



## PROJECT SNAPSHOT

### Transfer Data Custom Linkages: Improving Internal Reporting Capacity

**Type:** Data Linkages

**Project Number:** R2144

**Project Lead:** Canadore College of Applied Arts and Technology

#### Project Summary

This project supports the development of a custom data linkage drawing on data across various administrative data sources within Canadore College. It will improve internal reporting capacity and increase data related to transfer student outcomes at Canadore.

#### Approach Overview

This project will aim to construct a custom linkage drawing on data across various administrative data sources within Canadore College. Phase 1 of this project will seek to pool information from across the Canadore Student Information System (SIS), the College Graduate (KPI) survey, and other pertinent sources.

1. Identification of transfer student records for the project
2. Review of transcripts and transfer credit workflow data
3. Cross reference of the data from the various sources to the SIS data set

#### Project Rationale

Create a baseline of our transfer credit data.

Learn what process enhancements will garner the best data within our current systems.

## Methods

First, not all data is housed in our student information system, making it very a difficult and manual process to gather all the data required. Some examples of challenges we encountered were the availability and ease of retrieval of transcripts from previous institutions. There were a mix of transcripts that were electronic, but many were hard copy transcripts in individual student files. This made for a manual and time-consuming process of trying to retrieve data points such as GPAs, previous credentials earned and names of previous institutions. Please see institutional outcomes on recommended process changes. Another major downfall to trying to map transfer credit students to graduate survey outcomes was response rate. Of the over 1,700 transfer credit students, only 111 of those students completed the KPI graduate survey. Of those 111 only 41 had recorded any employment related data, therefore trying to draw any conclusions was difficult based on sample size. Please see institutional outcomes on recommended process changes for using graduate data to link to transfer credit students.

## Limitations

Manual review  
Record access during pandemic

## Main Collaborators

The main collaborators for this project were Institutional Research, Information Technology, and the Transfer Credit Officer

## Research Findings

Based on the projects rational of creating a baseline of our transfer credit data as well as learning what process enhancements will garner the best data within our current systems, it became clear that process enhancements would have to occur in order to remove the manual data collection as well as enhancing the amount of data points we could have. There were two main findings while trying to build a baseline database. First, not all data is housed in our student information system, making it very a difficult and manual process to gather all the data required. Some examples of challenges we encountered were the availability and ease of retrieval of transcripts from previous institutions. There were a mix of transcripts that were electronic, but many were hard copy transcripts in individual student files. This made for a manual and time-consuming process of trying to retrieve data points such as GPA's, previous credential earned and name of previous institution. Please see institutional outcomes on recommended process changes. Another major downfall to trying to map transfer credit students to graduate survey outcomes was response rate. Of the over 1700 transfer credit students, only 111 of those students completed the KPI graduate survey. Of those 111 only 41 had recorded any employment related data, therefore trying to draw any conclusions was difficult based on sample size. Please see institutional outcomes on recommended process changes for using graduate data to link to transfer credit students.

## Future Research

Based on the current research, it was clear that there has to be an increased amount of verifiable

data to be able to link transfer credit students to graduate outcomes. Small institutions have a very small graduate survey completion rates which make it very difficult to draw any conclusions. It may be possible to further this research once data is available from SMA 3 is available. Statistics Canada will be linking enrolment and graduation data (based on Postsecondary Student Information System) and the T1 Family File tax data. If student level data is shared with institutions, it will then be possible to map earnings and other variables to transfer credit student's vs regular cohort students.

## **Student Outcomes**

Due to this exercise being more of a discovery project, it will be future projects that will have benefits to transfer credits student or those who are thinking about returning to post-secondary and applying for transfer credit.

## **Institutional Outcomes**

Most of the recommendations that were identified were around process improvement. It became clear as the research went on that there were some significant data gaps to do this type of analysis. Recommendation #1 would be to capture all data points at a single point of entry (preferably Canadore's Student Information System). At the point of the application by the TC student, this information could be captured and stored for easy extraction when needed. Recommendation #2 would be for Canadore to work to increase their graduate survey response rate to that closer to the provincial average. The culture around TC and TC students has been growing and improving over the last few years. The college and the staff understand the importance of TC and how it positively affects students. Canadore has made great strides in improving the ease and access to the transfer credit process as well as promoting the benefits and outcomes it creates.

## **Sector or System Implications**

Yes, the ability to share information via meetings and workshop sessions augment the understanding of the sector.

For smaller institutions, the relevance of projects that are similar in scope and reach are of paramount importance. Data garnered that represents the realities of students who study in rural and remote regions bring to light access and mobility issues that may not be the same for learners who are in metro areas.

## **Tips**

I would recommend that institutions have a narrow scope and a well thought out plan, as well as and brainstorm what data is easily accessible, what exist and where, Due to this being a data baseline exercise, it was more of a data mining exercise.

## **Tools and Resources**

Yes, we developed a report that maps transfer credit students to all graduate survey question results. Unfortunately, due to low response rates the data is sparse.

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