

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities –

Student Credit Transfer Analysis

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Background: Transfer Complexity

- Increase in transfer volume
- Student credit from multiple institutions
- Credits - developmental credits, construction credits
- Age of credits
- Conversion from quarter systems
- Minnesota Transfer Compact (MnTC)
- Articulation Agreements
- Transfer Pathways
- Transfer Resources (DARS, U-Select, eTransfer, MnTransfer.org, college and university websites)
- Varying transfer practices

Background: Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC)

- General education consists in 10 goal areas
 - Communication
 - Critical Thinking
 - Natural Sciences
 - Mathematical/Logical Reasoning
 - History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - Humanities and the Fine Arts
 - Human Diversity
 - Global Perspectives
 - Ethics and Civic Responsibility
 - People and the Environment
- Completion of each goal area is defined by each college and university

Background: Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC)

- Minimum of 40 credits
- Transfer acceptance:
 - Board Policy 3.37, states Each receiving institution college and university all accept MnTC courses, goal area, or the entire curriculum as determined and documented by the sending institution college or university
- Example: Goal Area 5 – History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - Metropolitan State University
 - 6 credits from 2 or more disciplines
 - Centennial College:
 - 9 credits 3 courses from 3 different disciplines

Background: Context

- 2009 Academic Year
 - 103,109 new entering students
 - 16,309 transfer students (MnSCU to MnSCU)
 - 21,000 transfer courses (MnSCU to MnSCU)
- Focus of Analysis
 - Completed quantitative analysis
 - No contact with individual colleges and districts
 - No contact with students or faculty

Testing Methodology

- Statistical sampling of 2009 entering students in an effort to determine if there is a difference in the number of MnSCU students who are required to take a course at a MnSCU institution.
 - 16 data by institution
 - 281 interviews
 - 95 percent confidence interval
- Analysis of 2009 accounting graduates
- Analysis of 2009 psychology graduates

Results: Reasons Credits Not Accepted in Transfer

Reason Credits Not Accepted in Transfer	2009 Enrolling Students	2009 Accounting Graduates	2009 Psychology Graduates
MnTC course goal was not met as completed at receiving institution	10	4	1
Similar course not given equivalencies	8	19	0
D grades not accepted	3	6	12

Results: Magnitude of Credit Loss for Graduates

- Median credit loss was 6 credits
- Average (mean) credit loss
 - Accounting graduates 16 credits
 - Psychology graduates 6 credits

Results: Student Impact Projection

- 9.4% of students experience a transfer problem in credits
- 2009 population - 1,533 students
- Median 6 credits - 9,198 credits
- \$180 per credit
– \$1,080 per student
– \$1.6 million for 2009 students
- Addition of time - extra semester
- Unknown - leave higher education, leave campus

Results: Process Issues

- 20.7% of students experienced a process that did not allow them to transfer credits

Findings and Integrated Recommendations

- Minnesota Transfer Council (MnTC)
- Core Competencies and Acceptance of Credit
- Transfer Information and Resources
- Transfer Tools and Data Entry
- Accountability

Findings and Recommendations - Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC)

- **Student Survey**
 - Most common type of credit earned
 - 29% did not know whether they had completed
 - More satisfied with experience if MnTC completed
- **Quantitative Analysis**
 - Significant association for credit loss

Findings and Recommendations - Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC)

- Management Recommendations
 - Colleges and Universities
 - Engage staff members and employees
 - Advise students on the advantages of completing core and goal areas
 - Public Affairs and Academic and Student Affairs divisions should work in colleges and universities to communicate the advantages of completing the MnTC core and goal areas to students

Findings and Recommendations - Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC)



Findings and Recommendations – Course Equivalencies and Acceptance of Credit

- **Student Survey Reasons credit didn't transfer accepted**
 - Course not relevant
 - Course transferred as elective
 - Insufficient information
 - Course taken too long ago
- **Quantitative Analysis Reasons for lost credits**
 - Similar course not given equivalency
 - Inconsistent practices in D grades
 - Inconsistent practices in old credits
 - PSEO course not recognized or accepted

Findings and Recommendations – Course Equivalencies and Acceptance of Credit

- Suggested Action: Refer to Academic and Student Affairs Committee
- Policy Considerations :
 - 3.5 Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)
 - 3.21 Undergraduate Course Credit Transfer
 - Align to and forward programs to ensure the loss of credits
 - Consideration of Degrees for transfer eligibility
 - Consideration on the age at which course loss eligibility for transfer
 - 3.22 Course Syllabi
 - Clarify the use of syllabi, course outlines or other equivalency documents

