

# Value Driven Mobility: Expanding Mobility Cultures

## FINAL REPORT



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## Partnering Institutions

Algoma University  
Canadore College  
Cambrian College  
Collège Boréal  
Confederation College  
La Cité Collégiale  
Lakehead University  
Lambton College  
Northern College  
University of Sudbury

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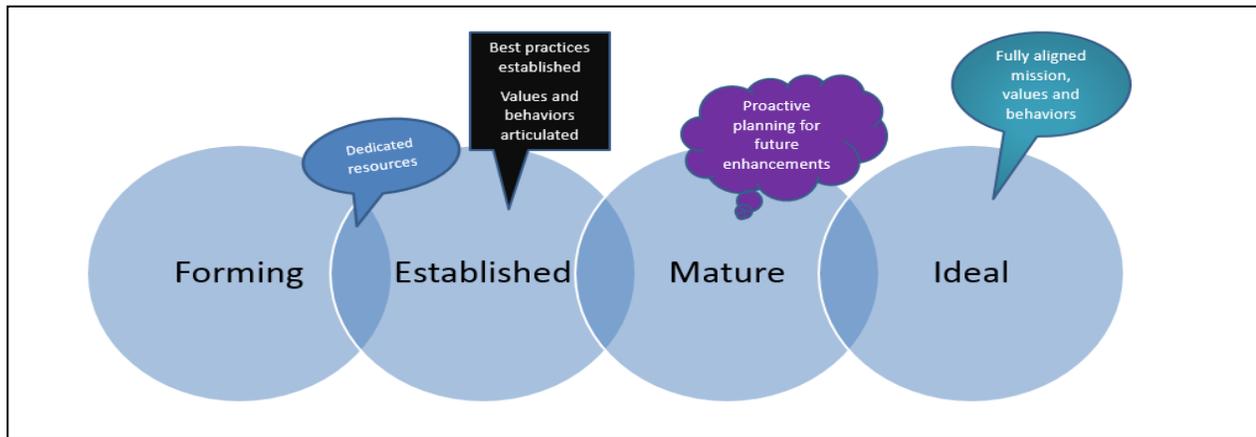
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## Value Driven Mobility: Expanding Mobility Cultures

### Introduction

The intent of this project was to continue work with the rich data collected during the recent study, *Creating a Culture of Mobility* conducted in collaboration with the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer [ONCAT] (Penner, Howieson, & Ditullio, 2017). Results of the 2017 study allowed a culture of mobility to be described on a spectrum (Figure 1). Values associated with a culture of mobility were identified, along with best practices/processes leading to a hypothesis that: values and best practices are two variables (Mueller, 2015) acting as drivers, to move culture along a mobility spectrum. Unanticipated findings included gaps on the spectrum, as well as underutilized pathways existing at all institutions. Addressing gaps in the spectrum through application of best practices, and identifying pathway utilization are important components of expanding institutions' organizational culture as it pertains to student mobility.

Figure 1. Culture of Mobility Spectrum



The 10 institutions that participated in 2017 agreed to continue their participation in what was presented as "phase two", or a continuation of the culture of mobility study. These institutions consisted of three universities: Algoma, Lakehead, and University of Sudbury, as well as seven colleges: Canadore, College Boreal, Confederation, Cambrian, Lambton and Northern. As a result of the Ontario Colleges' work stoppage, two institutions were unable to complete the intervention phase of this project. Subsequently, data to measure movement along the culture of mobility spectrum was collected for eight of the remaining participating institutions.

The current project incorporated two goals: the first was to use the 2017 data in order to create culture of mobility spectrum maps illustrating each institution's cultural placement based on the values and behaviours that were communicated during data collection. The second goal was to have each institution select a best practice intervention to apply through the Fall 2017 semester and collect quantitative survey data measuring values and behaviours to estimate whether the intervention had the effect of movement on the mobility spectrum. Participating institutions were provided with two tangible items at the completion of this project: A 2017 results booklet specific, to their institution, and an individual intervention effects summary with mapped data from the 2018 results.

Describing a culture of mobility, providing feedback about institutions' cultures as measured by survey data, and sharing best practices mapped through qualitative interviews with key informants across the parameters of the participants, provided impetus for cultural expansion. The opportunity and means to inject new practices that had been shown to represent values as drivers in a culture that supports student mobility was related to positive change for the majority of this project's participants.

Our results demonstrated most of the participating institutions moved forward on the culture of mobility spectrum when comparing pre- and post-intervention survey data. It is acknowledged that this project's design does not allow a scientific cause and effect conclusion between specific intervention and movement on the spectrum. The project did facilitate collaboration which is the philosophy and essence behind the practice of student mobility. Among benefits that were not specifically measured by quantitative data and yet still observed, this project stimulated creative responses when participants tailored best practices to their institution's specific needs. It was these responses that expanded the ability to send messages regarding student mobility throughout institutions, communicate more directly and effectively with a broader audience, and implement more pathways procedures, thus increasing awareness about student mobility.

## Environmental Scan

In 2011, ONCAT was developed in order to reduce barriers affecting students as well as enhance transfer pathways for students within and amongst Ontario's postsecondary institutions (ONCAT, 2016). By 2015, ONCAT had been responsible for creating a provincial database used to monitor as well as track the activities of the 21,500 transfer students within the province of Ontario (ONCAT, 2016).

An environmental scan was performed in order to assist the researchers in understanding why students are transferring between postsecondary institutions as well as how their requests are being accommodated by both the transferring and receiving institutions. The question as to whether participating institutions had created a means to track pathway utilization was also explored during the environmental scan. Key Informants at each institution were asked if they had the ability to track and report the level at which their pathways agreements with partner institutions were utilized. The results of this aspect of the environmental scan indicated that the post-secondary system in Ontario has not yet addressed the creation of a mechanism for tracking underutilized pathways. Only one of the participating institutions had collected and organized pathways utilization data.

There are a variety of reasons as to why a student may choose to engage in credit transfer activities, including pursuing a different field of interest, increasing career opportunities, and employer request for academic upgrading (ONCAT, 2013). Although credit transfer pathways have improved, some students find the process confusing with regards to variations in grading systems, the absence of a data base that could store postsecondary students' academic records, and terminology that is used inconsistently (ONCAT, 2013).

The topic of credit transfer in Ontario continues to be of interest for postsecondary institutions. As a result, new studies are being published annually. Research has shown that postsecondary institutions are striving to improve student mobility options. The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development reports that over 55,000 students are taking advantage of articulation agreements within Ontario institutions every year. In addition, there are over 1,400 credit transfer pathways in Ontario (OCAS, n.d.). These pathways are believed to lead to over 800,000 individual transfer opportunities (Nation Talk, 2017). One study in particular determined that by an Ontario credit transfer student's fourth year of university, they were more likely to graduate when compared to a student who had not selected a credit transfer route (Martinello & Stewart, 2015).

