

Finding Success Through Student Mobility

A Synopsis of three university to college pathways for remediation



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CHAPTER 1: THE ONTARIO COUNCIL ON ARTICULATION AND TRANSFER AWARDS THREE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FOR ACADEMIC REMEDICATION

1.0 BACKGROUND

In 2015 the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) invited funding proposals from Ontario universities and Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology for pathway development projects. Three university/college partners – The University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT)/ Durham College, Trent University/Fleming College and York University/Seneca College – who have both regional proximity and long standing histories of collaboration, submitted three separate proposals with similar characteristics.

Although each project had distinct differences, ONCAT recognized similarities that gave merit to a potential collaboration between the three development groups. Some of the major commonalities that existed include but are not limited to, the following:

- Each project proposal outlined a pathway proposal that was focused on academic mobility where the university was the sending institution;
- The proposals had an aspect of academic redirection and remediation;
- All three programs proposed some form of credit transfer between the university and college partner.

These similarities sparked a desire to allow each project to proceed independently, but with central collaboration that allowed for discussion and inquiry through the project development phase of each proposal. The culmination of this dialogue and the lessons learned by each project team is contained in this report. It is the hope of ONCAT and the six participating universities and colleges that the information contained in the following chapters will assist other institutions who wish to collaborate on academic redirection and remediation programs that involve credit transfer. Finally, this paper will focus solely on the project development phase of the three pathway programs. As all three programs are still in their implementation phases, there are not sufficient data to report on student success and program progression. In the case of successful implementations of all three projects, it could be valuable to consider future research on student success from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective.

1.1 FINDING A COMMON THEME

One of the hypotheses at the onset of the project proposals was that it would be possible to identify some sort of commonality between the project development learnings among the proposals listed above. While the projects had very different trajectories, there were some similarities observed, when they were compared synoptically. Perhaps the most striking commonality between the three projects is that the major challenges seemed to focus more on the logistical aspects than on the curriculum development, and in the case of UOIT/Durham and York/Seneca, the implementation process. This is not to say that curriculum development challenges did not exist, just that there seemed to be an emphasis on the challenges experienced across promotion, admission, communication, academic and non-academic logistics, and academic advising.

Most other challenges and successes that were experienced are uniquely individualized to each of the respective projects. With this outcome, all project teams had some sort of learning from the process of program development. Finally, the ensuing chapters are organized in a similar fashion, in order to address the program development phase of the three chapters synoptically. However, due to the distinct objectives of each project there are some small differences in presentation.

CHAPTER 2: UNIVERSITY TO COLLEGE REMEDICATION PATHWAY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND DURHAM COLLEGE

2.0 PROJECT SUMMARY

Some students have difficulty in achieving success in the first year of study. Programs are intensive and do not include capabilities to recover from academic deficiencies. A mechanism is needed for students to break off from their program, and address their specific deficiencies, before returning. The University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) and Durham College have developed a pathway for enhanced academic success to support students requiring remediation. The proposed pathway is done in such a way that successful students will be eligible to earn a general arts and science certificate concurrently with the continuation of their University degree.

In the academic success pathway, students that have been suspended from UOIT will be given the opportunity to enter a Durham College program that will address academic success related deficiencies. The students will undergo an assessment process to identify their specific needs and will have access to academic advisors at both institutions for guidance. Upon successfully completing the program, the student returns to University with a position reserved in their program of study; allowing for a semester reduction in the time lost due to suspension.

The program also allows for the student to recognize that they are not in the right program or at the right academic level and thus may choose to transfer to the College or apply to switch University programs during the remedial semester. Regardless of the pathway taken, the student is provided the opportunity to be successful in obtaining the academic education that they are suited for.

2.1 LESSONS LEARNED

The following is a summary of the challenges and opportunities that were faced by the project group while developing this pathway program. These 'lessons learned' are representative of program development only, and do not focus on student achievement in the program and subsequent academic progression. The project challenges and opportunities have been categorized into four major development areas – conceptualization, curriculum development, logistics and academic governance –

to better display the types of learning that was gained through the project's course. As many of the lessons learned can be very institution specific, an effort has been made to generalize for the benefit of the reader.