Findings and Recommendations – Course Equivalencies and Acceptance of Credit

- Management Recommendations
 - The Academic and Student Affairs division
should:
 - Ensure that course equivalency information is accurate, available and completed at colleges and universities
 - Develop a standardized DARS degree audit template for colleges and universities for degree elements

Findings and Recommendations – Transfer Information and Resources

- **Student Say**
 - 67% not aware of options
 - 89% of applicants in some or all of their credits being accepted
 - 40% did not seek advice
 -

Findings and Recommendations – Transfer Information and Resources

Findings and Recommendations – Transfer Tools and Data Entry

- Quantitative Analysis Top percent of 2009 clients may have lost transfer credits due to data entry errors

Findings and Recommendations –

Transfer Tools and Data Entry

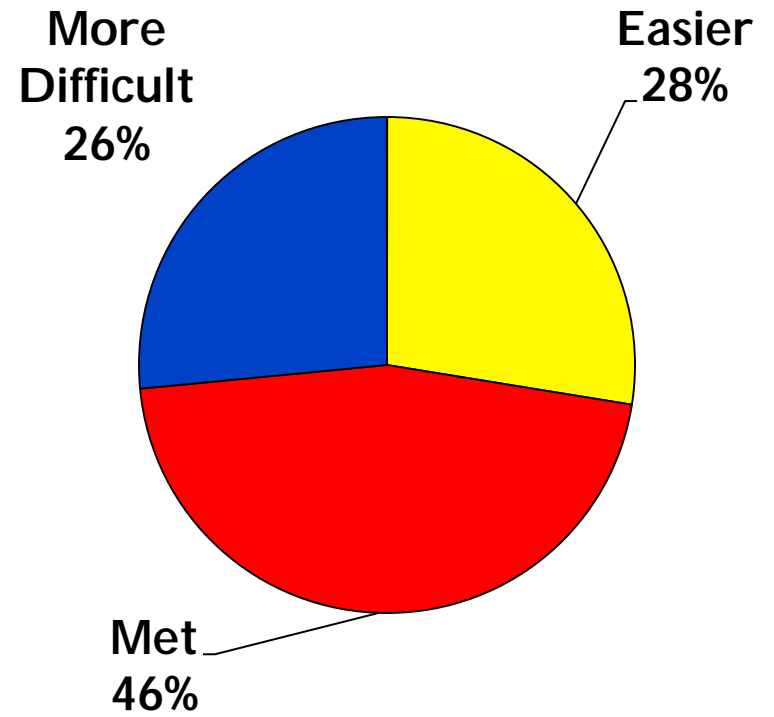
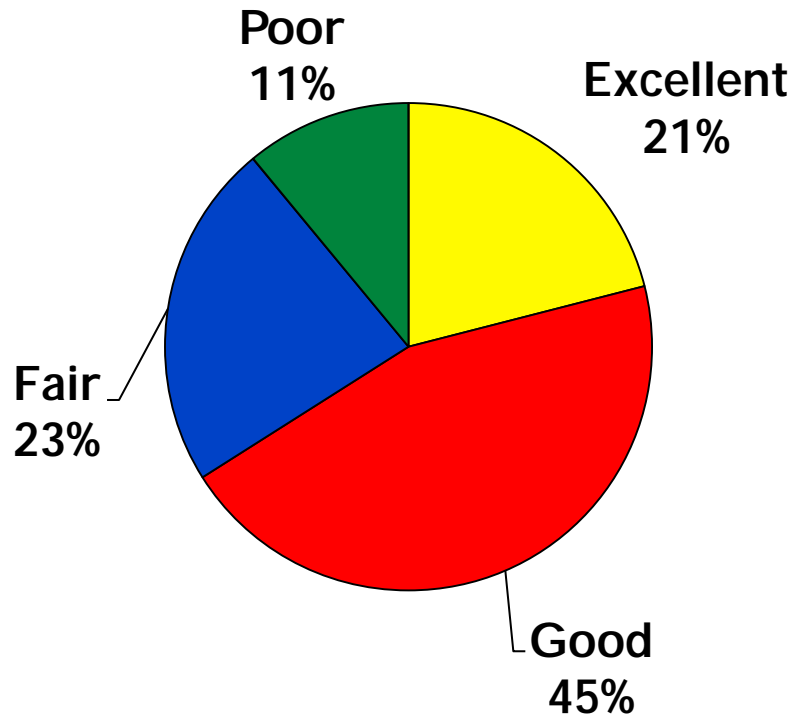