In recent years, research has focused on the cost of credit transfer amongst Ontario institutions as well as students' subsequent academic performance. To put this into perspective, ONCAT is funding an increasing number of studies every year. Between 2016 and 2017, ONCAT granted funding to 40 new projects, focusing on Innovative Curriculum Delivery and Pathways Development among postsecondary institutions in Ontario (ONCAT, n.d.).

A study was published in 2016 which examined the cost of credit transfer in small colleges. The researchers discovered that Ontario colleges consider credit transfer to be a high priority and are therefore making investments in order to ensure that their processes are adequate to cater to the increasing volume of students who are taking advantage of these programs (Penner & Howieson, 2016). Penner and Howieson (2016) also determined that students are benefiting from these programs; however, the institutions were found to exhibit a lack of understanding in terms of return on investment. This is significant as the sustainability of credit transfer is directly correlated with the issue of smaller institutions' vulnerability in terms of cost. Due to these institutions possessing smaller budgets, external support is necessary in order to buffer the financial impact that credit transfer incurs (Penner & Howieson, 2016).

The following table summarizes information found on the participating institutions' websites with regards to articulation agreements. Their official websites were examined to determine whether there was information available for students on transfer pathways between provincial, national, and international institutions.

*Table 1: Participating Institutions' Articulation Agreement Website Information*

	<b>Information on Credit Transfer (Ontario)</b>	<b>Information on Credit Transfer (Canada)</b>	<b>Information on Credit Transfer (Outside of Canada)</b>
<b>Algoma University</b>	Yes	No	No
<b>Cambrian College</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Canadore College</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Collège Boréal</b>	Yes	Yes	Limited
<b>Confederation College</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>La Cité Collégiale</b>	Yes	Yes	Limited
<b>Lakehead University</b>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Lambton College</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Northern College</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>University of Sudbury</b>	Yes	No	No

## Literature Review

A literature review was conducted in order to address the topics of student mobility, value systems, and institutional culture. In addition, a focus was placed on the relationship between value systems within an institution and the development of institutional culture (Mueller, 2014). This includes literature outlining Organizational Culture, Change Management, and Quality Assurance.

Since the early 2000s, there has been an increase in articulation agreements amongst Canadian postsecondary institutions. Research has shown that in Ontario, universities and community colleges have remained rather separate, with most upholding the mindset that universities are career-oriented establishments, while colleges are strictly for technical training (Gawley & McGowan, 2006; Hurlihey, 2012). It has also been well documented that a cultural prejudice surrounds postsecondary institutions. Often times, it is believed that students with higher grade point averages will attend universities, even if a college education will provide them with increased job opportunities (Anderssen, 2012; Hurlihey, 2012). This mindset is gradually changing in Ontario as articulation agreements between institutions are continually being created.

Student mobility demands are continually increasing; therefore, it is of the utmost importance that institutions become articulated as well as responsive in terms of managing student mobility (Voorhees & Harvey, 2005). Additionally, institutions should strive to integrate student mobility into their institutional culture. Should this culture already exist, understanding the value systems that support it need to be considered. This may be accomplished by examining the institution's goals, value systems, and established norms—all of which are indicative of institutional culture (Katzenbach, Oelschlegel, & Thomas, 2016). Research has already been performed on the effect that value systems have on institutional quality; however, there has been little focus on the relationship between value systems and a culture of mobility (Penner, 2007). Branson (2008) stated that the quality of one's work is influenced by their organization's ideology, which is ultimately experienced by its culture. This author also argued that the "bedrock" of organizational change is values alignment with regards to its culture. In addition, in order to be successful, the leaders within an organization may choose to adopt practices that allow employees to be creative and innovative. He furthered this statement by likening an organization's culture to a force by which members are drawn together (Branson, 2008). He also discussed how values-aligned organizations often endeavor to align their employees' values with their organizations' in an effort to understand their influence. Branson (2008) continued by arguing that if values are not aligned, there is a low likelihood that the organization can operate efficiently.

By understanding its culture, an institution is more apt to build sustainable credit transfer programs, as its impact on student mobility will be more apparent (Harrison, 2005). Previous research, such as the recent study entitled *Measuring the Cost of Credit Transfer in Small Colleges*, have outlined numerous best practices, including the consideration of a values system within an institution as a gauge of credit transfer initiatives (Penner & Howieson, 2016). The results of this research project will help build upon the body of knowledge regarding student mobility in Ontario.

Katzenbach et al. (2016) have researched the core concepts of culture. Their research stipulates that a specific culture cannot be given an exact description, as each institution has unique reactions, routine habits, and emotional responses. Katzenbach et al. (2016) described ten key principles required to motivate cultural change, which are deemed to be more successful than formally mandated change and as a result, are practical for organizational development. In order to be sustainable, it is imperative that the principles themselves are linked to a values system.

According to Katzenbach et al. (2016), the ten principles are:

1. Work with and within your current cultural situations.
2. Change behaviours and mind-sets will follow.
3. Focus on a critical few behaviours.
4. Deploy your authentic informal leaders.
5. Don't let your formal leaders off the hook.
6. Link behaviours to business objectives.
7. Demonstrate impact quickly.
8. Use cross-organizational methods to go viral.
9. Align programmatic efforts with behaviours.
10. Actively manage your cultural situation over time.

Mueller (2014) identified two separate value clusters within a culture. The first of which includes where behaviour and human activity are directly correlated with the organization's values. Conversely, the second cluster includes the variables that can be considered aspirational. As a result, the researcher argued that an institution's mission and vision statements should therefore offer a clear indication of the organization's values (Mueller, 2014).

Similarly, Calder (2011) sought to understand how accurately values, vision, and mission statements serve as a definition of an organization. These statements have the opportunity to affect how the organization operates; therefore, it is the institution's responsibility to clearly articulate these statements. It was found that often times, institutions write their mission statement in a way that reflects their intentions rather than focusing on the possible outcomes for their students. Furthermore, Calder (2011) determined that the majority of institutions publish mission statements which focus on what they do, rather than phrasing them in an outcome-oriented fashion. It is interesting to note that the author determined that although vision statements should focus on an institution's three-to-five-year plan, they are often unclear and unnecessarily lengthy documents (Calder, 2011).

Lucas and Kline (2008) performed a case study analysis examining the relationships between organizational learning, group dynamics, and organizational culture. The researchers determined that often times, a lack of psychological safety negatively impacts team learning. They defined psychological safety as "a climate in which group members believe that they can speak openly about mistakes without fear of negative repercussions". Furthermore, the researchers concluded that trust among group members was necessary if organizational change is to be initiated (Lucas & Kline, 2008). Trust comes from leader behaviour, as it was determined that if leaders demonstrated positive role modelling, fostered a common goal, and communicated a vision, group members expressed less cynicism regarding the proposed change (Lucas & Kline, 2008; Weiner, 2009). In addition, these leaders can affect the maintenance of the organizational culture, as it was found that members of a higher status were considered to be more influential than those of a lower status; therefore, group learning is possible via a strong social influence from other group members (Lucas & Kline, 2008).

