How Transfer Works

Chris Head
Assistant Director of Transfer Services
Registrar’s Office
Transfer Mobility

• 38.0% transfer rate among first-time enrollees
  • 4-yr to 2-yr even more frequent, partially due to summer swirling
    • 38.5% vs 36.7%
  • Total transfers nationally around 7.1% of total student fall enrollments (Fall ‘17)

• Transfer in WI
  • Total transfers lower than national figure: 5.5% (Fall ‘17)
  • In WI, UWSA transfers to WTCS almost as many as WTCS to UWSA
    • 4,244 : 4,435 (multi-year average)
  • In 2017-18 8,757 students transferred out of WTCS
    • 43% came to UWSA, 37% went out of state, 19% went to WAICU
    • In 2014-15: 47% came to UWSA, 34% went out of state, 19% went to WAICU

• Common to see students with multiple transcripts from prior institutions
Transfer as a Tension between

- **Accommodation**
  - Respect—of prior academic work
  - Fairness—prior credit completed in a good faith effort to progress
  - Access—varied pathways
    - Underrepresented students more likely to start at a 2-year

- **Distinction**
  - Unique curricula—instutions distinguish themselves by program offerings, gen ed structures, et al.
  - Residency—can put a limit on transfer
  - Accreditation—may or may not impact transfer, sometimes used as a shield
  - Protectionism—the dark side of distinctiveness
Approaching Transfer

• Every effort should be made to maximize the application of transfer credit and avoid duplication of learning.

• Transferable vs applicable credits
  • Transfer issues often less about transferability than about curricular misalignment
Transfer Best Practices

• “Joint Statement on the Transfer and Award of Credit”

• Endorsed by
  • American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)
  • American Council on Education (ACE)
  • Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)

• Stated Assumptions
  • Respect institutional autonomy
  • Promote social equity
  • Recognize complexity of transfer
  • Encourage an expansive view of what constitutes “validated learning”
Transfer Best Practices

• Considerations
  • **Quality**
    • Role of accreditation
    • Course outcomes vs syllabi
    • Caution re course numbers, modalities, seat-time, etc.
  • **Comparability**
    • Related mission, type of education, etc.
  • **Appropriateness**
    • Similar or related in content to native offerings
    • 100-level WTCS courses
    • Course purpose, function
    • Applicable to native programs & degrees

• Openness to innovation: Military, PLA, ACE, etc.
Transfer Best Practices

- UWSA Policy 135: UW System Undergraduate Transfer Policy
- Specifically endorses the “Joint Statement”
- Principles of Accommodation
  - 14 principles for all students
  - Others specific to UWSA & WTCS transfers
  - Also includes policies for Prior Learning Assessment
  - Focus on broad recognition beyond specific course-to-course equivalencies
    - Apply to requirements where appropriate
    - Grant departmental credit where appropriate
  - Consistent treatment of transfers compared to continuing students
Articulation Agreements

- Program-to-Program vs Course-to-Course
- Template in keeping with UWSA requirements
- Block Transfer
- Must complete degree
- Benefits
  - Allows exceptions to general transfer practice
  - Grouped equivalencies
  - Minimum transfer guarantees
  - Consistent
  - Simplifies & streamlines process
Articulation Agreements

• Challenges
  • Students don’t understand them
  • Curricular mismatches
    • Opportunity to rethink relationship of associate to bachelor’s curricula
  • Difficult to market effectively
  • Students shift disciplines in unexpected ways
  • Small audience
    • NSC study notes that 5.6% of 2-yr transfers completed a degree
The Transfer Process

• Student is accepted and file reviewed
• Credits entered  
  • Transfer Specialists
  • Student Workers
• Audit of completed entry by professional staff
• Rule-building  
  • Transfer rules in PAWS
  • New rules built as new courses received
  • Old rules updated based on ongoing evaluation & feedback
  • Consistency within WTCS
Communicating Transfer

• Transfer Equivalency Database (TED)
  • Pulls directly from PAWS
  • web.uwm.edu/registrar/tools/ted

• Transfer Information System (TIS)
  • Current public facing record for WI systems
  • Retiring July 2020
  • Unwieldy to update
  • Not always reliable
  • wisconsin.edu/transfer
Communicating Transfer

• Transferology
  • Transferology.com/index.htm
  • Replacing TIS for both UWSA & WTCS
  • Already in use by UWM & a few others
  • Pulls rules from PAWS via a third-party extractor
  • Broader reach
  • Allows students to compare institutions and find best transfer outcomes
  • Requires a log-in
  • Some limits on what information is available, i.e. GER
Recommendations

• Presume transferability
• Take the broad view
• Focus on application of credit
• Don’t expect 100% equivalency
• Privilege outcomes
• Avoid duplication
Thank you!