

## 2005 Mobility of Transfer Students in BC

### Background

Each year, BC's universities face the challenging task of establishing the minimum grade point averages (GPAs) that they will use to meet enrolment targets. The GPA threshold that results in a particular level of enrolment one year can result in quite a different level the next because the number of applicants varies as does the rate at which they accept offers of admission, and because of variations in the course load and retention rates of existing students.

Universities use data from the Ministry of Education about enrolment levels and grade distributions by subject to determine enrolment quotas and GPAs for admitting Grade 12 students. Data about the eligible pool of college, university college, and institute students seeking to transfer into second or third year university have been less robust. The establishment of the Central Data Warehouse (CDW) for colleges, university colleges, and institutes in BC (referred to as CDW institutions in this document) has presented an opportunity to provide better information to universities for their admission decisions.

This research project on BC transfer student mobility, funded and managed by the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), began with the goal of providing accurate data about the pool of potential transfer students seeking admission to university. However, the research has also increased our understanding about flows among and retention rates within CDW institutions.

This *Research Results* presents the key findings from the 2004-05 data, along with some comparisons to 2003 data and is also available on the web at [bccat.bc.ca/pubs/rr\\_may06.pdf](http://bccat.bc.ca/pubs/rr_may06.pdf). The background reports and pivot tables (sent to institutions in early March) provide a wealth of information specific to each institution, and can be accessed through each institution's Registrar and Research Director.

### Definitions & Conceptual Framework

The first step in this study was to define as broadly as possible the pool of students who might potentially transfer to university.

**A *potential* transfer student (PTR) is any student who is enrolled in or has completed at least one course listed in the BC Transfer Guide.**

The student's intentions or grades are immaterial for inclusion in the PTR group.

The second step was to determine what portion of the pool of potential transfer students (PTR) was likely to seek university admission in the near future by focusing on students who had enough courses and high enough grades to meet most universities' minimum entrance criteria for admission as transfer students.

**An *eligible* transfer student (ETR) is any student who is enrolled in or has completed at least 24 credits in courses listed in the BC Transfer Guide and has a GPA of at least 2.00.**

Not all of these "eligible" students would seek university admission in the following year, nor would they necessarily meet specific entrance requirements, but they represented the source of most of the transfer enrolment demand from Fall 2004 that universities would experience in 2005.

The third and final step was to determine the proportions of the pools of potential and eligible students who actually entered university the subsequent year with transfer as the basis of admission.

**A *successful* transfer student (STR) is any student who was admitted to university on the basis of having completed a minimum number of credits in courses in a college, university college, or institute that are transferable to BC universities.**

The number of STR could then be compared with ETR to calculate transfer rates. By monitoring trends in the transfer rate, along with trends in the numbers of potential and eligible transfer students, universities would be better able to forecast the transfer enrolment demand and hence to set appropriate GPA cut-offs for meeting enrolment quotas.

## Sources of Potential and Eligible Transfer Students

Over 63,000 PTR students were enrolled at CDW institutions in Fall 2004 and over 25,000 of these were ETR students. The following section provides data on PTR and ETR. Because it is important to determine trends in enrolment over time, Table 1 and

Charts 2 and 3 provide comparisons of PTR and ETR numbers in 2003, 2004, and 2005. BCIT and OUC/Okanagan College (OC) are excluded in the totals because data on enrolment at these institutions was not available for all three years being measured.

Table 1 provides the number of PTR and ETR enrolled in each CDW institution in Fall 2003, 2004, and 2005. Excluding BCIT and OUC/OC, the drop in PTR over a three year period was 3,535 students

or 6.2%. The corresponding drop in ETR over three years was 81 or 0.4%. Fifteen of 20 institutions experienced year-over-year drops in PTR.