2.2 CONCEPTUALIZATION

The UOIT-DC project was submitted to ONCAT as a funding proposal in the spring of 2015. The initial concept of the project grew out of the need for a remedial track for university students who were in academic jeopardy. At the time of the project conceptualization, UOIT had one of the lower year 1 to year 2 retention rates (81% vs the Ontario Average 86.6% based on CSRDE methodology) in the Ontario system. Furthermore, students that failed to persist to year 2 had virtually no options, except an academic appeal, to mitigate a possible suspension from the university. These challenges had led to open discussions across the university about possible retention mechanisms that could be employed for student success.

The strong academic and working relationship that the university had with Durham College allowed for a unique solution to the university's retention issues: Development of a college level remediation track. With a growing comfort level on academic pathways between the college and the university, collaboration on this project came relatively easy. This existing relationship also allowed for the formation of a dynamic project team, that consisted of academic, administrative and student development staff, many of whom had previously collaborated well.

Once the project team was assembled, and the funding submission was sent to ONCAT, there was considerable back and forth between UOIT (who was designated the project lead) and ONCAT to understand the uniqueness of the proposal. The project team had significant discussions on defining the scope of the project; main themes included:

- Project scope: should the program fit all academic disciplines at UOIT or just select programs?
- Transfer credit: the program allowed for the transfer of university credits to the college credential, but did not allow for college credits to transfer back to the university after the remedial program; should this be considered?
- Project intake: timing and potential enrolment were large question marks, should the program only run in the summer, and how many students could potentially enroll?
- Mode of delivery: should the program be online, face to face or hybrid?

In the end, the group decided that college to university transfer was outside of the scope of the project. The team also opted for a summer remedial term only, with a forecasted enrolment of between 40 students. After much discussion, it was decided that an in-class delivery would be the predominant learning mode, with some instructors free to incorporate a hybrid component to their courses.

2.3 CURRICULUM

The goal of the curriculum development group was to create a fundamentally sound program; and their hope was that Durham College's existing General Arts and Science (GAS) program could be used as a framework for developing a remedial program for the university. This would allow for students who are

successful in this program, to transfer university credits to the college after program completion and earn a GAS certificate concurrently with a university degree, while benefiting from academic remediation at the college.

The curriculum team agreed that before the GAS curriculum was evaluated, a set of learning outcomes would be developed in the areas of numeracy, literacy, and academic preparation. These outcomes would be used as the guideline with which to evaluate the college curriculum for the proposed goal of academic remediation to the university.

As the team began their work they decided to build a program option for all academic disciplines at the university. This required the development of variable learning outcomes to ensure students had the appropriate core competencies for reentry to their home program. After evaluating the curriculum, there were some major changes that had to be incorporated within student development and literacy courses, and only minor changes to the proposed math courses. The group decided that to round out the program, students would take an additional 2 elective courses that could be discipline specific; this would allow for more customization in building remedial packages for students.

Once the curriculum development was underway the group began discussions on the program across the university academic community. The Associate Provost was tasked with introducing the concept to the Decanal group for senior leadership feedback and support. The project team worked directly with various Faculty Council and Academic Advisor groups for feedback and support. On the College side, the team member from Durham College discussed the curriculum changes with the college academic community. The major themes of the discussion were:

- Deans liked the control that their advising units could have over the elective courses to add for program customization
- There was discomfort with the idea of allowing transfer credit from the college remedial program back to the university. This ultimately helped the project team to abandon the idea of two way transfer as outside of the project scope
- College faculty and administration were reluctant to modify curriculum, and wondered if the effort involved with overhauling a program would be realized with sufficient enrolment to run the program.
- Academic Advisors at both institutions had very few questions on curriculum, but had many questions on logistics and academic progression. This group was revisited by the logistical team for further discussion.

After campus wide discussions were conducted at both institutions, there was agreement that the university would adopt the elements of the GAS curriculum, with some modification, for the remedial option for students in academic jeopardy. In short, this agreement was the largest hurdle on the curriculum development side, as it would have been improbable that the college would have built 4 new courses to accommodate the university's desire for a remedial option with unknown potential enrolment.