Before implementing organizational change, one must consider the types of conditions that would increase favourability amongst its members. According to Weiner (2009), the first of which is change valence, a state that refers to whether the members of an organization value the proposed change. This includes whether they feel it is necessary, beneficial, and/or important. The author proposes that there are a variety of reasons that the individual may value the change, including the benefits with which it is associated for employees,

themselves, or the organization in general. In addition, the change may be valued if it is congruent with the individual's core values, or if their manager/peers support the change. The second condition Weiner refers to is change efficacy which is defined as a member's "cognitive appraisal of three determinants of implementation capability: Task demands, resource availability, and situational factors" (Weiner, 2009). This may include considering whether the organization has the appropriate material, financial, and human resources required to implement the change, as well as sufficient time to do so. The third condition that the author discusses is contextual factors, that is, how organizational culture develops change. Methods may include embracing innovation, adopting flexible organizational policies, and examining positive past experiences (Weiner, 2009).

Kurt Lewin's (1947) work is often considered to be a cornerstone in change theory. Burnes (2004a) reexamined the works of Lewin, arguing that his findings are still valid in modern society. In Lewin's *Field Theory*, he proposed that group behaviour had the power to modify individual behaviour. As a result, he considered individual behaviour to be a function of the "field", otherwise known as the group environment. Therefore, behaviour changes were said to result from forces within the "field". Lewin believed that if one understood these forces, they would be able to identify the forces that require modification in order to bring about change (Burnes, 2004a). Burnes continued by citing how Lewin stressed the importance of *Group Dynamics*, claiming that it is unproductive to attempt to change an individual's behaviour, as an individual is compelled to conform to social norms. Therefore, if one seeks to bring about change, change should address group level processes (Burnes, 2004a). Lewin (1947) also developed the *3-Step Model*, consisting of three stages. The first of which is referred to as "Unfreezing". In this stage, Lewin argued that the "equilibrium needs to be destabilized (unfrozen) before old behaviour can be discarded (unlearned) and new behaviour successfully adopted" (Lewin, 1947). Burnes (2004a) summarized this statement by explaining how one must feel safe from humiliation before they can renounce old behaviour and subsequently adopt new practices. The second stage in the *3-Step Model* is "Moving". Lewin argued that an individual should utilize trial and error, involving research and action, in an effort to modify behaviour. The final step is referred to as "Refreezing". In this step, Lewin argued that the group requires stabilization in order to avoid regression (Burnes, 2004a). References to Lewin's work were sourced by many researchers. Most frequently, they referred to his statement that initiating change using a top-down approach is futile as it is of the utmost importance that organizational members are not only aware of change, but are also offered the opportunity to help develop and support the change (Choi & Ruona, 2011; Levasseur, 2001; Weiner, 2009).

Choi and Ruona (2011) shared similar findings; however, these researchers commented that many efforts to implement organizational change cannot be sustained. In addition, they made note of a previous study, conducted by Burnes (2004b), which determined that at least two thirds of change initiatives fail. There are a variety of possible explanations for this extensive failure rate; however, the researchers focused on Kurt Lewin's theory of "Unfreezing". This theory refers to the process of modifying the beliefs of an organization's members in an effort to convince them that changes are necessary (Choi & Ruona, 2011). A similar theory was authored by Palos and Stancovici (2010). The researchers stressed that in order for change to be sustained, change must occur through the organization's members. Furthermore, they noted that in some situations, change fails due to the fact that leaders underestimate the importance of individual members. As a result, it is important to consider the members' attitudes towards a proposed change to gauge their behavioural support (Branson, 2008; Choi & Ruona, 2011; Palos & Stancovici, 2010; Weiner, 2009). Choi and Ruona (2011) also proposed that individuals are not necessarily resistant to change; however, it is the imposition that change brings, as well as the way in which it is imposed, that results in criticism. In order to be successful, the organization's members must perceive the initiative as necessary. This may be supported if the individual recognizes a personal benefit if the change is initiated, if there is support from management, if they view the change as appropriate, and if they believe in change-specific theory (Choi & Ruona, 2011).

Furthermore, participation in change is required to build partnerships, commitment, and trust among organizational members. In addition, if an organization is to implement a change, they must be able to obtain and reflect on feedback (Choi & Ruona, 2011).

Palos and Stancovici (2010) sought to understand if there is a difference with regards to organizational culture and learning capabilities between private and public organizations. These researchers also examined organizational culture in terms of type, strength, and congruence. From this information, they determined that there are four different types of culture: clan culture, hierarchy culture, adhocracy culture, and marketing culture. Clan culture refers to teamwork within and amongst organizational levels (Palos & Stancovici, 2010). This type of culture is hallmarked by tradition as well as loyalty. Conversely, hierarchy culture refers to the way in which an organization functions based on routines, norms, long-term objectives, and predictability. The researchers also go on to discuss adhocracy culture which fosters entrepreneurial spirit (Palos & Stancovici, 2010). This type of culture also allows for employees to be innovative while being managed from a risk-oriented leadership perspective. Furthermore, Palos and Stancovici (2016) define marketing culture as externally controlled, as well as a culture that values productivity and competition. This type of culture also emphasizes the importance of winning by utilizing competitive actions. The researchers determined that in terms of organizational learning capabilities, private organizations demonstrated statistically significant findings in terms of their ability to take risks, promote dialogue, and pursue creative solutions (Palos & Stancovici, 2010). They also found that private organizations were more likely to encourage collaboration among team members, obtain the information they require, raise awareness among coworkers, and be involved in continuous learning (Palos & Stancovici, 2010).

Many researchers have proposed theories regarding the implementation of organizational change. Kritsonis (2005) examined a variety of change theories, including Lippitt, Watson, and Westley's (1958) *Dynamics of Planned Change*. This theory considers seven steps to bring about successful organizational change. Kritsonis (2005) further explained that if Lippitt et al.'s (1958) steps are initiated across an institution, the proposed change will be regarded as normal, allowing for better uptake by its members.

According to Lippitt et al. (1958), the steps are:

1. Diagnose the problem.
2. Assess the motivation and capacity for change.
3. Assess the resources and motivation of the change agent. This includes the change agent's commitment to change, power, and stamina.
4. Choose progressive change objects. In this step, action plans are developed and strategies are established.
5. The role of the change agents should be selected and clearly understood by all parties so that expectations are clear. Examples of roles are: Cheerleader, facilitator, and expert.
6. Maintain the change. Communication, feedback, and group coordination are essential elements in this step of the change process.
7. Gradually terminate from the helping relationship. The change agent should gradually withdraw from their role over time. This will occur when the change becomes part of the organizational culture.