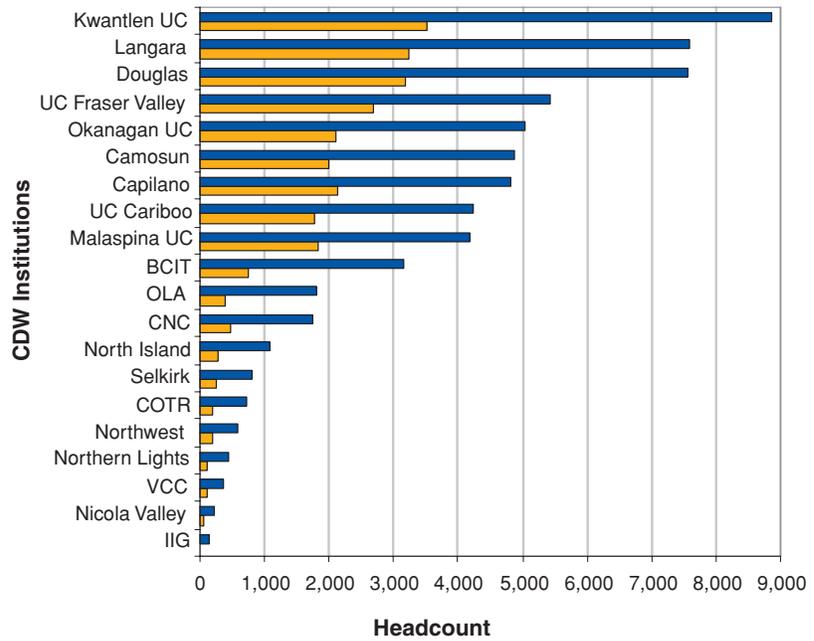
**Table 1: Fall PTR and ETR Headcount**

CDW Institutions	PTR 03	PTR 04	PTR 05	ETR 03	ETR 04	ETR 05
BC Institute of Technology	na	3,152	2,981	na	755	712
Camosun College	4,813	4,879	4,953	1,799	1,991	1,907
Capilano College	4,981	4,828	4,672	2,053	2,146	1,979
College of New Caledonia	1,843	1,756	1,618	477	478	514
College of the Rockies	728	716	660	195	189	191
Douglas College	7,877	7,554	6,509	3,014	3,182	2,965
Institute of Indigenous Government	99	138	116	12	32	36
Kwantlen University College	8,937	8,867	8,642	3,513	3,519	3,497
Langara College	7,880	7,594	7,349	3,145	3,244	2,990
Malaspina University-College	4,632	4,177	3,930	2,112	1,837	1,678
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	163	219	215	31	52	86
North Island College	1,166	1,093	1,067	316	278	264
Northern Lights College	474	443	299	130	98	77
Northwest Community College	670	594	595	180	188	177
Okanagan University College/OC <sup>1</sup>	4,792	5,041	2,296	1,882	2,116	77
Open Learning Agency	2,008	1,798	1,573	367	398	368
Selkirk College	881	798	744	281	240	231
University College of the Cariboo	4,300	4,226	4,319	1,643	1,778	1,707
University College of the Fraser Valley	4,800	5,433	5,505	2,261	2,675	2,764
Vancouver Community College	397	365	348	95	104	112
<b>Total</b>	<b>61,441</b>	<b>63,671</b>	<b>58,391</b>	<b>23,506</b>	<b>25,300</b>	<b>22,332</b>
<b>Total Without BCIT or OUC/OC</b>	<b>56,649</b>	<b>55,478</b>	<b>53,114</b>	<b>21,624</b>	<b>22,429</b>	<b>21,543</b>
<b>Percent change without BCIT or OUC/OC</b>		<b>-2.1%</b>	<b>-4.3%</b>		<b>3.7%</b>	<b>-4.0%</b>

