Reverse Transfer/En Route Associate Degree

YEAR-END REPORT
2015-2016

City University of New York
Office of Academic Affairs
Reverse Transfer Task Force
November 1, 2016
The Reverse Transfer Task Force was convened at the request of Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost Vita Rabinowitz to implement a CUNY-wide Reverse Transfer initiative by the end of the 2015-16 academic year. Chancellor Milliken identified implementation of a system-wide Reverse Transfer initiative as a University priority. Our community colleges encourage students to fulfill associate degree requirements prior to transferring, but students choose to transfer early for many reasons. It is important for CUNY to ensure that students are awarded the credentials they have earned and will be of professional and academic value to them. To this end, the Reverse Transfer Task Force prepared a work plan based on three sub-goals, listed below as goals 1, 2, and 3. The Reverse Transfer Task Force had its first planning meeting on October 5, 2015 and continued to meet monthly through May 2016. This report summarizes the work of the Reverse Transfer Task Force and the outcomes of year one.

**PROJECT GOALS**

**Goal 1:** Develop implementation models for colleges to use immediately. This incremental process will provide models that get the initiative off the ground in the first year, but will evolve once the Degree Works upgrade is complete.

**2015-16 Tasks:** Define criteria for student eligibility; design data query to identify eligible students at senior (four-year) colleges and provide them with the data; draft written procedures and implementation plans based on the Lehman Model and QCC Model; Identify and draft process and best practices for advisors and transfer coordinators at senior and community colleges (including recommendation to develop curriculum maps for all programs); identify policy issues that need to be addressed CUNY-wide and draft policies.

**2015-16 Milestones/Deliverables:** Implementation plans and models completed; policies drafted and disseminated via a Reverse Transfer Manual.

**Progress metric(s):** Implementation models shared with colleges; Best Practices for Advisors & Transfer Coordinators Guidelines completed and disseminated; Policies drafted and disseminated.

**Status: Completed**

**Goal 2:** Identify systems requirements between colleges and develop procedures and technology protocols for data exchange to deliver and share student records and transcripts for the short-term and the long-term (pre- and post-Degree Works upgrade).

**2015-16 Expected Tasks:** Develop data exchange protocols, instructions, and plans that are campus compliant.

A. Develop data exchange protocols, instructions, and plans for colleges.
1. Develop three query reports with workflow that colleges can run as needed to review, validate, and update equivalency rules. A number of existing queries have been located by CIS to satisfy these needs without developing new reports or queries, and they are included in the Reverse Transfer Manual.

2. Complete two outstanding C5s (Change Requests) for the “Evaluate My Transfer Credit” functionality in CUNYfirst. [As of November 2016, this functionality (for use by students, not administrators) is almost ready. But this student-facing functionality will have only a small impact on Reverse Transfer.]

3. Complete the pending C5 to recreate the Consolidated Transcript in CUNYfirst. Completed.

4. Request a new C5 to modify the external course catalog to include a long description within the catalog entry. This will assist faculty with deciding on the CUNY equivalent for maintaining non-CUNY transfer credit rules. [CIS does not have the resources to complete this task in a timely manner. Fulfilling this request would likely require a funding for the procurement of outside programming. However, this functionality is desirable but not essential. An alternative is to consider a University-wide subscription to the Transfer Evaluation System service.]

2015-16 Milestones/Deliverables: Clear systems requirements and implementation plan drafted and disseminated to campus Reverse Transfer implementation teams.

Progress metric(s): Implementation progress reports from colleges.

Status: Partially completed. See details above for each area. All incomplete tasks are systems issues related to staff resources.

Goal 3: Monitor and track progress of the campus implementation and degrees awarded.

2015-16 Expected Tasks: Set up protocol and reporting format and templates for reporting; identify trends in transfer; prepare year-end summary report.

2015-16 Milestones/Deliverables: Reporting protocol completed and disseminated; year-end report completed.

Progress metric(s): Number of colleges with initiative operational by July 2016; year-end reports; number of degrees awarded by college.

Status: Completed

PROCESS

The Task Force prepared the Reverse Transfer Manual to help colleges set up their own processes for the degree audit and certification processes. The manual addresses process, policy, and technology requirements and logistics. It includes model programs, sample procedures, and best practices. Each
colleges were given the tools to create a model and process based on their unique organizational structure and division of labor across divisions.