Previous research on this topic, published in *Creating a Culture of Mobility: Needs of Small Institutions*, determined that an institution's culture of mobility can be thought of as phases upon a spectrum. This spectrum begins with the Forming phase in which culture is said to be dispersed. The next phase in which the institution moves characterizes culture as increasingly automated as well as centralized, and is known as the Established phase (Penner, Howieson, & DiTullio, 2017). The Mature phase follows, and demonstrates

activities that are more future-oriented, as well as embodies actions that are more proactive in nature. Finally, the Ideal phase represents an institution that demonstrates perfect alignments amongst behaviours/practices, values, and missions (Penner et al., 2017).

Each phase of cultural development is also characterized by specific indicators and best practices. For example, in the Forming culture, the lexicon is being learned and communication tools are being developed (Penner et al., 2017). When moving into the Established culture, activities may become more centralized as dedicated resources are established. Conversely, in the subsequent Mature culture, an institution's actions may reflect a more proactive direction. Finally, an Ideal culture represents perfect harmony amongst all of the elements of cultural indicators (Penner et al., 2017).

Penner et al.'s (2017) study also determined that values, specifically student success, mobility, access, and faculty engagement, are associated with an institution's culture of mobility. In addition, the researchers determined that in each of the 10 participating institutions' mission and vision statements, these four values were addressed (Penner et al., 2017). This study concluded that based on their findings, institutions could be plotted on the culture of mobility spectrum. Upon review of their results, the participating institutions would then have the ability to make informed choices as to their goals of movement across the spectrum (Penner et al., 2017).

By considering previous research on value systems, institutional culture, and organizational change, one is more adept in determining the most appropriate method to invoke change within their specific institution. In doing so, the institution has the opportunity to consider how best to prepare their staff for new policies and procedures to increase student mobility, based upon their best practices.

## Methodology

The goals of this project were:

- To extrapolate and apply a specific, agreed upon best practice where the institutions' cultures of mobility are at a different point on the spectrum, and measure the effect of this application.
- To create a matrix values mapped to the cultural spectrum, to guide future cultural development.
- To identify the culture of mobility gaps that exist at various places on the culture of mobility spectrum within the ten participating institutions.
- To inventory underutilized pathways and identify approaches to improve utilization.

To achieve these goals, ten (10) small institutions participated to determine the culture of mobility within their institution.

The research questions to fulfill the goals of this project are: ***How does an institution move their culture of mobility along the full spectrum?***

1. Where are the gaps in mobility, based upon the existing cultures in these ten institutions?
2. What existing best practices could fill the gaps, and how do we adapt and apply them within our institutions?
3. How can underused pathways be better utilized?

## Phase One

Data from the previous study, *Creating a Culture of Mobility: Needs of Small Institutions* (Penner et al., 2017) was further analyzed in order to provide each institution with a full report of their individual results gathered from the quantitative survey that had been distributed. Data was also summarized and mapped on cultural spectrums for each institution. Separate mapped spectrums were presented for qualitative data and quantitative data using the variables of "values for student mobility" and "practices that support student mobility". Figure 2 depicts the mapped spectrums for values and practices for one of the institutions. Eighty percent of participants had values mapped further on the culture of mobility spectrum than practices, illustrating the gap that had been identified in the study performed by Penner et al. (2017). This further illustrates the concept that values act as drivers to move institutions along the culture of mobility

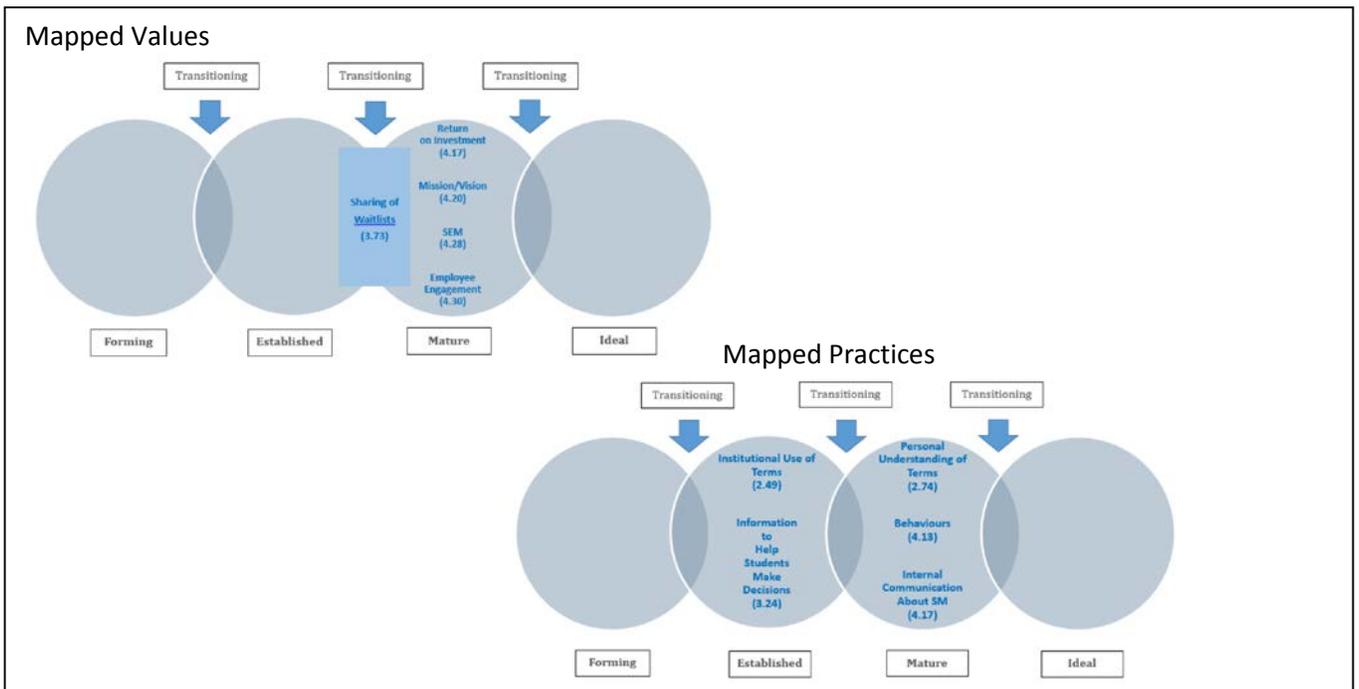
A key informant inquiry was conducted allowing for discussion regarding the information in the results booklets. When the inquiry meetings were complete, a best practices list of choices was presented as a stimulus to guide the participants in choosing an intervention to incorporate into their current student mobility practices.