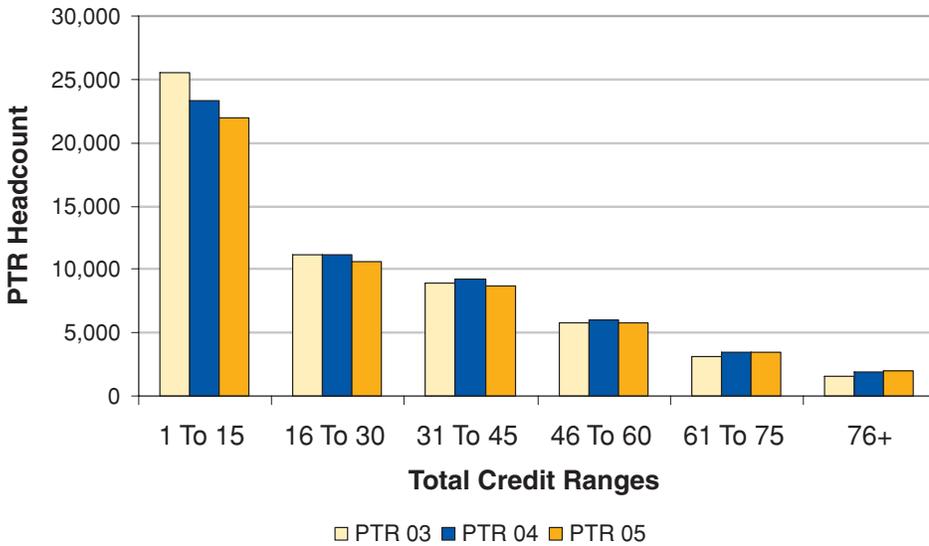
1. Okanagan University College became Okanagan College (OC) in 2005. Fall 2004 OUC students who stayed at UBC-Okanagan in 2005 were not reported by UBC, which was asked only to report students with transfer as the basis of admission. Therefore, these returning students are unaccounted for and show up in the "not enrolled" category in Charts 8 and 9.

**Chart 1: Fall 2004 PTR and ETR Headcount (PTR=63,671, ETR=25,300)**

➔ **Chart 1** gives the break-down of Fall 2004 PTR (n = 63,671) and ETR (25,300) by institution. Note that three Lower Mainland institutions (Kwantlen, Langara, and Douglas) have the greatest number of PTR and ETR.



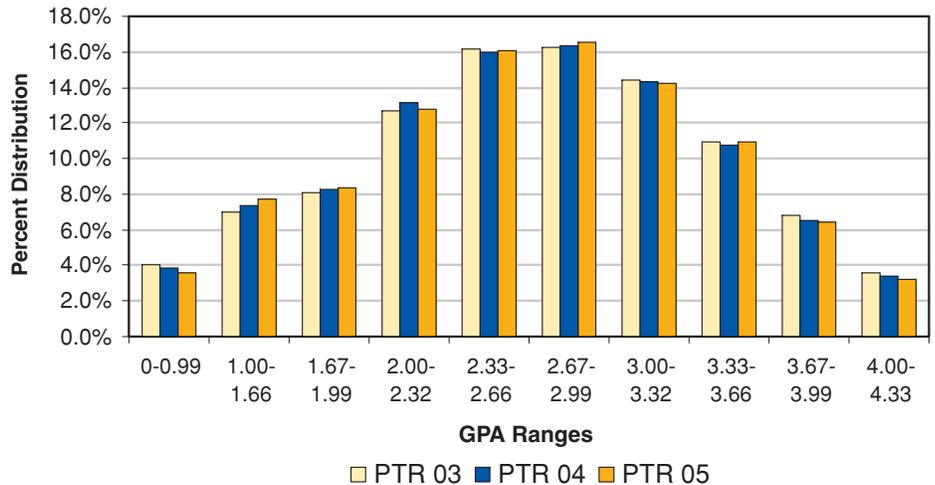
**Chart 2: PTR Total Credit**



➔ **Chart 2** provides the Fall 2003, 2004, and 2005 numbers of PTR (excluding BCIT and OUC/OC) broken down by credit ranges, based on credits earned and enrolled in by students. In each of the 3 years, there are more students in the 1 to 15 credit range than in any other range. The 1 to 15 credit range also shows the greatest drop in PTR year-over-year, with a total drop of 14%. This is significant because the drop in numbers of new entrants to transfer courses will have a larger impact on the number of ETR in the following years that will be eligible to apply to university.

➔ **Chart 3** represents the GPA percent distribution of PTR for Fall 2003, 2004, and 2005 (excluding BCIT and OUC/OC). The GPA distribution is consistent over these three terms (32% between 2.33 and 2.99 and over 59% between 2.00 and 3.32).

**Chart 3: PTR GPA Percent Distribution**



## Successful Transfer Students (STR)

This section provides information on the 5,436 students in CDW institutions in Fall 2004 and previously who were admitted to one of 6 universities in 2005 with transfer as the basis of admission (successful transfer students or STR).