2.4 LOGISTICS

At the same time that the curriculum team was redeveloping the GAS courses, a sub-group of administrators started discussing how in practice, students would be able to move seamlessly between the 2 institutions, while conforming to both institutions general academic regulations. Discussion with non-academic units included but was not limited to, the office of the registrar, financial aid and awards, scheduling, records and registration, enrolment services, admissions and recruitment, communications and marketing and student life. These interactions allowed for a fulsome discussion and the identification of major challenges. These included:

2.41 Enrolment Management

- The College's summer session start date was before academic standing was released at the university. This resulted in the college agreeing to start the students in the second week of term, making the necessary adjustments with faculty and administration. To accomplish this short turnaround time, the university managed a phone campaign to call students who had just been suspended to explain the remedial program, and the college conducted multiple on-the-spot admissions and registration sessions for students.
- There were concerns over the actual number of students who would enroll in such a program. The university had a little over 400 year 1 students on suspension, but it was guesswork to forecast enrolment.
- There were challenges for international enrolments, as many students who were on country specific scholarships (ex. King Abdullah Scholarship Program for Saudi Arabian students) were not able to keep their funding. Students were able to pay tuition outside of these programs if they wished.
- Due to the quick turnaround from university suspension to the program start date at the college, the students generated a significant number of unanticipated requests for knowledge associated with college and university transfer options.
- Despite the short turn around, a number of students from outside the target cohort attempted to access the remediation program, even some who were not suspended but who felt could benefit from further academic success training. As these students were outside the projected pathway, they generated additional registrarial related issues that were unanticipated.
- Students tried to enroll in the remedial program while attempting an academic appeal at the same time. This created hesitance for the student to register and pay fees at the college. Most university Faculties recommended the college remedial program in lieu of granting an appeal.
- To share enrolment data between the 2 institutions, a data sharing protocol (already in place between DC and UOIT) was leveraged.

2.42 Finances

- Ensuring the program was eligible for student financial assistance was important. This required all student registering in a full-time course load in a certificate level program to meet eligibility. This program format also ensured the college would receive government funding for the program.
- Many students paid an initial enrolment deposit for the program, but waited on appeals at the university before paying their full tuition. Much effort was made to explain to students that they are attending a separate institution, and that their fees would need to be paid regardless of an appeal outcome.

2.43 Student Development

- Transitioning a student from one accessibility office to another with a 5 day turnaround was challenging. Students may receive different levels of accommodation or support at either institution depending on the institutions policies or guidelines, and the differences in requirements for the programs at each institution may be confusing and stressful for students; especially with the tight turnaround time.

By May 13 most of the enrolment unknowns were abated, as 96 students registered for the program. In fact, there was so much interest that a waitlist was developed, despite the college employing an exceptionally short turnaround to increase the pilot program capacity by 240%. In the coming years, it is likely that up to 50% of year 1 suspended students may opt into the program.

2.5 GOVERNANCE

The way in which the remedial program was sent through academic governance at both institutions took some time to develop fully. On the university side, there was discussion if the entire curriculum needed to be accepted through formal governance channels. In the end, it was decided that what actually needed to be approved was not the curriculum itself, but rather an adjustment to the university's suspension policy. In short, the university governing body approved to allow students to readmit to the university on probation with the completion of the college remedial program; effectively waiving the second half of the students' suspension.

On the college side there were some management and procedural changes during the project development phase. This resulted in the reevaluation of aspects of the project including the need to receive approval from the Program Proposal Review Committee. These changes caused additional hurdles to the project but ultimately resulted in a stronger pilot project offering

CHAPTER 3: STUDENT REDIRECT INITIATIVES AT TRENT UNIVERSITY AND FLEMING COLLEGE: UNIVERSITY TRANSFER EXPANSION

3.0 PROJECT SUMMARY

Fleming College's (Fleming) General Arts & Science – University Transfer (UT) program and Trent University (Trent) collaborated to develop and facilitate a process for redirecting students facing suspension from Trent within business and the sciences, which account for the highest rate of academic suspension across Trent programming.

Prior to the beginning of the project, the UT program presented a social science and humanities emphasis through its multidisciplinary approach to literature, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. This program attracts students wishing to survey the humanities discipline; lack the academic credentials to meet university admission requirements; or previously attempted university studies. In addition, Trent and Fleming entered into an informal redirect upon admission agreement in 2014 to give an option to unqualified Trent applicants a pathway to achieve a degree in four years.

