

## **Good Research = Good Trust:** **How Research on Transfer Student Success** **Informs BC's Transfer System**

**OnCAT Transfer Conference**  
**Toronto, Ontario**  
**April, 2014**

Dr. Rob Fleming  
Executive Director and Co-Chair, BCCAT

# On trust a as a bond . . .

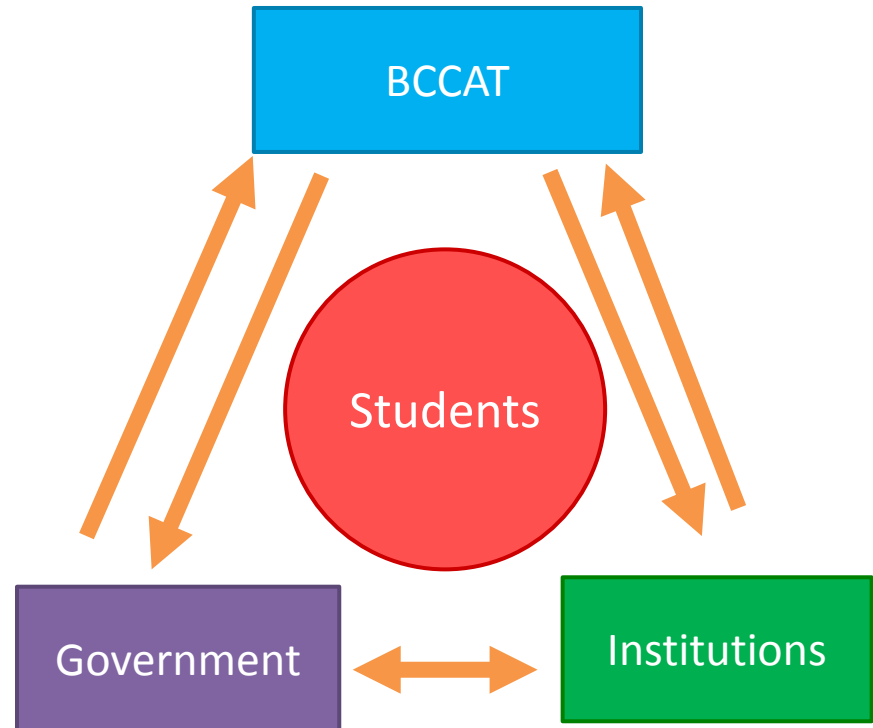
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“The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them.”

--Hemingway

# BCCAT Mandate

- ▶ Founded in 1989
- ▶ 19 member Council and four standing committees comprised of system professionals
- ▶ Enables articulation, transfer, and admission arrangements
- ▶ An “arms-length” agency of the Ministry of Advanced Education
- ▶ No regulatory authority

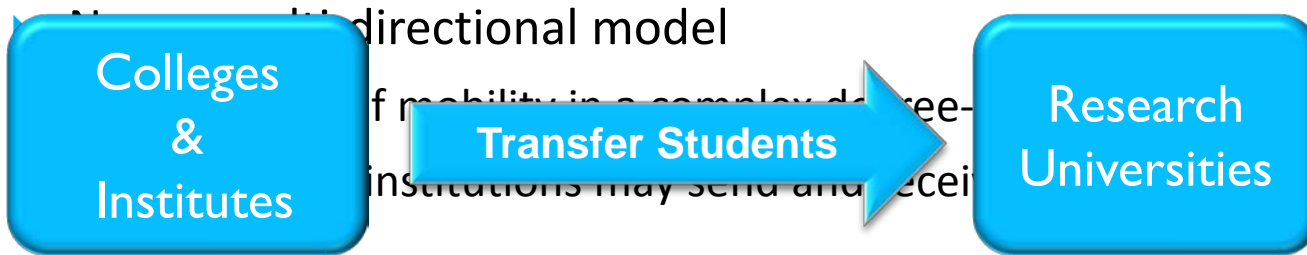


*“British Columbia has taken the California model and developed it into . . . possibly the most extensive credit accumulation and transfer arrangement in the world.”*

Bekhradnia, Higher Education Policy Institute, UK

# BC Transfer System: History & Context

- Developed in 1960s as a binary Transfer System model

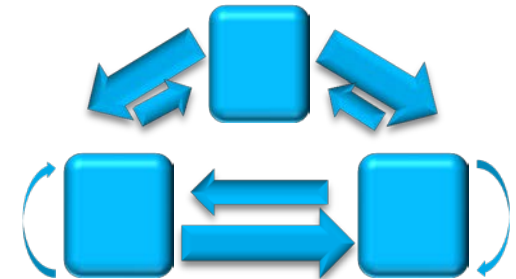
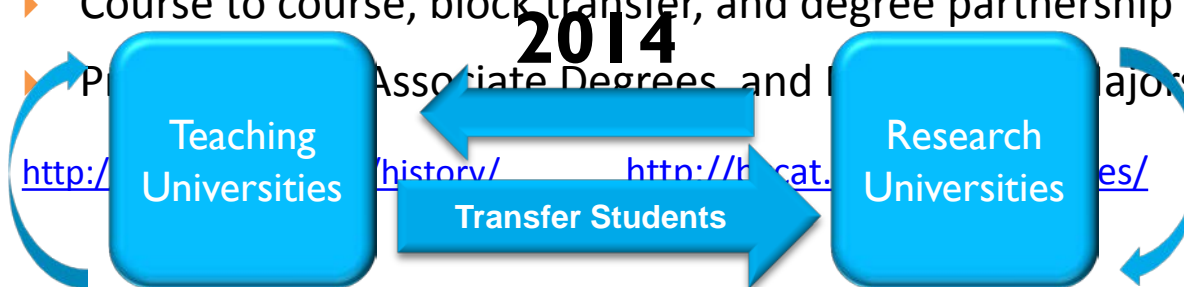


- No common core curriculum, but a high level of reciprocity among institutions

- Development of various transfer mechanisms:

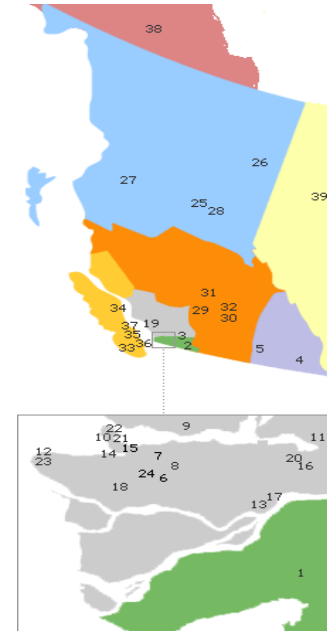
- Course to course, block transfer, and degree partnership

- Partnership for Associate Degrees and Majors



# BC Transfer System Facts

- 25 BC public, 2 out of province, and 11 private institutions are members.
- 67 province-wide faculty articulation committees.
- 55,000+ students (18%) moved between BC public institutions and programs in 2011-12.
- 100s of thousands of credits recognized by member institutions annually



*“Our post-secondary system is one of the best in the world because it is indeed a system. The new reality is that today, the starting point on your educational journey is not likely to be your end point. And because BC’s post-secondary transfer system is so advanced, it’s relatively easy to move from institution to institution.”*

*Scott McAlpine, President of Douglas College, Letter to the Vancouver Sun*

# BCCAT Perspective: Why Credit Transfer Matters

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*Well-articulated credit transfer systems facilitate access, affordability, flexibility, efficiency and success for diverse learners to accommodate their life-long educational needs and interests . . .*

- students studying near their home to enable transition, mitigate attrition, and reduce costs
- intentional pathways students plan and unintentional pathways that students follow as a result of changes in circumstances
- accumulation of credit within a system, so they count toward relevant credentials if students change institutions and/or programs

*“The most common main reason for leaving [post-secondary] . . . was personal circumstances (e.g., health, family). Other reasons cited included a change in plans about the program or a job (22 percent), disappointment with the institution (22 percent), and financial issues (18 percent).”*

Martell (2009), *Without a Trace*

# BCCAT Perspective: Principles and Process

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## ▶ **Fairness**

- ▶ Treat transfer students the same as direct entry students
- ▶ Transfer principles, membership, grades, admissions

## ▶ **Understanding**

- ▶ Collaborate with peers (faculty, staff, administrators) across autonomous institutions and sectors to facilitate credit transfer articulation
- ▶ Articulation committees and transfer credit evaluation system (TCES)

## ▶ **Transparency**

- ▶ Provide public, guaranteed information and practices on credit transfer
- ▶ BC Transfer Guide and institutional websites

## ▶ **Trust**

- ▶ Conduct ongoing research on transfer credit practices and student success
- ▶ Research program, system collaboration, and reciprocal accountability

# BCCAT Principles and Membership: Fairness

## *In the BC Transfer System:*

*1. Students earn transfer credit for equivalent learning and can apply that credit to fulfill credential requirements.*



*2. Students can expect to be **treated equitably** by all member institutions.*

*3. All members acknowledge and respect the primary jurisdiction of each institution for transfer policy and academic integrity.*

*4. Transfer agreements are based on rigorous articulation processes and transparent communication.*

*5. Evaluation of the BC Transfer System is focused on assessing its effectiveness for students.*

<http://bccat.ca/system/principles/>

<http://www.bccat.ca/pubs/BCTSmembers.pdf>





# BC Articulation Committees: Understanding

**Purpose:** “expanding education opportunities for students by facilitating students’ transfer of credits from one institution to another.”