**Table 2: 2005 STR**

STR 2005							
	RRU	SFU	TRU	UBC	UNBC	UVIC	BC Univ.
From PTR Fall 2004	62	1,913	67	1,075	281	1,247	4,645
From PTR Prior to Fall 2004	40	267	25	139	81	239	791
<b>From all PTR</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>2,180</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>1,214</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>1,486</b>	<b>5,436</b>

Table 2 provides information on the number of STR at each university in 2005. The number of 2005 STR that attended a CDW institution in Fall 2004 was 4,645, and an additional 791 STR had attended a CDW institution prior to 2004; thus, the total STR in 2005 is 5,436.

Chart 4 presents the 2005 STR (n = 5,436) for each of the 6 universities broken down by sending institution, with small colleges grouped into one category. The chart shows that students often attend a university in close regional proximity to their CDW institution.

**Chart 4: 2005 STR – by CDW Institution (n=5,436)**

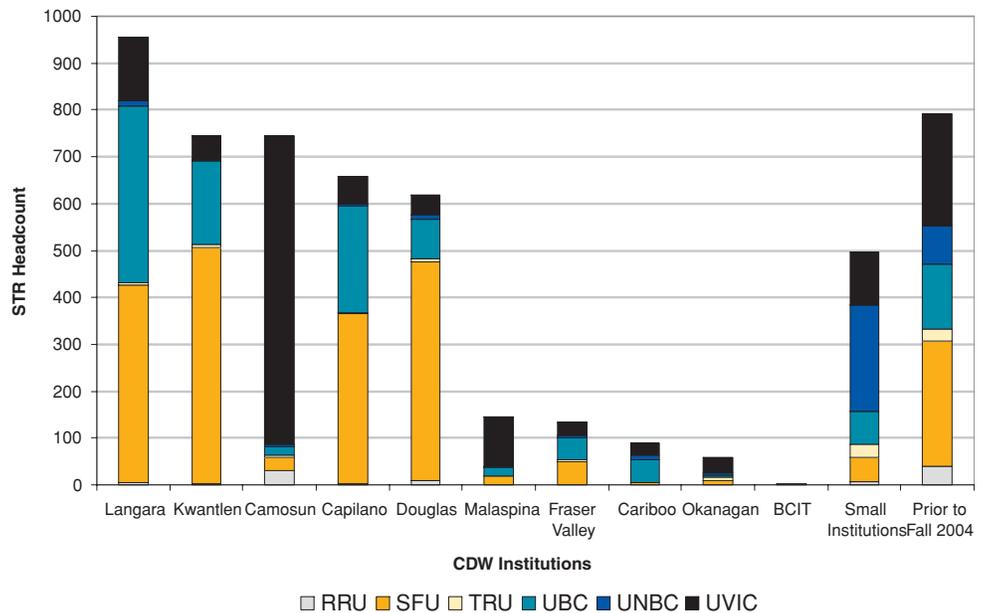
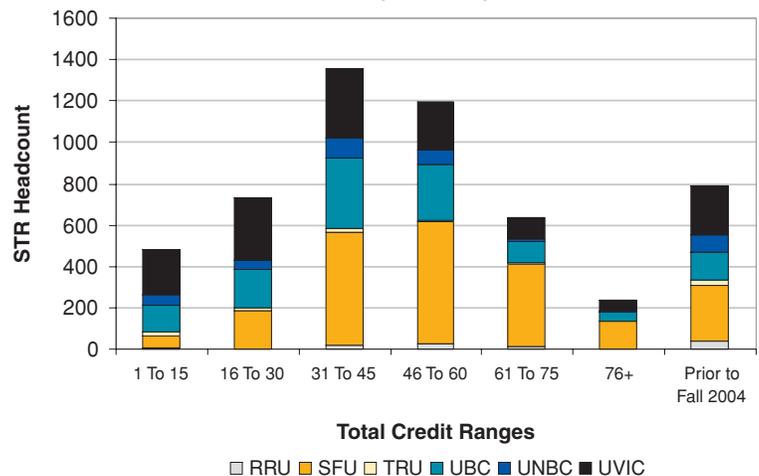


