and practices, and they have strengthened communications among colleges. Senior colleges have become more active partners, especially in terms of advisement and communications to students. However, there is still room for improvement in communication among community and senior colleges, which we will continue to develop in Year Three.

We have provided individual technical and policy support to colleges to ensure that all parties know how to code correctly in CUNYfirst (using the REV code). We have created an FAQ webpage for consistency and transparency. We have communicated to college leadership the critical importance of evaluating Transfer Credit Equivalencies, not only for the Reverse Transfer, but for typical transfer, ePermit, and *Evaluate My Transfer Credit* in CUNYfirst. And the central office plans to establish a new PMP indicator to track colleges’ progress on Transfer Equivalencies.

OIRA continues to provide potential eligible students lists, customized for each college, twice per year. We have arranged for Tumbleweed access for key Reverse Transfer staff, to deliver the lists securely. In addition, OIRA has begun to provide lists of students who have left CUNY (stops outs). Further, OIRA will help ensure that senior colleges know when their students receive Reverse Transfer degrees by periodically generating lists. OIRA continues to look for ways to better help colleges identify potential students and make the screening process easier.

We have held regular and productive meetings of the Reverse Transfer Council throughout the 2016-17 academic year. We will also update the Reverse Transfer manual.

**Goal 3: Incorporate technology in new ways.** We expect to revise processes as systems are upgraded and change, as new tools and functions that will assist in the process are likely to emerge from the Degree Works upgrade and evolving changes to CUNYfirst.

**2016-17 Expected Tasks:** Adjust processes to accommodate technology changes (e.g., Degree Works upgrade and *Evaluate My Transfer Credit* in CUNYfirst). Evaluate how other systems such as ePermit and the transfer application process could be modified to support Reverse Transfer. Consider how currently available features, such as CUNYfirst student groups and To Do lists, could support Reverse Transfer.

**2016-17 Milestones/Deliverables:** Annual Report
**Progress Metric(s):** Reports from the field, product demonstrations

**Status: In Progress.** We have made adjustments to accommodate technology changes, and there will be more to come. We have provided instructions to colleges on how to identify writing intensive coursework in CUNYfirst and how to pull transfer rules in both directions in CUNYfirst (Omnidirectional Equivalency spreadsheets). Colleges can also use the RTP (Reverse Transfer Program) Positive Service Indicator in CUNYfirst to track students.

CIS has presented the new *Evaluate My Transfer Credit* in CUNYfirst to the Reverse Transfer Council. However, *Evaluate My Transfer Credit* is student-facing only and requires a CUNYfirst login (not available to anyone outside of CUNY). Without TIPPS, there is no public-facing function to look up equivalencies, and even within CUNYfirst, the transfer equivalency feature is not intuitive and not a sufficient replacement for TIPPS. We are still in a transition period.

As part of the recent Degree Works upgrade, we expect to have a *Transfer Finder* component in spring 2018.

**Goal 4: Consider expanding the pool of eligible students.** We kicked off the Reverse Transfer initiative by focusing on students transferring within CUNY. Explore approach to reaching stop outs.

**2016-17 Expected Tasks:** Consider reaching out to students who have stopped out and left CUNY altogether. These could include students who have ended their college careers or have transferred outside of CUNY. Considerations include FERPA constraints, logistical processes, communications, etc.

**2016-17 Milestones/Deliverables:** Proposed plan

**Progress Metric(s):** Plan and Annual Report

**Status: In Progress.** OIRA has begun to provide lists of students who have left CUNY (stops outs) as potentially eligible for a Reverse Transfer degree. Associate-granting colleges are exploring ways to reach out to these students and award degrees. Colleges have begun to report out on progress, but implementation is not expected until Year Three.

Also, the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) asked CUNY to join its Reverse Transfer initiative and exchange lists of potentially eligible students with other colleges, most notably in New Jersey and in the SUNY system. We are in the initial stages of this partnership; CUNY lawyers have reviewed the amendment to CUNY’s established contract with NSC. We will need to consider how colleges can incorporate the increase in volume of student screening into their business practices, as well as how to obtain FERPA waivers from students to share academic information (a similar challenge as obtaining student consent). But, we are hopeful that a newly proposed bill, the Reverse Transfer Efficiency Act of 2017 (H.R. 3774), which CUNY signed on to support with 16 other higher education systems and several higher education associations, will pass. This act will create an exemption under FERPA to allow easier sharing of student credit information between institutions.
C. OUTCOMES for 2016-17

CUNY awarded 1,071 associate degrees in 2016-17 via the Reverse Transfer process. This is an increase of 465 over the 606 associate degrees awarded during the same period in 2015-16.

**Associate Degrees Awarded through Reverse Transfer**
**Preliminary Fall 2016, Spring 2017, and Summer 2017**

*Degrees Conferred:* Reflects all associate degrees shown as awarded with program reason ‘REV’ in the Administrative Data Warehouse on Sept 27, 2017.