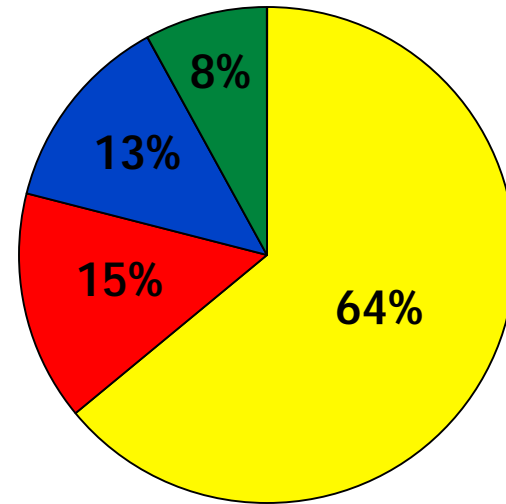
Findings and Recommendations – Accountability

- **Subject Action:** Refer to Academic and

Student Survey Reference Information

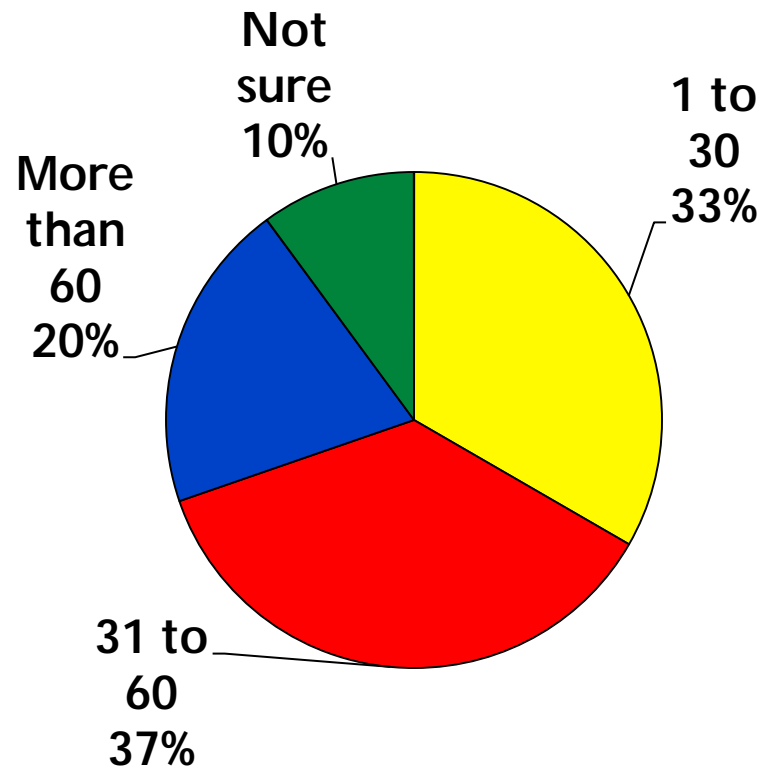
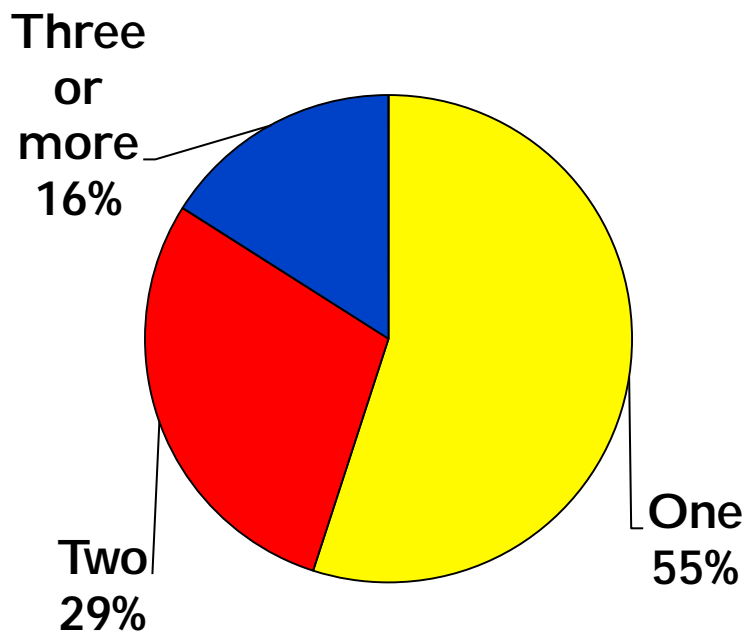