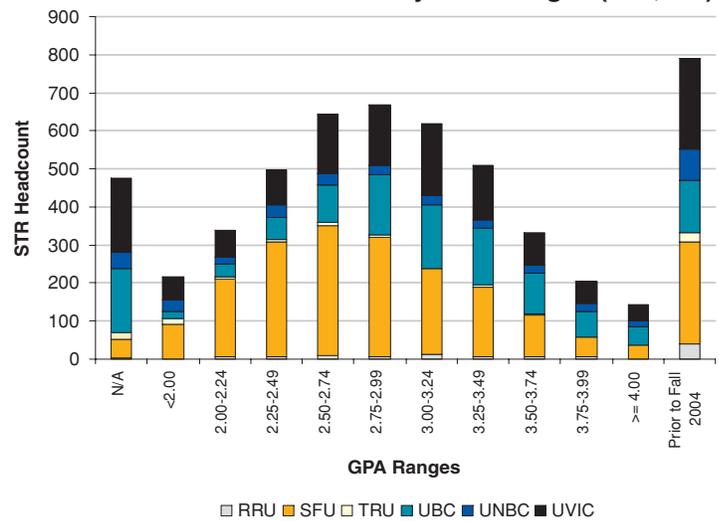
Chart 5 presents the 2005 STR (n = 5,436) for each of the 6 universities broken down by credit ranges. On average, 52% of STR students transfer when they have 31-60 total credits and 39% transfer when they have 46 or more credits from all PTR terms. This latter figure suggests that a significant number of students are staying at CDW institutions to take more than the minimum number of courses required for acceptance into a university as an STR.

**Chart 5: 2005 STR Headcount – by Total Credits (n=5,436)**



➔ **Chart 6** presents the 2005 STR (n = 5,436) for each of the 6 universities broken down by GPA ranges. On average, 70% of STR students transfer with GPA values of 2.25 to 3.49.

**Chart 6: 2005 STR Headcount – by GPA Ranges (n=5,436)**

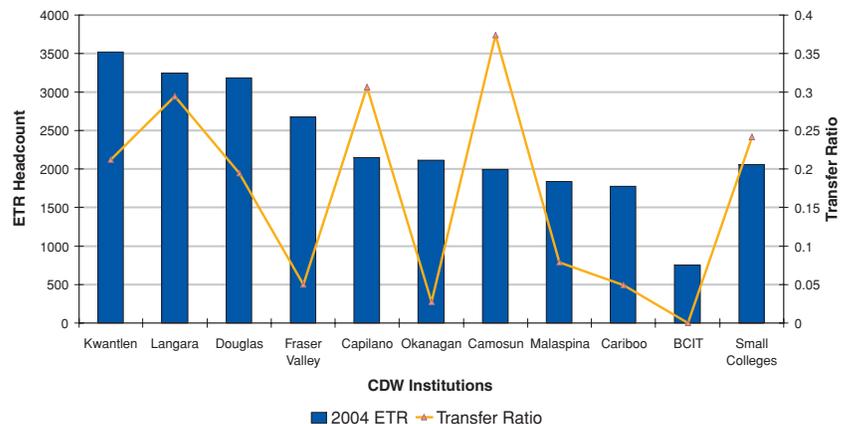


## Transfer Rates

A key purpose of this research was to determine the transfer rate to university by dividing the number of students who entered university with transfer as the basis of admission (STR) in one year by the number of ETR students from the previous year. This rate could then be used to predict the possible number of students in the following year who might seek access to university as transfer students.

➔ **Chart 7** provides information on two things: (a) the number of Fall 2004 ETR per CDW institution, and (b) the transfer rate for each institution. The highest transfer rates are at Camosun, Capilano, and Langara, in that order. The 4 university colleges (excluding Kwantlen) have low transfer rates, likely reflecting the fact that students are staying at university colleges to complete their degrees. More Kwantlen students likely transferred to universities because Kwantlen was not offering its own Arts and Science degrees during this time period. BCIT is the source of almost no transfer students to universities.

