

**Exploring the Evolution of Credit Transfer Policy: Implications on the Role and Interplay Between
Colleges and Universities**

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the historical evolution of the credit transfer policy and its implications on the roles and interplay between colleges and universities. This in-depth analysis of credit transfer evaluates the establishment of College of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs) in the 1960s, to present day initiatives in place to create a system wide credit transfer system between colleges and universities. The theoretical framework is comprised of two major components: firstly, through an examination of policy tools used over the years, this thesis provides a basis to understand measures that have been employed to address the issue of credit transfer. Secondly, through the organization adaptation approach and resource dependency theory, the credit transfer discussion contextualizes the overall impact on the relationship between colleges and universities. The findings conclude that although higher educational institutions are proactively responding to credit transfer demands, the hierarchical structure between universities and colleges is still prevalent.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The 1960s were one of the most defining moments for the Ontario higher education system. It was during this time that consensus was reached in Ontario that the province's education system needed to provide further opportunities to students through expansion (Skolnik, 2010). As such, Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs) were introduced in 1965 to provide technical education as the changing economy created semi-skilled jobs (Skolnik, 2010). Ontario used colleges as a way to dispense technical training throughout the province. Given the definite distinction between the type of education colleges and universities offered (one being technical, and the latter being theoretical), it was argued that there would be no need to create a system that overlapped one another. Hence, the binary education system was created in Ontario, with the added intention to segregate university students from post-secondary institution of colleges (Gallagher & Dennison, 1995 and Skolnik, 2010, p. 3). It is at this point that the issues of credit transfer and student mobility began to surface.

Credit transfer or the concept of transferability refers to the acceptance of credits obtained by one educational institution and accepted by another educational institution (Byrne, 1999). Student mobility is used to explore the ways in which students navigate and move from colleges to universities and vice-versa. Unfortunately, when colleges were initially being introduced in Ontario, the issue of credit transfer and student mobility between colleges to universities was not on the radar for Ontario. On the one hand, the then Minister William Davis made it clear that colleges would only provide vocational and technical training, thereby ensuring that universities and colleges would be kept separate (Stoll, 1993). However, in 1967, Minister Davis also said, "no able and qualified student should be prevented from going on from College of Applied Arts and Technology to University" (Kerr et. al, 2010, p.4). It is evident that

William Davis's statement was contradictory of the binary system that was established in Ontario, as it separated colleges from universities and vice-versa, with little or no movement between the two institutions (Kerr et. al, 2010). If Ontario had chosen the combined model of technical education at a college level and general education at a university level, like Alberta and British Columbia, the transfer function would have been an inherent part of the process. These provinces have pre-established systems to facilitate transfer and the recognition of transfer credits, which are courses designed explicitly for transfer across institutions. Since Ontario rejected the transfer function for colleges, they were also "rejecting the idea that the colleges should provide university-level general education courses" (Skolnik, 2010: p.6). As a result, students interested in pursuing a degree at a university after completing their college programs, would not have a formal transfer option (Kerr et. al, 2010).

The establishment of such a binary system also influenced the way colleges and universities related to one another. Unlike colleges, universities were designed to offer theoretical education and were given complete autonomy in deciding their overall purpose, mission and objectives (Clark, Moran, Skolnik, & Trick, 2009). This led to a hierarchical relationship between colleges and universities, where universities were viewed as being prestigious and academically oriented, while colleges were there to merely provide technical education (Skolnik, 2005). Due to these systemic ideologies, both universities and colleges were indifferent to the credit transfer discussion and the broader question of student mobility across the college and university sectors in Ontario Universities viewed colleges as competitors and thus, colleges responded by explicitly stating that they had no interest partnering with universities to deliver a credit transfer system to students (Skolnik, 2005).

Despite the relationship that formed between the sectors, the lack of a credit transfer system could not be ignored due to the labour market changes and the demand for mobility of students across colleges and universities, in order to respond to the technological advances in the economy (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2012). Research and statistics show an increasing number of students choosing to attend colleges first, and then pursue a university degree. According to data collected from the Ontario University Application Centre (OUAC), the number of university applicants with previous college experience has outpaced the general increase seen in the overall numbers of Ontario university applicants (Kerr, McCloy, & Lui, 2010). In other words, the number of university applicants with prior college experience are increasingly much more rapidly than the number of applicants applying directly from high school to university. In addition, according to the National Graduate Survey, 6% of Ontario's university graduates in 2000 held a college degree, which is calculated to be approximately 3520 graduates (Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, 2005). Also, the percentage of college graduates who furthered their education in a degree program rose from 5.3% in 2001-2002 to 8.4% in 2006 to 2007 (Kerr et al., 2010). Based on these statistics, it is clear that an increasing number of students are opting to attend college first.

The lack of a legitimate transfer system has created a barrier for mobility. As Skolink (2010: p.13) points out, "as a result of the decision to exclude transfer from the college's mandate, Ontario employs what looks like a relatively inefficient approach to the provision of baccalaureate-level education." Although colleges were introduced as separate from universities, they were never meant to preclude degree completion requirements (Boggs and Trick, 2009). Against this background, this study addresses the following questions:

1. How has the credit transfer policy evolved since the establishment of CAATs in 1965?

2. How has the relationship between colleges and universities evolved with the credit transfer policy evolution?

Given the limited research available on the relationship between colleges and universities, the aim of this research is exploratory, in order to better understand the impacts of credit transfer on the relationship between colleges and universities. To conduct this research, policy documents published by the government have been used as the primary sources of data. Secondary sources include scholarly articles and news reports that further inform the evolution of the credit transfer policy and its implications on the relationship between higher educational institutions. In order to critically analyze the research, the analysis of the findings is comprised of two major components; firstly, through an examination of policy tools used over the years, a basis will be provided to understand measures that have been employed thus far to address the issue of credit transfer. Secondly, through the organization adaptation approach and resource dependency theory, the credit transfer discussion will contextualize the overall impact on the relationship between colleges and universities. It is hoped that the findings of this analysis will help inform the ongoing discussion on credit transfer.

Organization of Study

The second chapter provides a literature review on the issue of credit transfer. Chapter three sets the ground for the theoretical framework that will be used to analyze the issue of credit transfer and the role and interplay between colleges and universities. The chapter following provides an in-depth analysis of major reports related to the credit transfer since the 1960s, and its impacts on the relationship and interplay between colleges and universities. Chapter five presents conclusions of the study, implications on policy and research, and concluding thoughts moving forward.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The inception of colleges in the 1960s led policy makers to address the issue of credit transfer. In order to effectively understand the discussion of credit transfer from a policy perspective, the literature available on this issue will be categorized and discussed under three main areas: the historical evolution of credit transfer in relation to the establishment of colleges, the student perspective and the reactionary response of colleges and universities, and lastly, the policy and decision making process behind this issue. Each of these topics provide further background on credit transfer, and lead to research areas that need to be further explored.

Historical Evolution

Until the 1960s, postsecondary education (PSE) was limited to the university sector as they were the sole providers of higher education (Gallagher & Dennison, 1995). However, in the 1960s, with the massification of education, economical demands and coming of age of the post-war baby boomers, consensus was reached in Ontario that the province's education system needed to provide further opportunities for students (Constantineau, 2009; Gallagher & Dennison, 1995).

1965 - The Introduction of the College of Applied Arts and Technology

On May 21st, 1965, the Honorable William G. Davis (Minister of Education) introduced the Bill that would provide legislation for the establishment and operation of a new form of educational institution, known as Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs) (Ontario Department of Education , 1967). The colleges were introduced with two main goals; firstly, they were intended to serve the needs of students who were unable to attend university due their secondary school program, or they were interested in an alternative outside of a university (Stoll, 1993). Secondly, they served as a means to respond to the economic and social demands of

Ontario at the time (Gallagher & Dennison, 1995). Minister Davis further reinforced this point through the following statement: “The world in which we live in and must make our ways is one which demands are ever-changing patterns of occupations and rising levels of skills. The occupations which are growing most rapidly are those which involve advancing levels of basic education and training” (Ontario Department of Education , 1967, p. 5).

In this case, colleges were being introduced to ensure that they were institutions that could adapt in accordance to the demands of the external environment (Gumport & Sporn, 1999). Dr. John Deutsch, Chairman of the Economic Council of Canada further reinforced the ideas presented by Minister Davis, as he argued that colleges were a means to respond to (Ontario Department of Education , 1967):

- The lack of managerial, technical, and scientific personnel in companies
- The deficiencies that existed in the education systems regarding training of technical skills
- Environmental factors such as the increasing speed of technological change

According to the Department of Education Act, colleges were going to offer programs of instruction in varying fields of vocational and technical education and training for full time and part time students, through day or evening courses. Due to the distinct nature of the programming colleges were going to offer in comparison to universities, it was also decided that CAATs would be “commuter” colleges, in a sense that residency or dormitory facilities would not be provided (Ontario Department of Education , 1967). As a result, 22 colleges were introduced as the new level of education that would address knowledge explosion, new technological revolution, and the first population explosion of students seeking higher education (Ontario Department of Education , 1967).

This also led to the establishment of Ontario's binary system consisting of distinct college and university sectors, with colleges providing technical training through diplomas, and universities offering theoretical training through degree programs. The very nature of such a PSE structure led to the creation of a hierarchy between colleges and universities, reinforcing the distinction between these two PSE institutions. Universities for instance, were designed to offer graduate and undergraduate degree programs that were academically oriented and theoretical in their delivery. As such, many university programs offer broad based exploratory education that is applicable to a variety of careers (EI Group , 2012). Part of their uniqueness lies in the ability to combine comprehensive academics with innovative research. To support this notion of research production, universities receive billions of dollars annually in research funding, by which universities contribute to major discoveries throughout the world.

While universities are often classified as research intensive, colleges are described as teaching focused institutions. Colleges offer a spectrum of credentials including certificates, two to three year advanced diplomas, bachelor's degrees in applied areas of study, graduate certificates, as well as joint college-university programming, leading to both a college diploma and a university degree (Colleges Ontario, 2012). Unlike universities, college programs are career focused, combining academic learning and practical experience (Colleges Ontario, 2012). Given these distinct features between colleges and universities, and the underlying power tensions that have come to exist between these two PSE systems, the topic of transfer was not seen as a valid option during this time. Hence, when Ontario university leaders and government rejected a transfer function for colleges, they were rejecting the idea that colleges should provide university level education, and reinforcing the fact that colleges were meant to co-exist with

existing and new universities, without any form of overlap (Skolnik, 2010 & Bell, 1998). Thus, little attention was given to the coordination between sectors (Bell, 1998).

University and Colleges – The Transfer Function

Due to the environmental, economic and external concerns, the labour market was placing an emphasis on general and technical training. Therefore, the introduction of a college system separate to that of universities was seen as the ideal direction for the PSE system in Ontario. It was also argued that a transfer function was not necessary as Grade 13 was seen as the door through which students could attend university (Stoll, 1993). To further highlight the distinction between colleges and universities, Minister Davis stated, “we must create a new kind of institution that will provide...a type of institution which universities are not designed for” (Ontario Department of Education , 1967, p. 11). It is evident that at the time, colleges were seen as providing an education that only they could provide (technical and applied training) to a larger portion of the community that was inadequately served by universities. Universities however, would continue to fulfill their mandate as educational institutions that provide theoretical training. From this separation between colleges and universities, at the time, little to no interplay existed between these two types of institutions.

Ironically though, Minister Davis also stated that no able or qualified student who attends college should be prevented from attending university. Minister Davis stated that a committee comprised of government and university representatives would be struck, to determine situations under which universities may grant admission to outstanding students who completed a program at CAAT (Ontario Department of Education , 1967). This statement is representative of Minister Davis’s approach to addressing the credit transfer issue on a needs basis, as per the demands of the students (the market). The establishment of the committee symbolizes the government’s way

of encouraging colleges and universities to adapt their organizations to ensure they are meeting the expectations of the students.

Although Minister Davis was cognizant of the necessary adaptations that needed to be made to meet the market demands, he failed to realize the implication this approach would have on the interplay and relationship between colleges and universities. For instance, by excluding colleges from a potential decision making body such as the transfer committee, he may have indirectly undermined the role of colleges and promoted the importance of universities in the HE system. As a result, some of the early presidents of CAATs were opposed to the idea of introducing a system of transfer between colleges and universities, as they explicitly stated, “There are no formal transfer routes. As a matter of fact we shun them, we do not want them” (Isabelle, 1979). Such a statement highlights that although colleges were created separate of universities, and were not meant to be placed on a hierarchical structure, the rigid segregation that existed between these two institutions also led to a disparity between colleges and universities, which manifested itself in limited interactions between these institutions.

The higher education system today also reflects the reality of credit transfer between colleges and universities, as more students are choosing to attend colleges first, and then further their studies in a university setting. For example, an Ontario study of transfer indicated that 23% of students who complete a college program have intentions of continuing their education in universities (Carter, Coyle, & Leslie, 2011). Also, the provincial government estimates approximately 4000 college graduates transfer to universities every year (Tamburri, 2012). With transfer rates on the rise, it is clear that more and more students are attending colleges, and the lack of a transfer system is impeding their abilities to continue their studies at a university.

The above historical evolution of colleges can be held responsible for the absence of an effective system wide credit transfer system. While there is a great deal of literature on this issue of credit transfer and the establishment of colleges, there is a definite gap between the historical trajectory of PSE systems and the underlying tensions that are evident today between colleges and universities. Through an analysis of the policy making process of credit transfer and its implications on the interplay between colleges and universities, researchers will be able to gain a better understanding of the tensions that exist today between colleges and universities, and how it is impacting the establishment of a credit transfer system in Ontario.

Demand for Credit Transfer – The Student Perspectives

According to Ian Smith (1998), students often choose to transfer from CAATs to university for several reasons including, career development factors (such as better employment opportunities), desire to attain a potential degree resulting in enhanced job opportunities, an interest in gaining further knowledge in theoretical fields of study, and further one's education level from a societal perspective. As such, this changing profile of students applying to universities from colleges is representative of the student demand for an effective credit transfer system in Ontario. It has been reported that every year, an increasing number of university applicants have had some kind of prior learning at the PSE level, and are seeking ways to have it recognized and count towards their program of study (Constantineau, 2009). This statement has been further proven by the fact that 4 in 10 students between the ages of 20-25 have reported transferring between PSE institutions (Junor & Usher, 2008). It is becoming increasingly common for students to attend college at some point in their educational career, whether it be before or after pursuing studies at a university level. According to the 2001 Graduate Student Survey (GSS), a survey conducted six months after CAAT students graduate, results indicated

that “the proportion of these graduates enrolling at a university has grown steadily since 1998-1999, [accounting] for more 26.2% of PSE attendees (Decock, 2004, pg. 7). In 2003, as per the Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium’s Graduating Survey, it was reported that 31% of university students had transferred some form of PSE credits (Junor & Usher, 2008). Data collected from 2007-2008 concluded that 21% of college students stated their enrollment in college was a means to prepare them for further education at the university level (Colleges Ontario , 2008). The most recent survey conducted by Colleges Ontario (2008) showed that more than 26% of the 2006-2007 graduates were continuing their education within six months of graduation. In fact, “the percentage of graduate students enrolled in university within six months of graduation increased substantially, from five percent for 2001-02 graduates to nine percent for 2006-07 graduates” (Colleges Ontario , 2008, p. 2). Ontario College Application Service data indicates that the percentage of college applicants with previous university experience has increased from 6% in 2000 to a total of 13% by 2007 (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). Research conducted by Decock (2006) on Seneca College graduates from 1998-99 to 2002-03, suggested that an increasing number of students were attending the college, with the intention of transferring on to a university, even though not all programs were designed to facilitate transfer. These data sets clearly illustrate the student demand for an education system that supports student mobility across PSE institutions of both colleges and universities.