The goal of this project was to develop streams within Fleming's one-year UT certificate program and facilitate second-year entry into strategic Bachelor of Science majors and the Bachelor of Business Administration program, in addition to the existing pathway which supports Bachelor of Arts second-year entry and limited transferability into the Bachelor of Science degrees. This pathway will have three distinct entry points: traditional Fleming recruitment and admission processes, Trent's redirect upon application, and Trent's suspension redirect process. A redirected suspension student will complete the certificate and transition into second-year studies of a degree program; this is identical to a student who entered into the UT program through Fleming's traditional recruitment and admission process or Trent's re-direct upon application process.

Students accessing the UT program at Fleming via the suspension redirect process will be eligible to obtain transfer credits towards their certificate at Fleming. The project team acknowledges that some students facing suspension from Trent could have had success in varying courses during their first year of study that may be deemed equivalent to courses in the program specific streams in the UT program at Fleming. Although transfer credits can be assigned it will not expedite completion time for the certificate but may exempt students from studying in a full course load.

Both institutions are committed to the project's implementation and success; the UT streams provide a unique opportunity to those students that wish to survey humanities, science and business disciplines, lack the university admission requirements, or as an alternative to Trent's academic suspension policy.

3.1 CONCEPTUALIZATION

The UT pathway between Fleming and Trent has been a longstanding success for both institutions and the students it serves. The initial discussion of this project began at a meeting between Fleming and Trent administration in early May 2015. During that meeting, an expansion was proposed to the existing UT pathway where Trent would redirect suspended students to Fleming's General Arts & Science UT instead of Trent enforcing the traditional one-year suspension from the university. Trent highlighted the need that any redirect or suspension redirect pathway would need to allow seamless second-year entry into specific Bachelor of Science majors and the Bachelor of Business Administration program because of their persistently high first-year suspension rates (approximately 10% of the incoming cohort is faced with suspension at the end of their first academic year).

Early in June 2015, a decision was made to develop stream options within the existing UT program. The project team performed an analysis of Trent's first-year major requirements that identified key courses that required development for the business and science streams. Additionally, Fleming faculty identified the courses that are integral to the UT program, which ensures student success and maintains its program vocational outcomes. The courses deemed integral are mandated program requirements of the three-stream options.

3.2 CURRICULUM

As the curriculum development stage of the project approached, the teams at Trent and Fleming agreed that the conversation for course development would need to be collaborative and focus on establishing UT streams that supported the foundations of related degree programming. Thus creating a program that would work from a preparatory point of view and solidify the fundamentals needed to be successful in the students selected degree program.

Trent and Fleming reached a consensus on which streams and corresponding courses would have the greatest mutual benefit. As part of the curriculum development process, Fleming faculty reviewed Trent's course outlines and consulted with Trent faculty when necessary regarding textbook selection and delivery patterns. Fleming consulted Trent faculty early in the development process to ensure the courses would meet Trent's equivalency threshold.

Courses developed include Preparatory Calculus, Calculus I (60 hrs.), Calculus II (60 hrs.), Biology I (60 hrs.), Biology II (60 hrs.), and Introduction to Management. Fleming is working towards operationalizing the multiple streams.

Fleming has included an equivalent preparatory calculus course in addition to the two calculus equivalents. This preparatory course ensures that students have the necessary background knowledge and understanding to succeed in an introductory university calculus course. Further, it allows students without a high school grade 12 U mathematics credit access to the UT - Science stream.

Understanding the overall project goal of on-time degree attainment and the timeline, the team chose to approach the design and curriculum assessment in a unique approach.

The proposed streams have been mapped in a way that ensures students have the prerequisites to provide entrance in program specific second year courses. The proposed streams create a seamless

transfer into the following Trent degree programs: Business Administration (BBA), Economics (BA or BSc), Biology (BSc), Math (BA or BSc), Psychology (BA or BSc), English Literature (BA), Philosophy (BA) and Sociology (BA). Students are able to apply for, and declare majors outside of these listed programs, but not all transfer credits may be usable towards degree requirements nor would students have the prerequisites to enter directly into the second-year of the desired program.