*Students Eligible for Review:* Baccalaureate degree-seeking students with at least 60 total credits at the beginning of either Fall 2016 or Spring 2017 who completed at least 30 credits at a community college with a GPA of 2.0

**Reverse Transfer Degrees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Students Eligible for Review</th>
<th>Number of These Students Reviewed</th>
<th>Students Deemed Eligible and Notified</th>
<th>Degrees Conferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMCC</td>
<td>2027</td>
<td>1644</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guttman</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostos</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCC</td>
<td>1314</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAGCC</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCC</td>
<td>1231</td>
<td>1231</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>6327</strong></td>
<td><strong>4374</strong></td>
<td><strong>706</strong></td>
<td><strong>320</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**“En-Route” Reverse Transfer Degrees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Students Eligible for Review</th>
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<th>Students Deemed Eligible and Notified</th>
<th>Degrees Conferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYCCT</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>751</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL: 1,071
## Associate Degrees Awarded through Reverse Transfer
### Preliminary Fall 2015, Spring 2016, and Summer 2016

Reflects all associate degrees shown as awarded with program reason ‘REV’ in the Administrative Data Warehouse on Oct 21, 2016.

### Reverse Transfer Degrees

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMCC</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guttman</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostos</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCC*</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAGCC</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCC**</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total     | 4035                        | 2680                             | 524                                   | 236               |

### “En-Route” Reverse Transfer Degrees

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<tr>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total     | 370                         |                                  |                                       | 606               |

* KCC chose to review records of only students who opted in, which is why all students notified received degrees.

** QCC found additional students who were not on their original eligibility lists and thus awarded more degrees (73) than the number deemed eligible (65) from their original list.
En-Route Reverse Transfer Degrees: Comprehensive Colleges

The comprehensive colleges have a broader pool of potentially eligible students. In addition to reviewing students with the same eligibility criteria as students at the community colleges, the comprehensives can review their currently enrolled bachelor’s degree students to see if associate degrees had been earned.

We categorized all Reverse Transfer associate degrees awarded by comprehensive colleges as En-Route Reverse Transfer Degrees, to be clear that these students began their college careers at the same comprehensive college and did not transfer to another college.

D. REVIEW PROCESSES

During Year Two of the Reverse Transfer/En Route Associate Degree initiative, colleges improved their processes for reviewing the records of potentially eligible students.

Community colleges tried to review all or most potentially eligible students (lists provided twice annually by OIRA). To get through the volume, community colleges strategized about which students to review first, such as: students with majors less specialized and therefore more likely to result in a degree (i.e., first Liberal Arts, then Business Administration, then other majors), students with the highest credit counts, students eligible to graduate without substitutions/waivers, etc.

OIRA continues to look for ways to better help colleges identify potential students and make the screening process easier. Further, OIRA will help ensure that senior colleges know when their students receive Reverse Transfer degrees by periodically generating lists.

But, the number of potentially eligible students will only increase as we expand to include stop outs and begin our partnership with the National Student Clearinghouse.

Senior colleges worked with community colleges to update student records and ensure that student advisement reflected the new associate degree, which could affect courses (e.g., number of College Option courses needed) and financial aid.

E. COMMUNICATING WITH ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Community colleges were encouraged to work with senior colleges to correspond with students, who may be more likely to open/respond to communications from their current colleges. Senior colleges emailed potentially eligible students when prompted by community colleges, or they worked together on co-branded messages. Senior colleges also trained advisors to be on the lookout for potentially eligible students during advising and orientation sessions.

Email was the primary method of communication (sometimes via Hobson’s Retain), but colleges also reached out to students by letter and by phone. When possible, emails were sent to both college and personal email addresses. Some colleges included a link to an opt-in form or to a graduation application; some requested an email reply.
A major hurdle to communication is outdated/incorrect contact information.

CUNY strongly encourages students to fulfill associate degree requirements prior to transferring from community colleges. We want to be sure not to encourage students to leave community college without their associate degrees. However, senior colleges can promote the initiative through their advisement offices, transfer orientations, etc.

F. PROBLEMS, ISSUES, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

This first two years of CUNY-wide implementation of the Reverse Transfer/En Route Associate Degree initiative was a great start. Colleges have incorporated Reverse Transfer practices into their normal business processes. They have also identified hurdles to growth.

Problems and Issues
Similar to Year One, in Year Two colleges struggled with:

- Time and staff required to review students’ records
- Time and staff required to reach students to opt in (with many students not responding)

Many colleges reported that the screening process is labor-intensive, especially when drilling down to individual students and figuring out how best to serve them, which requires managing logistics across several offices. Communication within the colleges as well as among community colleges and senior colleges is essential. There are many student-by-student considerations: requirement terms, waivers/substitutions, overlays and writing intensive courses, residency requirements, etc.

The biggest obstacle remains student opt in. However, we are optimistic that the proposed CUNY-wide opt-in via CUNYfirst will move us toward solving this problem.