- ▶ Many of BC’s 67 articulation committees pre-date BCCAT
- ▶ They represent core programs within the Transfer System
- ▶ Normally they meet annually at member institutions
- ▶ AC’s are overseen by Council’s Transfer & Articulation Committee, however . . .
  - ▶ Articulation committees have no authority to make decisions on behalf of institutions.
  - ▶ BCCAT can not mandate articulation committees to undertake specific activities.
  - ▶ BCCAT and articulation committees must respect institutional autonomy.



*“A forum for conversations and relationships that may not otherwise occur.”*

# BC Transfer Guide: Transparency

- ▶ 90,000+ guaranteed agreements updated dynamically through Transfer Credit Evaluation System
- ▶ Searchable databases
  - ▶ Course-to-course
  - ▶ Block transfer
  - ▶ Degree Partnerships
  - ▶ Program-specific
  - ▶ AP and IB
- ▶ Transfer Help and FAQ
- ▶ In 2012, 1,000,000 unique visits.

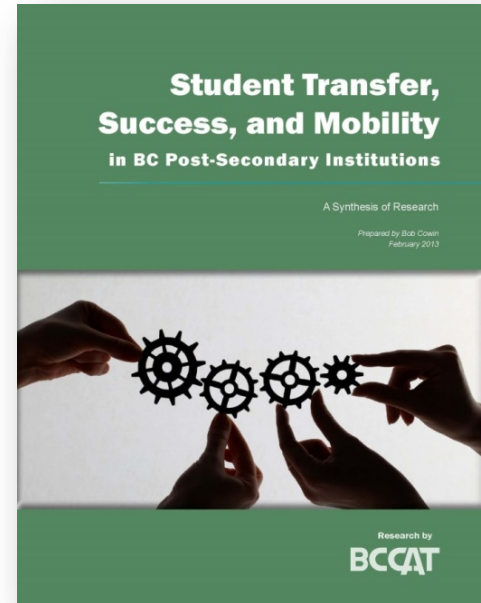
The screenshot shows the homepage of BCTransferGuide.ca. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like HOME, ABOUT US, SEARCH, BLOCK, AP AND IB GUIDES, BC TRANSFER SYSTEM, TRANSFER HELP, and RESOURCES. Below this is a large banner image of a student thinking, with a thought bubble showing stacked books. To the right of the banner is a 'COURSE SEARCH' section with four search options: 'By Sending Institution', 'By Receiving Institution', 'By Course Load', and 'By Program'. Each option has a brief description and a 'Go' button. Below the search section are four informational boxes: 'HOW TRANSFER WORKS', 'TRANSFER FROM OUTSIDE OF BC', 'FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS', and 'THE BC TRANSFER SYSTEM'. At the bottom, there's a footer with logos for EducationPlanner.ca, British Columbia, and BCCAT (British Columbia Council on Admissions & Transfer).

[bctransferguide.ca](http://bctransferguide.ca)

# BC Transfer System Research: Trust

1. Student Performance Reports
2. Student Transitions Project (STP)
3. Transfer Satisfaction and Success
4. Transfer Practices and Efficiency

<http://www.bccat.bc.ca/publications/>



*"It seems unlikely . . . that another entity would have the credibility that BCCAT has enjoyed with the institutions. . . . It seems safe to conclude that . . . the issues . . . would not have been addressed had the Council not existed."*

Waterhouse, *An Assessment of BCCAT Research*

# 1. Student Performance Reports

- ▶ BCCAT sponsored course level student performance research conducted every 5 or so years by university staff
- ▶ Provides public information on performance of transfer students by source institution and in comparison with non-transfer students
  - ▶ SFU: <http://bccat.ca/pubs/SFUProfile0708.pdf>
  - ▶ UBC: <http://bccat.ca/pubs/UBCProfile0708.pdf>
  - ▶ UNBC: <http://bccat.ca/pubs/UNBCProfile0708.pdf>
  - ▶ UVic: <http://bccat.ca/pubs/UVICProfile0708.pdf>
  - ▶ TRU: <http://bccat.ca/pubs/TRUProfile0708.pdf>



## UBC Example:

*The admission percentages for BC college transfer students are considerably lower than for high school admissions . . . though, BC college transfer students ultimately achieve the same sessional averages as the direct entrants . . . . BC transfer college students are just as successful at university as are direct entrants, and have the grades to prove it.*

# Table 10: Performance by Session 2003/04-2007/08

		At Admission		End of First Session		End of Second Session		End of Last Session	
		headcount	average GPA	headcount	average GPA	headcount	average GPA	headcount	average GPA
Non Lower Mainland									
Northern BC	College of New Caledonia	68	78.30	65	66.53	53	69.68	41	72.82
	Northern Lights College	10	76.21	10	66.88	4	X	4	X
	Northwest Community College	33	77.01	31	71.02	24	72.70	14	76.59
Northern BC Total		111	77.73	106	67.88	81	70.71	59	73.58
Interior/Kootenavs	College of the Rockies	25	77.47	24	68.50	16	74.99	12	73.82
BC College Transfers		7,368	74.98	7,208	70.53	5,109	71.82	3,554	73.07
BC High School Admissions		17,944	87.36	17,650	69.33	12,673	71.10	8,977	73.28
Lower Mainland									
Public Lower Mainland	B.C. Institute of Technology	111	71.62	104	74.39	56	76.58	33	76.32
	Capilano College	1,295	74.98	1,267	71.31	926	72.62	648	74.18
	Douglas College	692	74.70	675	70.07	468	72.19	299	73.03
	Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design	7	77.73	7	70.39	6	75.00	6	74.77
	Institute of Indigenous Government	19	79.32	19	63.48	13	64.56	6	62.75
	Kwantlen University College	1,045	74.75	1,024	69.71	734	70.80	529	72.46
	Langara College	2,394	74.40	2,348	71.11	1,623	71.90	1,081	72.78
	University College of the Fraser Valley	225	75.70	221	73.07	149	73.14	104	74.57
	Vancouver Community College	48	75.08	48	68.37	25	73.28	16	74.58
Public Lower Mainland Total		5,828	74.64	5,705	70.85	3,999	72.00	2,721	73.18
Private Lower Mainland	Columbia College	354	75.62	348	68.65	253	70.03	182	71.61
	Coquitlam College	294	75.02	288	68.79	239	69.09	173	70.14
	Corpus Christi College	56	77.18	54	69.25	30	71.08	18	71.88
Private Lower Mainland Total		704	75.49	690	68.75	522	69.66	373	70.94
Lower Mainland Total		6,532	74.73	6,395	70.62	4,521	71.73	3,094	72.91
BC College Transfers		7,368	74.98	7,208	70.53	5,109	71.82	3,554	73.07
BC High School Admissions		17,944	87.36	17,650	69.33	12,673	71.10	8,977	73.28

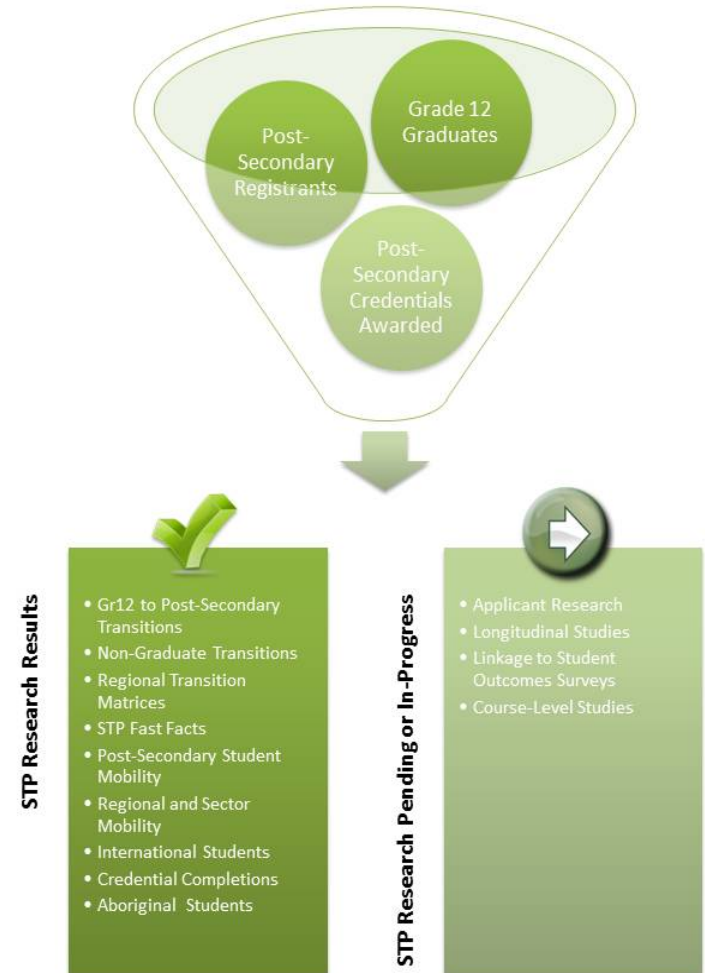
# UBC Course Performance Examples

	ECON355 headcount	admission average	course grade
College of New Caledonia	2	X	X
<b>Northern BC Total</b>	2	X	X
College of the Rockies	1	X	X
Okanagan College/University College	9	79.83	77.00
Selkirk College	1	X	X
University College of the Cariboo	3	X	X
<b>Interior/Kootenays Total</b>	14	79.35	76.50
Camosun College	3	X	X
Malaspina University-College	4	X	X
<b>Vancouver Island Total</b>	7	78.30	73.86
<b>Total Non Lower Mainland</b>	23	78.93	74.39
Capilano College	39	76.13	71.10
Douglas College	10	76.21	69.30
Institute of Indigenous Government	5	78.02	60.80
Kwantlen University College	20	74.16	73.30
Langara College	78	76.32	75.54
University College of the Fraser Valley	2	X	X
<b>Public Lower Mainland Total</b>	154	76.07	73.40
Columbia College	59	75.91	72.02
Coquitlam College	61	74.92	71.07
Corpus Christi College	3	X	X
<b>Private Lower Mainland Total</b>	123	75.41	71.22
<b>Total Lower Mainland</b>	277	75.78	72.43
<b>BC College Transfers</b>	300	76.02	72.58
<b>BC High School Admissions</b>	465	85.72	70.43
		-3.5%	-15.3%