The best practices list was compiled through further analysis of the 2017 data. This process involved identifying the institutions that were mapped at the mature phase of the culture of mobility spectrum and performed qualitative analysis to discover common themes of behavioural practices pertaining to how these institutions went about the tasks involved in student mobility (see Appendix A).

Qualitative patterns were organized into the following categories:

- A. Behaviours Demonstrating Values:
  - I. Employee Engagement
  - II. Explore Hypothetical Sharing of Waitlists
  - III. Demonstrating Impact of Investment
  
- B. Practices Indicating Culture:
  - I. Internal Communication about Student Mobility
  - II. New Procedural Behaviours
  - III. New Terms or Language
  - IV. Providing Information to Help Students with Decisions about Student Mobility

Figure 2. Mapped Values and Practices illustrating Values as Drivers



A follow-up inquiry was conducted with the participants to inquire about and record each institution’s choice of best practice intervention. Many participants used the information from their 2017 results booklet, along with their mapped spectrums to analyze the areas in which their institution could benefit from growth. With this approach, they were able to choose the intervention and tailor it to suit their individual needs.

It was at this point in the study that the researchers discovered that 90% of the participating institutions did not have a tracking method in place to collect information regarding underutilized pathways. During the key informant inquiry interview, participants indicated that gathering this information would be extremely cumbersome and would interfere with their ability to apply their chosen interventions. The institution that did track pathway usage generously shared their internal data. It was determined that the development of a method to track pathway usage between institutions was beyond the scope of this study.

## Phase Two

A survey tool was designed as a pretest and posttest to measure institutional movement on the culture of mobility spectrum. The survey was a short version of the quantitative questionnaire that was utilized for Penner et al.'s (2017) study, *Creating a Culture of Mobility: Needs of Small Institutions*. Items from the previous survey that related to spectrum mapping were retained. These items related directly to the best practices intervention list that was created for this study with the intention of measuring the variables of Values and Best Practices.

The survey began with demographic questions such as the name of the institution, level of authority, years of experience, and length of experience with student mobility. Two survey sections were created: Values, as well as Practices and Challenges. With the exception of two items, the questionnaire presented a series of statements with a Likert scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The statements were framed to inquire how the individual perceived the statement and how the individual perceived the institution in relation to the statement. The two exceptional items were in the Practices section, and had modified scales of Yes (3), Somewhat (2), or No (1). These questions dealt with corporate lexicon. In the first question, the individual was asked to rate their understanding of mobility terms, and in the second, they were asked to rate how their institutions used the same terms (see Appendix B for the full survey).

The questionnaire was automated through Survey Monkey and pretesting was administered before best practices interventions began. Survey participants were selected by each institution with the criteria for selection being faculty and staff who are directly involved with student mobility. As with the 2016 study, this was a targeted census, not a random sampling design. A minimum of 10 respondents was requested from each institution. There were 99 respondents to our pretest questionnaire. Response rates ranged from seven at two of the institutions, to 20 at one, and 23 at another. The researchers ensured the pretest questionnaires were completed before they implemented their best practices intervention.

Each institution was very creative in designing interventions that made sense for their institution. Some focused on one area with improvement in mind, while others chose a variety of activities that addressed a number of the best practices themes. Table 2 summarizes the interventions created at each institution. Timelines for the intervention application phase varied and was affected by the Ontario College's work stoppage from October to November. Despite the interruption, eight of the participating institutions were able to complete their objectives for this project. Each institution had different completion dates, the earliest of which being the end of January 2018. The final institution completed mid-April.

Table 2: Summary of Participating Institutions' Best Practices Intervention

Institution Identification Number	Best Practice Chosen	Application
1	Employee Engagement	New position created and filled in summer 2017 with the specific job of creating pathways and partnerships
	New Procedural Behaviours	Discussions have led to procedures in place. Material development pending.
	Providing Information to help with student decisions	New designated position is first point of contact. Much more sharing happened with high schools. Discussion about how to continue to improve overall communication.
2	New Procedural Behaviours	Updated internal and external website to reflect new pathway agreements with universities.
		Discussed how to trace a path for a flexible student mobility with other Colleges and Universities.
	Employee Engagement	Offered Pathways information and communication workshops for the professors, staff members, and students.
3	New Procedural Behaviours	Pathways Officer was relocated to the Admissions Office with a designated physical space.
		A manual system to track student mobility inquiries and their connection with students' application, admission, and enrollment was created.
4	Employee Engagement	Developed pathways training modules specifically for faculty with the goals of providing better understanding about what pathways are, how to find pathways information, and how to best help students.
	Providing Information to help with student decisions	Created a "gamification" presented interactive map within a specific program to show prospective students what internal and external program pathways exist in conjunction with this program as well as what job outcomes that will result from the pathways.
5	New Procedural Behaviours	Created specialized materials for promotion and recruitment activities as a way to enhance our recruitment presentations.
		Improving layout and information about transfer credits and pathways on the Institution website.
6	New Procedural Behaviours	Worked with and improved understanding and utilization of ONTransfer.ca. Information was posted to staff news site.
	Employee Engagement	Information/educational pamphlets handed out to staff and faculty.
7	Providing Information to help with student decisions	The institutions' Outreach and Support Officer built stronger relationships with partner institutions by adding more in-class presentations to their students. These visits were in addition to the institution's standard recruitment plan which typically focuses on more general information sessions. Conducted information sessions for partner institutions' faculty regarding pathway options and processes, including joint admissions, where relevant. Designed a supplementary handout specifically for partner institutions' faculty.
8	Providing Information to help with student decisions	Pathways Promotional messaging campaign launched on Institution's portal. Updated informational flyer.
	New Procedural Behaviours	Created in-house Informational Presentations.

Posttest measurement was requested at an individual rate after each intervention. The pretest and posttest questionnaires were administered with a repeated measure design. Since the posttest was the same questionnaire, it was accompanied with the following script:

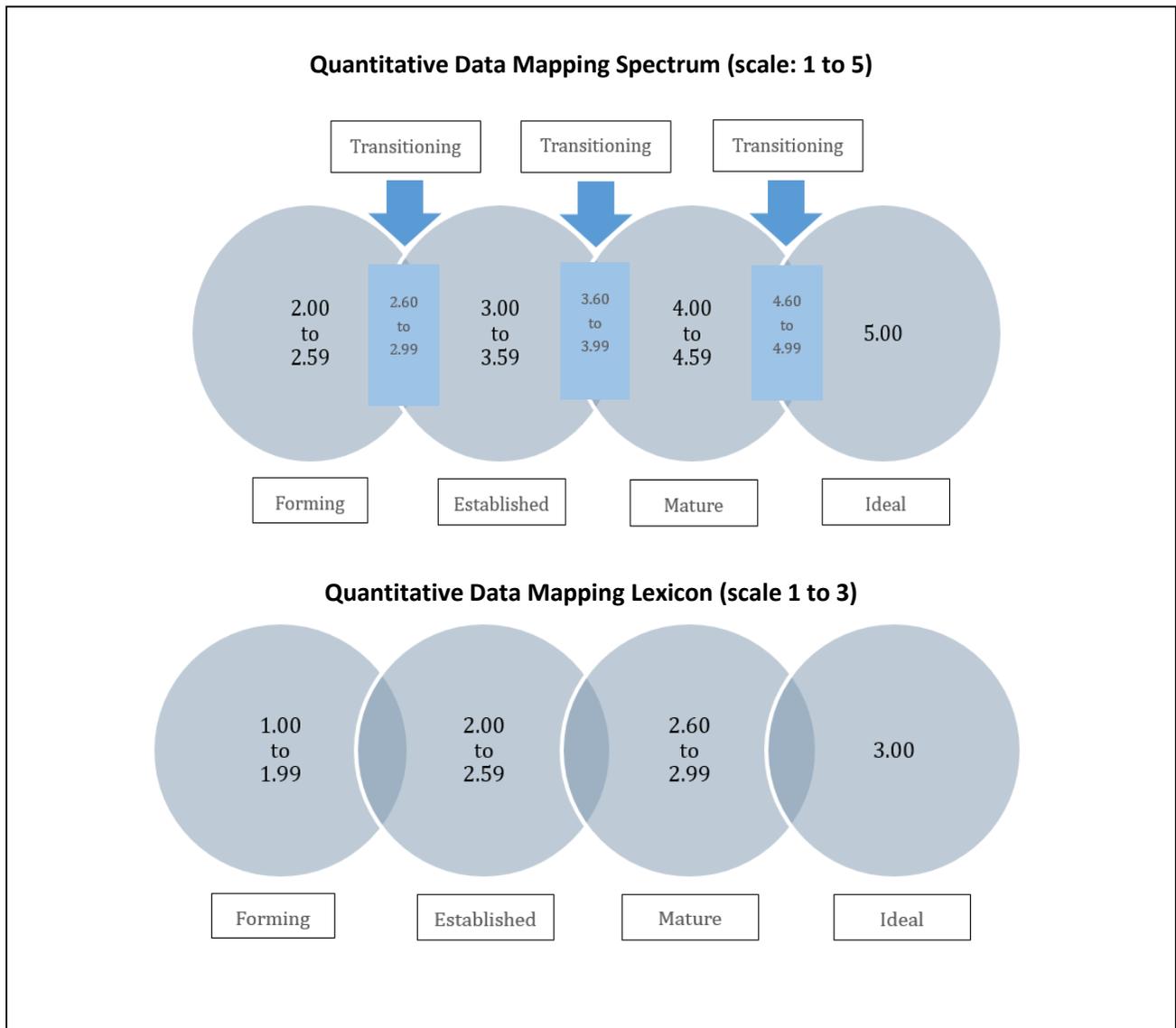
“Thank you for participating in our Expanding Cultures of Mobility research project. The important next step in this study is to assess how attitudes may or may not have changed based upon the activities your institution undertook. If you could take the time to complete the survey again, we thank you very much for all of your participation and help in this valuable research project.”

Survey response rates decreased 27% for the posttest measure. The most notable decline was from 20 respondents before the intervention to eight after.

### Phase Three

Using the relatively small data set, questionnaire responses were averaged per item for each institution. Researchers used mapping methods established in Penner et al.'s (2017) study, *Creating a Culture of Mobility: Needs of Small Institutions* which involved setting score-based parameters for each level of the spectrum (Figure 3). Data was mapped, and four culture of mobility spectrums were created for each institution. Values and practices were mapped separately for each of the pretest and posttest questionnaire responses which allowed for observation of movement on the spectrum. Completion of intervention results summary, which includes mapped spectrums for each institution, is pending as this report is being written.

Figure 3. Spectrum Mapping Parameters



## Findings

Using pretest and posttest survey data to map participating institutions on a spectrum that describes the culture of mobility, this study addressed the research questions inquiring about the gaps in existing cultures of mobility for each institution and whether best practices interventions could fill cultural gaps. Considering a modest participant pool (eight small institutions) and data set (n=99 for pretest and n=72 for posttest), the results are encouraging. Seventy-five percent of the participating institutions showed forward movement on the spectrum of cultural mobility for the “Practices Indicating Culture” variable. In addition, 25% showed forward movement for the “Behaviours indicating Values” variable. Table 3 is a summary of institutions’ cultural shifts on the spectrum before and after the intervention.

*Table 3. Movement on the Culture of Mobility before and after best practice interventions*

Institution Identification Number	Best Practice Categories Implemented	Results	
		Values	Practices
1	New Procedural Behaviours	<i>Waitlist*</i> moved backward from Mature phase to Established phase <i>Employee Engagement*</i> and <i>SEM*</i> moved backwards from Transitioning to Mature into Established phase	<i>Information to Help Students*</i> moved forward from Transitioning to Established into Established phase. <i>New Behaviours*</i> moved backwards from Established phase into Transitioning to Established
	Employee Engagement		
	Providing Information to Help Student Decisions		
2	New Procedural Behaviours	No movement on the spectrum	<i>Student Mobility Terms Used*</i> moved forward from Forming phase into Established phase. <i>Student Mobility Terms Understood*</i> moved forward from Established phase to Mature phase
	Employee Engagement		
3	New Procedural Behaviours	<i>Return on Investment*</i> moved backward from Mature phase into Transitioning to Mature <i>Waitlist*</i> moved backward from Transitioning to Mature into Established phase	<i>New Behaviours*</i> moved backwards from Mature phase into Transitioning to Mature <i>Information to Help Students*</i> moved backwards from Mature phase into Transitioning to Mature
4	New Procedural Behaviours	No movement on the spectrum	<i>Information to Help Students*</i> moved forward from Established phase into Mature phase
	Employee Engagement		
	Providing Information to Help Student Decisions		
5	New Procedural Behaviours	No movement on the spectrum	<i>Internal Communication*</i> moved forward from Established phase into Transitioning to Mature Phase