In an attempt to better accommodate their needs of credit transfer, some students are relying on individual articulation agreements that exist between certain PSE institutions. For example, 55% of college-college transfer students and 65% of college-university transfer students mentioned the existence of specific transfer agreements that played a vital role in their decision to transfer, ensuring their credits would be recognized (Pin, 2010). While this group of

students have been successful in compensating for the lack of developed transfer mechanisms, other students have not been so successful in accessing their pathways of choice. For example, the absence of a system wide credit transfer system is also negatively impacting immigrants with foreign credentials, as they are often unable to have them count within the Canadian education context. Students who have completed work-related professional development courses also report similar frustrations, as they too are seeking to have their courses assessed towards their program of study, but often, are left at a loss (Pin, 2010). As a result, the absence of a credit transfer system is leaving many qualified students with an inability to access their pathway of choice as their prior academic work is not recognized (Pin, 2010). Based on the way students are navigating through the PSE system, one can conclude that the initial pathway model introduced in the 1960s for attaining PSE education from high school to university is no longer applicable for a majority of students.

It has been noted that students are relying increasingly on mobility and transfer mechanisms within the PSE system in order to strengthen personal development, increase academic opportunities, and enhance career prospects, all of which have been proven to increase benefits to the student such as confidence, level of maturity, and academic ability (Junor & Usher, 2008). However, research findings have concluded that the lack of an effective credit transfer system in Ontario is impacting the average transfer student, creating academic barriers, and raising issues of access to equal opportunities available for college students aiming to gain a university education (Bell, 1998). Generally speaking, transfer students are often considered to be part-time students who are older, married with children, less confident about their prospects of program completion, and consequently, they also experience lower social and academic self image and lack of motivation (Arnold, 2011). It has also been noted that students from a higher

socio-economic background are more likely to attend university than those who come from a lower socio-economic background (Bell,1998). As a result, it is these students from lower socio-economic backgrounds of minority groups, women, graduates from general and vocational tracks and low achievers in high schools, who experience the most difficulty with transfer. It is these very students though, who rely on the university through college approach to provide them with access to attend university, because they would not have met the university entrance requirements based on their pre-college credentials (Decock, 2006). Evidently, when legitimate credit attainment is not acknowledged, students face frustration, discouragement, and duplication of coursework resulting in increased time, effort, and cost required for credential completion.

Transfer students also experience transfer shock as they attempt to adjust into a new PSE environment (Arnold, 2011). Transfer shock, also known as academic shock, “refers to the students’ negative experiences related to their academic abilities in a new environment” (Cameron, 2005, p.32). Cameron (2005) conducted research on the experiences of transfer students in a collaborative baccalaureate nursing program to elucidate the experiences in a program, which is designed for students to begin their studies in a college and transfer to a university to continue their studies). Cameron (2005) argues that understanding the social and academic integration of the transfer experience of students are vital to make sense of the transfer experience of students. Ultimately, it is the overall theme of transition stress, as students negotiate new academic expectations, curriculum, geographical location (larger university community versus a small close-knit college atmosphere), that leads to transfer shock. This transfer shock is further reinforced by the existing academic barriers in the education system for transfer students, due to insufficient information available regarding transfer expectations and procedures. As a result, even though students are relying on transfer processes (through

collaborative programs) to maximize their future prospects, it is clear that they are still faced with academic barriers that negatively impact their overall student and academic experience.

In order to address this issue, colleges and universities are working on an individual basis to provide support to these students. For example, the University of Toronto employs Transfer Credit Advisors who provide students with guidance on the administrative process of transfer, and also serve as a support system for these new transfer students (University of Toronto Scarborough, 2012). Seneca College has a Degree/Credit Transfer Office that is under the Student Experience Programming, to ensure transfer students have the necessary tools to deal with issues such as transfer shock (Credit Transfer Opportunities , 2012). While these initiatives are helpful in supporting students through the transfer process, the issue of providing support services, resources and survival strategies for transfer students still needs to be a strong area of focus for both colleges and universities, to ensure the overall success of transfer students.

The University Response

In response to the students, universities and the government have been proactive to address the student demand for the establishment of a system wide credit transfer system. The current literature on the response of universities to credit transfer provides evidence that universities and colleges are focusing on credit transferability where possible, through an increased emphasis on quality assurance agreements (Arnold, 2011). The literature covered within this area highlights various initiatives universities are putting in place in order to address the issue of a lack of a credit transfer system in Ontario. Offering joint programming with other colleges and/or universities is one of the most common ways to address the issue of credit transfer, as students are able to become integrated into a single program from two separate institutions that acknowledges the credits they are taking from both institutions (Junor & Usher,

2008). Universities are also making use of prior learning assessment measures and block transfer agreements to create programming at the institution level that provides students the ability to navigate through the system by including credit transfers as part of the process (Constantineau, 2009; Colleges Ontario , 2008).

The university sector is also coming together to ensure credit transfer is given priority on the education agenda. In 2009 for instance, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities established a Credit Transfer Steering Committee to support policy development, design, and implementation of a credit transfer system in Ontario (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). The steering committee is chaired by the ministry and includes representatives from colleges, universities and student organizations, to further analyze the credit transfer issue and propose recommendations (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). Based on these observations, it seems evident that the universities are implementing measures to ease the transfer process for students.

The College Response

Just like universities, colleges also aim to establish clear and transparent pathways within the PSE sector in order to optimize pathways for students (Colleges Ontario , 2008). Colleges are at the forefront when it comes to establishing transfer. It has been reported that in 2009, 233 articulation agreements were signed from colleges to universities, while universities to colleges initiated only 14 agreements (Jones & Skolnik, 2009). There is a great deal of literature readily available through college websites, Ontario Transfer publications, Association of Canadian Community Colleges, and academic journals, that highlight the various initiatives colleges are implementing to ensure their diploma programs enable students to continue into a degree program at a university. For instance, Algonquin College and Centennial College have created collaborative partnerships with Carleton University and University of Toronto respectively, in a

broad variation of programming (Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 2011). Seneca College also lists numerous articulation agreements it has signed with other universities, thereby enabling students to transfer credits to the respective universities. For example, a student who completes the first 5 semesters of the Biotechnology Technologist Program at Seneca with a cumulative GPA of 3.3 can apply to the Biotechnology program at York University leading to a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Biotechnology (Degree Transfer Guide, 2012). The student will be eligible for a maximum of 45 transfer credits. Also, students who complete the Police Foundations Program at Seneca with a minimum GPA of 2.7 are also eligible to apply to obtain a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Monash University, and may be able to receive up to 1 year of transfer credits towards this degree.

It is clear that articulation agreements play an instrumental role in enabling students to navigate through the PSE system. As such, colleges, just like universities, have also been proactive in introducing initiatives that will address the issue of the lack of credit transfer system. In 2006 for instance, Colleges Ontario received funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities to evaluate and strengthen pathways between colleges by developing clearer understanding of student mobility within the system (Colleges Ontario, 2008). College Ontario (2008) invested these funds to launch a research project entitled *Improving College Pathways*, which was designed to develop a better understanding of college-college transfers, student perceptions about the transfer process, and challenges students face with college-to-college transfers. Some of the commitments that resulted from this research include continuing the development of programs across colleges, simplifying the process for students by seeking transfer credits through the creation of a common sector framework for evaluation across all

colleges, and making information regarding transfer accessible and readily available to students (Colleges Ontario , 2008).

In order to embrace the mission of addressing credit transfer policies, it is evident that colleges are implementing a variety of programming initiatives. The introduction of credit transfer offices, transfer counsellors, increased articulation agreements between colleges and universities, and increased collaboration with the provincial government are just some measures colleges and universities are participating in to address the issues of student mobility and credit transfer (CMEC, 2009; Boggs & Trick, 2009; Ministry of Training, College and Universities, 2010). Although colleges and universities are both playing their roles in addressing credit transfer through these initiatives, there is still an apparent distinction between colleges and universities. The overarching questions still remain: how are the credit transfer agreements shaping the interplay between colleges and universities in relation to the state? How has the credit transfer discussion redefined the role of colleges in the education field? How has it impacted the role of universities? Exploring the policy of credit transfer will provide a basis to better understand the role colleges and universities have played in the process, and how it has affected the power relations between these post secondary educational institutions.

Policy and Decision Making Process

Given the increasing demand for a system wide credit transfer system, the provincial government has taken several initiatives to respond to this issue. There are detailed reports published by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario and other intergovernmental organizations such the Council of Ministers Education, that track the provincial response to the issue of credit transfer since the 1990s. In 1995 for example, the Pan-Canadian protocol on the Transferability of University Credits was signed by the provincial Ministers of Education (Kerr,

McCloy, & Liu, 2010). After a couple of other initiatives, in 2002, CMEC established a working group on Credit Transfer to develop pan-Canadian strategies of credit transfer (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). Although policy recommendations continue to be proposed, this does not bypass the challenges the policy making process is currently encountering.

Thus far, the government has been addressing the issue of credit transfer from a supply and demand perspective, which has to do with access as much as it has to do with the demand of transfer. In other words, the rates for transfer from college to university are increasingly affected by access to universities and further education (Lang, 2009). Since the demand exceeds supply, the government is encouraging colleges and universities to collaborate and introduce agreements that articulate the relations between colleges and universities, to enable students to transfer seamlessly through the system. Articulation agreements have also led to an understanding and need for colleges, universities, and government to explore the issue of credit transfer in depth, as an increasing number of students are citing these agreements as an asset to further their education. To this effect, there have been various measures since the 1990s in order to address the issue of credit transfer (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010).

The first such project was in fact introduced by the government in 1990, entitled *Vision 2000: Quality and Opportunity*, a report which reviewed the mandate of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2006; Drea, 2003). The report was based on a highly consultative process with college, universities, and students, focusing on the expansion and improvement of opportunities for students to move between colleges and universities (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010; Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2006). This report outlined recommendations based on three major themes of quality, accountability and accessibility to advocate for greater cooperation between

postsecondary institutions (Ministry of Training, College and Universities, 2010; Ministry of Education and Training , 1996). One of the questions that arose from this report was the overall relationship between quality and credit transfer. If there were major differences in the quality and content of programs offered by each college, universities would be unable to identify whether a course offered at one college covered the same content at another college. In order to bridge this issue of quality and content of programming across different colleges, the Colleges Standards and Accreditation Council (CSAC) was established in 1993 (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2013). It was mandated to develop program standards for the college systems, to address the issue of quality as it relates to the credit transfer discussion.

In addition, one of the specific recommendations from the *Vision 2000* report included the establishment of a taskforce to examine how the province could best meet its advanced training needs (Smith, Cameron, Gorbet, Henderson, & Stephenson, 1996). In response, in 1993, the Ontario Taskforce on Advanced Training was struck (Smith, Cameron, Gorbet, Henderson, & Stephenson, 1996). Chaired by Walter Pitman, the aim of the taskforce was to identify the needs of the province for advanced training as understood through the perspective of students, employees and employer, recommend ways of more effective transfer between colleges and universities, and assess the need for an expansion of current training opportunities. In addressing these challenges, some of the recommendations proposed included a number of system changes to link colleges and universities together, the establishment of a council to provide leadership in the development of credit transfer policies and practices, and supporting and encouraging inter-sectoral credit transfer arrangements between colleges and universities (Smith, Cameron, Gorbet, Henderson, & Stephenson, 1996).

In 1994, representatives of the Association of the Canadian Community Colleges (AUCC), the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) all came together as a united body, and recommended that the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) address the issue of student mobility among Canadian provinces and territories (CMEC, 1995). As such, in 1995, the Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits was signed by the provincial Ministers of Education to ensure that course work completed by transfer students during the first two years of university study in Canada will be recognized and fully credited at other Canadian postsecondary institutions (CMEC, 1995; Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010).

Keeping in tandem with the spirit of recommendations on transferability, in 1996, the College University Consortium Council (CUCC) was introduced (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). The aim of the council was to “promote and coordinate joint education and training ventures that [would]: aid the transfer of students from sector to sector; facilitate the creation of joint programs between colleges and universities; and further the development of a more seamless continuum of postsecondary education in Ontario” (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010, p. 4). CUCC was also charged with the responsibility of updating and expanding the Ontario College University Transfer Guide to provide students with an online resource regarding transfer processes at different colleges and universities (Ontario College University Transfer Guide, 2010).

The Ontario College University Degree Completion Accord, also referred to as the Port Hope Accord, was signed in 1999 by representatives from colleges and universities (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). The accord outlines a series of principles and provides a framework for the development of degree completion agreements between Ontario colleges and universities (Arnold, 2011). It also set out a model for the number of credits that should be given in

articulating college diploma programs to university degrees, though most universities did not follow this model (CMEC, 2009). “By 2002 [however], CUCC concluded that there had been moderate success in meeting the target of having 90% of college programs with substantial academic affinity to a university degree program so that they could make a degree-completion arrangement” (CMEC, 2009, p. 22).

As a follow up to the Port Hope Accord, in 2002, CMEC established the Working Group on Credit Transfer in order to develop pan-Canadian strategies of credit transfer through an emphasis on the development and enhancement of strong provincial and/or territorial systems (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). As a result of the working group, Ontario developed a three year framework for action which included consultation and strategy development process with colleges and universities to design and implement a “made in Ontario” credit system, as well the establishment of a steering committee with representation from COU, CO, and Ontario’s three postsecondary student associations that would emerge in 2008 (CMEC, 2009).

The year 2003 marked the commitment of institutions to maximize the recognition and transfer of learning acquired at other colleges, as college presidents signed a Mobility and Transferability Protocol for College to College Transfer (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). The operating principles of the protocol highlight the importance for colleges to provide transfer credits based on equivalency of educational achievement, relevance of programming, and ensuring information is readily available to students (Colleges Ontario , 2008).

In 2004, Colleges Ontario and the College Student Alliance (CSA) presented submissions to the Rae Review: *Ontario A Leader Learning*, advocating for the need of an integrated, coherent PSE system in order to ensure access and success are optimized (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). As a response to this message, COU recommended that the government should continue

to encourage collaboration and cooperation between colleges and universities through improved funding mechanisms, while maintaining the current structure of PSE system in Ontario (Council of Ontario Universities , 2004). The report's recommendations also included that colleges and universities be required to recognize each other's related programming to create clear and efficient pathways for students, as well as the introduction of a system wide credit transfer system (Rae, 2005, p. 29).

The Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admission and Transfer (PCAAT) was created in 2006 as a means to facilitate the implementation of policies and practices that support student mobility (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). The consortium aims to create a single accessible pan-Canadian database that will collate information about transfer credits designed for institutions and students, so that provinces and territories can benefit from one another's systems (Constantineau, 2009).

The most recent initiative dates to 2010, affirming a commitment from the provincial budget to improve student mobility through additional resources to support the implementation of a credit transfer system (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010). Student support and feedback was also gathered at this time through the Credit Transfer Steering Committee led by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (Pin, 2010). These propositions led to major advances regarding credit transfer in 2011; firstly, the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) was established to facilitate and support academic collaboration and the development of transfer pathways among Ontario's publicly funded colleges and universities (Government of Ontario, 2012). The council also launched an online portal (ONTransfer), to guide students through the transfer process (Government of Ontario, 2012). Secondly, the provincial government announced a \$73.7 million investment in order to create a system wide credit

transfer system to ease the process of transferring credits among Ontario colleges and universities (Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 2011). To progress towards this vision, this funding has been allocated to the establishment of a new credit transfer system that will be implemented in phases over five years as follows (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2012):

1. Implement a province-wide credit transfer system by 2015
2. Provide up to date information on credit transfer and pathways for students through a new credit transfer site (ONCAT)
3. Support new partnerships and agreements amongst multi-partner institutions that respond to student demands of mobility across sectors, specifically from college to university
4. Promote the value and importance of credit transfer through different educational forums and research best practices to enhance credit transfer for students
5. Measure and report on overall progress

Thus far, these funds have been allocated and used towards the Credit Transfer Innovation Fund, the Credit Transfer Institutional Grants, supporting ONTransfer, and facilitating the provision of support services for students and transfer in colleges and universities, through institutional grants (Popovic, 2012).

