



CREDIT

when it's due

New York



STATE PROFILE

State Funder: Lumina Foundation for Education

About Credit When It's Due

The Credit When It's Due (CWID) initiative is funded by six foundations and is supporting 15 states to develop reverse transfer programs and policies. Reverse transfer enables students to receive an associate's degree when students meet associate's degree requirements after transfer to a 4-year college or university.

State Implementation Context

The State University of New York (SUNY) includes 30 community college campuses and 29 universities, and the system's goal is to develop a system and process for institutions to handle reverse transfer degree conferral on students' path to the baccalaureate. SUNY's strategy includes the design, development, and utilization of a new software tool (DegreeWorks) that will automate degree audits using information on course equivalencies across SUNY's campuses and enable greater efficiency in reverse transfer associate's degree conferral.

Key Implementation Strategies

Field Visits to Community Colleges by SUNY's Reverse Transfer Coordinator. SUNY hired a Reverse Transfer Coordinator who works with leadership across the system to design and implement an effective reverse transfer process. To obtain a baseline understanding of how and where transcript-level information is stored and retrieved at SUNY's community colleges, the coordinator visited all 30 SUNY community colleges early in the grant period. Several gaps and needs were identified as a result of the visits including: (a) the majority of community colleges do not have course articulations recorded in online systems; (b) course equivalencies are not always updated when conducting degree audits; and (c) manual degree audits require more capacity than exists at community colleges. The fieldwork has primarily resulted in creating a process for entering course equivalencies (from 2-year to 4-year institution) in the SUNY system to better automate degree audits.

Implementation Timeline

November 2012: SUNY hired a Reverse Transfer Coordinator.

December 2012 – May 2013: Approximately four to five field visits per month were conducted with community colleges, and student focus groups were held.

Spring 2013: The Degree Audit and Planning Tool was released to most community colleges and universities, and it allows students to assess progress in degree planning at any point in time at a single institution.

Summer – Fall 2013: The transfer audit tool (called Transfer Finder) was developed, and it allows students to examine course transferability within the SUNY system.

January – present 2014: The Transfer Finder tool is beta tested with two campuses.

November 2013 – February 2014: Five pilot sites were selected and reverse transfer processes developed.

July 2014: The first reverse transfer degrees will be conferred.

Automated Degree Audit System. DegreeWorks was redesigned with a new degree audit and planning tool, as well as a new Transfer Finder feature (i.e. a transfer audit and planning tool) such that staff and students can determine degree conferral readiness and assess transfer options. SUNY intends to develop a batch/data mining process for automated degree audits that will be scalable system-wide after the grant period ends. Once this technology is automated and operational, SUNY plans to combine data sources (on students' coursetaking, grades, and completion data) to run degree audits every term. This process requires training for about 500,000 system users and electronically uploading information from all the course catalogs across clusters of campuses. This degree audit infrastructure is foundational to the system's ability to scale-up reverse transfer across all institutions.

Pilot Initiative. SUNY is currently piloting reverse transfer with several campuses. Mohawk Valley Community College and SUNY IT and SUNY-Morrisville were the first institutions to pilot the reverse transfer process in fall 2013. Based on data analysis from this pilot, the SUNY team learned that one of the main reasons students are ineligible for reverse transfer is that students do not meet the residency requirement at a single institution (i.e. student swirl prevalent). Four new pilot partnerships began implementing a reverse transfer process, drawing from lessons learned by Mohawk Valley Community College and its partners. System-wide scale-up is planned for fall 2014 after the Spring 2014 pilots and Summer 2014 degree conferrals. SUNY also plans to formalize a process for students to request degree audits for reverse transfer, since individual campuses respond to student requests for degree audit and conferral.

Student Focus Groups. During the visits to SUNY campuses, the Reverse Transfer Coordinator conducted interviews with several students to learn about students' perspectives on reverse transfer degree conferrals. Students offered their insights on their motivations for transferring without an associate's degree, their perception of the value of an associate's degree, their desire to participate in a reverse transfer degree conferral, their recommendations about reverse transfer degree conferral process (consent, fees, etc.), their preferences regarding associate's degree type (relative to major field of study), and the potential impact of receiving the associate's degree on their path to the baccalaureate. The focus groups were used to improve engagement of 4-year campuses in reverse transfer.

Based on a review of implementation across CWID states, OCCRL developed a framework for the reverse transfer process that consists of five broad processes, and New York's process is applied to this framework below. At least three pilot institutions are applying the process below in Spring 2014.

Reverse Transfer Process

Based on a review of implementation across CWID states, OCCRL developed a framework for the reverse transfer process



Associate's degrees conferred as of March 2014: 0

Credit When It's Due: New York Profile



that consists of five broad processes, and New York's process is applied to this framework below. At least three pilot institutions are applying the process below in Spring 2014.