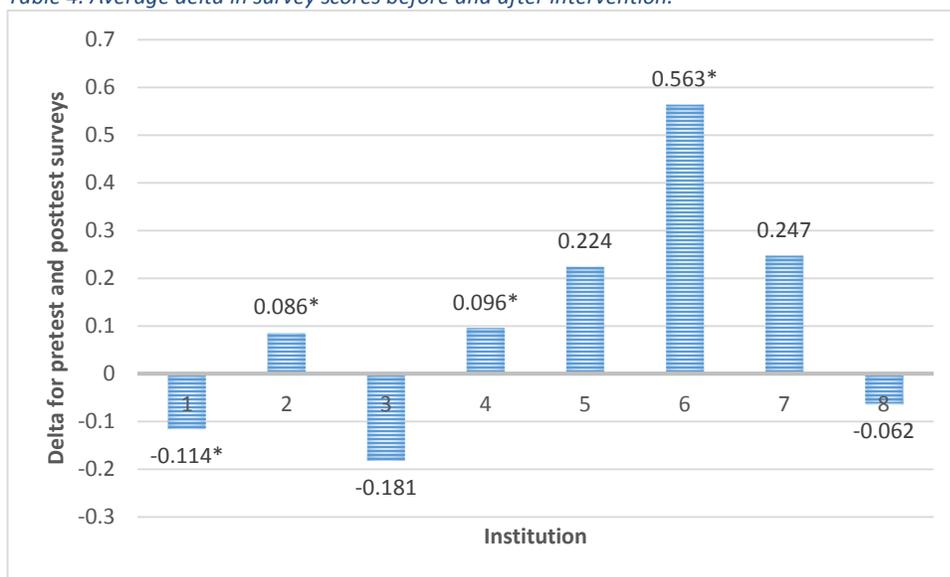
Institution Identification Number	Best Practice Categories Implemented	Results	
		Values	Practices
6	New Procedural Behaviours	General shift forward from Established into Transitioning to Mature	General shift forward. <i>Internal Communication*</i> moved a full phase forward from Transitioning to Established to Transitioning to Mature
	Employee Engagement		
7	Providing Information to Help Student Decisions	General shift forward from Established to Mature Phase	<i>Internal Communication*</i> moved forward from Transitioning to Mature into Mature phase
8	Providing Information to Help Student Decisions	No movement on the spectrum	No movement on the spectrum
	New Procedural Behaviours		

\*questionnaire item

It is also worth noting that 50% of the participating institutions maintained their position on the values spectrum and there was some backward movement on the spectrum for two of the participating institutions.

In addition to observing movement of cultural shifts on the spectrum, a numerical analysis of change in scores (delta) for before and after best practices intervention was conducted. Table 4 reports average delta values for institutions. These values represent the average change in scores for pretest versus posttest across all of the questionnaire items.

Table 4. Average delta in survey scores before and after intervention.



\*Institutions that applied *Employee Engagement* as part of their best practices intervention

Further investigation regarding a connection between the type of best practices intervention applied and forward movement on the culture of mobility spectrum revealed that of the seven participants who applied *New Procedural Behaviours* for at least one of their best practices intervention, 71% experienced forward cultural shifts. Conversely, of the four participants who applied *Providing Information to Help Student Decisions* as one of their interventions, 75% experienced forward movement on the cultural spectrum. One hundred percent of participants who used *Employee Engagement* as part of their intervention demonstrated forward cultural movement. A comparison with those participants who did not use *Employee Engagement* as part of their intervention resulted in the observation that only 50% of those institutions moved forward on the culture of mobility spectrum. Statistical analysis utilizing *t*-Test was used to determine whether the average delta scores were significantly different between the groups that used *Employee Engagement* and the group that did not. This test did not show significant differences in mean deltas for the two groups.

## Conclusions

Ontario's postsecondary system continues to adapt to the increase in student mobility demands. This study examined cultural adjustment to the changes required to support student mobility at small institutions. Using the concept of a spectrum to describe the culture of mobility, and a comprehensive data base collected in 2016 (Penner, et al., 2017), the present project provided descriptive summaries of individual organizational culture as it relates to student mobility at each of the participating institutions.

The spectrum for culture of mobility has four distinct stages: forming, where the culture tends to be dispersed; established, where the culture is centralized and more automated; mature, where the activities become proactive and future focused, and ideal, where there is perfect alignment between mission, values, and behaviours/practices (Penner et al., 2017). Mapping individual cultures allowed for the observation that most institutions were transitioning from the established phase into the mature phase at the time the data was collected. The present study queried whether institutions could purposely move their culture of mobility forward on the spectrum. Originally, the research objectives included the application of a best practices intervention and a compilation of an inventory of underutilized pathways. As the research process progressed, it became evident that all but one of the participants did not have a method to report on underutilized pathways.

After the application of best practices interventions, modest cultural shifts were observed; however, not all of the shifts were forward in trajectory. Despite varied results for the intervention, the overall observation was that one year after mapping the previous data, participating institutions were now transitioning to the mature phase on the culture of mobility. It is acknowledged that there are numerous explanations for the institutions' movements on the culture of mobility spectrum, both as individual entities, and as a systemic whole. The current project's study design lends more to exploratory results; however, examination of average delta scores for cultural change led to some speculative conclusions regarding the connection between values and cultural mobility.

The present study hypothesized that values and practices act as variables that drive institutional movement on the culture of mobility spectrum. Branson (2008) highlighted the concept of a "values aligned" organization and argued that if employees' values were not aligned with the organization's, efficiency would be sacrificed. Weiner (2009) also wrote about change being successful when members of the organization feel it is necessary, beneficial and/or important, and Kurt Lewin's work (as cited in Burnes, 2004a) supports the notion that leaders must not underestimate the importance of individual members' attitudes and support for change. The current study's results lent support to these theories as it was discovered that the institutions that included *Employee Engagement* in their interventions were observed to move forward on the spectrum more consistently than those who did not include this best practice. It is speculated that the value of *Employee Engagement* is a primary driver for cultural change. Including this particular variable in combination with all best practices interventions needs to be further explored as Ontario's postsecondary institutions look toward reaching the ideal phase in the culture of mobility spectrum.

## Recommendations

Exploring change in culture is necessary in supporting student mobility for Ontario's postsecondary education system. The present study's results revealed in the last year, all of the participating institutions experienced overall forward movement on the culture of mobility spectrum, although in specific areas, there was some backward movement. It was also discovered the participant group of institutions does not have a consistent method to track underutilized pathways. Responses to best practice interventions were moderate and varied for the participating group; however, *Employee Engagement* emerged as an integral variable to facilitate forward cultural change. Further research is needed to support theories that organizational change does not stabilize without member understanding and alignment (Branson, 2008; Weiner, 2009). Recommendations from these findings are as follows:

### Recommendation One:

A method to track underutilized pathways be created and an inventory compiled with an assessment of why the pathways are underutilized.

### Recommendation Two:

The survey tool used to measure cultural placement on the mobility spectrum be validated for further use with other institutions.

### Recommendation Three:

Further research be designed to specifically examine *Employee Engagement* as a factor in culture of mobility change.