As explained earlier, Ontario has implemented various initiatives to address the credit transfer issue. However, the underlying issues of credit transfer such as degree partnerships that are limited by program, the lack of a universal course by course transfer guide, and the establishment of institutional rules that dictate transfer with no measuring stick or standards, have yet to be addressed (Arnold, 2011). Today, this challenge is further reinforced by the mere fact that the number of college students and graduates seeking access to an Ontario

undergraduate degree program has doubled over the past eight years (The Centre for Spatial Economics, n.d.). As these large number of students attempt to navigate through their educational opportunities, it is clear that one of the main problems is the lack of universality with credit transfers, in a sense that transfer agreements are not coordinated between institutions. As such, a graduate could receive different credentials based on the university and/or college he/she graduates from (The Centre for Spatial Economics, n.d.). This one example speaks to the challenges policy makers face, as they attempt to address the issue of relevant credential recognitions, along with the social and academic adjustments students have to get accustomed to when it comes to transfer. Keeping these issues at the forefront, the government (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) has also introduced arms-length organizations and other programming in order to encourage collaboration between PSE institutions, and an understanding of student mobility between PSE sectors to facilitate the credit transfer process for students (Kerr, McCloy, & Liu, 2010).

The Council of Ontario Universities for instance, advances higher education in Ontario through advocacy, research and policy development of relevant and critical issues (COU, 2012). One of its initiatives includes working to ensure student recognition is a successful process, through the Student Equivalency Program and College University Consortium Council (Junor & Usher, 2008). “However, membership in the council is voluntary, and credit recognition agreements are still left up to individual institutions to negotiate with other institutions” (Junor & Usher, 2008, p. 27). Although all of the 22 universities are members of COU, and even though recommendations may be made regarding credit transfer agreements, the process and implementation of credit recognition is at the discretion of each university. This lack of unity amongst PSE institutions is also evident in the “Rae Report” (2005), as he discussed the need for

increased collaboration amongst both colleges and universities. Rae (2005) argued that cooperation was vital for the creation of an integrated system wide credit transfer policy, similar to the ones that exist in British Columbia and Alberta. Following up on this recommendation, in 2008, Colleges Ontario and the COU established a taskforce to “develop shared principles, goals and approaches that would help students make informed decisions on PSE options” (CMEC, 2009, p. 6). The Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) is an ideal example of an intergovernmental organization that was introduced in 1967, and today, they are reinforcing the discussion of credit transfer in Ontario by learning from other provinces about potential credit transfer models that can be implemented in Ontario (Junor & Usher, 2008). To date, the most recent statement on the policy of transfer discusses the importance of including participation of all PSE institutions, requiring institutions to optimize pathways for students so that the attractiveness of institutions is further enhanced, and the strategy will also enable the government to recognize and support institutions’ leadership role in improving pathways (Ministry of Training, College and Universities, 2010). Part of this initiative will also include the gathering of data on transfer students and measuring their performance through pre-existing tools such as the Multi Year Accountability Agreements and Key Performance Indicators in order to evaluate and better understand the transfer student profile and issues pertinent to them.

As with any policy decision making process, there are always gaps that need to be further assessed and analyzed to better approach the credit transfer policy. For instance, the literature discussed thus far is reinforcing the importance of collaboration and cooperation, but is ignoring the underlying institutional tension that exists between colleges and universities (Arnold, 2011). The public debate over the university transfer function also needs to be addressed, as many university presidents wish to keep the sole right of offering university level courses, and have

advocated that colleges should not serve the purpose of preparing students' education; this debate has further manifested itself in terms of the articulation agreements that have been established, as there are an increasing number of agreements being introduced from colleges to universities as opposed to universities from colleges (Arnold, 2011). This tension between colleges and universities leads to the discussion surrounding the challenges in forming and maintaining cooperative relationships. Research conducted by Boggs & Trick (2009) and authors such as Park & Russo (1996) have shown that 50% to 70% of joint ventures do not succeed; as such, exploring this issue will require further investigation into the types of relationships that can exist such as imperfect formation, uncertainty about external authorities, absence of focal points, and how all of these factors can contribute to the overall success or tension of structural relationships between colleges and universities (Boggs & Trick, 2009). Stemming from the cooperation aspect of these two PSE institutions of colleges and universities, the current literature is also silent about the nature and current atmosphere of colleges and universities, especially with the recent announcement made by the government to indirectly inform colleges and universities to work together to create a system wide credit transfer system.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter outlines the conceptual framework used in this research. It will discuss the rationale in selecting policy tools and the resource dependency theory, as it applies to the adaptation of organizations. Through these lenses, the historical trajectory of credit transfer, and its implications on the role and interplay between colleges and universities will be explored. In addition, this chapter will also provide background information regarding the analytical method that will be employed in order to discuss the findings of this dissertation.

Policy Analysis: Brief Overview

Policy analysis represents the efforts of players both inside and outside the formal political decision-making processes to improve policy outcomes through systemic evaluative rationality (Howlett & Lindquist, 2007). There are a variety of frameworks and theories that have been introduced in order to approach the analysis of policies. For the purposes of this research, we will first analyze the history of credit transfer through policy instruments that have been implemented over time to address the issue of credit transfer. Thereafter, the organization adaptation approach that encompasses resource dependency theory will be adopted, to understand how the historical evolution of credit transfer has impacted the overall role and interplay of colleges and universities. These two lenses combined will help address the following research question: How has the historical trajectory of credit transfer impacted the role and interplay between colleges and universities? The above analytical lens will also begin to shed light on the underlying tensions and issues of institutional cooperation between colleges and universities.

Policy Instruments

By definition, policy instruments are methods by which higher levels of government assert partial control over an area of educational policy (Clune, 1987). They are tools which can be implemented to overcome problems and achieve objectives. From an educational standpoint, there are a variety of concepts/ideas that could be considered policy instruments, adopted by the institutions as well. For example, institutional restructuring such as system changes is one example that a higher education institution could use, as a means to address issues such as lack of adequate funding or resources (Clune, 1987). The choices institutions make, whether it be the programs they choose to offer or the type of faculty and administrators they choose to hire, could also be classified as policy instruments through which an institution could potentially be redefining its overall mission within the higher education context (Clune, 1987).

Over the years, policy instruments have evolved from focusing on mandates, inducements, capacity building and system changing to market-based policy instruments, accountability, and incentive based instruments (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). Market-based policy instruments introduce competition and choice to the higher education discussion, by responding to the demands of the market. It has been argued that these instruments are adopted as a means to reduce bureaucratic forces and politics. As a result, the competitive measures would force institutions to improve the overall delivery of education, ultimately leading to a “system-wide performance improvement” (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003, p. 4).

Accountability and incentive based policy instruments are also being used to improve school performances through tightening the internal management of education systems (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). These efforts are aimed to better align the interest of the different stakeholders involved in the education process, i.e. the student body, the universities

and colleges, and the role of the state (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). It has been founded that establishing incentives for school performances through formal accountability measures does in fact affect the overall performance in terms of the way the institution functions, and the way in which education is delivered (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003).

There have also been policy instruments that have been introduced to regulate academic quality such as the Australian Qualifications Framework and Subject Assessment for Academic Quality in Denmark (Mhamed, 2011). Class size and teacher quality have also been identified as potential targets of policy instruments, as a means to address the issue of inadequate resources (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003).

For the purposes of this research, this thesis will be looking at policy instruments employed by both the government and higher educational institutions to analyze the historical evolution of credit transfer, which may shed light on a variety of issues. For instance, using institutional restructuring as a policy tool could be one means to critically analyze and understand the different policy recommendations that have been made since 1990 to address the issue of credit transfer. In addition, this policy instrument will also serve to explain the different roles colleges and universities have played over the years, through the evolution of the credit transfer discussion. Factors that influence policy such as massification of education, economical demands, the increasing demands of PSE education that offers options of mobility, could also help identify how market-based policy instruments for example, have been employed to address the issue of student mobility and credit transfer. Policy instruments will also be vital in understanding the overall interplay between colleges and universities in relation to credit transfer and the changing environment of higher education. To take this discussion further, the accountability based policy instruments as they apply to the introduction of arms length bodies

such as CMEC and HEQCO could also serve to inform the overall question of how the history of credit transfer has impacted the role of colleges and universities, through an accountability lens.

Organization Adaptation Approach

Organizations are defined as collectivities oriented to the pursuit of specific goals, that exhibit a relatively high degree of formalization (Scott & Davies, 2007). The organizational approach looks at impacts of organizational rules and structures on the policy-making process. In addition, the study of organizations contributes to basic sociological knowledge by increasing one's understanding of how generic social processes operate within distinctive social structure (Scott & Davies, 2007). Since the early 1940s, various scholars have been exploring the issue of organizational analysis. In 1949, Selznick introduced the structuralist-functionist model that revealed how organizations were organic systems adapting to their own environment (Mullen, 2005). Di Maggo (1983) and Powell (1991) later introduced isomorphic models to explain how organizations change to resemble others facing similar conditions (Scott & Davies, 2007). They argued that once isomorphism occurred, organizations are subject to pressures of more powerful, well-connected and better resourced institutions. In 1984, March and Olsen approached the organizational analysis through an analysis of the structure, historical, development, personal networks and decision making history of organizations to understand how and why a particular policy emerges (Mullen, 2005).

Organization adaptation refers to the modifications and alterations that occur in an organization to adjust to the external environment (Gumport & Sporn, 1999). Its ultimate purpose is to respond to potential discontinuities that may arise between the organization and its environment (Gumport & Sporn, 1999). Within the PSE context, this approach calls for an analysis of the changes in the societal and institutional environments, the way adaptation occurs,

and the consequences for the organization. Gumport and Sporn (1999) argue that colleges and universities must contribute to the national productivity of the economy through production of a well-educated workforce. In order to successfully contribute to the economy, despite the public funding cuts, unpredictable financial patterns, increased competition, and declining resource supports, colleges and universities have to respond to these changes in their external environment, as per the organization adaptation approach (Peterson, 2007). In an attempt to do so, organizations need to establish appropriate goals based on environmental needs and demands, and adapt to both the local and globalization trends of higher education to attract a wide pool of students (Gumport & Sporn, 1999).

Organization adaptation is seen as a broad view on organizations that encompasses the Resource Dependency Theory (RDT). RDT argues that in order for organizations to succeed, they must engage in exchange with the environment (Gumport & Sporn, 1999). RDT was originally developed in order to provide an alternate point of view to other economic theories, and get a better grasp of understanding inter-organizational relations (Davis & Cobb, 2009). RDT defines role of institutions within the context of economic competitiveness and growth (Maassen & Stensaker, 2011). It is characterized by an open systems framework, in a sense that organizations and institutions need to be understood within the environmental context (Davis & Cobb, 2009). It assumes an active role in individual organizations in their struggle for survival as organizations must engage with the environment if they want to succeed. For example, the need to acquire resources creates dependencies between organizations which lead to political tensions and solutions.

Within the PSE context, this approach calls for an analysis of changes in the societal and institutional environments (government regulations, changing student demographics, and

financial crisis), the way adaptation occurs, and the consequences for the organization (Gumport & Sporn, 1999). It may also include strategies or positions to manage the relationship between organizations and the environment (Gumport & Sporn, 1999). Understanding organizations also calls for an analysis of the different elements that make up an organization such as:

- Strategies and Goals: The choices organizations make in terms of their target audience, tactics the organization employs, typology distinctions (“prospectors, defenders, analyzers”), the particular output objectives they set (Scott & Davies, 2007, p. 21).
- Work and Technology: Ability to perform critical tasks effectively, such as the establishment of articulation agreements with x number of colleges/universities, level of interdependence throughout the organization (ex. how effectively colleges and universities are addressing the credit transfer mandates).
- Organizational culture: Understanding one’s shared assumptions of the individuals in the participation of the organizations, to contextualize the way in which colleges and universities relate individually and to one another, through the historical evolution of credit transfer (Tierney, 1988).

Based on the information presented thus far, it is clear that organizations can either adapt or change to fit environmental requirements, or they can alter the environment so that it fits the organizations’ capabilities. Organizations play a vital role in the resource dependency theory because of its effects on the organization. It will definitely be interesting to employ the resource dependency theory from an organizational adaptation approach, to better understand how the evolution of credit transfer policies has impacted the organizational structure of colleges and universities. And if so, how has that impacted the overall interplay and current role of colleges in

universities. What different policy instruments were employed within the process? These are all questions that will be further discussed and explored in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of the policy tools employed through the evolution of credit transfer history, the next chapter will critically analyze and discuss each of the credit transfer policy recommendations that have been introduced since the 1970s. The organization adaptation approach and the resource dependency theory will be vital in understanding the way colleges and universities adapt to meet the demands of the external market, and how this process has impacted the overall role and interplay between colleges and universities. It will also shed light on understanding exactly how and why the underlying tensions were initially formulated between colleges and universities, and its resulting implications on the current higher education system.

Chapter 4 – Discussion and Analysis

This chapter will focus on analyzing critical documents, reports, and landmark events dating back as far as the 1970s, to critically analyze the evolution of credit transfer policy, and its implications on the evolving relationship between colleges and universities. Policy Tools that have been implemented over the years will further explain the various mechanisms that have been put in place to facilitate credit transfer and reinforce a positive interplay between colleges and universities.

1972: Report of the Commission on Postsecondary Education in Ontario

The establishment of the CAATs in 1965 can be seen as a system change policy tool that was introduced to address the need of technical skills in the HE system (Clune, 1987). However, in the beginning, this created tension and friction between colleges and universities. For instance, in response to the establishment of the CAATs in 1965, a final report of the Commission on Post Secondary Education in Ontario was published, entitled The Learning Society (Ross, 1972). The report stressed the need for diversity, as the Commission was concerned about “the process of homogenization” in postsecondary education (Ross, 1972, p. 86). The report further argued that introducing a formal system of university transfer, similar to the junior colleges in the United States, would not be appropriate for the CAATs because they would be measured according to university standards as opposed to their own. (Commission on Postsecondary Education in Ontario, 1972). This would eventually lead to a hierarchical structure of institutions, where universities would be seen as being more elites in comparison to colleges (Commission on Postsecondary Education in Ontario, 1972). The report concluded that colleges and universities had an equally important role to play in the education sphere, and a change in social attitudes

was required so that colleges would be “held in the same esteem as the universities,” by offering applied degrees as well (Stoll, 1993, p. 14).

From an organizational approach, by avoiding the introduction of credit transfer between colleges and universities, it can be concluded that the government was hoping to avoid colleges becoming isomorphic models of universities (Scott & Davies, 2007). This report also highlights the fact that the government believed that at the time, excluding the credit transfer option would in fact facilitate a positive interplay between colleges and universities, and minimize the chances of a hierarchical structure being established between these two postsecondary institutions.