	EECE251 headcount	admission average	course grade
College of New Caledonia	6	75.02	59.33
Northern Lights College	1	X	X
<b>Northern BC Total</b>	7	75.07	55.71
Okanagan College/University College	4	X	X
Selkirk College	8	69.99	52.88
University College of the Cariboo	6	75.32	66.33
<b>Interior/Kootenays Total</b>	18	74.18	63.39
Camosun College	5	77.76	38.60
Malaspina University-College	6	71.42	63.50
<b>Vancouver Island Total</b>	11	74.30	52.18
<b>Total Non Lower Mainland</b>	36	74.39	58.47
B.C. Institute of Technology	1	X	X
Capilano College	42	72.80	69.48
Douglas College	12	75.07	70.75
Kwantlen University College	67	72.49	66.48
Langara College	48	74.16	68.90
University College of the Fraser Valley	23	72.54	75.91
Vancouver Community College	1	X	X
<b>Public Lower Mainland Total</b>	193	73.12	69.05
Columbia College	9	74.88	64.89
Coquitlam College	7	71.43	64.71
<b>Private Lower Mainland Total</b>	16	73.37	64.81
<b>Total Lower Mainland</b>	209	73.14	68.72
<b>BC College Transfers</b>	245	73.33	67.22
<b>BC High School Admissions</b>	647	87.25	63.91
		-6.1%	-23.3%

## 2. Student Mobility Data

- Provincial student mobility data tracks movement (registration) using PENs.
- Collaboration of Ministries of Advanced Education and Education, post-secondary institutions, the Central Data Warehouse and BCCAT



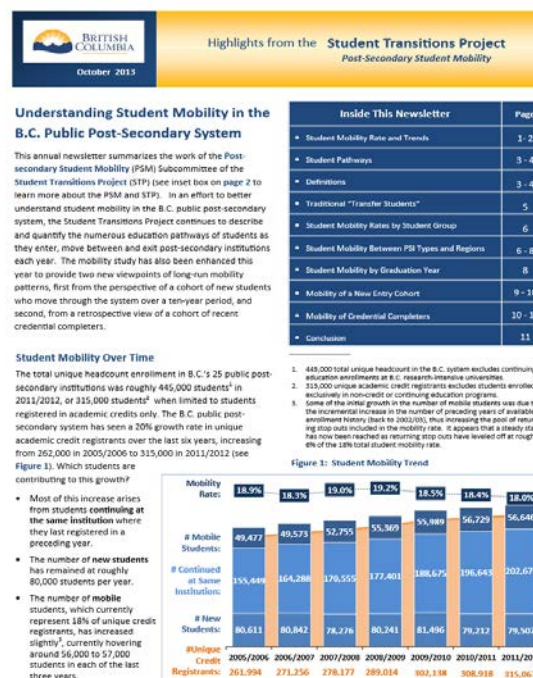
[http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/)



# Student Transitions Project Annual Reporting

- ▶ Reporting includes publications and flat data files (generally available to public), and pivot tables provided via secure webpages to STP partners (institutions and ministries).

- ▶ Fast facts
- ▶ Credentials awarded pivots
- ▶ Regional Transition matrices
- ▶ Aboriginal Transition matrices
- ▶ International Student tables
- ▶ Time to completion pivot
- ▶ Student mobility pivots

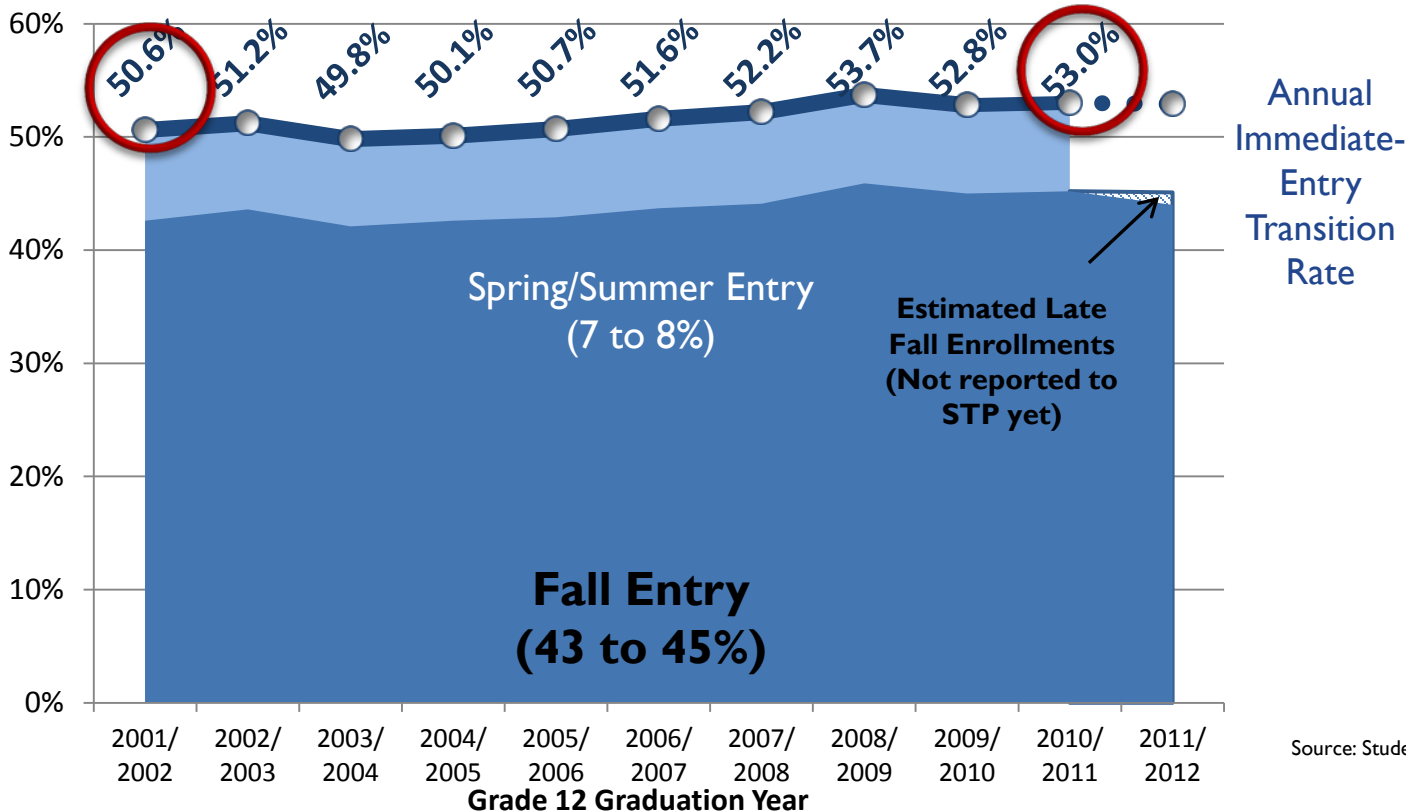


STP Mobility Transition and Mobility Highlights:

[http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/documents/psm\\_highlights\\_2013\\_10\\_26.pdf](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/psm_highlights_2013_10_26.pdf)