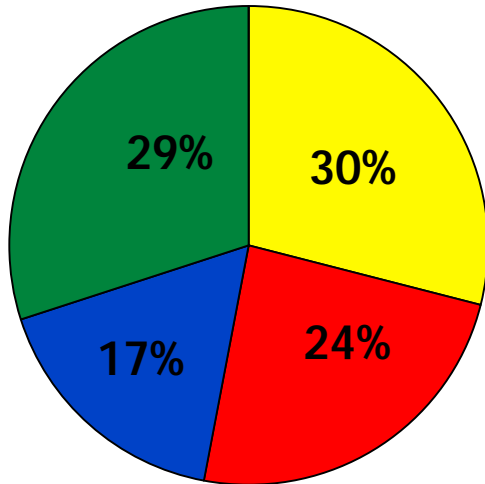




- State University
- Community College
- Community & Technical College
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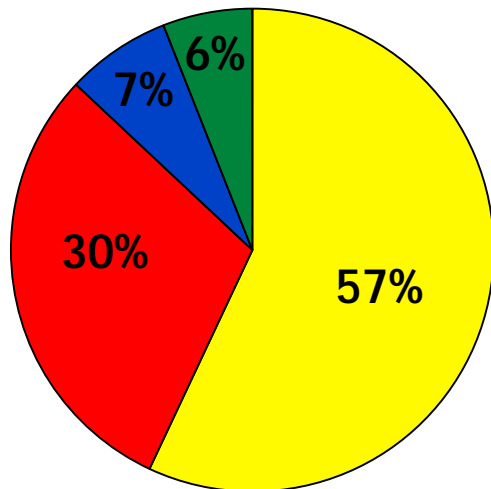






Completion of MnTC prior to transfer

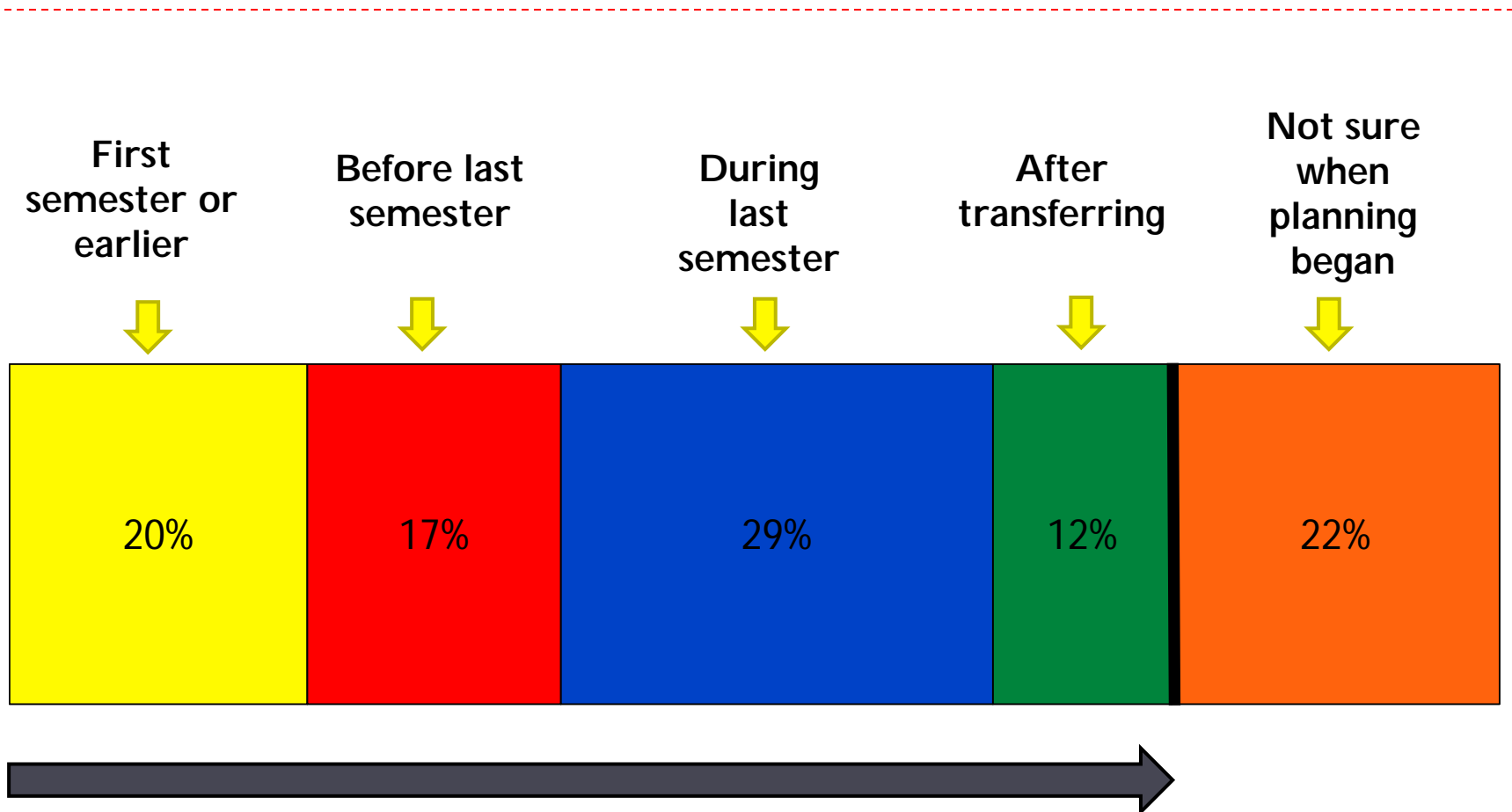
- Completed prior to transfer
- Completed some courses/goals
- Did not complete
- Did not know whether completed