1. **Reverse Transfer Student Identification:** The SUNY system office and pilot 4-year institutions and community colleges collaborate to identify eligible students. The SUNY system first identifies eligible students based on state-level eligibility requirements and 4-year institutions confirm that eligible students also meet institutional eligibility requirements. Then, the community colleges review the list of eligible students to ensure there are no academic or financial holds.
2. **Consent Process:** SUNY uses an opt-out process for consent. Pilot institutions currently plan to seek student consent with a phone call at the point of degree conferral once the community college verifies associate's degree eligibility.
3. **Transcript Exchange:** The 4-year institutions pull the paper transcripts, scan to PDF, and email it to the community college. The SUNY system office follows-up with the 4-year institutions to ensure the lists of eligible students' transcripts were sent to community colleges.
4. **Degree Audit:** The Reverse Transfer Coordinator is working with pilot institutions to conduct the degree audits and determine system processes. Community colleges conduct the degree audit and if the student meets all degree requirements, the community college contacts the student to seek consent.
5. **Degree Conferral:** Degrees will be conferred to students who meet all degree requirements in Summer 2014.

completed the development of course articulation tables for 15 community colleges and 2 agriculture-technology colleges, leading to approximately 45,000 articulated courses across the system, as part of the development of the Degree Audit and Planning Tool and the Transfer Finder in DegreeWorks. Collaboration with SUNY institutions about reverse transfer processes has resulted in considerable understanding about existing resources, resource limitations, and additional technological capacity needed. SUNY identified some best practices in transcript review through the pilot process and has determined some next steps for marketing reverse transfer to students.

Challenges: One challenge experienced to date is that SUNY community colleges have expressed more willingness to volunteer to participate in reverse transfer than 4-year campuses. One explanation is that SUNY 4-year institutions have concentrated their time and attention on baccalaureate degree conferral with the new DegreeWorks software, but they have also raised questions about the ethical considerations of not including the student in the transcript and degree conferral process.

Another challenge is the labor-intensive nature of inputting course equivalencies across campuses for automation of degree audits, liberal arts associate's degrees and major-specific area associate's degrees. The goal is that DegreeWorks will be able to conduct a reliable and accurate degree audit each term and an email be automatically generated to the student if eligible for reverse transfer.

The main campus-level constraints include limited staffing in registrar offices and numerous initiatives that demand campus attention. While the automated system for degree audits with course equivalencies is being built, the degree audit process involves manual review and sending students' transcript via the post office. The goal for the SUNY system office is to provide all campuses with the data mining of eligible students, offer transparent access to course articulation equivalencies, access to the cross-campus information, and give campuses support for official degree audits such that degree conferrals can be made across campuses with accuracy and confidence.

Implementation Successes and Challenges

Successes: Through field visits, regional meetings, focus groups, and the institutional pilots, SUNY has assembled a wealth of information about processes and procedures to facilitate reverse transfer. SUNY completed the development of course SUNY

Institutions Participating in Credit When It's Due

Adirondack Community College	College of Technology at Delhi	Monroe Community College	State University College at
University at Albany*	Dutchess Community College*	Morrisville State College*	Potsdam
Alfred State College	Empire State College	Nassau Community College	State University College at
Binghamton University	College of Environmental Science	State University College at New	Purchase
State University College at	and Forestry	Paltz*	Rockland Community College
Brockport	Erie Community College*	Niagara County Community	SUNY-IT*
Broome Community College	Farmingdale State College	College	Schenectady County Community
Buffalo State College*	Finger Lakes Community College	North Country Community	College
University at Buffalo	State University College at Fredonia*	College	Stony Brook University
College of Technology at	Fulton-Montgomery Community	State University College at Old	Suffolk County Community
Canton	College	Westbury	College
Cayuga Community College	Genesee Community College	State University College at	Sullivan County Community
Clinton Community College*	State University College at	Oneonta	College
Columbia-Greene Community	Genesee	Onandaga Community College	Tompkins Cortland Community
College	Herkimer County Community	College of Optometry	College*
NYS College of Human	College	Orange County Community	Ulster County Community
Ecology at Cornell	Hudson Valley Community College*	College	College
NYS School of Industrial and	Jamestown Community College*	State University College at	Westchester Community College
Labor Relations at Cornell	Jefferson Community College	Oswego	
Corning Community College	Maritime College	State University College at	
State University College at	Mohawk Valley Community College*	Plattsburgh*	
Cortland*			*piloting reverse transfer

in Spring 2014

This publication was prepared pursuant to a contract awarded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in October 2012 to OCCRL, College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Preliminary research associated with this project was funded by Lumina Foundation in July-September 2012. ©2014 Board of Trustees, University of Illinois

State Contact: Chris Hockey, chris.hockey@suny.edu | **OCCRL:** occril@illinois.edu | CWID is online at <http://occril.illinois.edu/projects/cwid>