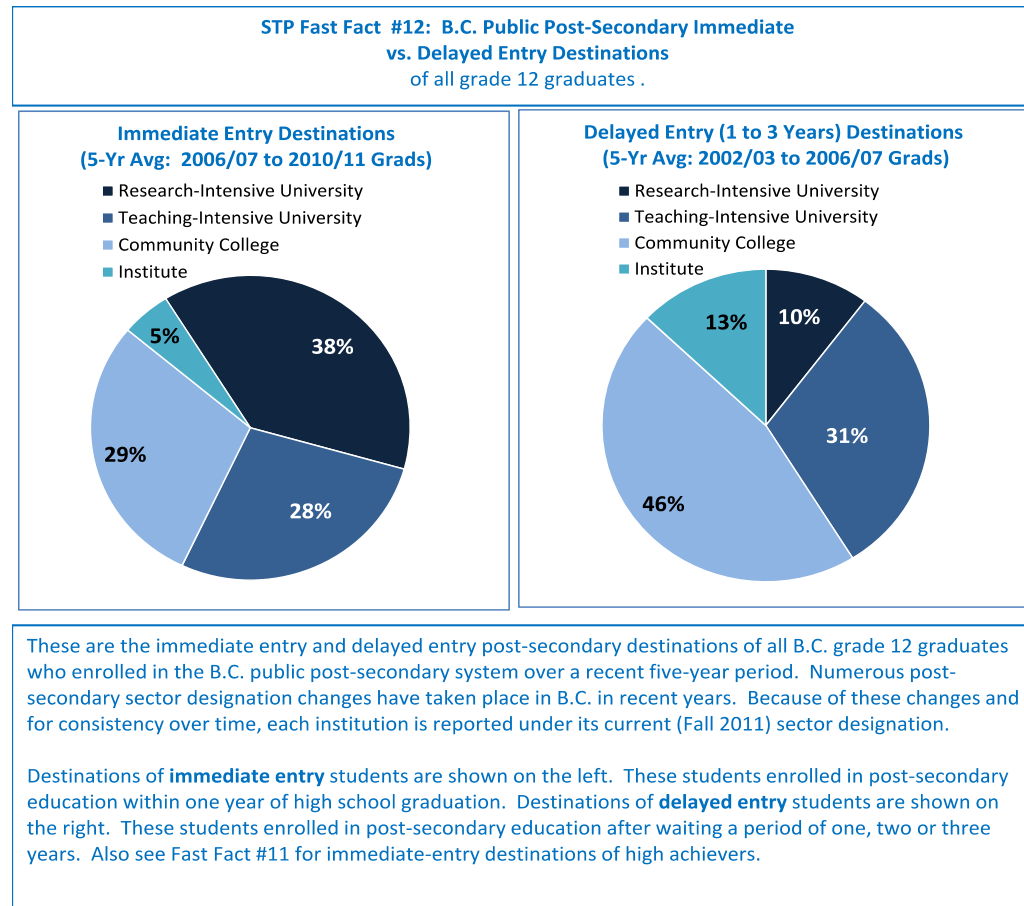
# Immediate-Entry HS Transition Rate



Source: Student Transitions Project

The survey... found that **7%** had enrolled in a private BC institution and **6%** had left the province to study ... the two-year transition rate into public BC institutions of **62% increased to over 75%** when all ... destinations were taken into account.

# Transition to Institutions by Type

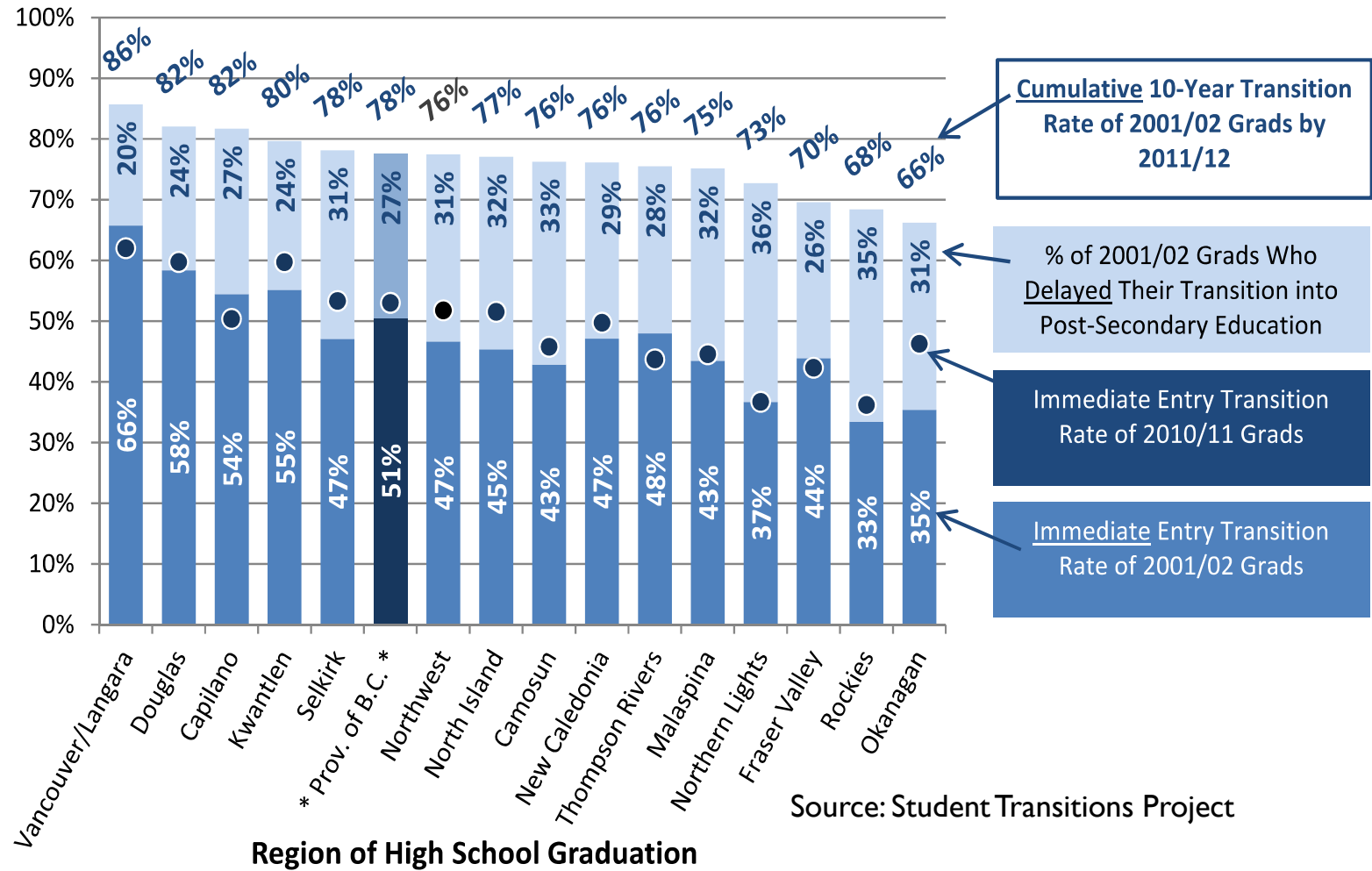


Source: [http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/)

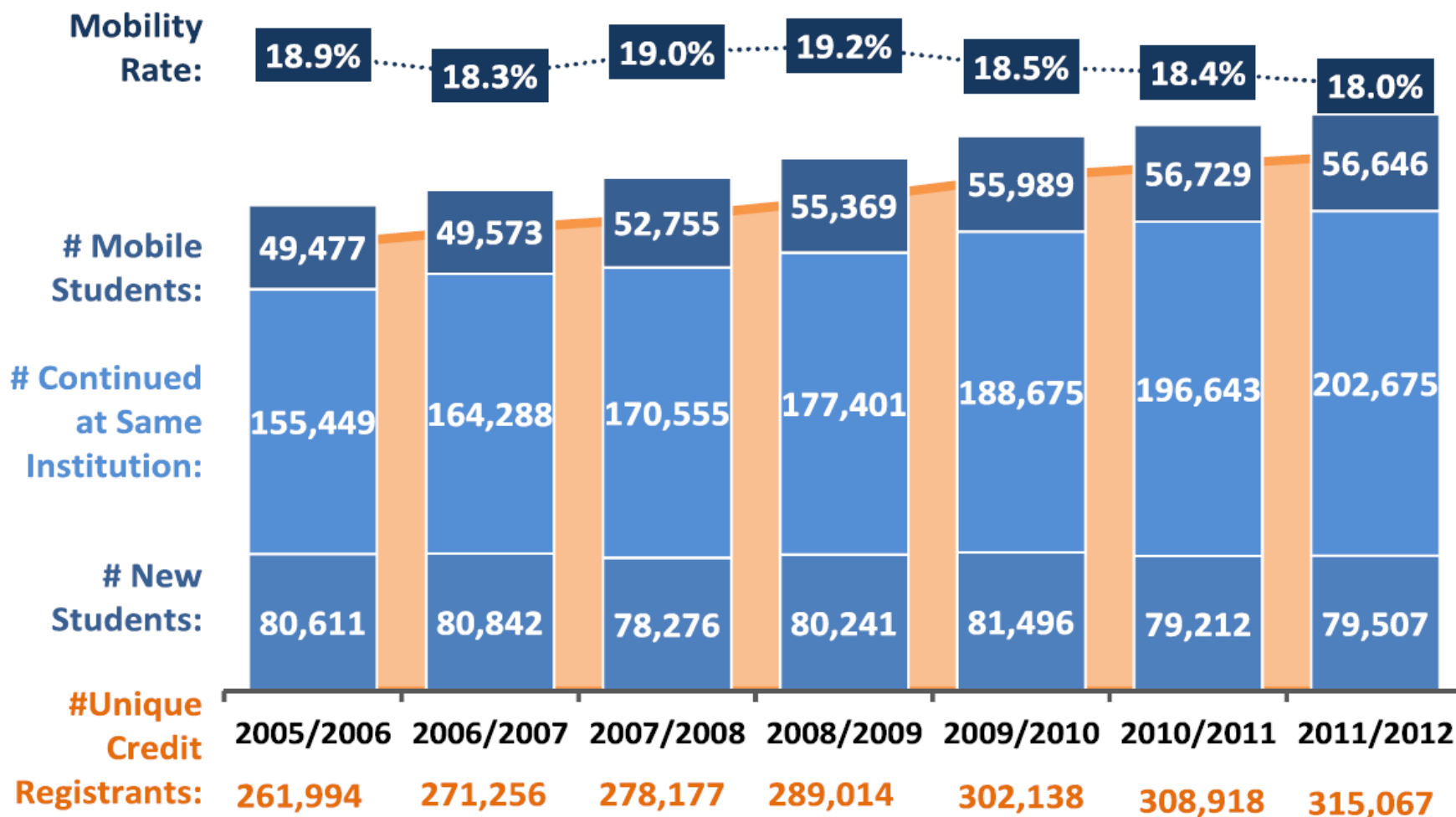
- BC's integrated PSE system provides differentiated pathways for a range of learners.

