

Stakeholder Summary

Study examines 12 years of student transfer between Seneca College and York University

Students with strong grades have the most success after transferring between college and university, according to a new study from the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO). Looking at more than 14,000 students who transferred between Seneca College and York University from 2000 to 2012, the study also found that transfer students who are younger and/or female are more likely to persist to graduation after transferring from college to university. Younger students are also more likely to complete their education faster after transferring from university to college, but gender was not a significant factor.

Project Description

Transfer Pathways in Postsecondary Education: York University and Seneca College as a Case Study followed 9,330 students who transferred from Seneca to York and 5,413 who transferred from York to Seneca over the 12-year period. The study examined the effects of student demographics, program details and academic factors on credential attainment and time to completion. Demographic factors included gender, language spoken, immigration status, age, neighbourhood income and parental education. Program details examined were admission basis, program of entry, program length, relatedness of pre- and post-transfer program and transfer credits granted. Academic factors included course type and final marks in grade 12 English, credential attainment at the sending institution and cumulative GPA at both institutions. For students transferring from Seneca to York, aspirations for university at point of entry to college were also examined.

Findings

For those moving from college to university, the amount of transfer credits awarded was a significant factor for both graduation rate and time to completion. Although the average amount of transfer credit provided by York was 26.5 credits (equivalent to almost one full year of study), transfers who went on to graduate with a degree were provided, on average, 30 credits at transfer, compared to 21 credits for those who did not. Transfer credits may also be tied to the impact of program choice on success after transfer. College students who selected university programs that matched their previous program graduated faster than other students. The authors argue this is likely due to the ability of students to use their transfer credits for electives and program requirements.

Immigration status was an area that showed differences based on the direction of the transfer. Permanent residents and visa students were more likely to graduate compared to Canadian citizens when transferring from college to university. However, visa students who transferred from university to college were less likely to graduate than Canadian citizens.

The type of credential had an impact for both types of transfer. For college to university transfers, students enrolled in a four-year honours degree program completed faster than the standard program length compared to those enrolled in a three-year degree program. This may be attributed to the increased flexibility in the way in which four-year students can allocate transfer credits. This same pattern exists in university to college transfers. Students pursuing a certificate or graduate certificate completed their program faster than the standard program length, compared to those in diploma programs.

*Authors of *Transfer Pathways in Postsecondary Education: York University and Seneca College as a Case Study* are Richard Smith, Sylvia Lin and Robindra Sidhu from York University and Henry Decock and Ursula McCloy from Seneca College.*