While the government of Ontario had one perspective of looking at the issue of credit transfer and CAATs, other organizations had a different perspective regarding this issue. In 1973, the Council of Ontario Universities prepared a response to the Report of the Commission of PSE in Ontario. COU’s report emphasized the importance of responding to the demands of the external environment (labour market demands) through the establishment of technical institutes that would offer a comprehensive applied curriculum and training program (Shanahan, Fisher, Jones, & Rubenson, 2005). At the same time though, the report called for collaboration across colleges and universities, in response to the Commission’s proposal to introduce an Open Academy, stating the fact that many existing institutions could contribute valuable ideas and resources (Council of Ontario Universities , 1973). Although this view was not directly related to credit transfer, the encouragement of collaboration across the two institutions does foresee future arguments that will soon surface, advocating for a system wide credit transfer system to be established between colleges and universities. However, it is important to note that up till this point, the separation between colleges and universities was strongly advocated for by the government, CAATs, and university presidents alike. So much so that even up till the late

1980s, the widely held belief was that the core function of colleges was to provide career education, and an academic transfer would not serve the college students (Clowes & Levin, 1989). As a result, such a strong segregated belief system reinforced the limited extent to which colleges and universities would interact with one another.

1970s – 1980s: Contextualizing the Relationship between Colleges and Universities

Although colleges had been introduced into the post-secondary education arena, close linkages were not created between colleges and universities. Universities focused on their mandate of research and teaching, while CAATs were occupied with the development of programming related to occupational training (Skolnik, 1995). Even when colleges shared facilities with universities, the relationship did not progress beyond real estate matters (Skolnik, 2005).

To better understand why transfer agreements didn't establish naturally between colleges and universities, Stokes (1989) discussed the following points:

- CAATs recruited students from the technical stream as opposed to the academic stream of high-schools; as a result, universities doubted the academic capability of these students
- CAAT faculty were business and high school oriented professionals, versus university professors who held PhD and Masters, at the bare minimum

Due to these differences that neither universities nor CAATs were willing to discuss, it is evident that the interplay and institutional relationship between colleges and universities was almost non-existent. These arguments are also representative of the hierarchical attitudes that were forming amongst universities, in that they were seen as being the more prestigious and academically oriented institutions, while CAATs were simply there to provide technical education. In fact, university leaders viewed colleges as unwanted (Skolnik, 2005). Instead of viewing them as

collegial institutions who could facilitate in teaching and educating the society, universities viewed colleges as “vexatious competitors” (Skolnik, 2005, p.7). CAATs were also indifferent to the credit transfer discussion as they “had no interest in butting heads against the walls of academe” (Skolnik, *Evolution of Relations Between Community Colleges and Universities in Ontario*, 1995). For most faculty and CAAT administrators, having to work with universities to develop transfer agreements may have reinforced the hierarchical attitudes that were forming, and make colleges feel as they were in “second class universities rather than in first rate institutions on the cutting edge of change in post-secondary education” (Skolnik, *Evolution of Relations Between Community Colleges and Universities in Ontario*, 1995, p. 442).

By the late 1980s though, there were established agreements between colleges and universities, but they were relatively low in number. A study of CAAT transfer agreements in 1988 confirmed that only 19 agreements existed between specific programs in Ontario universities, offered by one CAAT with one university that accepted these transfer credits (Marshall, 1989). At the time, it was estimated that there were approximately 27 000 CAAT graduates, and 2000 approved postsecondary program titles (Marshall, 1989). Marshall, and many others to follow in the years to come argued that Ontario was in need of a formal credit transfer system in order to “meet the needs of society in the new technological age” (Marshall, 1989, p. 23). The society, as reflected by the students, was in favour of the establishment of a credit transfer system. Data collected from the 1980s highlighted that there were an increasing number of students transferring from college to university and vice versa, and overall, there was a steady number of CAAT students proceeding on to universities (Decock, 2004).

Marshall’s (1989) argument is in direct relation to the resource dependency theory, as he believed that in order to meet the demands of the new technological changes and in the interest

of economic competitiveness and growth, colleges and universities would need to embrace the idea of establishing a credit transfer system that was better coordinated and articulated. This proposal was not universally accepted; colleges and universities also had to confront another issue that would determine their relationship and interplay in the near future. The establishment of a transfer function through a credit transfer system would endanger the vocational mandate of colleges and increase competition between colleges and universities for students (Skolnik, 2011). Over the years though, as the credit transfer policy evolved, these tensions manifested themselves in a variety of ways.

1990: Vision 2000

In light of increased college-university interaction, in 1988, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities asked the Council of Regents, the intermediary role between the CAATs and the government, to review the system of CAATs in Ontario and develop a vision for 2000 (Shanahan, Fisher, Jones, & Rubenson, 2005). The final report was released in 1990, designed to introduce and renew the mandate of the Ontario Colleges (Vision 2000, 1990).

Institutional restructuring can be categorized as the major policy tool that was adopted in this report, as it called for an analysis of the current CAATs system, and its inability to serve the needs and demands of the market and the relevancy of its current mandate within the future of the higher education system (Clune, 1987). In exploring the institutions of CAATs, *Vision 2000* also responds to the resource dependency theory, in that in order for colleges to succeed in an increasingly competitive environment, they need to engage with the universities as their counterparts, and to adapt accordingly in the field of higher education (Davis & Cobb, 2009). Subsequently, this report was designed to explore the very issue of the role of colleges in the

economy and the environment (increasing demands for a technical education) moving forward, as per the organization adaptation approach.

One of the major recommendations of this report includes the call to expand and improve opportunities for students to move between the college and university sector, thereby encouraging a positive relationship to be fostered between colleges and universities (Morrin, 2011). Related to the topic of collaboration across these two institutions, the report also recommends increased student mobility across sectors, and suggested the establishment of a provincial Institute Without Walls (IWW). IWW would act as a mediator and facilitator between colleges and universities to stimulate the development of formal joint agreements (Vision 2000, 1990). The report argued that enhancing institutional cooperation and facilitating inter-institutional and inter-jurisdictional transferability would provide a means for assessing equivalence credits, as well providing the necessary expansion and opportunities for college and graduate students (Vision 2000, 1990). While colleges were in favour of increasing collaboration across universities, the report argued that the definitive lines between colleges and universities need to be maintained, to stay true to the mandate under which colleges were introduced: “the provision of career oriented education at the certificate and diploma levels” (Vision 2000, 1990, p. 97). To remain true to this mandate, the report explicitly rejected the traditional university transfer programs that existed in B.C. and Alberta, stating that, “these programs might detract from the career-oriented role of colleges” (p. 97).

The irony here is quite evident; on the one hand, the report highlights the importance of increased collaboration across colleges and universities and the importance of fostering partnerships so that students who choose to pursue university studies, should have their college experience accounted for in a fair manner (Vision 2000, 1990). At the same time though, the

report argues that there should be limitations placed on the types of program-specific agreements that are made with universities, so that colleges and universities continue to remain parallel to each other in the education system.

This dual-minded approach can be further analyzed through understanding the way organizations adapt and their need to engage with the environment, as per the resource dependency theory. For example, this review of the CAAT mandate, the needs and demands of the CAAT students and graduates, and economic analysis of Ontario, led to the conclusion that there was both student and employer needs for advanced training in Ontario (Stoll, 1993). Being weary of the need to adapt to the demands of advanced training, one of the recommendations also included the development of a comprehensive program for advanced training, and providing opportunities for learning in non-traditional ways (Vision 2000, 1990). Colleges were also created in an environment when the economy was dominated by manufacturing and the natural sector. At the time, universities alone were not able to meet the demands of the changing labour market. As such, community colleges were introduced as organizations that could adapt to the environment and the changing trends of: “the aging workforce, industrial restructuring, technological innovation, and the changing skill content of jobs,” all of which were seeking an education system that provided “high-quality, relevant career education for a broad range of learners” (Vision 2000, 1990, p. 9). Of course, as the knowledge economy continued to evolve, there was an identified need to introduce some form of credit transfer system to accommodate “the small but consistent stream of students moving on from CAATs to universities”(Skolnik, 1995, p.442). Throughout the 1980s, it was reported that approximately 2.5% of CAAT graduates entered Ontario universities on an annual basis. Although the flow of students from CAATs to universities was quite small, British Columbia’s comparative rate of 10-12% was

taken as evidence to argue that transfer agreements need to be improved, and a credit transfer system needs to be built into the Ontario education system (similar to British Columbia) (Dennison, 1989). It is only through these changes that the process of transfer would become easily accessible to students (Skolnik, *Evolution of Relations Between Community Colleges and Universities in Ontario*, 1995). Responding to this resource need (the students), colleges recommended the establishment of agreements between colleges and universities as a strategy of both seeking and managing their environment, while simultaneously maintaining their autonomy through their mandate (Davis & Cobb, 2009). Although this may have been a smart move on the part of colleges, in terms of remaining competitive in the higher education field, it may not necessarily have garnered the positive relationship colleges were looking to develop with universities.

Universities initially responded with silence, as they were not satisfied with the implied criticism of inaction on their part regarding increased agreements between colleges and universities. They also viewed colleges as being a threat to their autonomy, which could have been a contributing factor in the underlying tension that exists, even today, between colleges and universities (Skolnik, 1995). CAATs were also not keen on working with universities, as credit transfer agreements were not on the radar of colleges, which further reinforced CAATs view that fostering close relationships with universities may infringe their overall mandate (Stokes, 1989). Given these attitudes, the recommendations of the Vision 2000 were not strongly supported by particular higher education institutions. Rather, support for the report came from some educators and academics, certain business people and government officials who were cognizant of the challenges CAAT graduates might face, should they wish/need to pursue higher education in a university setting (Skolnik, 1995).

As per the organization adaptation approach, it is clear that enhancing agreements between colleges and universities would benefit the students and enable organizations to adapt. Despite this fact, there was still a very strong divide between colleges and universities and a sense of hesitancy to work with one another, due to issues of maintaining overall autonomy of each institution and reinforcing differentiation in the education system. The fear is evident; if a credit transfer system is developed, then colleges' mandate could potentially change, and it would increase overall competitiveness for resources. Being weary of these factors, the government established the Taskforce on Advanced Training in 1991, to further research and analyze the issue of university and college relationship that was subtly raised in the Vision 2000 report.

1993: No Dead Ends: The Report of the Taskforce on Advanced Training

Although colleges were doing their best to hold on to their mandate, the overall mission of the colleges was in a flux due to the evolving nature of the higher education system (Konrad, 1993). It was argued that external authorities such as the government were playing a more active role in the authority of higher education, thereby declining independence of both institutions (Konrad, 1993). Given these factors, the publication of this report was quite timely, to address these challenges that the post-secondary education was facing, due to advances in the technologically oriented, knowledge based society.

Advanced training is characterized by the Taskforce as a vehicle that caused government officials, college and university representatives alike, to truly think about the nature in which college and university education could be offered to maximize the overall educational experience of students. For instance, the Taskforce accepted the definition of advanced training (from Vision 2000) as an education which “combines strong applied focus of college-career oriented

programs with a strong foundation of theory and analytical skills”(Pitman, 1993, p.2) . In accordance with this definition, the report’s focus was on advanced training programs which have been or could be offered by the colleges of applied arts and technology, individually or in collaboration with the universities and the private sector (Pitman, 1993). This point is extremely critical, as it set the overall tone of calling institutions to work together, and foster a positive relationship between colleges and universities. This was once again reinforced through the issues the Taskforce was asked to address:

- “identifying the needs of the province for advanced training as seen from the point of views of student, employee and employer
- recommending ways of more effective transfer between college and university
- determining the need for an expansion of current training opportunities and whether or not this would require a new and special type of education not currently available in this province” (Pitman, 1993, p.3-4)

In fulfilling the mandate and the task at hand, the Task Force confronted questions that were directly related to the external environment of higher education such as the current opportunities available for advanced training, the need for further training, and the components of advanced training for the future in order to meet the demands of the workforce (Pitman, 1993). From a credit transfer perspective and the need for increased coordination and collaboration between colleges and universities, the report highlighted that the transfer agreements between Ontario colleges and universities were becoming increasingly common.

The Task Force emphasized this demand from three key parties: transfer agreements between colleges and universities, the student demand and the needs of the labour market. With regards to transfer agreements, between 1988 and 1992, it was noted that the number of

agreements between colleges and universities increased from 27 to 130 plus agreements (not all formally written) respectively (Pitman, 1993) . “In addition, research on college-to-university transfer has shown that articulation agreements dramatically increased the amount of credit awarded by universities for college studies”(Pitman, 1993, p.132). The student perspective also feeds into these findings; based on another survey of approximately 3700 CAAT graduates from 1980 to 1991, it was concluded that CAAT graduates experienced promotional challenges in their careers, and identified a significant need for further training after graduation to pursue degree level education to advance in their fields (Task Force on Advanced Training, 1993). These survey results have been further validated through quantitative research methods as well. For example, research conducted from 1987 to 1991 concluded that the total number of new registrants from CAATs to universities increased steadily from 1362 to 1527 respectively(Pitman, 1993). All of these findings go hand in hand with the research and reviews conducted of the Ontario labour market and sector studies, which through the Task Force, strongly advocated for the need to develop a higher education system that would meet the advanced training needs of Ontario (Task Force on Advanced Training , 1992).

The research and findings illustrate that the Task Force Report was released at a time when both students and the labour market were seeking a system that educated and equipped the economy with the necessary skills to help the knowledge economy prosper and grow. As a result, the Task Force proposed four out of seven recommendations that directly related to the discussion of credit transfer, as quoted in the Report (Task Force on Advanced Training, August 1993, pp. 12-13):

1. Equal value of vocational and academic education be recognized by all the partners engaged in Ontario’s postsecondary system

2. The barriers to inter-sectoral transfer for postsecondary learners be eliminated... a mechanism must be developed to facilitate transfer and to provide accessible, widely available and comprehensive information on credit transfer opportunities in Ontario
3. The importance of the partnership of colleges, universities and the employment sector be recognized in providing opportunities for individual development and in contributing to the economic renewal of the province
4. The Ontario Institute for Advanced Training (OIAT) be established, which would be based on the principle of partnership and equal representation between colleges, universities, and employee groups; the OIAT would also recognize for credit previous education for credits.

Since the recommendations outlined in this report speak specifically to address the needs of advanced training and creating an effective transfer system between colleges and universities, it is clear that this report can be categorized as implementing market-based policy instruments (Clune, 1987). Each of these recommendations were being proposed to respond to the increasing need and demand for enhanced student mobility. In this particular scenario, student demand can be equated with the market demand. Colleges and universities need to be responsive to this market demand in order to remain competitive and succeed in the higher education industry. For instance, equal value of vocational and academic recognition and eliminating barriers to inter-sectoral transfer would provide students with better access to an education system that embraces transfer between colleges and universities. Even the establishment of OIAT is an institution that is designed based on the principle of promoting partnership between colleges and universities, who would also play a vital role in addressing the demands of credit transfer between colleges and universities, and to break down the barriers between colleges and universities. Institutions

that facilitate transfer within their programming will also provide these organizations with an increased competitive advantage in attracting the resources (students), which is one of the major benefits of implementing market-based policy instruments.

The findings and recommendations of this report can be contextualized under the organization adaptation approach, which encompasses RDT. The report evaluated the economical trends in the market in terms of the skill-set that would be required for the establishment of a successful labour market in Ontario. In response to these findings, the Task Force asked for organizations (colleges and universities) to address these needs through an interdependent relationship (as per the resource dependency theory), vis a vis increased agreements between colleges and universities (Tierney, 1988). The introduction of OIAT is an ideal example of the introduction of an institution that will adapt to the external factors in the environment (advanced training skill set), and the demands of the resources (in this case students), who will feed into the education system. All of these recommendations combined together are also a way for colleges and universities to address one of the basic elements of an organization, which is creating strategy and meeting its goals (Scott & Davies, 2007). For example, as colleges and universities work in partnership to eliminate the inter-sectoral barriers of transfer, they can work towards enhancing their own organizations, such as the programs they choose to offer. These college-university relationships that could be established through articulation agreements could also serve as a strategy to meet the broader goals of the economy, and adopt an innovative approach to the higher education system, as per the needs and demands of the student body (the market).