## STP Fast Fact #7: Regional Transition Rates

From grade 12 graduation (in 2001/2002) to  
B.C. public post-secondary education (by 2011/2012)



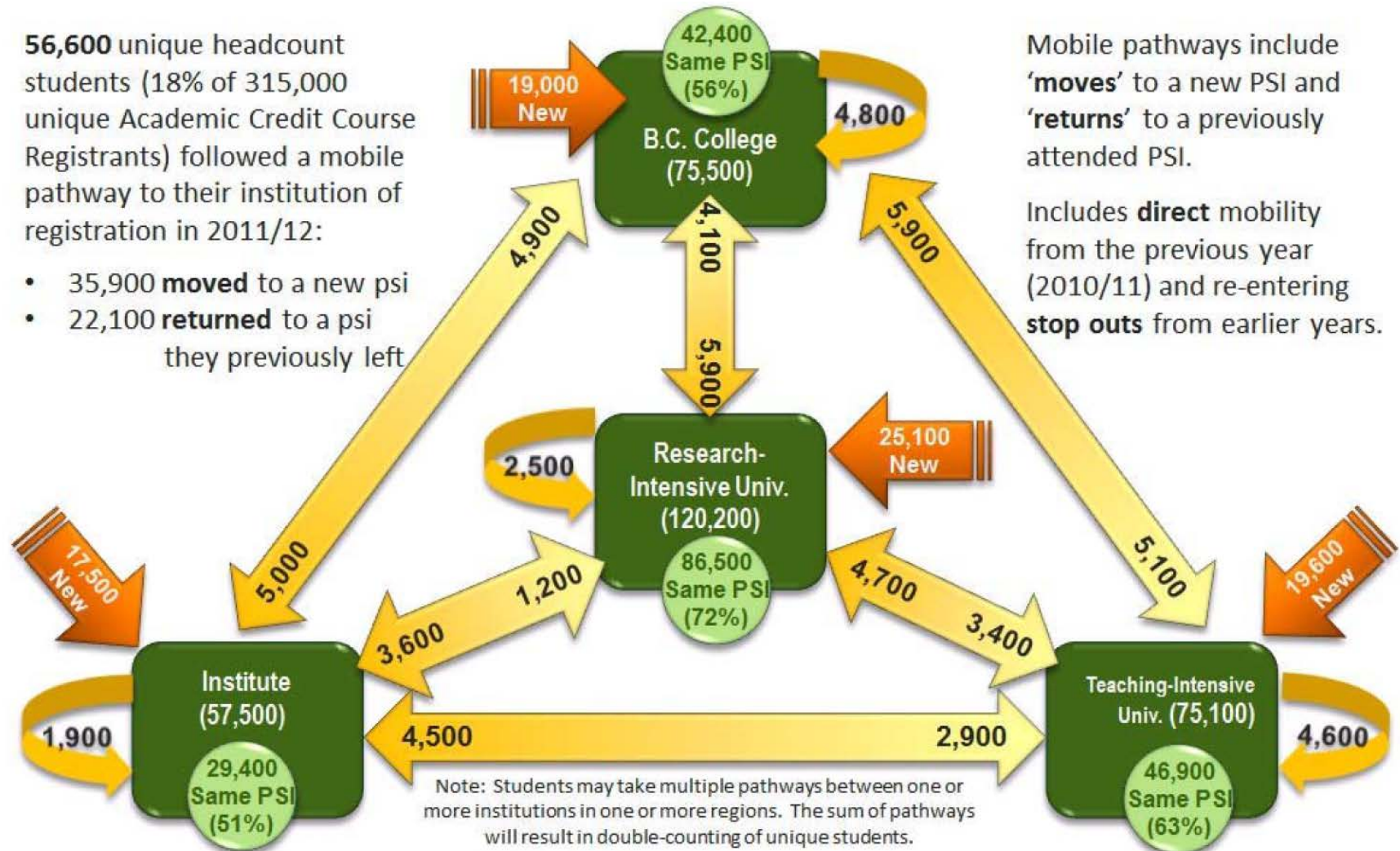
# Trends in Student Mobility: Volume and Rates



# Student Mobility Between Sectors in the BC Public Post-Secondary System

56,600 unique headcount students (18% of 315,000 unique Academic Credit Course Registrants) followed a mobile pathway to their institution of registration in 2011/12:

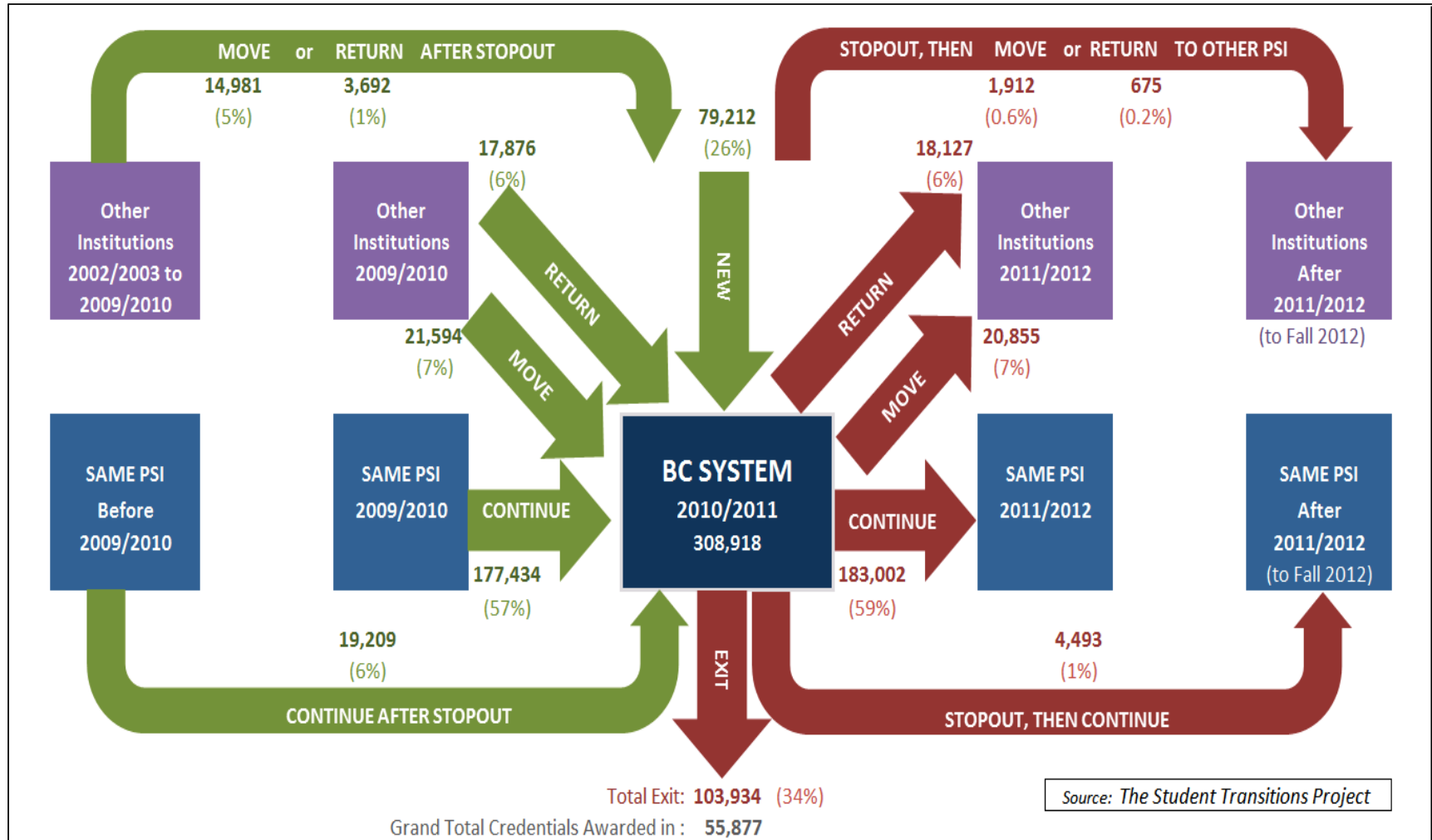
- 35,900 **moved** to a new psi
- 22,100 **returned** to a psi they previously left



Mobile pathways include 'moves' to a new PSI and 'returns' to a previously attended PSI.