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# Appendix 1

## Value Driven Mobility: Expanding Mobility Cultures

### Intervention Opportunities

<b>A. Behaviours Demonstrating Values</b>	
<b>I. Employee Engagement</b>	
	Designated staff assigned to student mobility tasks and projects
	Improvement on transparency and efficiency of student mobility services
	Facilitate collaboration of Faculty with other programs and/or other colleges.
	Promote Faculty contribution to student mobility ideas/initiatives
	Explore ways to have pathways staff become permanent positions
	Support pathways staff in creation and promotion of student mobility
	Involve pathways staff in recruitment and admissions
<b>II. Hypothetical Sharing of Waitlists</b>	
	Investigate and pilot (working with OCAS/OUAC) the sharing waitlists or collaborative applications for oversubscribed programs that are common among institutions.
<b>III. Demonstrating the impact of investment</b>	
	Explore the potential for student mobility to stabilize enrollment and retention
	Set up student mobility as a recruitment tool and measure the effect on enrollment
	Become proactive in student mobility by exploring ways to track student's prior learning with their applications and offer students mobility as they apply to programs.

## B. Practices Indicating Culture

### I. Internal Communication about Student Mobility Activities

Increase **intranet** presence

Support designated staff to create internal outreach/information activities for students, faculty and staff

Create communication pathways that encourage BOTH top-down and bottom-up interchange of ideas and information

### II. New Procedural Behaviours

Design new “user friendly” transfer credit evaluation procedure for faculty

Develop promotional material

Facilitate faster turnaround from faculty evaluations

Create an internal transfer credit data base to establish precedent for transfer decisions

Create, update or improve Pathways presence on institutional website including applications forms, contact information and “how to” tutorials

Liaise with and improve understanding and utilization of ONTransfer.ca

Create a dedicated physical area for Pathways staff

Bring the pathways discussion to program/course development and review level

Gather data regarding transfer credit students pathways

### III. New Terms or Language

Create a glossary of terms that is common to all institutions who share the language of your institution and promote this glossary internally and throughout the post-secondary system where appropriate based on language

**IV. Providing Information to help students with decisions about SM**

	Designate a specific staff member as first point of contact
	Work with ONtransfer.ca to create a more comprehensive guide
	Create a Pathways flier/view book to distribute and include in acceptance packages
	Increase Pathways presentations: to Students and Graduates; Open Houses; High Schools (students and staff)
	Increase collaboration with Registrar's Office/locate Pathways physical presence within Enrollment Services/Admissions Office

# Appendix 2



## CULTURE OF MOBILITY

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

#### 1. Your Institution:

- Algoma University
- Cambrian College
- Canadore College
- College Boreal
- Confederation College
- La Cite Collegiale
- Lakehead University
- Lambton College
- Northern College
- University of Sudbury

#### 2. How long have you been working at your institution? (in years)

3. What is your role at your institution?

- Faculty
- Coordinator
- Chair
- Dean
- Associate Dean
- Admissions
- Director
- Recruitment
- Vice President
- Administrative Assistant
- Registrar
- Student Advisor
- Academic Counsellor
- Other (please specify)

4. How long have you been working on Student Mobility?

- Less than 2 years
- 2 - 4 years
- More than 4 years

## CULTURE OF MOBILITY

### PART 1: VALUES

#### 1. Mission Vision

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My work with credit transfer supports my organization's objectives.	<input type="radio"/>				
My institution encourages student mobility into our institution.	<input type="radio"/>				
My institution encourages student mobility to other institutions.	<input type="radio"/>				
My institution is focused upon student mobility.	<input type="radio"/>				
Student mobility comes to mind when I read my institution's Mission/Vision Statement.	<input type="radio"/>				

## 2. Employee Engagement

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I collaborate with my colleagues when dealing with student mobility processes	<input type="radio"/>				
Last school year, my colleagues and I had more discussions about student mobility with each other than in previous years.	<input type="radio"/>				

## 3. SEM and Level of Authority

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My supervisor encourages credit transfer activity.	<input type="radio"/>				
My supervisor supports my activity related to credit transfer.	<input type="radio"/>				
Student Mobility directives originate from the Executive level at my institution.	<input type="radio"/>				
The activities for Student Mobility are directly connected to our institution's Strategic Enrollment Management plan.	<input type="radio"/>				

## 4. Hypothetical Sharing of Waitlists

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
One way to address student mobility that my institution may explore is the possibility of sharing wait list information with other institutions.	<input type="radio"/>				
Sharing waitlist information between institutions could get complicated.	<input type="radio"/>				

## 5. Return on Investment

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Creating and using student mobility practices is a good investment for my institution.	<input type="radio"/>				
There is/will be a return on investment for my institution's efforts on student mobility.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am aware that my institution has accessed special funding for student mobility.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am aware of the results my efforts have on credit transfer activity for students.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am aware of the results of student mobility initiatives as a whole.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am aware of the results of student mobility initiatives for my institution.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am aware of the results of student mobility initiatives for specific schools of study.	<input type="radio"/>				

## CULTURE OF MOBILITY

### PART 2: PRACTICES

#### 1. Communication about student mobility

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have taken part in/received communication about student mobility at my institution.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am aware of the student mobility opportunities for students in my department.	<input type="radio"/>				
Departments that need to understand credit transfer within my institution, do understand.	<input type="radio"/>				
There is a high level of awareness of credit transfer activities within my institution.	<input type="radio"/>				

## 2. New Behaviours

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I regularly interact with staff whose job is specifically related to student mobility.	<input type="radio"/>				
It is easy for me to explain to students their mobility options.	<input type="radio"/>				
My supervisor encourages handling of credit transfers as a priority for me.	<input type="radio"/>				
My institution encourages handling of credit transfers as a priority for me.	<input type="radio"/>				
Handling credit transfer is a priority for me.	<input type="radio"/>				
I understand the importance of credit transfer to my institution.	<input type="radio"/>				
I understand the importance of credit transfer to students.	<input type="radio"/>				
I understand the importance of credit transfer in my role.	<input type="radio"/>				

## 3. I understand the following terms

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Advanced Standing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer Credit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course to Course Transfer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Degree Completion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pathways	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course Equivalency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ONTransfer.ca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ONCAT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. My institution uses the following terms on a regular basis

	Yes	Somewhat	No
Advanced Standing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer Credit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course to Course Transfer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Degree Completion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pathways	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course Equivalency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ONTransfer.ca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ONCAT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. How information is provided to help student decision making

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Information about credit transfer is easy to find for students.	<input type="radio"/>				
Information about credit transfer is easy to find for staff.	<input type="radio"/>				
Processes for credit transfer are easy to find.	<input type="radio"/>				
Processes for credit transfer are easy to use.	<input type="radio"/>				
Our website provides information/assistance to students about mobility.	<input type="radio"/>				
I can explain student mobility options and decision steps to the students in our department.	<input type="radio"/>				
Our graduating students know about future student mobility options when they leave our institutions.	<input type="radio"/>				