Trent's transfer equivalency database was reviewed following the development of the curriculum map to determine which Fleming courses may already have been deemed equivalent and could be worked into the pathway without requiring additional course development. The benefit of this approach was it allowed the team to adhere to project deadlines. Further, it allows course delivery at Fleming to be viable as a single course spans multiple college programs.

This preliminary work allowed Trent to make recommendations to Fleming regarding course development. Devising a curriculum map in the preliminary stages allowed for a more focused course development.

Following the preferred curriculum map, department heads and designated faculty members at Fleming and Trent were asked which courses would best fit in the new streams. The initial step in the curriculum analysis was to share current Trent course outlines with Fleming. This provided Fleming faculty the framework to ensure the courses had enough learning outcome overlap to constitute an equivalency following development. Subsequent to the distribution of the course outlines, subject matter experts met to explore course pedagogy and delivery pattern nuances.

Following the meetings, faculty began ongoing email consultation and collaboration. Once Fleming had established a skeletal course outline, learning outcomes, lecture and seminar topics, it was shared with Trent. Trent subject matter experts reviewed the skeletal outline and, if appropriate, awarded an 'in-principle' equivalency. After full development, Trent subject matter experts reviewed the complete outline and related documentation to determine its equivalency. Equivalencies for all developed courses were awarded.

3.3 LESSONS LEARNED

3.31 Project Challenges

The project received its approval midway through the fall academic term; this midterm approval prevented Fleming from beginning the course development process until the end of the term as faculty appointments were already established and course release could not be implemented mid-term. Full-time faculty received development release time as part of their winter and spring teaching assignments, which ultimately led to the push back of project's completion date.

At present, Trent has an internal program, which supports newly suspended students to re-enter the University without completing the standard one-year suspension. This program known as 'Fresh Start' allows students to petition to stay at Trent on a reduced course load under close supervision of academic advisors. The project team has faced some challenges in moving forward with a suspension redirect process as it conflicts with an existing institutional program aimed at supporting student success within Trent.

The Trent project team has recommended that both the Fresh Start program and the suspension redirect bi-directional-remediation program can coexist and ultimately the student will decide which suspension outcome is best suited to their needs. Trent students facing suspension will meet with Trent academic advisors and be presented with the option to make an appeal to become a part of the Fresh Start program or to participate in the pathway with Fleming. This option supports the desire for these students deciding the direction of their educational journey and ensures that staff supports are in place to assist with the decision making process.

3.32 Project Successes

The collaborative measures taken throughout the stages of curriculum mapping, course development and curriculum analysis for equivalency have led to a successful outcome of robust Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Business Administration pathways. Students enrolled in any stream, regardless of how they entered, will have the opportunity to receive full Trent credit for their learning at Fleming. Another benefit is participating students will not have to enroll into a summer bridge in order to enter second-year programming at Trent. The project team views this as a monumental success of the curriculum planning and a best practice in student mobility as it allows students to receive full credit for the learning completed in the academic year and eliminates the need for off-term study.

The project is evidence that college curriculum developed and structured in a specific manner can allow for one-to-one college to university equivalents in the sciences and business disciplines. Further, the program and its streams are not the pure delivery of university curriculum at the college, but provide the necessary preparatory curriculum and applied learning where necessary to ensure student success.

The success of the project is attributed to the joint institutional faculty and administration collaboration at all project stages. Faculty pedagogy discussions have been a learning experience for each institution's faculty and administration.

3.4 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

As of Fall 2016 the Trent and Fleming UT expansion has not yet been implemented and as such cannot include comments regarding Governance or Logistics of the pathway program. However, both institutions are committed to moving forward and establishing a viable model to launch in a continued effort to support the development of strong academic foundations for diploma to degree completion.