College Reverse Transfer liaisons were appointed by the Provosts in December 2015; the manual was completed and distributed in February; OIRA prepared and distributed lists of potentially eligible students—based on the criteria set by the Task Force—to the colleges at the end of February 2016; colleges had from March through May to filter their lists, conduct degree audits, contact students, and award degrees in June 2016.

OUTCOMES

We awarded a total of 606 associate degrees in 2015-2016 via the Reverse Transfer process.

**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Students Eligible for Review, Spring 2016</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>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>
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<td>0</td>
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<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>
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<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>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4035</strong></td>
<td><strong>2680</strong></td>
<td><strong>524</strong></td>
<td><strong>236</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Students Eligible for Review, Spring 2016</th>
<th>Number of These Students Reviewed</th>
<th>Students Deemed Eligible and Notified</th>
<th>Degrees Conferred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>NYCT</td>
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<td>Staten Island</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>370</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 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 could 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 college and did not transfer to another college.

**FILTERING/REVIEW PROCESSES**

Colleges approached this initial round of the Reverse Transfer/En Route Associate Degree initiative using different strategies to manage reviewing the often large numbers of students potentially eligible for a Reverse Transfer associate degree.

Many community colleges chose a subset of the pool to review. For example, one community college grouped students by majors and focused on majors that were less specialized and therefore more likely to result in a degree (i.e., first Liberal Arts, then Business Administration, then other majors). Another community college started with students with the highest credit counts, then focused on students eligible to graduate without substitutions/waivers, then finally focused on those who needed 12 or fewer credits of substitutions/waivers.

Another community college sought student consent from the full group of potentially eligible students before reviewing any files, and reviewed only those students who opted in, to help narrow down the pool. (Most colleges notified students and requested consent only after confirming that they were eligible for degrees.)

Senior (four-year) 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.

**PROCESS/Mechanisms for Communicating with Eligible Students**

Community colleges were encouraged to work with senior (four-year) colleges to correspond with students, who may be more likely to open/respond to communications from their current colleges. Some 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, 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.

**Students Approaching Colleges to See If Eligible**

The practice of reverse transfer should be communicated as an option for students who have not completed their associate degrees before transferring to senior (four-year) college, not as an opportunity for community college students generally. (Currently attending students should be strongly counseled against transferring out of the community college before completing the associate degree.)

However, the senior colleges may choose to promote the initiative through their advisement offices to encourage students to inquire about the program. Students can then be advised to take courses at the senior college that would fulfill degree requirements for an unfinished associate degree.

To date, only a handful of students have taken the initiative to approach colleges (“walk-ins”) to ask about their own eligibility.

**PROBLEMS, ISSUES, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD**

This first official year of CUNY-wide implementation of the Reverse Transfer/En Route Associate Degree initiative was a successful initial cycle, but we expect this to be an incremental process. Now that the initiative is underway, we will address the challenges that emerge, share ideas and practices, and hone the process.

Most colleges reported that the process can be 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 (four-year) colleges is essential. There are many student-by-student considerations: requirement terms, waivers/substitutions, overlays and writing intensive courses, residency requirements, etc. Staff time is a big concern. Many colleges requested support from Central.

Colleges proposed features, such as a student group in CUNYfirst, to help track students.

The CUNY-wide policy is an “opt in” policy, in which students actively affirm that they wish to receive the associate degrees (as opposed to an “opt out” policy). So far the opt-in policy has been employed differently at different colleges, and with varying success (many students do not opt in), and we will assess what works best both for the students and for the colleges. For example, one community college allows students to opt-in electronically via a special form on its website. Another asks for an email response.
Many colleges proposed that changing the timing of the opt-in could make a big difference, such as including it with the admissions and/or transfer applications so that students have already opted in at the point of admissions. The committee is exploring such options.

A more defined and active role for the senior (four-year) colleges will be considered in the next round: from more proactive advisement, to greater sharing of lists eligible students, to assistance with communication with students.

Considerations for the future include plans to reach out to students who have stopped out and left CUNY altogether. We also expect to revise the manual 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. CUNY may evaluate how other systems such as ePermit, DegreeWorks, and the transfer application process could be modified to support reverse transfer.