Includes **direct** mobility from the previous year (2010/11) and re-entering **stop outs** from earlier years.

# Student Pathways in the B.C. Public Post-Secondary System



# 3. Transfer Satisfaction and Success

- ▶ BCCAT provides resources to BC Stats to include transfer satisfaction questions on its student outcomes surveys
- ▶ Research results are published:  
[http://bccat.ca/pubs/rr\\_mar12.pdf](http://bccat.ca/pubs/rr_mar12.pdf)

## Highlights:

- 44% of post-secondary students surveyed continue their studies (33% for credential completers and 73% for those who had not completed their credential)

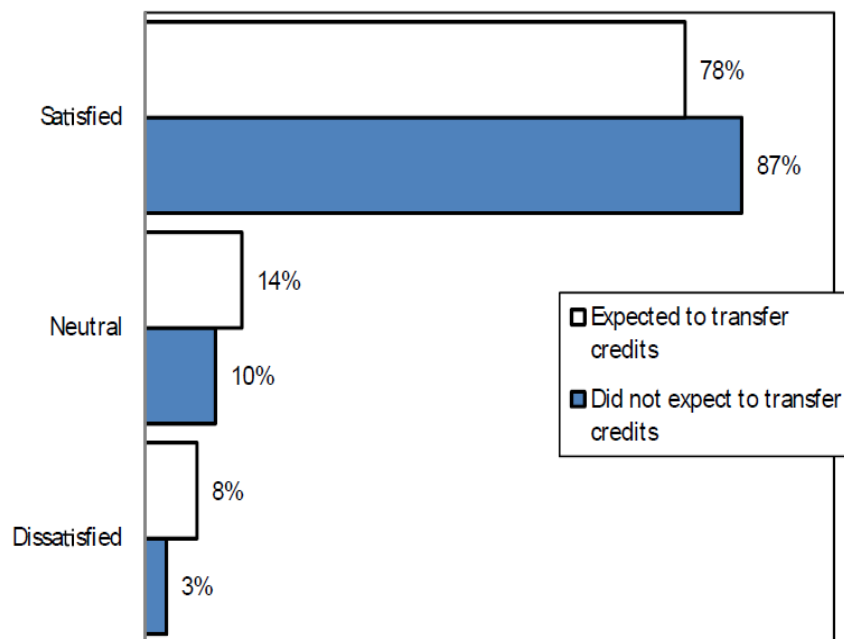
*Of those continuing their studies at a different institution:*

- 80 % are satisfied with admissions services
- 86 % enter their preferred institution
- 94 % enter their preferred program
- 85 % register in all the courses they want
- 86 % receive all the transfer credits they expect
- 79 % are satisfied with their transfer experience



# 2011 Admissions and Transfer Experiences

**FIGURE 6:** Respondents' satisfaction with admission services and application processes at the institution they transferred to, by transfer expectation



Each survey year, a small proportion of respondents (8%, n=193 in 2011) who expected to transfer credits to their new institution have reported being dissatisfied with their overall transfer experience. . . .

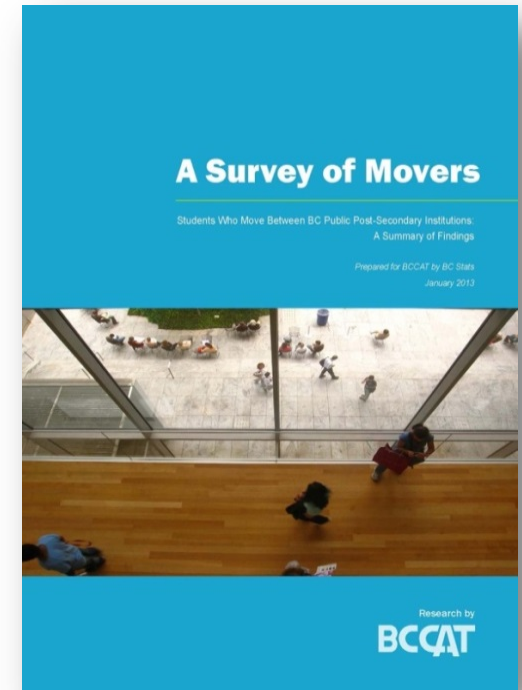
The three top reasons for dissatisfaction were difficulty getting the information needed (51%), challenges understanding the transfer process (50%), and not receiving the transfer credit expected (46%).



# Survey of Movers

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- a subset of all movers from one year to the next (~ 6,000 students out of ~ 55,000 annual movers)
- Surveyed fall 2011 registrants who were in a different institution in academic year 2010-11
- Response rate of over 27% or ~ 1600 students



<http://bccat.ca/publications/research/surveyofmovers/>

# Survey of Movers – System Findings

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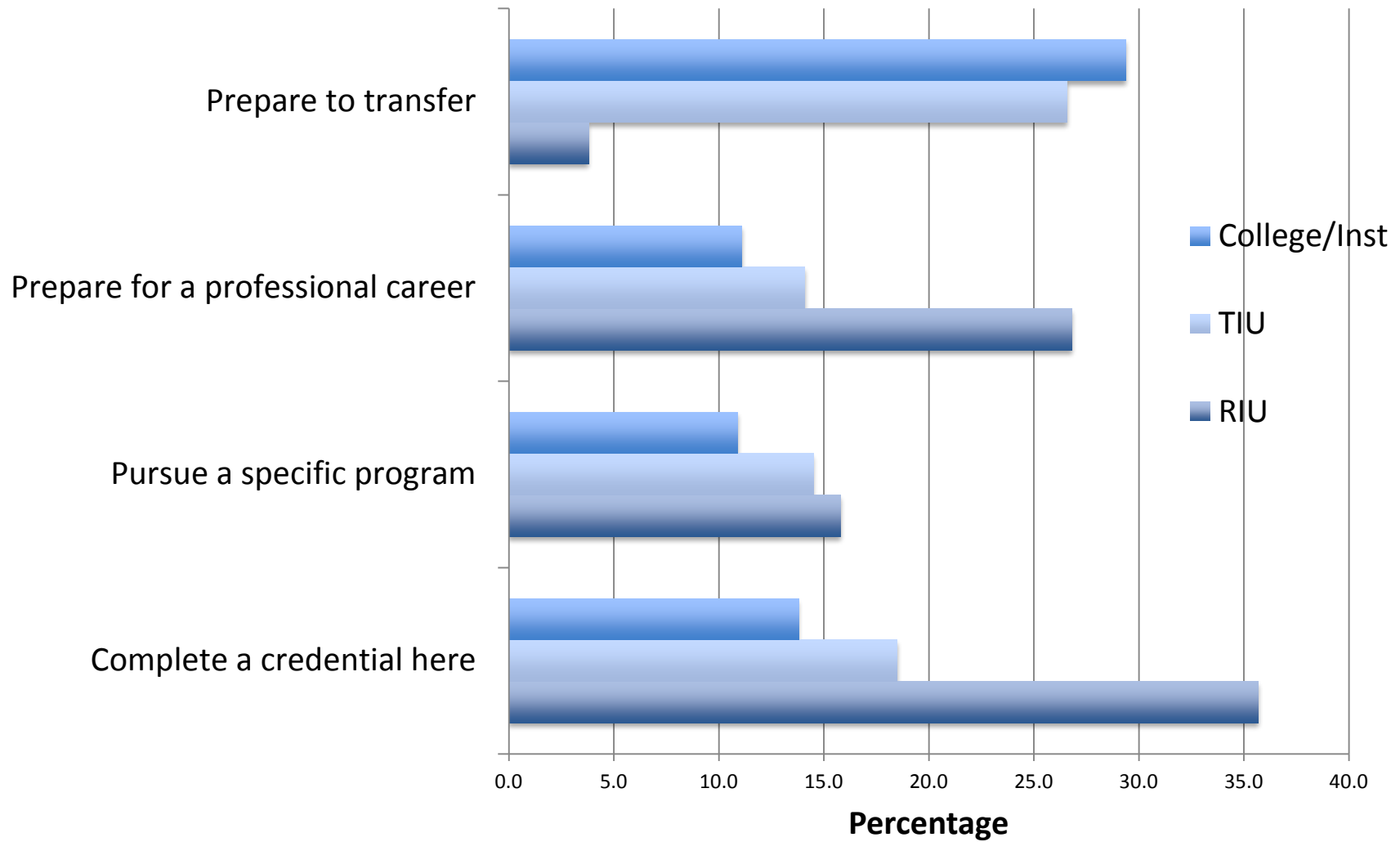
## ▶ Transfer Expectations:

- ▶ Almost **90%** of respondents transferring to Research Universities expected to transfer credit.
- ▶ Respondents moving to Teaching Universities (**60%**) and Colleges and Institutes (**43%**) were less likely to expect to transfer credit.