CHAPTER 4: UNIVERSITY TO COLLEGE PATHWAY FOR STUDENTS NOT MEETING ACADEMIC PROGRESSION REQUIREMENTS IN ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES-YORK UNIVERSITY AND SENECA COLLEGE

4.0 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Building on their existing partnership relationship, York University and Seneca College established an accounting redirect project for students struggling in the Bachelor of Administrative Studies (BAS) degree program. The accounting redirect program offered an alternative pathway to students in academic jeopardy at York University to be redirected to the Seneca College accounting diploma program. Upon successful graduation from the accounting diploma program, students would be able to transition back to York University through the Accounting Bridge program. The goal therefore of the accounting redirect project was the provision of a college transfer pathway option for students to achieve their original degree aspirations (ONCAT Report 2015-24, March 2016, p. 2).

To be admitted into the accounting redirect program, students from York University needed to have completed at least 24 credits. Upon transfer, redirected students would then receive credits from Seneca College for the courses previously taken at York University. The duration of their Seneca College program would vary depending on the number of courses previously taken at York University where a C average was maintained. The anticipated duration of the student's enrollment at Seneca College was three semesters.

This redirect option offered a pathway to help students achieve academic success, and was also a collaborative effort by both institutions to improve student retention. The approximate duration of the entire redirect program was sixteen months. At Seneca College, students would complete three semesters and combined with their transfer credits, obtain a diploma. On their return to York University, they would be required to complete five, three-credit bridge courses from York University, offered only during the summer months. Upon successful completion of these course requirements, they would be re-enrolled back into York University for the fall semester. However, during the three semesters at Seneca College, students would have the option of taking two or three of the bridge courses offered by York University. The option to take these courses would be conveyed during the student advising appointments. Students who take the two bridge courses while enrolled at Seneca College, for example,

would reduce the 15 credit (five, three-credit courses) bridge requirement to nine. The assumption was that the reduction would make the bridge program more appealing and manageable for students.

In a document outlining the program, administrators noted that over a two year period, approximately 35 students were exited at the 24-credit decision point from the accounting program in the School of Administrative Studies. Additionally, approximately 80 students were exited at the second decision point. Consequently, it was assumed that many of these students already knew they were struggling at the 24-credit mark, and therefore the redirect program might be an appealing option for them, especially given the more supportive academic environment (smaller classes, slower pace), curricular design and pedagogical approaches offered at Seneca College. The bridge courses would allow the returning student to upgrade, and arrive in Year Three of the BAS with 60 York University credits and with the foundational courses for the accounting specialization. To successfully graduate from an honours degree program at York University, students would normally need approximately 120 credits.

4.1 LESSONS LEARNED

The project experienced a number of challenges that made its execution problematic. However, the ability to review and analyze what was the proposed implementation plan offers some insight for improving future inter-institutional collaborations. Hence this report was compiled primarily from the post-project feedback conversations with the various administrators involved in the accounting redirect project. Below is a summary of some of the challenges experienced in the project during the planning and implementation phases. They can be categorized primarily as structural, student and logistical challenges.

4.2 PROJECT CONCEPTUALIZATION

A number of meetings were held by the project team at both institutions to map out the implementation plan. Through these deliberations, the courses that were most likely to be completed by York University accounting students were identified and assessed for the course credit transfer process. Additionally, there were other discussions that led to the identification of course equivalents at Seneca College, which helped to reduce in the number of courses required for the accounting bridge into York University. With these milestones achieved, the committee turned their attention to the promotion and advising aspects of the implementation plan.

Staff from the Office of the Associate Vice President Academic Partnerships (Seneca College), the Office of the Vice Provost Academic (York University), administrators from the Admissions and Registrars Offices at both institutions, academic managers from the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (York University) and the School of Accounting within the Faculty of Business (Seneca College) held a series of meetings, some of which were joint discussions. These discussions culminated in spring 2016.

The students targeted for the project were those experiencing academic difficulty in the accounting program. The goal was to have the project plan completed and aligned to the institutional academic timelines for notifying students about their academic performance. At York University, students would normally receive their final grades and notifications about their academic standing during the month of

May. Students who were not succeeding academically would receive letters of academic warning, or academic debarment/ probation, or be required to completely withdraw from their program. With the receipt of a warning or probation/ debarment, the condition for a student's continuation at the University is the achievement of a Grade Point Average of 4.0 (C average), on their next 24 credits. On the other hand, students who had a grade Point Average of 2.5 or less after the completion of 24 credits are required to withdraw from the University for 12 months. These groups of students were seen as ideal candidates for the redirect project. Included in the academic standing correspondences to these students is the requirement to meet with an academic advisor, within two weeks of the receipt of these academic decisions, to determine next steps. Therefore, the plan was to have the redirect project roll-out timed to these administrative processes.