**Chart 7: Fall 2004 ETR – by CDW Institution (n=25,300)**



➔ **Table 3** provides information on the number of STR in 2004 and 2005 and resulting transfer rates. The number of 2005 STR that attended a CDW institution in Fall 2004 and previously was 5,436 compared to 4,549 total STR in 2004. The increase between 2004 and 2005 is likely due to three reasons: (1) All universities submitted full year data in 2005, (2) RRU and TRU were included for the first time in the 2005 data, and (most importantly) (3) UVic had a 167% increase in STR enrolment in 2005. Table 3 also provides a prediction of possible numbers of qualified transfer students that can be expected to register at a university in 2006, all other enrolment conditions being equal.

**Table 3: Transfer Rates**

STR 2004 (Fall 2003 ETR = 23,506)							
	RRU	SFU	TRU	UBC	UNBC	UVIC	BC Univ.
From all PTR 2004	na	2,463	na	1,257	272	557	4,549
Total Transfer Rate	na	10.5%	na	5.4%	1.2%	2.4%	19.4%
STR 2005 (Fall 2004 ETR = 25,300)							
From all PTR 2005	102	2,180	92	1,214	362	1,486	5,436
Total Transfer Rate	0.4%	8.6%	0.4%	4.8%	1.4%	5.9%	21.5%
Possible 2006 STR (2004/2005 transfer rate applied to Fall 2005 ETR = 22,332)	89	1921	89	1072	313	1318	4801

## Whereabouts of Potential and Eligible Transfer Students

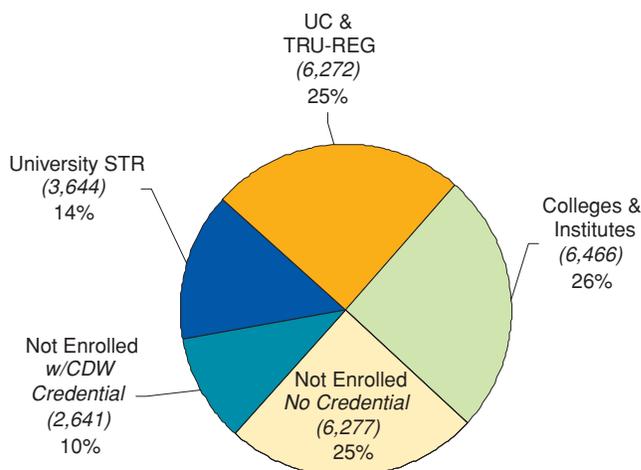
By including the Fall 2005 data from the CDW as well as the 2005 university data on STRs, it was possible to determine the whereabouts of all 2004 PTR and ETR in 2005. This information is provided in Charts 8 to 11.

➔ **Chart 8** provides a breakdown of the whereabouts of Fall 2004 ETR (n = 25,300) in 2005. The information shows that 25% of students are still enrolled in or have moved to a university college, 26% are still enrolled in or have moved to a college or institute, 14% have gone on to university as STR, and 10% are no longer enrolled but have attained a CDW credential.

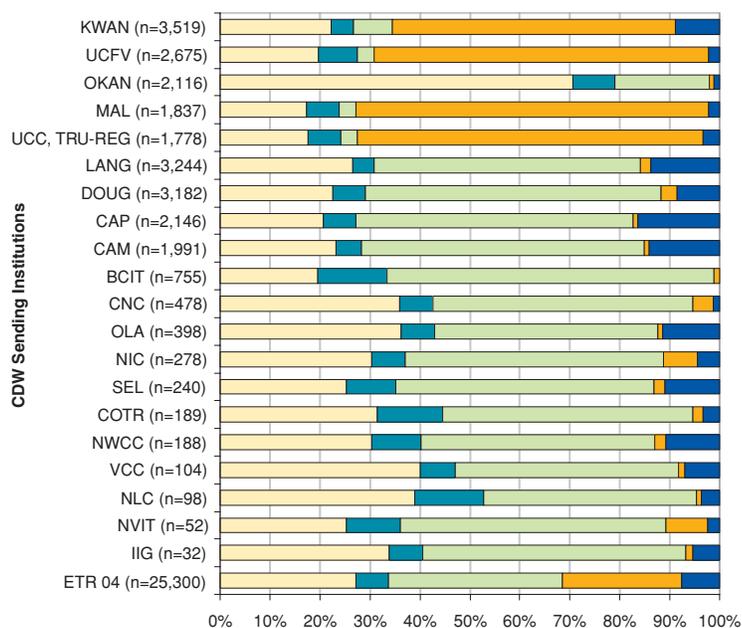
This leaves 25% (n = 6,277) that have not graduated with a credential and are not enrolled in any public post-secondary institution in BC as of Fall 2005. The present research was not designed to determine the whereabouts of this group of students; however, possible reasons for their whereabouts include:

- Some were admitted to university under a basis of admission other than transfer because they did not have the required number of credits and/or GPA to be considered an STR.
- Others may have gone to private post-secondary institutions in BC or out-of-province institutions or have entered the labour force. Data do not exist on these transitions.
- Others may have taken a year or two away from their studies and are planning to attend in a future year.

**Chart 8: 2005 Whereabouts of Fall 2004 ETR (n=25,300)**



**Chart 9: Where are Fall 2004 ETR Students going in 2005? (n=25,300)**



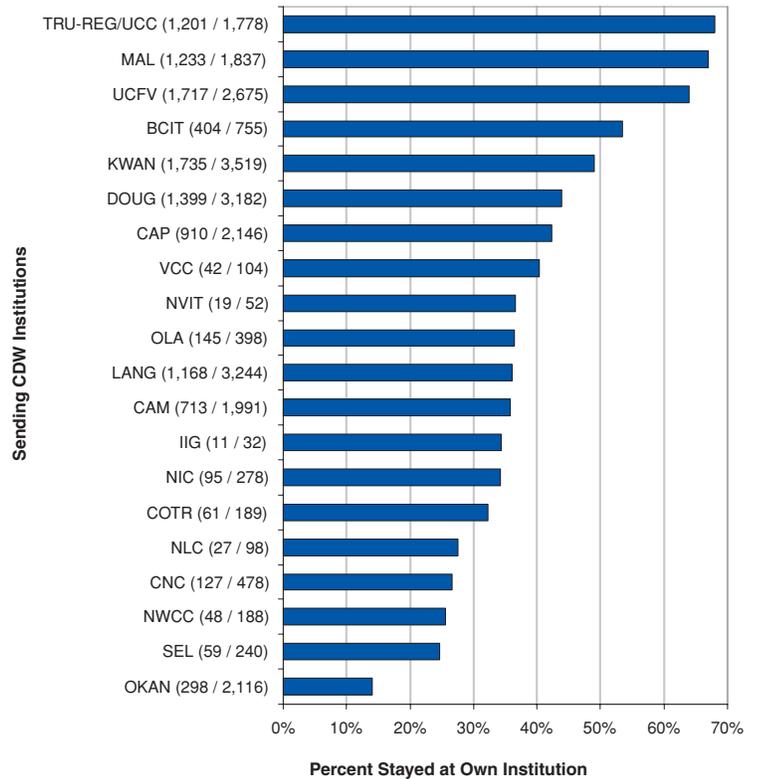
➔ **Chart 9** provides the same information for Fall 2004 ETRs (n = 25,300) as Chart 8 does, but it breaks the data down by CDW institution.

- Not Enrolled Fall 05- No Credential
- Not Enrolled Fall 05- w/Credential
- Colleges & Institutes
- UC & TRU-REG
- University - STR