The very first recommendation is a direct call for colleges, universities, and the larger society to view vocational and theoretical education as one united education system, and

eliminate the hierarchy that had been created between colleges and universities by this time. The development of OIAT could be seen as a way to mediate and foster the relationship between colleges and universities, similar to the proposed establishment of IWW in Vision 2000. However, the challenges and tensions that exist between colleges and universities are often not explicitly discussed, as has been noted in previous reports. There is also limited literature discussing the reaction of colleges and/or universities, and their reactions to the recommendations of such institutes, who would be acting as brokers to facilitate transfer agreement between CAATs and universities. However, the response to these recommendations and the reports to follow will help illustrate the underlying perceptions between colleges and universities, as it relates to credit transfer.

1995: Pan Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Transfers

In February 1995, the Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits was signed and agreed upon by the provincial Ministers of Education (Council of Ministers of Education, 2012). The protocol called for the introduction for a Canada wide agreement to be signed, ensuring transferability of first and second year courses, including final year of studies leading to diploma of college studies in Quebec, and university transfer courses (courses explicitly designed for transfer) offered through community college and university colleges in British Columbia and Alberta (Council of Ministers of Education, 2012). It is important to note that the transferability of the studies of the final year of colleges leading to a diploma of College Studies (DSC) in Quebec, and university transfer courses offered by community colleges in B.C. and Alberta were also valid, due to the existing credit transfer system that existed in these provinces. Ontario was not included in this category due the binary system that was in place, keeping Ontario colleges and universities on separate ends (CMEC, 1995).

While the report acknowledges the challenges related to student mobility, and the importance of lifelong learning, the focus of credit transfer was not based on colleges to universities. It focused on an overall pan-Canadian approach to transferability of only university courses. This approach further highlights the disconnect that existed between colleges and universities, and the gaps that were created as a result of exclusion. Even in the protocols of this programming, the focus and overall use of the language is focused on universities, and reinforcing the point that the academic autonomy of universities will not be infringed upon (Council of Ministers of Education, 2012). This point is representative of the pre-existing hierarchies between colleges and universities, and reinforces the fact that the priority for universities lies with maintaining their autonomy. The fact that the transfer of credits with colleges was completely disregarded at a national level highlights the disconnect and separation that existed between colleges and universities.

However, the wide range of approaches to system coordination across provinces could be considered one of the major challenges in establishing a pan-Canadian strategy of credit transfer across universities and colleges (Skolnik & Jones, 1993). Although there is consensus across Canada that inter-sectoral coordination is important, not all provinces are functioning at the same pace to address this issue. Due to constitutional interpretations, higher education issues are controlled at a provincial level, rather than a national level (Jones, Skolnik, & Soren, 1998). As such, coordination sectors are more developed in provinces that have the strongest mandate for articulation between sectors, such as Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec (Jones & Skolnik, 1993). Meanwhile, in other provinces such as Ontario, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, efforts are underway in order to redefine and improve the structure of inter-sectoral coordination, in

order to meet the demands of student mobility and address the issue of credit transfer. To further complicate matters, the role and mandate of non-university institutions (such as community colleges), vary amongst provinces as well. Thus, given the inconsistency across the provinces, it will definitely be a challenge to establish a pan-Canadian strategy of transfer, across both colleges and universities, unless some level of consistency is introduced across the provinces.

From an organization adaptation approach and RDT though, it is clear that the introduction of a pan-Canadian transfer would enable universities to now have the ability to access a wider pool of students, which would no longer be restricted based on the student's provincial institutional background. This analysis could also strengthen the argument that the Pan-Canadian Protocol was implemented as an incentive based policy tool, as it provided universities with two incentives on signing on the protocol; firstly, it would provide them with increased access to the resources (students), and secondly, signing the protocol would reinforce the academic and elites status of universities as they come together under this protocol.

In responding to the diverse student backgrounds, and increased mobility, universities were also being identified as evolving institutions (Council of Ministers of Education, 2012). This point is representative of the fact that universities were indeed adapting to the changing higher education environment through their choice in program offerings and the overall delivery of education. As a result, in order to attract an increased number of students (resources), universities needed to ensure they met and proactively addressed the demands of the increasingly advancing knowledge economy. In responding to these external demands, the universities agreed to the pan-Canadian protocol, ensuring their organizations are changing and responding in a way that is conducive to the students needs, while remaining competitive with the colleges. This approach could also be seen as a market based policy instrument, in that there was a direct cause

and effect relationship with the universities and the market demands. Since the higher education environment was changing and universities needed to stay competitive, the protocol provided a way for universities to come together, and amongst themselves, accept the importance of student mobility and agree on a way to incorporate it effectively into the system. Thus, the protocol is a perfect fit in terms of addressing the demands of the higher education market.

From a relationship perspective, the protocol indirectly reinforces the segregation that has been recorded to date between the higher educational institutions. Although the report highlights the importance of student mobility, it fails to discuss it within the context of credit transfer between colleges and universities. It simply addresses it in relation to transfer across universities. Also, the protocol is very upfront regarding academic autonomy. It explicitly states that the protocol “in no way infringes on the academic autonomy of the university” (Council of Ministers of Education, 2012, p. 4). Given the separatist approach under which colleges and universities were introduced, the academic autonomy is definitely seen as a “prized” possession per say, and whenever there is a potential threat of it being lost, documents or protocols such as this one, emphasize that this is not, and will not be the case. This is representative of the fact that although colleges and universities were working together on articulation agreements, the divide between these two institutions was still very much prevalent. The future policy recommendations also illustrate this point.

1996: Future Goals for Ontario Colleges and Universities

In 1996, shortly after the release of the Pan-Canadian Protocol on Transferability, the Ministry of Education and Training released a discussion paper entitled the *Future Goals for Ontario Colleges and Universities* (Ministry of Education and Training, 1996). The findings of this report are very informative in analyzing the relationship between colleges and universities as

per the government perspective. Just like colleges and universities, the government was also weary of the social and economic developments that were changing and defining the future of the higher education system (Ministry of Education and Training, 1996). As such, the report argues that policies governing the higher education system should be based on excellence, access to postsecondary education for all qualified students, offer a range of programming and institutions that meet the students' varying needs, and responsiveness to the evolving requirements and circumstances (Ministry of Education and Training, 1996).

Keeping these overarching objectives in mind, the report places a great deal of emphasis on the issue of coordination and credit transfer between colleges and universities. It contextualizes the higher education context dating back to the 1970s, when the focus was primarily on growth and meeting the demands of the changing student body (Ministry of Education and Training, 1996). However, by the early 1980s and onwards, the report states that the focus of higher education shifted from growth to better understanding and addressing the issue of cooperation between colleges and universities through reports such as *Vision 2000* and the *Pitman Report*. In order to address this particular issue of cooperation between colleges and universities, the report proposes increased articulation agreements between institutions, measures to allow students to transfer easily from one institution to another, and the establishment of an Advanced Training Consortium to explore ways in which college and university programs can complement one another, while maintaining traditional areas of expertise and continuing to perform their distinctive roles (Ministry of Education and Training, 1996).

The overarching themes in this report of excellence, increased collaboration across colleges and universities, and responding to the needs of the students through diversification in programs, can be classified as a means to implement market-based policy instrument and

accountability based instrument (Clune, 1987). Both of these policy tools work together in this report to highlight the way in which the higher education system can respond to the needs of all the parties in question: colleges, universities and students. Accountability measures for example, are implemented through emphasis on an education system that is based on excellence, where the clients (students) are able to achieve the maximum possible benefits from their investment of time and money (Ministry of Education and Training, 1996). The report also argues that through excellence, integrity of the credentials offered in the PSE institutions can be maintained, reinforcing the importance of holding institutions accountable for the education they deliver to the students.

Market-based policy instrument is another tool that is implemented in this report. The report argues that colleges and universities need to be responsive to the evolving needs of the students as the employability of a student depends on the type of education they receive (Ministry of Education and Training, 1996). The report calls for colleges and universities to respond to the student demands through refining mechanisms to allow credit transfer to occur between institutions, encouragement of articulation agreements between colleges and universities, and ensuring a wide range of programming is available to students, so that their future needs can be met. This emphasis on meeting the demands of the market is two-fold: firstly, colleges and universities need to respond to the student demand and needs of credit transfer, so that students can transfer across educational sectors; secondly, once students have the necessary mechanisms available to them to gain both technical and theoretical skills, they can respond and effectively contribute to the success of the economy, especially given the demand of increased technical skills. Evidently, these market demands, both from a student and economy perspective, can be seen as a way to pressure institutions to improve their overall delivery of

education, which has been the focus of all the reports presented thus far (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). This approach would also serve as a means for colleges and universities to enhance their programming, to better attract the target audience (students), and remain competitive in the higher education arena. In terms of understanding the relationship between colleges and universities, this report clearly states the government's stance: they are encouraging colleges and universities to respond to the external demands of the changing higher education market through increased institutional cooperation. While this may be seen as an ideal from a government perspective, the Pan-Canadian protocol reinforces the autonomy and independence universities are seeking to maintain within their own sector. For instance, although *Vision 2000* called for institutional cooperation, the fact that the Pan-Canadian protocol was designed only for universities speaks to the separatist approach universities wanted to maintain in relation to colleges. In comparison to the protocol released in 1995 which only focused on universities, this report is quite intriguing because it reinforces the theme of institutional cooperation that was initially raised in *Vision 2000* and the *Pitman Report*. It will be interesting to see how the future of the policy reports unfold, and whether the theme of increased institutional collaboration is reinforced to promote credit transfer, or an approach that continues to segregate colleges and universities is promoted.

Establishment of the College University Consortium Council

Shortly after the release of this report, in April 1996, the College University Consortium Council (CUCC) was established by the Minister of Education and Training. The introduction of CUCC was a direct result of CAATs continued advocacy for government action to hasten the process of increased articulation agreements (Decock, 2004). COU were also lobbying the government for a voluntary process to be put in place to promote and encourage articulation

between college and universities, as it was this approach that led to the greatest institutional collaboration. In order to address these concerns, the aim of CUCC was to “promote and coordinate joint education and training ventures that will: aid the transfer of students from sector to sector; facilitate the creation of joint programs between colleges and universities; and, further the development of a more seamless continuum of postsecondary education in Ontario” (College-University Consortium Council, 2001, p. 2). The Consortium Council is comprised of one representative from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, three representatives from the Colleges and three representatives from the Universities (College-University Consortium Council, 2001). The make-up of the council is a means of integrating and formally establishing the conversation of credit transfer across colleges and universities. As of 2001, the mandate was expanded further to facilitate and coordinate joint ventures between colleges and universities, to achieve agreements that provide continuum of learning opportunities (College-University Consortium Council, 2001). The overall focus of CUCC is to facilitate cooperation between colleges and universities.

In addition, CUCC was also charged with the responsibility of updating and expanding the Ontario College University Transfer Guide in order to provide students with an online resource regarding the transfer processes at different colleges and universities (Kerr, McCloy, & Lui, 2010). Since its inception, the council publishes annual reports identifying progress being made under the mandate. For example, in 2003, a successful CUCC Forum was held on College-University collaboration and transferability between the sectors (College-University Consortium Council, 2004). Forums like these are a direct response to the organization adaptation approach, as they “provide an opportunity for colleges and universities to learn about the changing

environmental factors that influence intersectoral transferability” (College-University Consortium Council, 2004).

CUCC is an example of an incentive based policy instrument that is employed to garner interest and support of credit transfer by colleges and universities, and promote the importance of student mobility across these two educational sectors. The overall mandate of CUCC is an ideal example of this, as it provides an incentive to develop a coherent education system in ON by bringing together college and university representatives to facilitate the discussion of joint programming. The activities undertaken by CUCC also align with its classification as an incentive based policy instrument. The CUCC Forum held in 2003 for example, stressed the importance of credential recognition as a means to maintain quality assurance in Canada and remain competitive in the international education market (College-University Consortium Council, 2004). Also, in 2006, CUCC received \$1 million grant from the government to increase the number, type and range of collaborative arrangements in Ontario (College-University Consortium Council, 2007). In response, CUCC sought innovative proposals from colleges and universities to promote and improve pathways between colleges and universities. Based on these examples, it is clear that the introduction of CUCC served as both a financial incentive and an incentive to help colleges and universities understand the importance of working in partnership to address the changing demands of the market by increasing agreements that support student mobility and credit transfer.

In terms of understanding the relationship between colleges and universities CUCC’s perspective is valuable as it is a non-governmental voice. As such, it brings up different challenges that pose as barriers to institutional cooperation. Three major challenges include: (College-University Consortium Council, 2001):

- Limited data on the number of students pursuing additional college or university education, level of demand for increased education from university and/or college, and whether this increase would increase more degree completion or joint programs offered by colleges and universities. At one point, CUCC did attempt to conduct a study of general transfer, but they were placed at a disadvantage, due to the lack of a centralized database with complete information tracking movement students across the PSE institutions (Decock, 2004).
- Demand for joint programming between colleges and universities from a labour market perspective
- System wide level information on the ability of college to university transfers

All of the above factors need to be taken into consideration, if institutional cooperation is to increase between colleges and universities, specifically from a resource dependency theory perspective in terms of meeting the demands of the market, and ensuring appropriate measures are implemented to engage effectively with the environment and across institutions (i.e. colleges and universities).

General academic differences have also been identified as barriers to increased collaboration between colleges and universities. For example, collaborative programs through credit transfer raise the discussion of academic preparedness between college and university students. Some have also argued that universities offer a higher quality scholarly learning environment that college programs do not offer. As such, even when it comes to introducing collaborative programming through credit transfer mechanisms, it generally takes between one to two years to simply figure out the overall dynamics of the college and university relationship (College-University Consortium Council, 2001). As a result, even though previous reports have

argued for a credit transfer system and increased collaboration, it is clear that the issue of the relationship and understanding the underlying hierarchy that exists between these two institutions is definitely playing a vital role in the discussion of a system wide credit transfer system.

1999: College-University Degree Completion Accord

The Ontario College-Degree Completion Accord, also known as Port Hope, was signed in 1999 between colleges and universities in March 1999 (Kerr, McCloy, & Lui, 2010). The report provides a framework for the development and establishment of articulation and joint agreements between colleges and universities (College-University Consortium Council, 2001). As a result of the Accord, CUCC conducted two specific surveys. The first survey assessed the level of college activity in college-university agreements (College-University Consortium Council, 2001). The results concluded that there was an increased negotiation for transfer programs in all college program areas, based on increasing levels of respect and understanding between colleges and universities, and an overall commitment to work in partnership with colleges and universities (The College University Consortium Council, 1999). The survey that followed this report later on in the same year concluded that the Accord provided impetus to college and university activity, as 46 new agreements were signed between colleges and universities (College University Consortium Council, 1999).

One of the major reasons the Accord was able to solicit such a positive response could have been due to the overall guiding framework, which was based on the importance on complementing other arrangements. It was calling on universities and colleges to evaluate their pre-existing arrangements, and strategize ways to incorporate credit transfer by taking into account the different features of each institution.