4.3 STRUCTURAL

4.31 Timelines, Marketing, Promotion

More time was needed for the planning to implementation phases of the redirect project. As a result, marketing and promotion did not occur before or during the May to June timeframe, nor were the names of key contacts made available for distribution. The original goal was to ensure that the academic advisors had the accounting redirect program information at their disposal during the advising period. This would have ensured the provision of alternative degree pathway recommendations to the accounting students. However, although advising staff was assigned, the advisor list and program information were never developed and disseminated to the advising teams across the institutions.

4.32 Advising

Additional challenges were also experienced because of the structure of the advising. Although both institutional models could be classified as decentralized (located within the specific Faculties/ Schools), York University's advising structure had additional complexities. At the University, student advising functions are performed in both the Academic Program Offices (within the larger schools) and in the Student Academic Advising Services unit, which sees a high volume of students from across many disciplines/programs. However, the advising for students in academic jeopardy falls within the purview of the Student Academic Advising Services department. Therefore, the identification of a suitable advising model, information coordination, adequate time for advisor training, and an evaluation process, were critical to the successful implementation the accounting redirect pilot project.

4.33 Workload

More than 40% of York's undergraduate population is enrolled in programs within the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. Therefore, with a two week timeframe given to students in academic jeopardy for meeting with an advisor, there are many time constraints. Added to that, this faculty also has the highest percentage of transfer students. Accordingly, the advisor per student workload here is significantly higher than in other faculties. As a result, although the project proposal recommended that specific staff be assigned to the accounting redirect project at both institutions, workload issues prohibited this from occurring.

There was also a sense among some administrators that the number of students identified, who might actually be interested in the accounting redirect program may have been too small to warrant the use of

current, or additional advising or full-time resources. Yet they maintained that there were many small projects in need of advising attention. It was therefore believed by some administrators that through a restructuring of the current advising model, and the pooling together of smaller projects, there would be sufficient work to allocate additional advising resources.

4.34 Advisor Training

In the current training for advisors there is often greater emphasis on internal referrals as alternative program options for students in academic jeopardy. Consequently, students are often redirected internally to programs with a lower GPA requirement. For these reasons, the dissemination of information about the accounting redirect program within the advising units would have required additional training to strengthen current knowledge about the options available through college, as well as dedicated staffing, and a high degree of coordination.

4.4 STUDENTS ISSUES

4.41 Student Satisfaction

The practice of providing primarily internal referrals has created additional challenges. Administrators have observed that some of the students, who have been advised out of pursuing an accounting degree often engaged in 'shadowing.' That is, when enrolment restrictions are removed, they would still enroll in accounting program courses. These students continue to persist in the degree courses, even though they don't have the appropriate GPA average to graduate from the program. Alternatively, some students choose to pursue the other degree options provided to them during advising, but may not be all-together satisfied with their new program choice.

4.41.1 Student Interest

It was also never verified whether students would be interested in a redirect program option. That is, input from students was never solicited as part of the project's conceptualization.

4.5 LOGISTICAL

4.51 Staffing Turnover

Within York University, academic administrators are appointed for a specific term. During the planning to implementation phase of the project there were academic administrative change-overs within the University, which may have contributed to the communication gaps that were experienced. Additionally, there were management and staff changes within advising units of the faculty. The high turnover of administrative and advising staff within the faculties resulted in communication failures, so that students were never offered the accounting redirect as an option.

4.52 Program Location

The Seneca College Accounting program is offered at the Finch Avenue, Newnham Campus location. Students being exited from York University accounting program attended the Keele Campus. Since students were not part of the initial discussions on the project's conceptualization, it is difficult to know

how location would have affected their decision to participate in the accounting redirect program at the Newnham Campus. However, currently students can travel using the shuttle bus system which moves between the campuses of both institutions. Additionally, course delivery options available to students at Seneca College are multiple and flexible (hybrid, online, in-class), and are also offered on evenings, weekends, and during the daytime, every semester.