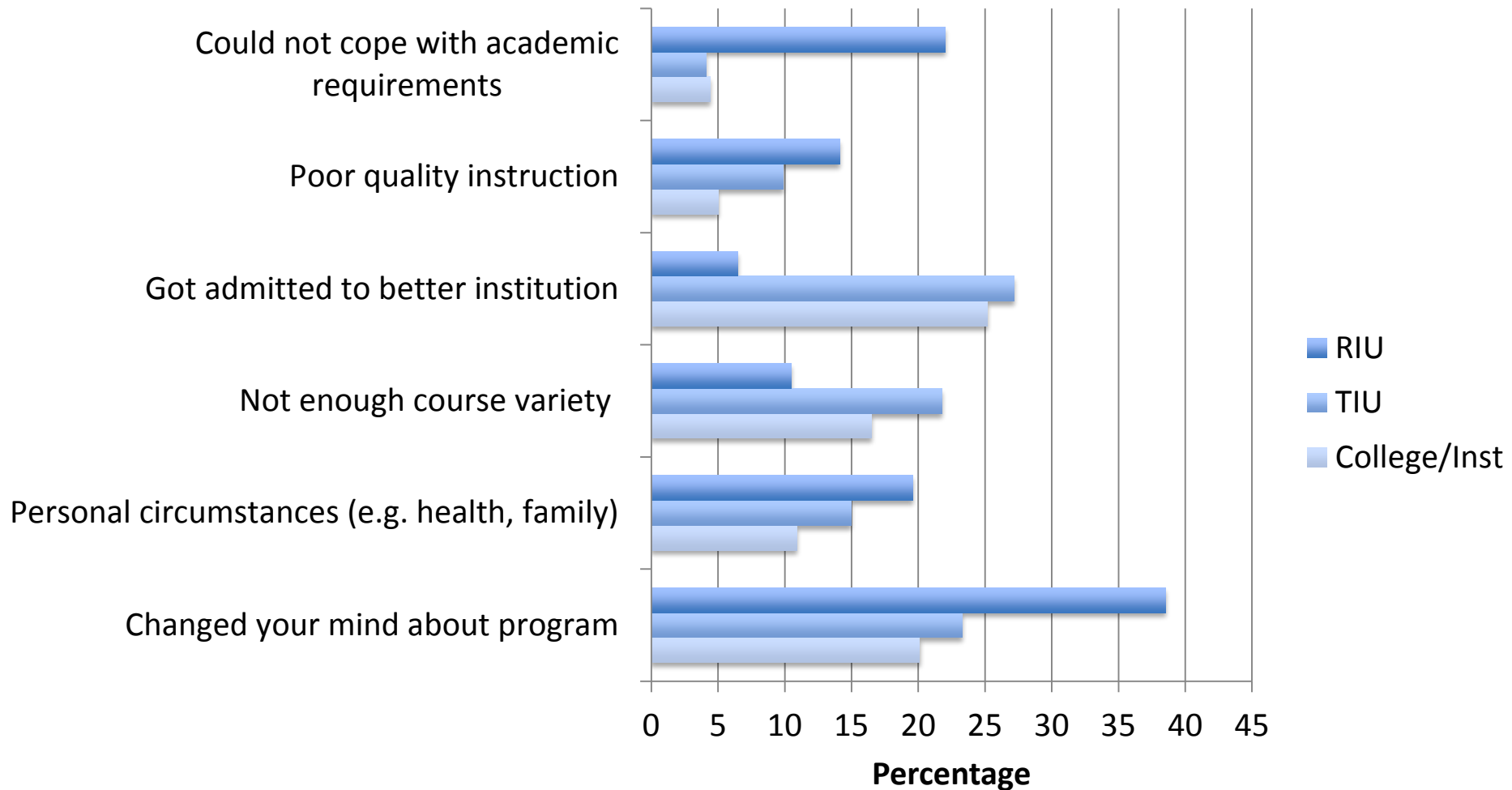
## ▶ Transfer Credit Received

- ▶ **94%** of respondents were successful in transferring at least some of their credits to their new institution.
- ▶ **73%** received all or most credit completed at original institution.
- ▶ **74%** applied all or most of the credit transferred to new program.

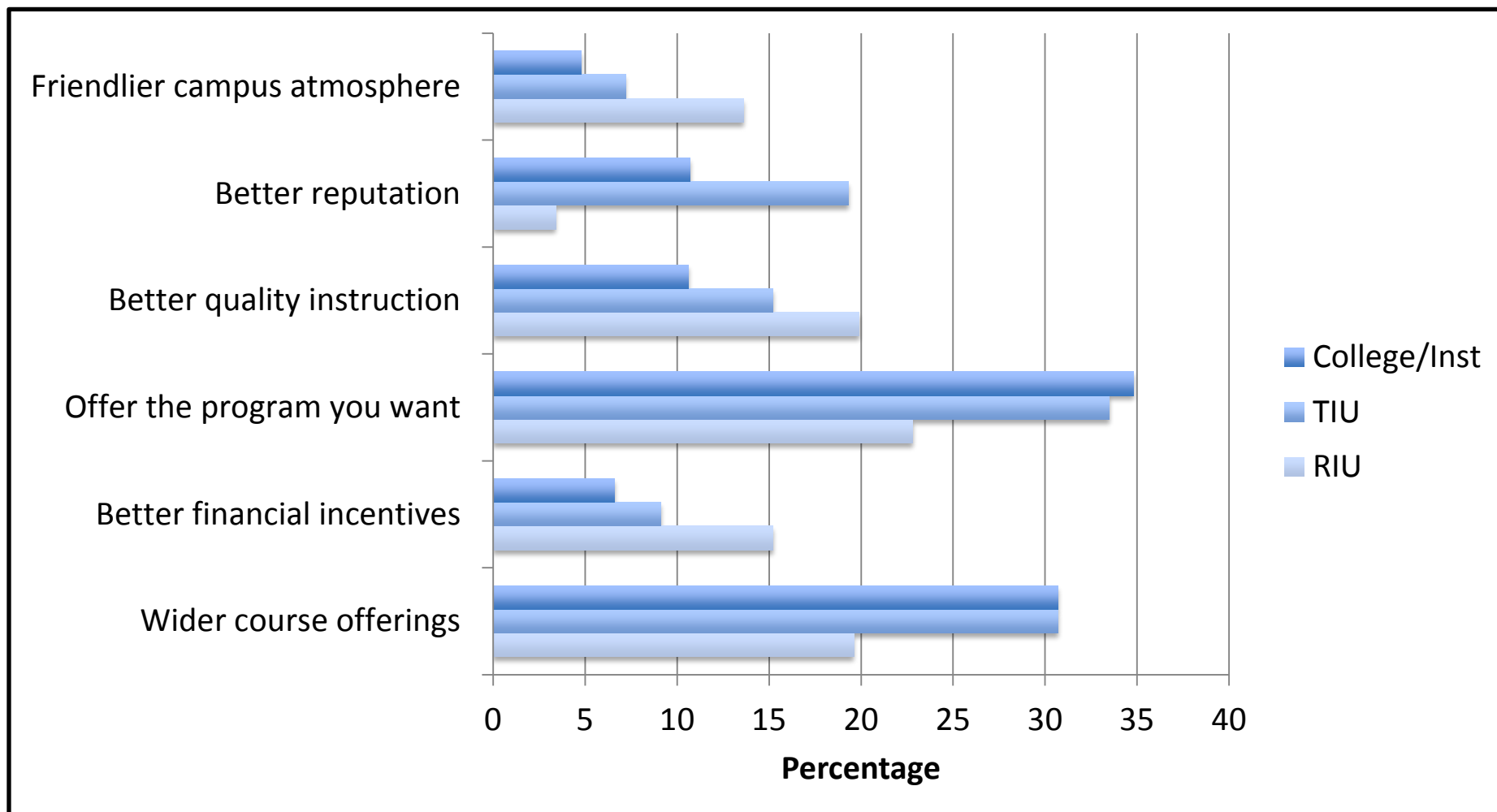
## Most Important Goal for Enrolling at Original Institution (Students who moved FROM Sector or Institution)



# Reasons for Leaving Original Institution (multiple responses permitted)



# What could have been changed to prevent leaving (multiple responses permitted)



# Survey of Movers – System Lessons

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- Students report high levels of satisfaction with the initial institution (75%), the transfer system (80%) and subsequent institutions (88%).
- There are important sector-level findings – The Summary Report focuses on students moving to and from RIUs and College/Institutes.
- Effective transfer mechanisms serve students who are following a planned course of study, and those who need to adjust their plans due to changing circumstances.
- Transfer satisfaction is greatest along paths where articulation agreements in BC Transfer Guide are most developed.

## 4. Transfer Practices and Efficiency

- *BCCAT and other system groups regularly sponsor or conduct research on transfer practices and efficiency and make this research available on public websites.*
- *A few recent studies of interest include:*
  - Pendleton (2011), *Credits to Graduation*  
<http://bccat.ca/pubs/creditstograduation.pdf>
  - Lavin (2011), *The Time It Takes* <http://bccat.ca/pubs/timeittakes.pdf>
  - Beatty-Guenter and Cowin (2013), *Post-Secondary Pathways of Non-Graduates*  
[http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student\\_transitions/documents/Pathways\\_of\\_High\\_School\\_Non\\_Graduates.pdf](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/Pathways_of_High_School_Non_Graduates.pdf)

*... the transfer system between the colleges and Simon Fraser University is working effectively . . . . The college transfer students have shown that their SFU academic performance is equal to, and sometimes better than, the performance of their academic peers from high school who entered SFU directly”*

Heslop (2004), *Alternate Paths to SFU*

# Credits to Graduation

- ... transfer students are able to graduate with approximately the same number of credits as secondary school students. ...