The Accord is based on the following framework:

1. The framework served as a facilitation point for the expansion of degree completion programs in areas where there is substantial academic affinity (creating a point for colleges and universities to be able to establish common, mutually agreed upon grounds)
2. The framework would facilitate better educational choices for Ontario students, through the expansion of pre-existing university and college agreements, extending to other colleges (increased emphasis on the organization adaptation approach in terms of ensuring institutions were equipped with the necessary programming to succeed, and attract the resources i.e. students)
3. Program teams comprised of both college and university representatives (increased emphasis on a positive, equitable relationship between colleges and universities)
4. Learning of students from a college program will be identified, and the mission and academic standards of each institution will be respected (this guideline directly speaks to the importance of collaboration between colleges and universities, and one where hierarchy is no longer seen as an issue between these two institutions)
5. Admission standards should be based on grade-point average, as well as external accreditation requirements and work place demands (The Accord encourages players to be cognizant of the environmental factors such as the workplace demands and offer programming accordingly)

The above five guiding principles make it clear that the Accord is definitely an overt effort in encouraging colleges and universities to break down the hierarchy and pre-existing notion of universities as being more academically oriented institutions than colleges. It also called for the establishment of a credit transfer system through programming that meets the

demands of the labour market and student needs (Davis & Cobb, 2009). Although this Accord was released by the government, the fact that it was signed by both college and university representatives, and endorsed by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACCATO), is definitely a step forward in the right direction to redefine the higher education system in Ontario (Stanyon, 2003). Instead of continuing to remain a binary system, the education system is evolving into one that includes and encourages both colleges and universities to intertwine their paths for the overall benefit of the economy.

This point is further reinforced in the New Charter for Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, which was released in June 1999 (Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, 1999). As per the organization adaptation approach and resource dependency theory, the report advocates for a new charter based on the changing demands of the workplace (focused on immediacy, virtualization, integration) (Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, 1999). It argues that “career education and training mandate remains the same, processes and environment for achieving the mandate have changed significantly” (Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, 1999, p. 5). Hence, to ensure colleges are responding to the external environment and adapting accordingly, the report proposes increased institutional flexibility and credentials recognition across colleges and universities.

Although the Port Hope Accord was released by the Government of Ontario and the New Charter of Ontario Colleges was introduced by the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario, both have been used as policy instruments to promote system change, focused on addressing the issue of student mobility and credit transfer. For example, the

protocol received formal signatory approval from colleges and universities, who were committing to create an education system that increased articulation agreements, involved other interested colleges who may wish to partner on an agreement, recognize learning achieved at the college level, and admission standards that respond to external accreditation requirements and workplace demands (College University Consortium Council, 1999). The New Charter also embraces the importance of a partnership between colleges and universities to promote credit transfer through three major elements: increased college authority, increased institutional flexibility and facilitating articulation agreements with out-of province universities, so that students are equipped with both theoretical and practical skills to succeed in Ontario's changing workforce (Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, 1999).

From an organization adaptation approach, it is evident that colleges and universities positively responded to the Port Hope Accord as both institutional types agreed to the framework, and made a commitment to increase articulation agreements. One of the major elements of the Charter was asking for an increased sense of autonomy, independence and authority for colleges. One could argue that in light of the changing nature of a higher education system that was calling for increased transfer between colleges and universities, colleges were also using this charter as a forum to re-determine and re-define their role in the higher education context, especially in comparison to universities. However, it is important to note that while the Accord was beneficial from both an organizational and student perspective in terms of facilitating transfer, only few universities accepted it. Thus, even by 2005, Bob Rae argued that there was still a lot of progress to be made regarding credit transfer (Boggs & Trick, 2009). Nonetheless, it will be interesting to see the policy recommendations the millennium brings

forward regarding credit transfer, and the role these reports play in defining the institutional relationship between colleges and universities.

2000 – CAATs Degree Granting Authority

The start of the millennium led to a major change in the higher education system, which would impact the future relationship between colleges and universities. Due to the Post-Secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act in 2000, Ontario colleges were able to offer degrees in applied areas of study, pending government approval (Government of Ontario, 2009). This Act also led to the creation of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, through which college degree programs would be evaluated (Shanahan, Fisher, Jones, & Rubenson, 2005).

This change in the CAATs offering was a pivotal moment in higher education. Initially, in 1983, degree granting authority was restricted only to those institutions that were legislated to do so under an act of the provincial legislature (Skolnik, 1995). The Act of the legislature which established the CAATs back in the 1960s did not enable colleges to offer degrees but the 2000 legislation created a pathway for the approval of college degree programs in applied areas (2001). From an organizational adaptation perspective, this likely was a positive change for CAATs, especially in light of the fast moving turbulent market, technological innovation, and the need for institutions to respond to the student and labour market demands, while finding ways to deliver education that held greater value for the students (Alfred, 1998).

CAATs receiving degree granting authority was very important in the higher education industry because it served as a policy instrument to regulate academic quality (Mhamed, 2011). Now that colleges and universities both had degree granting authority, it was evident that Ontario was emphasizing the importance of both college and university education, that would benefit the

students and the economy in their own ways. The creation of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) was another policy tool that ensured the overall academic quality of programs by assessing and evaluating programs delivered by colleges (Shanahan, Fisher, Jones, & Rubenson, 2005).

It is important to note that although the introduction of these policy tools increased and broadened the capacity of colleges to deliver education, their authority was still quite restricted. Even though colleges received degree granting authority, they still require government approval following a review from PEQAB, in order to officially grant degrees. Universities did not and do not have to go through such a process, as they were initially introduced as degree granting institutions. Each Canadian university is autonomous in its own academic matters, including having the ability to determine its own quality assurance policies and procedures for their programs (AUCC, 2013). Despite this fact, some universities viewed the degree granting authority of colleges as a threat to their academic autonomy, because they were no longer the sole providers of a degree (Stanyon, 2003). It also brought to light the issue of academic and mission drift of programs (Wilson, 2009). Academic drift is defined as the process where non-university institutions, such as colleges, aim to become increasingly like universities. Mission drift is also related to this topic, as it refers to a shift from institutional focus to the role of mission of more prestigious institutions. Two instances of academic and mission drift occurred in Ontario: first, in 1975, when Ryerson added three-year diplomas, and later received official university status in 1993 (Wilson, 2009). The second incident occurred in 2001, when 23 proposals for applied degree programs, which were 2-year degrees obtained at a community college, were submitted for approval. As a result, universities viewed degree granting authority for colleges as an invasion on their turf per say, having the desire to be part of the exclusive,

elite, university club. As such, the relatively slow response by universities in responding to the calls of increased credit transfer agreements between colleges and universities, and the obvious hierarchical structure between these two institutions, could both be attributed to the tension universities felt from the colleges (Stanyon, 2003). Given the challenge at hand though, CAATs have been responding positively. Ontario CAATs have been actively pursuing agreements with universities in other Canadian provinces, and have also partnered with foreign universities who expressed interest in collaborative programs between colleges and universities, to expand the overall education market, and meet the demands of the economy (Stanyon, 2003).

2002 – Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) Working Group on Credit Transfer

In April 2002, CMEC revisited the issue of credit transfer between colleges and universities and established the CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer to develop pan-Canadian strategies (CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer , 2005). The working group was chaired by Ontario, and included representation from all provinces and territories (Kerr, McCloy, & Lui, 2010). The working group agreed that in order to address the issue of credit transfer, a pan-Canadian system of credit transfer should be established over time, through an initial focus of developing and enhancing strong provincial/territorial transfer systems (CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer , 2005). Each province committed to review its respective transfer agreements and develop a framework for action to build and enhance credit transfer system as per the priorities of each province by 2005 (CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer , 2005).

During this time, CMEC also endorsed and released a Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer which set out the expectations for credit transfer to guide institutions, students and governments (CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer , 2005). The statement was also seen as a means to address the demands of the students, who are ultimately the resources that colleges

and universities need to attract and invest in to succeed. Therefore, the guiding principles of the framework called for: increased facilitation of student mobility between institutions and across sectors, offer student assurance to continue their studies, and provide mobility and flexibility to students to move across careers, vis-à-vis institutional cooperation between colleges and universities

The CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer and the Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer can be categorized as accountability based policy instruments (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). The working group was designed as forum to bring representation across provinces and institutions (colleges and universities), to strategize ways to address the issue of credit transfer, and be accountable to the group in following through and establishing a pan-Canadian system of credit transfer (CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer , 2009). The ministerial statement further reinforced this commitment, by setting out guidelines to ensure credit transfer is a priority for each of the provinces (CMEC, 2009). These two initiatives combined together make it clear that colleges, universities and Canada, were all interested in coming together to establish a credit transfer system that is accountable and responsive to the students and the stakeholders (colleges, universities) involved in the education process (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). It is also important to note that it was the role of CMEC as an inter-governmental body that was instrumental in acting as an intermediary tool to formalize the credit transfer discussion at a pan-Canadian level.

The response to the working group and the projects that followed were quite promising from colleges, universities, and the government as well. As part of Ontario's Three-Year Framework for Action for example, the Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities worked with college and university sectors to create a strategy development process to promote increased

credit transfer and collaboration. In addition, the ministry received confirmation and direction from the province to create a design for the implementation of an Ontario specific credit transfer system (CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer , 2009). In order to reinforce the importance of inter-institutional cooperation, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities established a steering committee with representation from all three stakeholders: Council of Ontario Universities, Colleges Ontario, and Ontario's three postsecondary student associations (CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer , 2009).

CMEC has been a powerful policy tool in terms of ensuring Ontario is responsive to the issue of credit transfer, primarily because Ontario is the chair of the Working Group. As leaders, Ontario would definitely need to be at the forefront and tackle the issue of credit transfer. But it is still important to take note of the fact that the Ministerial Statement of Credit Transfer, although endorsed by the same group, is not necessarily a document with tangible, concrete items for provinces and territories to implement. Rather, they are guiding principles to ensure students are satisfied, and PSE institutions are committed to working with other organizations and educational institutions to enhance and maintain credit transfer opportunities (CMEC, 2009). As a result, some provinces are doing a great deal of work on credit transfer while others are still at the discussions phase with their educational institutions, because of the mere fact that approaches of coordination vary across the country (Skolnik & Jones, 1993). Hence, such an approach, where Canada at a national level is at a different stage in each province and territory, raises the question of the overall effectiveness of CMEC at a pan-Canadian level, and whether the establishment of a pan-Canadian strategy on credit transfer is actually realistic, given the variation in credit transfer policies across Canada.

2003: Mobility and Transferability Protocol for College to College Transfer

Keeping in tandem with the theme of introducing a formal credit transfer system, College Presidents came together and signed a Mobility and Transferability Protocol for College to College to Transfer in order to maximize recognition and transfer acquired at other participating institutions (Colleges Ontario, 2008). The framework agrees to operating principles that ensure students are able to receive transfer credits for similar programs based on equivalency and educational achievement (Colleges Ontario, 2008). It also identifies the need to ensure information is readily available to students so that they can make informed decisions as it relates to their career objectives.

This protocol can be classified as a market-based policy instrument as it provided a formal venue for colleges to come together to formally agree that student mobility and credit transfer are priorities that will define the future HE in Ontario. In responding to the demands of the student market, this protocol is representative of colleges' embracing the issue of credit transfer and addressing student mobility. While this policy instrument does definitely serve the needs of the market, it is missing one element- universities and colleges both need to work together to address the changing demands of the higher education market.

Thus, one can't help but notice that this protocol was only signed amongst colleges; similar to the Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits, signed back in 1995, only by universities. While it is true that these transferability protocols are strategies that are being implemented by both colleges and universities to address the issue of credit transfer, the fact that each institution signed its own protocol (colleges to colleges, universities to universities), demonstrates each organizations' need to maintain its autonomy and pursue their own individual interests. Institutional cooperation is formally agreed upon only through

government-led initiative such as the Working Group on Credit Transfer. Based on this analysis, it is clear that colleges and universities are still grappling and coming to terms with their relationship and inter-dependence to one another, while the government is proposing different approaches (such as Working Groups) to mitigate this issue. This could very well be one of the reasons the formalization of a system wide credit transfer system has yet to occur.

2004: Rae Review: Ontario, A Leader in Learning

In 2004, Colleges Ontario (CO) and the College Student Alliance (CSA) presented submissions to the Rae Review advocating for the need for a coherent, integrated PSE system that would benefit students from college and university backgrounds (Kerr, McCloy, & Lui, 2010). “In response to these findings, the Council of Ontario Universities recommended that the government continue to encourage collaboration between colleges and universities through improved funding, while maintaining the basic structure of Ontario’s PSE system (Kerr, McCloy, & Lui, 2010, p. 5).

Based on this feedback, and in an attempt to address the issue of institutional differentiation and collaboration, Bob Rae, an advisor to the Premier and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities published the Report and Recommendations document, entitled *Ontario, A Leader in Learning* (Rae, 2005). It can be argued that the report was drafted from an organizational adaptation and resource dependency perspective within the Canadian and international context. The report described higher education systems as international commodities that need to be invested in effectively for overall success (Rae, 2005). To emphasize the importance of education, Rae (2005) draws comparisons between countries like India and China, who are investing unprecedented amounts in post-secondary institutions and research rapidly, and then states, “The world is not standing still. Neither should Ontario” (Rae,

2005, p.7). It is this argument that has played an instrumental role in reinforcing the importance of credit transfer.

The report argues that it is important to maintain the distinct evolution of each institution and promote differentiation between colleges and universities (Rae, 2005). One of the recommendations the report proposes includes the importance of re-affirming the mandate of colleges to focus on occupational educational and labour market needs, while allowing applied degrees to be offered (Rae, 2005). Specifically related to credit transfer, the report proposes the following recommendations: creation of advisory boards with a mandate to improve system wide coordination, encourage inter-institutional cooperation, and facilitate the process of transfer for students (Laidler, 2005).

The Rae Report served as a vehicle and policy tool by promoting system change in Ontario's higher education system by encouraging the government to invest in education as a local and international commodity that will serve the Canadian economy in the long run (Rae B. , 2005). In addition, it advocated for credit transfer to become a priority through the formation of an intermediary board that would encourage and facilitate system wide coordination, while maintaining institutional differentiation between colleges and universities. All of these recommendations represent a dedication to creating and promoting an education system that is competitive on a international scale, and responsive to the local needs of the students (credit transfer system) and the HE institutions (colleges and universities).

The recommendations proposed in this report were viewed by universities as a threat to their overall sense of academic autonomy. The response paper to this report by the Council of Ontario Universities directly speaks to this point. The report rejects the idea of a coordinating advisory board, arguing that advisory boards would not help in addressing the primary issues that

universities were/are currently facing (Council of Ontario Universities, 2004). COU further argues that if a decision to establish an advisory board is reached, then it is “essential that its mandate and structure...do not interfere with university and college operations, undermine institutional and academic autonomy, nor stifle institutional and system innovation in programming and partnerships” (Council of Ontario Universities, 2004, p. 23). COU’s decision to voice this concern and stress the importance of maintaining academic as well as institutional autonomy is representative of the opposing beliefs that exist regarding the establishment of a credit transfer system and the implications of increasing institutional collaboration. This may come as a surprising reactionary response, particularly since institutional cooperation and enhancing the relationships between colleges and universities has been constantly promoted since the 1960s. . However, the mere fact that the COU explicitly stated in this report, that the advisory board not “interfere” with the academic autonomy of institutions emphasizes the need for higher educational institutions to not only keep hold of their autonomy as colleges and universities respectively, but rather, against the government as well. As a result, it is no surprise that even as of 2005, institutional autonomy for colleges and universities is a priority, thereby implicating the potential positive relationship that could be fostered between them.

2006: Pan Canadian Consortium on Admission and Transfer (PCCAT)

The Pan Canadian Consortium on Admission and Transfer (PCCAT) emerged shortly after the Rae report in 2006. It was mandated with the following purpose: “to facilitate the implementation of policies that support student mobility both within and among provinces and territories and granting of transfer credit in order to improve access to post-secondary education in Canada (PCCAT, 2011). It was argued that increased capacity for student mobility was

essential in providing the appropriate support for students to meet the demands of the knowledge based economy (PCCAT, 2011).