4.53 The Accounting Bridge

Students targeted for the redirect project would require sixteen months before re-entry back into the university could be facilitated. This included the acquisition of credits at the college towards a diploma, then an additional five bridge courses which could only be taken during the summer months, for those wanting to return to the University. However, many students needed the summer months to finance their academic programs. As well, the heavy academic content of the bridging courses was viewed as problematic among some administrators, and the attempt to do them within a single semester amounted to what some felt was ‘academic suicide.’ However, as part of their Seneca College program, students did have an option to complete two or three bridge courses, which would have reduced their course load during the summer. As of the writing of this report, there has been no significant enrollment into the accounting bridge program. Therefore, given the lessons learned in the attempt to implement the accounting redirect project; and the recent changes the regulatory process for accounting certification, the accounting bridge may need to be revisited and reconstituted into alternative pathways.

4.54 Admissions Process

To facilitate the ease of movement, it was proposed that the “redirection into Seneca College and transition back to York University will be completed internally between institutions and the students will not be required to navigate through the respective central application services” (ONCAT Project Report 2015-24, March 2016, p.2). However, in reality, to mitigate issues around information sharing and privacy, and to expedite admissions into the College, the process was best facilitated through an application to OCAS. Additionally, on the readmit back to York University following the Accounting Bridge program, students needed to reapply directly to York.

4.6 THE WAY FORWARD

Most administrators shared the view that redirection to college was and still is a good option for students who wanted to pursue a career in accounting, but were struggling in their university degree program. Now in Ontario with the amalgamation of the regulatory bodies into the Certified Professional Accountants (CPA), non-degree students can obtain mid-tier certification, which is an Advanced Certificate in Accounting and Finance, in order to obtain employment in intermediate accounting and finance positions. Consequently, the redirect option through Seneca College offers an alternative pathway and even greater opportunity for accounting students experiencing academic difficulties at York University.

At the same time, higher education administrators were very aware of the realities of enrolment pressures, which are aligned to funding allocations from government. Yet, there was overall agreement that the motivations for student retention into particular programs should not be primarily motivated by finance. Student satisfaction and the pursuit of a career path of interest to individual students, was also of paramount importance.

Administrators noted that some of the reasons that university accounting students experienced difficulty may be due, in some cases, to the program's Math requirements. That is, the student's math literacy/ numeracy level was inadequate for success in the university's accounting program. However, the practice of admitting academically weaker students created challenges that warranted remediation. These were initially offered as camps, pre-assessments, and later on as introductory/ foundational courses. What will need to be evaluated is the academic performance of these groups of students and the effectiveness of these remediation strategies. With this understanding, some administrators advocated more strongly for the redirect option through the college for the latter group.

4.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, some of the general recommendations emerging from the post-project discussions are as follows:

- Establish a clear and manageable advising process
- Allocate specific resources and provide advisor training that includes information on the college program options
- Manage student expectations about academic performance requirements at the university and how to achieve academic and career success through multiple pathways, including through the college
- Give greater visibility to the York Seneca Partnership through timely marketing and promotion of the multiple pathway option
- Mitigate communication failures and gaps through the assignment of dedicated resources, including staffing
- Clarify registrarial processes to facilitate the bidirectional movement of students between the degree and diploma programs
- Adopt a more flexible redirect model / approach that is not affixed to the accounting bridge, but is instead refocused to credential completion and student success. This could include:
 - Course credit transfer options through an articulated agreement for the acquisition of the current bridge courses, thus ensuring adequate preparation for success in the degree program;
 - Concurrent enrolment or other dual credential options for degree completion in alternative areas of study at the York University, along with the acquisition of an accounting diploma through Seneca College

The redirect program also addressed the issue of access toward achieving a postsecondary credential for groups of students that were 'typically' excluded. And a pathway through college may offer a more successful approach towards career advancement than course 'shadowing.' Thus there was consistent

and continued support for the accounting redirect program, and an intent to implement an improved version of the project.

4.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the accounting redirect project experienced a number of unforeseen challenges during the implementation phase. As previously discussed, there were unexpected complications with advising that would have required restructuring, additional resources and time, in order to find resolutions. Considering these factors, perhaps the September 2016 implementation timetable may have been too ambitious.