Pendleton (2011), *Credits to Graduation*

**Table 14: Average credits for programs which require 120-121 credits (transfer credits awarded plus credits earned at university); joint majors and honours programs excluded**

Degree	Institution	Secondary School	Transfer	Total
Arts	SFU	126	125	125
	UBC	126	125	126
	UNBC	125	127	126
	UVic	124	125	125
Arts Total		126	125	125
Business	SFU	126	125	126
	UBC	128	124	126
	UNBC	123	124	124
	UVic	135	136	136
Business Total		128	126	127
Science	SFU	126	131	128
	UBC	136	131	135
	UNBC	122	131	124
	UVic	129	131	130
Science Total		132	131	132
Total		129	126	128

Note: excludes 13 records where transfer credits awarded > 100 credits per student.

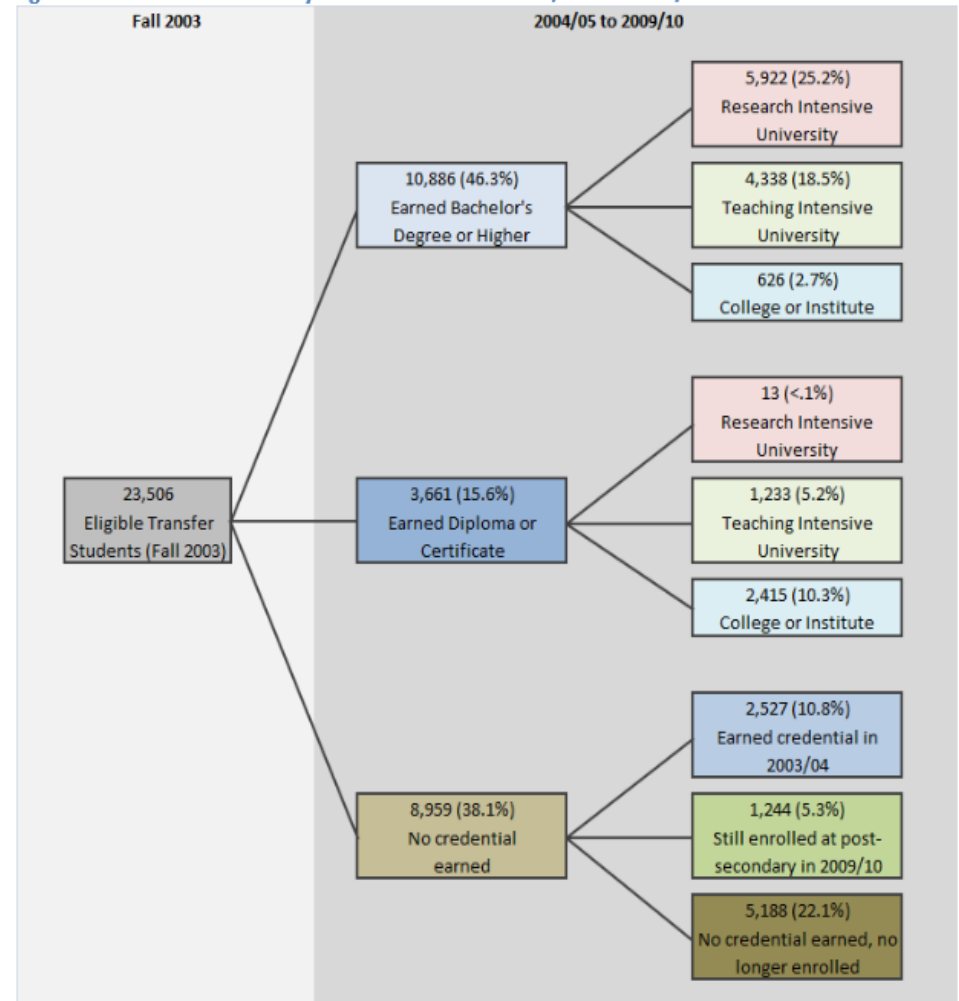


# The Time It Takes

- The ... system provides widespread opportunities for students to pursue a variety of credentials at different kinds of post-secondary institutions. ... one third of the original 2003 cohort had moved to a research intensive university .... about 55% ... had enrolled at a teaching intensive university, college or institute to continue their studies. A large number ... (72.6%) did complete a credential ... while a further 5% were still enrolled. Most ... students completed bachelor's degrees or higher ....

Lavin (2011), *The Time It Takes*

Figure 14: Credentials earned by 2003 ETRs between 2004/05 and 2009/10

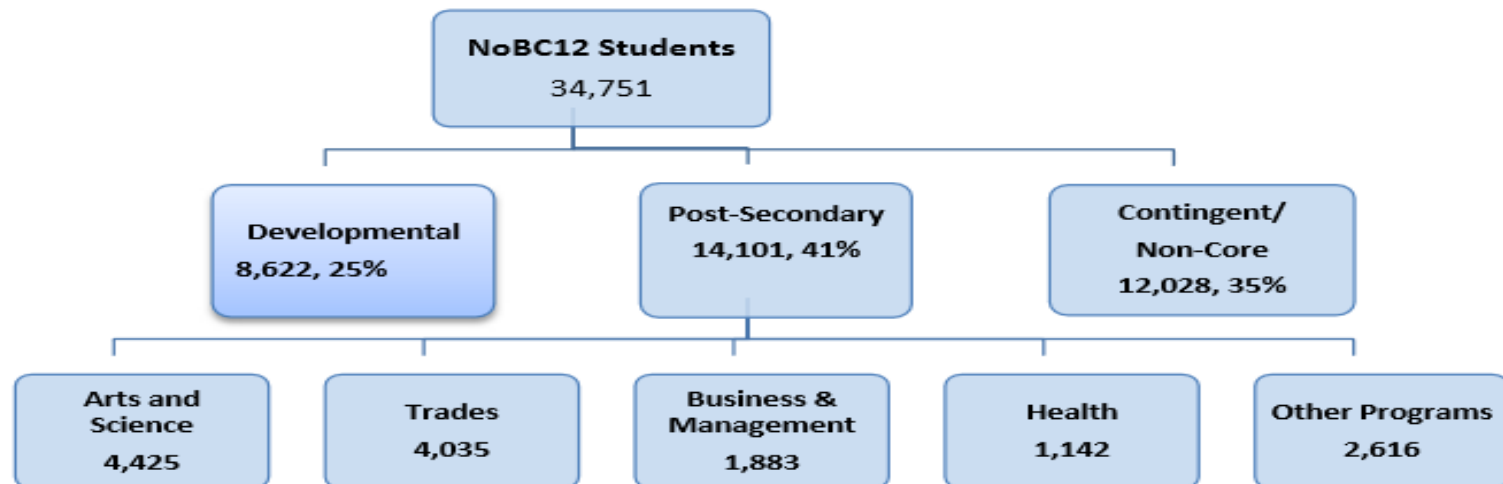


# Post-Secondary Pathways of Non-Graduates

... a significant number of NoBC12 students are entering post-secondary institutions (the door is indeed open), study in a variety of programs (the door does not lead to a blind alley), and complete credentials (it is not a revolving door)... In short ... the B.C. post-secondary system does function as envisioned over a generation ago with respect to “second chance” pathways.

Beatty-Guenter and Cowin (2013), Post-Secondary Pathways of Non-Graduates

Figure 3: Enrolment Patterns of NoBC12 Students in B.C. Public Post-Secondary 2009/10



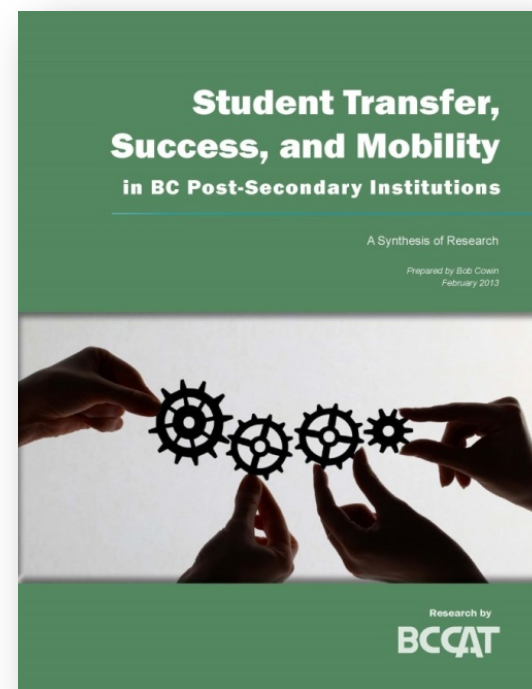
# Synopsis and Questions?

An important finding of BCCAT's research is that the pathways taken by individual students are highly variable. While many follow the ladder programs designed by institutions, changing objectives and circumstances lead many to choose more creative pathways.

Whether framed in terms of student choice or of social and geographical access, the notion of students determining their pathways has been implicit in all of BCCAT's work as it seeks to foster pathways that are efficient, flexible and convenient for students.

(Cowin, *Student Transfer, Success and Mobility*)

<http://www.bccat.ca/pubs/synthesisofresearch.pdf>



Source: BCCAT Research