Reverse Transfer Task Force

Lucinda Zoe, University Dean for Undergraduate Studies, CUNY OAA (Chair)  
Anny Morrobel-Sosa, Provost, Lehman College (Co-Chair)  
Paul Marchese, Provost, Queensborough Community College  
Karrin Wilks, Provost, Borough of Manhattan Community College  
Felix Cardona, Assistant Dean, Hostos Community College  
David Crook, University Dean, Institutional Research and Assessment  
Robert Maruca, Associate University Provost for Planning, CUNY OAA  
Annamarie Bianco, University Registrar  
Chris Buonocore, University Director of Course and Transfer Information  
James Anastasio, Computer Information Systems/Information Technology  
Karen Kapp, Director of Administration and Grants, CUNY OAA  
Kathy Mone, Finance Manager, CUNY OAA  
Stephen Sheets, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment  
Yvette Rosario, Senior Registrar, Lehman College  
Ann Tullio, Registrar, Queensborough Community College  
Linda Reesman, Faculty Fellow in Academic Affairs, Queensborough Community College  
Laura Silverman, Director of Advisement, Queens College  
Bart Grachan, Director of Transfer Services, LaGuardia Community College

Working Groups

Policy

Charge: This provost-led group will identify the policy issues that need to be addressed by the colleges or be addressed CUNY wide. Determine what policies and curricular issues and changes colleges will need to pay attention to in–house (waivers, for example, for residency or overlay requirements) and what policies the Task Force will draft for CUNY-wide use (for example, degree requirements at senior college after associate degree awarded).

Karrin Wilks, Lead
Anny Morrobel-Sosa
Paul Marchese
Laura Silverman
Annamarie Bianco
Bart Grachan
Paul Marchese

**Systems CIS/IT**

*Charge:* Identify and stay on top of technical/system issues related to successful implementation including C5 for the query report tool for keeping equivalencies updated, Degree Works upgrade progress updates, changes needed in CUNYFirst or DGW to facilitate smooth transfer, recommendations and guidelines to the college CIS/IT units to prepare for, support and sustain an ongoing reverse transfer process.

Annamarie Bianco, Lead
Jim Anastasio
Bob Maruca
Stephen Sheets
Chris Buonocore

**Logistics**

*Charge:* Consider, review and draft on the ground logistics for implementation based on experience from the Hostos and Queensborough implementation. Who does what and how; what offices need to be involved; what do transfer evaluators need to know and do; what are the duties and responsibilities of the advisement office etc. Deliver instructions, guidelines and best practices for implementation.

Felix Cardona & Ann Tullio, Leads
Bart Grachan
Yvette Rosario
Laura Silverman
Ann Tullio

**Administrative**

*Charge:* Support working groups, compile & edit final manual, manage year-end reporting process; manage and archive Task Force materials for each access.

Lucinda Zoe
Karen Kapp
Kathy Mone
### Reverse Transfer Liaisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baruch</td>
<td>Edward Adams</td>
<td>Senior Registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>Monica Rivera</td>
<td>Associate Registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>Karen Thomas</td>
<td>Associate Registrar</td>
</tr>
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<td>BMCC</td>
<td>Deborah Conway</td>
<td>Assistant Registrar</td>
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<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>Thomas Castiglione</td>
<td>Senior Registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSI</td>
<td>Veronica DiMeglio</td>
<td>Curriculum Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guttman</td>
<td>Marissa Schlesinger</td>
<td>Associate Dean of Academic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostos</td>
<td>Johana Rivera</td>
<td>Associate Dean of Student Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>Shirley Pierre-Louis</td>
<td>Assistant Registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>Juan Reyes</td>
<td>Registrar's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Jay</td>
<td>Kathy Killoran</td>
<td>Academic Director of Undergraduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBCC</td>
<td>Davida Cooper</td>
<td>Associate Registrar</td>
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<td>KBCC</td>
<td>Madalena Carrozzo</td>
<td>Associate Registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaGCC</td>
<td>Bart Grachan</td>
<td>Director of Transfer Services</td>
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<td>Lehman</td>
<td>Yvette Rosario</td>
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<td>Medgar</td>
<td>Tatiana Mejic</td>
<td>Registrar</td>
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<td>NYCCT</td>
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<td>Associate Provost</td>
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<td>Otilia Abraham</td>
<td>Director of Academic Advising</td>
</tr>
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<td>Queens</td>
<td>Laura Silverman</td>
<td>Director of Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCC</td>
<td>Linda Reesman</td>
<td>Faculty Fellow, OAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>Sharon Davidson</td>
<td>Registrar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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