Percent of Fall 2004 Institutional ETR

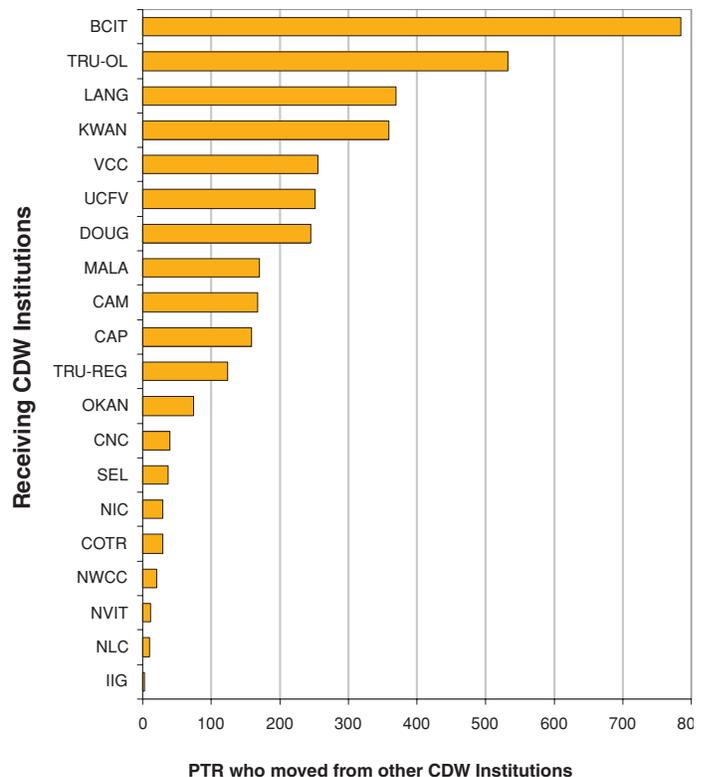
**Chart 10: Percent of Fall 2004 ETR Students that stayed at their own Institution in the Fall of 2005 – by CDW Institution (n=25,300)**

➔ **Chart 10** provides the numbers and percents of Fall 2004 ETRs that were studying at the same CDW institution in Fall 2005. BCIT and the university colleges have the highest percent of students continuing their studies at the same institution.



**Chart 11: Fall 2005 CDW Students that attended another CDW Institution in the Fall of 2004 – by CDW Institution**

➔ **Chart 11** provides the number of students (n=3,815) at CDW institutions in Fall 2005 that had attended a different CDW institution in Fall 2004. BCIT and TRU-OL had the largest number of students moving to them in Fall 2005 from other CDW institutions, followed by Langara and Kwantlen.



## Conclusions

The evidence presented in this highlights document and in the underlying data sent to institutions in early March suggests that there may be a softening in future demand for university spaces from transfer students as the number of potential transfer students has declined over the last three years. However, the methodology to identify possible transfer students is not precise and there are several other factors which could influence demand for university spaces in the future, such as lowering GPA entrance requirements at universities, a changing economy, the introduction of more degrees at CDW institutions, etc.

BCCAT has presented the above findings to a number of provincial post-secondary groups in BC and has had overwhelming support for the continuation of such research to assist institutions with enrolment planning. Working with the Student Transitions Project<sup>2</sup>, BCCAT plans to continue research on potential transfer students in 2006/07 as part of research on the overall flow of students among BC post-secondary institutions over a multi-year period.

The idea of conducting research on potential transfer students first arose from BCCAT's **Ad Hoc Committee on Sharing Information on Enrolment Planning**. Membership includes:

- ☞ Robert Buchan, President, University Colleges of BC
- ☞ Paul Harrison, Chair, Associate Dean of Science, University of BC
- ☞ Blair Littler, Vice-President, The University Presidents' Council
- ☞ Judith McGillivray, VP for Learning & Provost, Kwantlen University College
- ☞ Jim Reed, President, BC College Presidents
- ☞ John Waterhouse, VP Academic, Simon Fraser University
- ☞ Walter Wattamaniuk, Director, Office of Analytical Studies, Simon Fraser University
- ☞ Susan Witter, President, Douglas College

The Ad Hoc Committee formed an **Enrolment Planning Data Subcommittee**, whose members have put in significant effort to develop and implement the research methodology and report on the findings. Membership includes:

- ☞ Kathleen Bigsby, Director, Institutional Analysis & Planning, Kwantlen University College
- ☞ Bob Cowin, Director, Institutional Research & Planning, Douglas College
- ☞ Hugh Judd, Data Warehouse Coordinator, Ministry of Advanced Education
- ☞ Walter Wattamaniuk, Director of Analytical Studies, Simon Fraser University

2. The Student Transitions Project (STP) is a collaborative effort among the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education and BC's public post-secondary institutions to link data about students in the secondary and post-secondary systems to answer questions on student mobility. BCCAT is represented on the STP Steering Committee.