From a policy tools perspective, PCCAT acts as an accountability based policy instrument, bringing together colleges, universities and intergovernmental organizations together to address the issue of student mobility and credit transfer (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). Since there is no organization that currently works towards transfer across all provinces and post-secondary sectors, PCCAT acts as the overarching body to promote, facilitate, and address potential barriers and challenges to address credit transfer (PCCAT, 2011). Serving under this capacity, PCCAT brings together stakeholders from all the provinces and territories, holding them accountable to their commitments of addressing the issue of credit transfer, to collaborate on a pan-Canadian transfer strategy. In terms of membership, PCCAT seeks membership across all 13 Canadian jurisdictions. Given the fact that an effective pan-Canadian credit transfer system would benefit the higher education system for each province and territory, PCCAT membership can also be seen as an incentive-based policy instrument (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003).

The way in which the Terms of Reference are outlined directly speak to the organization adaptation approach. RDT states that external factors of the environment need to be taken into consideration in order for higher education institutions to meet these demands (Tierney, 1988). Also, in order for these organizations to succeed, they must engage in exchange with the environment (Davis & Cobb, 2009). As a result, the need to acquire resources creates dependencies between organizations, and these economic dependencies can lead to political problems followed by political solutions (Gumport & Sporn, 1999).

In addressing these very concerns, it is evident that the creation of PCCAT was seen as way to respond to the changing student profile of increased mobility, through interaction and

engagement with other higher educational institutions. PCCAT's introduction as a follow up to the protocol of interprovincial transfer by CMEC is a direct response to the political aspect of increasing inter-collaboration across colleges and universities. Hence, this development hints to a political solution of potentially introducing a national system of transfer that would enable student mobility across Canada (PCCAT, 2011). PCCAT also intends to bring stakeholders across Canada together to collaborate and create a forum for inter-institutional dialogue between colleges and universities, thereby reinforcing the importance of fostering a positive relationship between colleges and universities (PCCAT, 2011).

The goals and functions of PCCAT to promote interprovincial transfer also provide a means to foster a proactive relationship between colleges and universities. Some of these examples include (PCCAT, 2011):

- Increase awareness of transfer credit systems, so that higher education institutions can better understand the value of transfer systems from an economical and institutional perspective
- Promote and facilitate interprovincial transfer articulation

PCCAT also aims to create a single pan-Canadian database that would hold information about transfer credits, so that institutions and students can easily access this information. From a college-university relationship perspective, such a database would create exposure to the numerous pre-existing articulation agreements between college and universities (Constantineau, 2009). Although such a database has not been established at a national level, an Ontario based portal has been introduced to address this objective.

In the absence of a federal body that oversees the education system, it seems that organizations such as PCCAT are being introduced to fulfill this void. PCCAT is definitely

playing an impactful role in terms of encouraging the overall enhancement of student mobility and discussing the issue of transfer credits across provinces and territories. For instance, meetings and conferences are held at an annual basis, where college and university representatives across Canada come together to discuss a variety of issues including: research and findings, support and further the work of the CMEC Credit Transfer Working Group, and most importantly, support and encourage student mobility and transfer credits within each provincial/territorial jurisdiction (PCCAT, 2011). It also serves as an indirect way for provinces and territories to ensure transfer credits and student mobility is a priority. At the 2012 conference for example, Ontario presented a report highlighting the latest developments in establishing a system-wide credit transfer system, including the launch of the online credit transfer portal (ONTransfer), and continued government commitment to support a “culture of transfer” (PCCAT, 2012).

It can be argued though that while this pan-Canadian strategy is an effective tool to raise the issue of transfer credits and student mobility, the lack of a central federal body to address this educational issue may impact the participation of all provinces and territories. For examples, PCCAT membership only includes government representation from Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick. Also, some provinces and territories were not in attendance at the 2012 PCCAT conference; as a result, such inconsistencies in participation and representation raises the question of the type of role the federal government should be playing, and how impactful such pan-Canadian strategies will be in the long term, given the decentralized federal approach to education.

2008-2010

During this time period, several major initiatives have occurred to continue to address the issue of student mobility, and discuss the potential of creating a system wide credit transfer system in Ontario. Since there is limited information available on these initiatives, they have been categorized and discussed under this two year time period.

Establishment of Joint Taskforce (COU and CO), Credit Transfer Steering Committee, and Commitment to Improve Student Mobility

In response to the strategy of the CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer back in 2002, in 2008, Council of Universities (COU) and Colleges Ontario (CO) came together and established a joint taskforce to strategize on best approaches to improve the quality and access to PSE, as well as create an Ontario specific model for credit transfer (Kerr, McCloy, & Lui, 2010). In 2009, “the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities established a Credit Transfer Steering Committee to support the policy development, design and implementation of a made-in Ontario credit transfer system. The Steering Committee is chaired by the ministry and includes representatives from the COU, CO, College Student Alliance, Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario” (Kerr, McCloy, & Lui, 2010, p. 6). Shortly after, in 2010, the Ontario Speech from the Throne announced the “Open Ontario” Plan, which included commitments in the 2010 provincial budget “to improve students’ ability to navigate through the post-secondary system by providing additional resources to support the implementation of a credit-transfer system” in Ontario (Ministry of Finance, 2012).

The above working group on credit transfer works on two levels; from an organization adaptation perspective, the fact that all higher education institutions are coming together to establish an Ontario specific model demonstrates the willingness and interest on the part of

institutions, to adapt their programming accordingly to meet the demands of labour market and the resources (student mobility). As a steering committee that is guiding the credit transfer process, this working group is also being utilized as a policy tool to provide direction and continue to promote the importance of establishing a credit transfer system.

2011: Credit Transfer Innovation Fund Projects, Province Wide Credit Transfer Vision, and the Establishment of the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer

Last year, these three initiatives have helped moved the issue of credit transfer to tangible discussion items, through financial commitment from the government, and continued interest and investment by colleges and universities.

Credit Transfer Innovation Project

In order to follow up on the commitments made in 2010 to improve and implement a credit transfer system, in 2011, the government of Ontario provided a pool of funding to support this initiative. The Credit Transfer Innovation Fund Project was introduced to help create more opportunities for students when transferring amongst Ontario colleges and universities (Government of Ontario, 2012). These transfer initiatives specifically focused on transfer students moving from college to university, providing students with greater choice and flexibility (Government of Ontario, 2012). Inter-institutional collaboration was kept at the forefront, as a team of university and college program experts were asked to come together to develop the various credit transfer projects (Government of Ontario, 2012). Examples of the different types of programming the Credit Transfer Innovation Fund Project supported include: Business, Information Technology, course by course transfer pathways and journalism, all of which directly respond to the changing demands of the labour market and student needs.

Province-Wide Credit Transfer Vision

The government also committed a total of \$73.7 million investment over the next five years to create a province-wide credit transfer system (CBC, 2011). This amount was further validated by the Open Ontario Plan commitment in the 2010 provincial budget to improve students' ability to navigate through the post-secondary system by providing additional resources to support the implementation of a credit-transfer system" (Ministry of Finance, 2012). Some of the funds were awarded directly to the institutions to provide orientation programs for transfer students, appoint transfer advisors on campus, and facilitate in the introduction transfer policies (Tamburri, 2012). The new system is expected to include an increased number of articulation agreements that will enable students to complete their first two years in College and then transfer over into a university (Tamburri, 2012). It has also been argued that introducing a system wide credit transfer system will expand and improve student transfer pathways that respond to student demands of mobility, it will improve transparency and provide access to information to support student success (College-University Consortium Council, 2001).

The Credit Transfer Innovation Fund Project and the financial investment for a province wide credit transfer system are both examples of policy instruments that have been designed to provide more resources and enhance the capacity of institutions (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). Through the financial incentive of the Credit Transfer Fund, colleges and universities can apply and enhance their programming accordingly to address the issue of credit transfer and student mobility. In addition, the governments' additional funding commitment to establish a system wide credit transfer system provides colleges and universities with a way to expand their capacity and work in partnership with all the stakeholders to establish a credit transfer system, without having to make the financial investments. As such, it is clear that these financial investments by the government are being used as a policy tool to direct colleges and universities

to play their part in establishing a system wide credit transfer system through the financial incentives that will provide more resources to tackle the issue.

Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer

In order to provide further support to the credit transfer system and student mobility, in 2011, the government introduced the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT). ONCAT was established to facilitate and support academic collaboration and the development of transfer pathways among Ontario's publicly funded colleges and universities (Government of Ontario, 2012). The council also launched an online portal to guide students through the transfer process. Students can select the type of students they are (college, high school or university), and once they provide their transfer preferences, the website launches potential pathways for them, alongside contact information of the appropriate personnel. This portal definitely serves as a forum to address the external demands of the higher education market. Given that the ONCAT includes information on all transfer agreements that exist across Ontario, it indirectly encourages organizations to continue to adapt their programs accordingly to address the issue of transfer, and promotes institutional cooperation between colleges and universities.

2012: The Drummond Report

The need for a system that enables student mobility was further reinforced in the report recently submitted by the economist, Don Drummond (Tamburri, 2012). This Report of the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services was assigned to Drummond by the government to study and recommend ways to reduce the provincial deficit (Government of Ontario, 2012). The report argues that PSE must meet the following five critical objectives: educate the masses, help equalize economic and social outcomes, provide life-long learning for the learners, serve to innovate for the benefit of the market, and deliver a quality education. In

order to achieve these goals, the report argues that the postsecondary education system needs to be evaluated in its entirety.

The commission states that differentiation within the higher education system needs to be introduced through establishing mandated agreements, due the blurred lines between colleges and universities (Government of Ontario, 2012). As such, not every university needs to be research intensive, and neither does every college require new degree granting authority. In fact, Drummond (2012) states that colleges should not be granting new degree programs, but rather, should continue to expand the existing ones. The report also argues that the creation of a formal system of transfer will better define and divide the roles of colleges and universities, whereby after two years of college study, college students who meet specific academic criteria should be able to transfer into the university system (Government of Ontario, 2012). From an organizational, resource dependency perspective, the report also recommends that CAATs should work in partnership with College of Trades to maximize the delivery of apprentice training in non-degree programs (Government of Ontario, 2012). This could be a way for colleges to adapt to the external environment by creating partnerships to maximize the overall education experience for students by providing opportunities for mobility within the education system. On another note, it will certainly be interesting to see though how colleges respond to the proposition of not offering any new degree programs.

Based on the information provided regarding ONCAT and the recommendations proposed in the Drummond Report, it can be argued that both initiatives are policy tools that have been and are being implemented in order to promote, foster and support system change (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). For the purposes of this research, it is clear that system change

in this case is incorporating a system-wide credit transfer system in to the current higher education system in order to respond to the changing demands of the higher education market.

Thus far, these are the policy directives that have been implemented since the 1960s to address the issue of credit transfer. Having laid out the historical evolution of credit transfer, the next section of the paper will provide a synthesis of the findings in a table that further analyzes the resulting relationship between colleges and universities due to the policy tools that were implemented.

Policy Tools and Implications on College-University Relations

The historical evolution of credit transfer to date has illustrated a very active picture, in terms of measures and initiatives taken by the government to reinforce the importance of establishing a credit transfer system in Ontario. The policy tools that have been implemented over the years by government reinforce the government's perspective on the need for colleges and universities to foster a positive relationship.

The table below illustrates the way in which each policy tool has impacted the relationship between colleges and universities, and the way in which non-governmental institutions responded to the policy tools have been noted under the category, College-University Relations. It is important to note though that only the years that led to the establishment of formal working groups, or implementation of particular recommendations have been included in the table to help create a holistic picture of the implications on the college-university relationship. Also, due to the lack of literature available on the discussion of college-university relationship, the analysis below has been reached through the discussion and analysis provided earlier on this chapter:

Table 1: Policy Tools and its Impact on the College-University Relationship

| Year | Policy Tool | Initiative | Goal | College-University Relationship |
|------|---|---|--|--|
| 1965 | System Change, and a means to respond to the changing demands of higher education | Establishment of CAATs | Led to the creation of a binary education system in Ontario, in order to respond to the economic and social demand, including the need for technical training, which was required for the success of the economy. As such, CAATs were introduced as institutions that could adapt in accordance to the changing higher education environment, creating space for a new system of colleges. | Initially universities did not see colleges as a threat; but as the student demand for transfer increased, the roles of colleges and universities were no longer seen as clear cut. Realizing the need to address the issue of transfer, in 1973, COU advocated for increased collaboration between colleges and universities. |
| 1993 | Market-based policy tool | Establishment of the Ontario Taskforce on Advanced Training | Address the need for advanced training, and recommend effective ways of transfer to accommodate an education system that combines theory and practical skills. | Although this taskforce was not a formal policy tool, it was designed as a formal mechanism to recognize the credentials between colleges and universities, thereby once again, reinforcing the importance of establishing a constructive relationship between these institutions. |
| 1995 | Incentive-based policy tool, market-based policy tool | Pan-Canadian Protocol on Transferability | Pan-Canadian strategy to enable transferability of university courses across provinces and territories; was also seen as a means to provide universities to | This agreement signed at the provincial, ministerial level, focused only on universities. Although colleges did not formally respond to this protocol, the fact that this protocol did not include colleges does shed light on the institutional dynamics that existed at the time between |

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|-------------|---|--|---|--|
| | | | <p>access a wider pool of students, and providing students with options of mobility across the country.</p> | <p>universities and colleges. This protocol definitely served to reinforce and re-assure universities that their autonomy still existed, and would not be affected by the presence of colleges in the higher education system.</p> <p>It is important to take note though that by this time period, many colleges and universities had separate transfer agreements – thus, relationships were being established, but “on the ground,” and not yet promoted at a higher level.</p> |
| 1996 | Incentive based policy instrument | College University Consortium Council | CUCC was created to foster and facilitate institutional cooperation between colleges and universities. | CUCC was another government led initiative to promote and coordinate joint education ventures and facilitates coordination between colleges and universities. It can be argued that these formal intermediary bodies were created as a means to formalize and further encourage collaboration between colleges and universities, thereby facilitating the creation of a system wide credit transfer system. |
| 2000 | Regulate Academic Quality | CAATs receive degree-granting authority | Provide colleges with academic autonomy, and ability to offer degrees. | This change in the higher education system provided colleges with an increased sense of independence and autonomy. Universities weren't as readily accepting of this change as they viewed degree-granting colleges as a threat to their academic autonomy. |
| 2002 | Accountability –based policy instrument | CMEC Working Group on Credit Transfer, and | The goal of the working group was to develop pan-Canadian strategies to establish a credit | As the inter-governmental body, CMEC served as an intermediary body to bring colleges and universities together under one working body, to address the |

| | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | | <p>the Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer</p> | <p>transfer system.</p> <p>The Ministerial statement on Credit transfer set out expectations for credit transfer to guide institutions, students and the government.</p> | <p>issue of credit transfer between colleges and universities. The response was a positive one from colleges and universities, as the working group brought representation from both colleges and universities, reinforcing the importance of representation from both colleges and universities (it also served as an indirect means to reduce the hierarchical nature of the higher education system).</p> <p>The Ministerial statement on credit transfer included increased facilitation of student mobility between institutions, and enhancing and encouraging institutional cooperation between colleges and universities. The fact that this was formally agreed upon at a ministerial level demonstrates the government's commitment to promoting a collaborative relationship between colleges and universities.</p> <p>The working group and the ministerial statement demonstrate a commitment and interest on both colleges and universities to work together and address the issue of credit transfer.</p> |
| 2003 | Market-based policy instrument | Mobility and Transferability Protocol for College to College Transfer | <p>This protocol served to maximize recognition and transfer acquired at other participating institutions, thereby promoting the importance of student mobility.</p> | <p>Colleges came together and signed a Mobility and Transferability Protocol for College to College Transfer, emphasizing the importance and recognition of transfer for students.</p> <p>There is one issue with this protocol – it does not include universities, who play an equally</p> |