Recommendations

1. Review Transfer Credit Equivalencies: All academic departments should review their current transfer credit rules and evaluate courses that have not yet been evaluated. The following areas are impacted:
   - Typical transfer students – Colleges are using CUNYfirst to automatically evaluate transfer credits based on the equivalencies as defined by the college.
   - ePermit – When a student applies for an ePermit, they are presented with equivalency options as defined by the college.
   - Evaluate My Transfer Credit – Since TIPPS is no longer an available tool, all students (and prospective students) have the ability to conduct an unofficial evaluation in their Student Center. This evaluation relies completely on the transfer credit equivalencies.
   - Reverse Transfer – Equivalencies can help make the awarding of a Reverse Transfer Associate degree a more streamlined process.
We suggest that academic departments start by reviewing CUNY-to-CUNY course equivalencies for their particular area of expertise. When updates are necessary, they can be done by campus admissions and/or registrar’s office. Faculty likely already have a contact person for this type of request.

2. Continue to plan for time and staff needed for Reverse Transfer, including reviewing the records of potentially eligible students and coding Reverse Transfer degrees in CUNYfirst (REV).

3. Colleges have the flexibility to make allowances in the best interests of students when determining substitutions, waivers, and equivalencies. Ensure that senior-level members of the colleges’ Academic Affairs offices are an integral part of the Reverse Transfer team and these decision-making processes.

4. Develop lists of pre-approved substitutions/waivers/equivalencies. Alleviate labor-intensive processes by making decisions up-front. There are many student-by-student considerations (requirement terms, waivers/substitutions, overlays and writing intensive courses, residency requirements, etc.). Colleges can be pro-active and leverage faculty expertise to determine guidelines for these issues, document those guidelines, and fold them into normal practice. Share lists of pre-approved substitutions/ waivers/ equivalencies among colleges.

5. Community colleges: Share lists of students who are three to six credits short of an associate degree, and work with senior college able to provide advising about which courses to take.

6. Continue to propose ideas to the Reverse Transfer Council on how to improve the Reverse Transfer processes and policies.
Reverse Transfer Council

The Reverse Transfer Council is responsible for the success of the CUNY-wide Reverse Transfer initiative. The Council comprises a variety of roles and positions at all colleges, and Council members have different responsibilities related to Reverse Transfer.

The Council Chair is Lucinda Zoe, University Dean for Undergraduate Studies, CUNY Central.

Edward Adams, Senior Registrar, Baruch College*
Mohammad Alam, Enrollment Registrar Director, Borough of Manhattan Community College
Deborah Conway, Assistant Registrar, Borough of Manhattan Community College*
Monica Rivera, Associate Registrar, Brooklyn College*
Karen Thomas, Enrollment Registrar Manager–Special Projects, Bronx Community College*
Thomas Castiglione, Senior Registrar, City College*
Veronica DiMeglio, Curriculum Coordinator, College of Staten Island*
Diana Babb, Registrar Specialist, Guttman Community College
Jazmin Lopez, Coordinator of Academic Administration, Guttman Community College*
Terrence Brown, Deputy Registrar, Hostos Community College*
Felix Cardona, Assistant Dean, Hostos Community College
Aylin Brandon, Registrar, Hunter College
Shirley Pierre-Louis, Assistant Registrar, Hunter College*
Juan Reyes, Associate Registrar, Hunter College
Kathy Killoran, Academic Director of Undergraduate Studies, John Jay College*
Sumaya Villanueva, Senior Director, Academic Advisement Center, John Jay College
Madalena Carrozzo, Associate Registrar, Kingsborough Community College*
Davida Cooper, Associate Registrar, Kingsborough Community College*
Bart Grachan, Director of Transfer Services, LaGuardia Community College*
Yvette Rosario, Senior Registrar, Lehman College*
Tatian Mejic, Regisrar, Medgar Evers College*
Pamela Brown, Associate Provost, New York City College of Technology*
Otilia Abraham, Director of Academic Advising, School of Professional Studies*
Laura Silverman, Director of Advisement, Queens College*
Linda Reesman, Faculty Fellow OAA, Queensborough Community College*
Ann Tullio, Registrar, Queensborough Community College
Sharon Davidson, Registrar, York College*

Karen Kapp, University Director of Academic Planning and Administration, CUNY Central
Chris Buonocore, University Director of Course and Transfer Information, CUNY Central
Stephen Sheets, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, CUNY Central
David Crook, University Dean, Institutional Research and Assessment, CUNY Central
Robert Maruca, Associate University Provost for Planning, CUNY Central

* Several Council members also serve as their colleges Reverse Transfer Liaison, who is the team leader at the college with additional responsibilities, including: developing their college’s team, acting as point-person for all communications and dissemination to appropriate offices, communicating with other Reverse Transfer Liaisons, tracking and reporting progress, and managing data transactions.