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| | | | | vital role in the establishment of credit transfer and articulation agreements. |
| 2006 | Accountability based policy instrument and incentive based policy instrument | Pan Canadian Consortium on Admission and Transfer (PCCAT) | PCCAT was mandated to facilitate the implementation of policies that support student mobility throughout Canada, and granting transfer credit to improve access to PSE in Canada. | PCCAT was introduced as a mechanism to implement policies and practices that support transfer and student mobility. As a non-governmental institution, the organization has been active in producing research related to student mobility and transfer, by bringing together inter-governmental bodies such as the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, and individual colleges and universities together, as a means to continue foster a positive relationship between colleges and universities. |
| 2008 | | Joint Taskforce | | In response to the working group on credit transfer by CMEC, COU and CO came together to establish a joint taskforce to strategize ways to address credit transfer. This initiative and joint venture speaks volumes in terms of contextualizing and understanding the relationship between colleges and universities. |
| 2009 | Policy tool to provide direction and continue to promote the importance of establishing a credit transfer system | Establishment of Credit Transfer Steering Committee | The goal of the steering committee was to support policy development, design and implementation of an Ontario specific credit transfer system. | The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities led this initiative, and it included representation from CO, COU, and student representation from each of those areas. It is interesting to note that this Committee into existence shortly after a group was already created, under the leadership of colleges and universities. It raises questions regarding the government need to control/steer the credit transfer process, which may potentially have impacted the response of colleges and |

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|-------------|---------------|--|---|---|
| | | | | universities. |
| 2011 | System Change | Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) | ONCAT was established to facilitate and support academic collaboration and the development of transfer pathways between Ontario's publicly funded colleges and universities. The council also launched an online portal to guide students through the transfer process. | The government launched an online portal to gather information on credit transfer. Higher education institutions don't formally play a role in this process, but indirectly, it does include information on existing articulation agreements between colleges and universities, alongside appropriate contact information. As such, it definitely does provide a forum to highlight the partnership and progress that is being made, between colleges and universities. |

Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, it is evident that the government has used various intergovernmental bodies such as the CMEC and the CUCC to create working groups and taskforces to determine the best approach to address the issue of credit transfer as it relates to colleges, universities and students. Although colleges and universities did begin responding to both the government and student demand for the need of credit transfer system through individual articulation and transfer agreements, it wasn't until 2003 that colleges formally responded through the Mobility and Transferability Protocol of College to College Transfer. It's also interesting to note that this protocol was one that was signed only amongst colleges as opposed to colleges and universities, which might have said quite a bit more about the relationship between colleges and universities.

Fortunately though, after the establishment of PCCAT in 2006, in 2009, COU and CO brought together college and university representatives to the table to establish the taskforce on

credit transfer, setting a positive and constructive light on colleges and universities and their approach to credit transfer. However, the fact that in 2009, the very next year after the creation of the credit transfer taskforce, the government introduced a Credit Transfer Steering Committee does raise questions about the role the government intends to play in the establishment of the credit transfer system. Based on the research presented thus far, it can be argued that the establishment of a credit transfer system should be led by the stakeholders involved, i.e. the colleges and universities, as opposed to the government.

It seems as if the government is at times, duplicating the work that colleges and universities are slowly taking on, as they begin to create and foster a positive relationship amongst one another, and break down the hierarchical structure between these two institutions. However, it is still important to note that despite the evolution of credit transfer and the increased number of articulation and transfer agreements that are being created, the importance of academic autonomy and notion of universities being better than colleges and universities is still prevalent. For instance, Sheridan College recently announced that they would like to become a university and are interested in becoming part of the “university club” (Brown, 2012, para.3). The president further states that there is a growing demand for degree programs that Ontario graduate schools are unable to provide (Brown, 2012). Hence, he argues that Sheridan College is ready to become a university, so that the institution can provide students with the best possible options (Brown, 2012). This is an example of Sheridan College adapting its organization to remain competitive in the higher education industry, by considering the option of becoming a university (Brown, 2012).

However, the nature in which universities are described as being an exclusive club, and the fact that only a university per say can provide students with the best possible options,

reinforces the hierarchical structure between colleges and universities. This leads one back to square one and reaffirms the fact that although Ontario's colleges and universities have come a far way in terms of institutional cooperation, there is still a great deal of work that needs to be done to enhance the relationship between colleges and universities, especially in light of the establishment of a system wide credit transfer system.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

This research presented a historical analysis of the evolution of credit transfer policies, in order to contextualize and better understand the implications on college-university relations. The nature and academic environment under which colleges were introduced has played an instrumental role in affecting the evolution of credit transfer as well as the relationship that exists today between colleges and universities.

Analysis of Findings

The establishment of Ontario's binary education system has had major implications on two fronts; the credit transfer issue and the current relationship between colleges and universities. We can safely conclude that although the government has been attempting to address and accommodate the student demand of credit transfer since the 1960s, the binary education system in Ontario was and is not conducive to supporting such a system. Consequently, given the separation and parallel approach under which colleges and universities have been kept, a hierarchical structure has inevitably surfaced itself between colleges and universities. While it is true that there are numerous articulation agreements and support systems in many universities to facilitate credit transfer and advise students accordingly, this does not mean that universities no longer hold the belief of being superior to colleges. In fact, we know this to be true, due to several examples. For instance, the recent announcement by Sheridan College wanting to become a university highlights the college's desire and wish to join the "elite" institutions (Brown, 2012). This elite ideology that universities carry has also been reinforced through the Pan-Canadian Protocol on Transferability signed in 1995 only for university courses. Then, in 2003, colleges signed their own college-to-college mobility and transfer protocol. All the while, the government is introducing credit transfer committees to bring

colleges and universities to discuss a system wide credit transfer system. These four examples illustrate a very interesting picture: yes, it is true that colleges and universities are creating articulation agreements and working together to address the immediate, short term issue of credit transfer. However, when it comes to playing a part in the long term vision of credit transfer and addressing student mobility, universities continue to fight for their autonomy, independence and elite status in society (Pan-Canadian Protocol), while colleges are competing with the universities to gain more autonomy and independence as well (College-College mobility). Since colleges and universities come to the table when asked to, the government and research as well, has ignored the discussion of the relationship between colleges and universities, which is instrumental if Ontario is hoping to establish a credit transfer system in Ontario.

The changing and competitive nature of the higher education industry is also affecting institutional cooperation between colleges and universities. There is a greater emphasis being placed on the learning and the delivery of knowledge for a greater population than ever before, with a wide range of expectations (Jarvis, 2001). As a result, when the supply and demand do not meet the market expectations, new suppliers surface (colleges, private universities, private colleges), increasing competition between institutions for resources (students). Although colleges and universities are both adapting their organizations to meet one of the major demands, credit transfer, at the end of the day, they are both competing for the same resources. Thus, the strategic approach colleges and universities are taking to approach their relationship, while still attempting to maintain independence and autonomy is not surprising, especially within the context of the resource dependency theory.

The Literature: Addressing the Gaps

Based on the policy analysis provided from 1960 to 2012 on the topic of credit transfer, it is evident that currently, this issue is a major topic of discussion and interest for government, colleges, universities and students. From a government perspective, the financial commitment is an incentive to establish an Ontario specific credit transfer system; from the perspective of colleges and universities, establishing such a system will facilitate in attracting international students, thereby helping each of them better compete in the higher education market; from the student perspective, to be considered employable, students need to be equipped with both practical and theoretical skills – a skill set that will come through student mobility, and gaining a holistic education that includes learning from both colleges and universities.

For the reasons listed above, there is obvious vested interest by all parties regarding the establishment of a credit transfer system in Ontario. However, as discussed earlier in this paper, in order to effectively establish a system wide credit transfer system, all components of the higher education system (colleges and universities) need to come together and foster, support and encourage institutional cooperation. The only way an understanding can be reached is if research is done on the relationship between colleges and universities, and the nature in which these relationships are continuing to implicate the credit transfer process. This is the ultimate challenge and minor gap in the literature, which researchers need to address.

There is an astounding and sometimes overwhelming amount of literature about credit transfer, addressing a wide variation of issues, that may not all have been addressed in this thesis. For instance, in 2009, Ian Clark, Greg Moran, Michael L. Skolnik, and David Trick published a book entitled *Academic Transformations*, arguing that the present approach to the baccalaureate education in Ontario is not sustainable. They called for significant changes to the current

delivery of post-secondary education, including: shifting away from a research oriented university model and focusing on establishing degree granting institutions that are focused on undergraduate education (as opposed to research), shortened three year degrees, enhancing the role of colleges through institutional differentiation and specialization, and improving transfer opportunities for students from career focused college programs to universities (Clark, Moran, Skolnik & Trick, 2009). In the same year, David Wilson (2009) shed light on the issue of “reverse transfer,” and the factors that motivate university graduates to enroll in community college programs. He also discusses the challenge associated with the lack of data available for students moving from universities to colleges, which is also a major area of discussion regarding credit transfer. This point has been reinforced by other researchers such as Henry Decock (2004), who adds another lens to the discussion of data available on credit transfer by focusing in on the issue of calculating the college-to-university transfer rate in Ontario, and the need to be able to measure and understand transfer rates, beyond the graduate data for Key Performance Indicators (KPI).

As mentioned earlier, government, inter-governmental institutions and researchers such as Michael L. Skolnik and Catherine Drea, are continuing to research and report on the issues of credit transfer and the discussion of the establishment of a system-wide credit transfer system. HEQCO completed a study in 2011 of the transfer experience of Ontario College graduates in universities. The report’s findings conclude that although the overall transfer experience seems to be satisfactory for most transfer students, only 66% of students entering university received the expected amount of transfer credits, while 33% received significantly less transfer credits (Decock, McCloy, Liu & Hu, 2011). A recent discussion paper published by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (2012), recognizes the challenge with transfer credits by

emphasizing that students should not have to repeat the same courses when transferring from one institution to another. In order to address this challenge, one of the options Ontario proposes includes making all first and second year introductory general education courses fully recognized across all institutions (Government of Ontario, 2012).

All of the issues raised in the above articles are critical in addressing and establishing an effective system wide credit transfer system in Ontario. It is equally important to ensure though that the relationship between colleges and universities, their evolution as competitors to colleges, and their vision for the credit transfer system remains a priority area for research. To truly understand the credit transfer system, one needs to understand the stakeholders involved (colleges and universities). Given that the establishment of a credit transfer system is likely moving forward, it will be important to explore the relationship aspect between colleges and universities, that may affect the way the credit transfer option may be planned or delivered later on. It is definitely a point that needs to be explored further.

Implications for Policy and Research

Based on the research and discussion presented thus far, it is evident that there needs to be more interaction and communication occurring at the college and university levels to address the role and interplay between colleges and universities. Given the rapid changes in the overall environment of higher education, policy makers need to conduct an in-depth analysis of the relationship between colleges and universities to better accommodate and address the needs of students as it relates to the issue of credit transfer. This approach to policy making and research is in direct accordance to the resource dependency theory because of the overall social context of higher education is changing. As a result, organizations (colleges and universities) have to invent strategies in order to enhance their autonomy and pursue interests. By default, issues of power

also need to re-configured, primarily between internal and external actions of the organizations, specifically within the context of articulation agreements between colleges and universities (Davis & Cobb, 2009).

Within this context, it is also equally important to take heed of the specifics changes that are occurring in the higher education context. For instance, the concept of online learning and distance education is becoming increasingly common, due to advances in technology, diversification of learning and access to education. At the same time, there have been numerous articles discussing the bid to transform post-secondary education in Ontario as the government is considering shorter degrees, year-round classes, and making all general first and second year credits transferrable to any university in the province (Rushowy, 2012). In order to ensure the higher education system is able to meet these expectations, types of universities are also changing. Some examples include outlined by Skolnik (2005) include:

- Research universities such as the University of Toronto, where institutions are expected to offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in a wide range of disciplines, and faculty are expected to conduct research and teaching
- Distance, open and virtual universities such as Athabasca University
- Community colleges and institutes of technology, whose mandates includes offering courses for transfer credit at some universities and baccalaureate programs in some universities

In reviewing the different types of institutions and the way in which the higher education system is changing, one of the major questions that policy makers need to address is the type of education system that Ontario needs. This question requires addressing various dimensions of PSE including structures, processes, and relationships that have been formed, or lack thereof

between colleges and universities. Since Ontario has never had a plan for the development of a PSE system or an agency responsible for this plan, this has also been a contributing factor to the creation of a formal credit transfer system between colleges and universities (Skolnik, 2005). As a province, once this question is answered, policy makers and researchers can begin to better contextualize the role of credit transfer within the higher education narrative. Other jurisdictions such as B.C. and Alberta, are an ideal example of provinces that have a pre-established higher education system plan. For instance, the credit transfer system within these provinces was established during the formation of colleges and universities, ensuring that the two institutions would be complementary to each other (Kerr, McCloy, & Lui, 2010).

Given that Ontario's higher education system was initially created as a binary system, university leaders have rarely viewed colleges as institutions can benefit them. Thus, colleges were and perhaps still viewed by some as being unwanted, vexatious competitors (Skolnik, 2011). This can also be seen as one of the major reasons as to the lengthy time period that has been taken to formulate a credit transfer system.

As this credit transfer discussion moves forward, it will be important to review the mission of colleges, and analyze the ways in which the credit transfer system can enhance and facilitate cooperation and partnerships between colleges and universities, to maximize the economy and the students.

Concluding Thoughts

Ontario has always striven for a balanced economic role within the broader, cultural and civic functions (Skolnik, 2005). In the 1970s, this role manifested itself in an education system that was viewed as being a simple and "technocratic commodity in the services of business and government (Skolnik, 2005, p.9). By the 1990s however, this role was being questioned as the

concerns were now focused on the preoccupation of universities in Canada (Stoll, 1993). This is and continues to be an issue, as Ontario universities have a tendency to resist change as they enjoy a greater degree of autonomy than most other educational institutions (Stanyon, 2003). In response, Ontario needs to propose a plan to figure out the overall role of both colleges and universities, in order to better facilitate and foster the relationship between colleges and universities. It is also important to encourage and support the movement of community colleges into sophisticated areas of applied knowledge, to meet the demands and needs of the industry. These societal needs can only be met once colleges and universities work in partnership with another, and universities begin to acknowledge colleges as allies, as opposed to an academic threat.

The various working groups and protocols that have been in existence since the 1960s are testament to the fact that the government of Ontario is committed to encouraging interaction and supporting inter-sectoral arrangements between colleges and universities. It is also evident that increased coordination can facilitate student mobility, influence overall participation rates, clarify the relationship amongst educational programs offered by different types of institutions and enable rationalization of resource use between sectors (Skolnik, 2005). As such, that the establishment of a system wide credit transfer system will definitely be a positive point for the higher education system in Ontario. The key to ensuring the establishment of a successful credit transfer system lies in creating positive dialogue, cooperation and discussion between the colleges and universities. One cannot discuss the credit transfer system without taking into account the perspectives and ideologies of the institutions that will deliver this system, colleges and universities. Although this thesis is one of the few research papers that discussed institutional cooperation in relation to credit transfer, there is still a need to better understand the

contextual and institutional leadership factors that influence college and university collaborations and relationships (Stanyon, 2003). Once this is given a priority in the area of research and policy analysis, especially in light of the credit transfer discussion, only then can Ontario begin to critically analyze and propose the best way to approach the establishment of a credit transfer system.

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