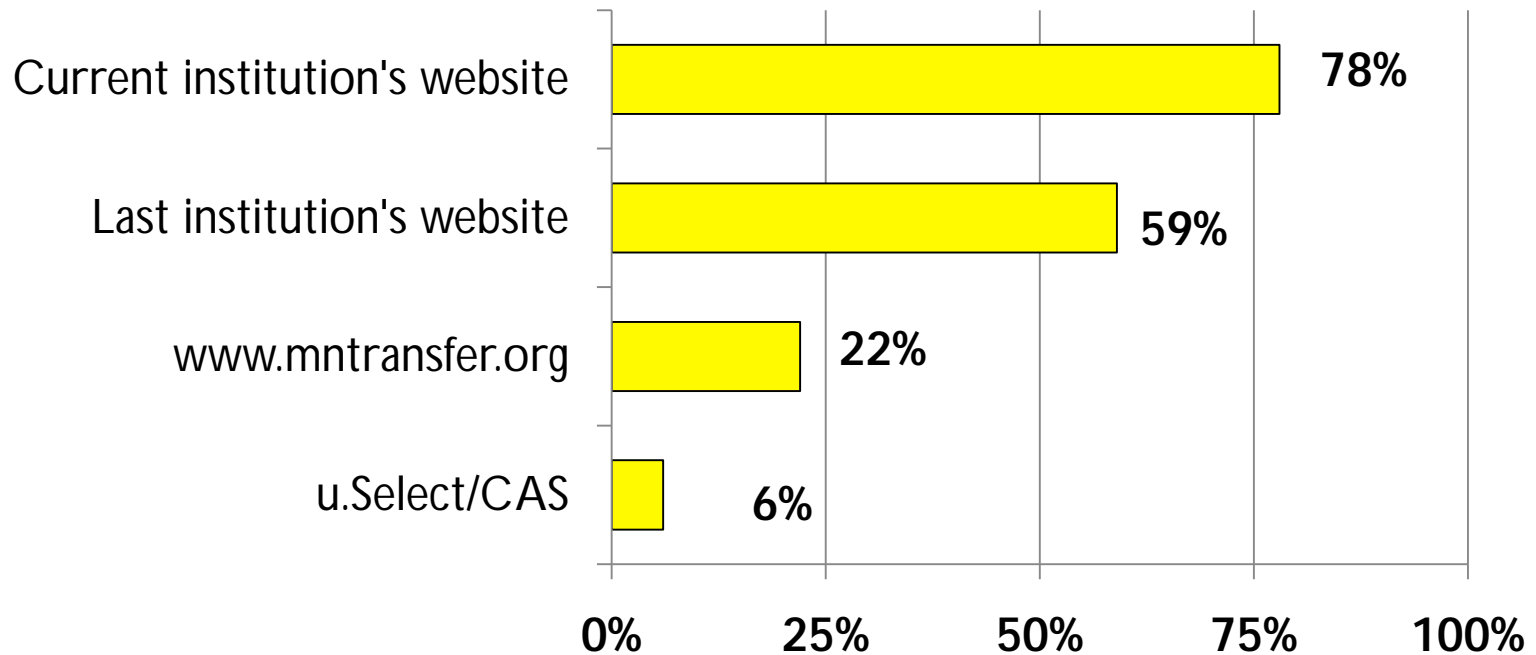
Degree completion prior to transfer

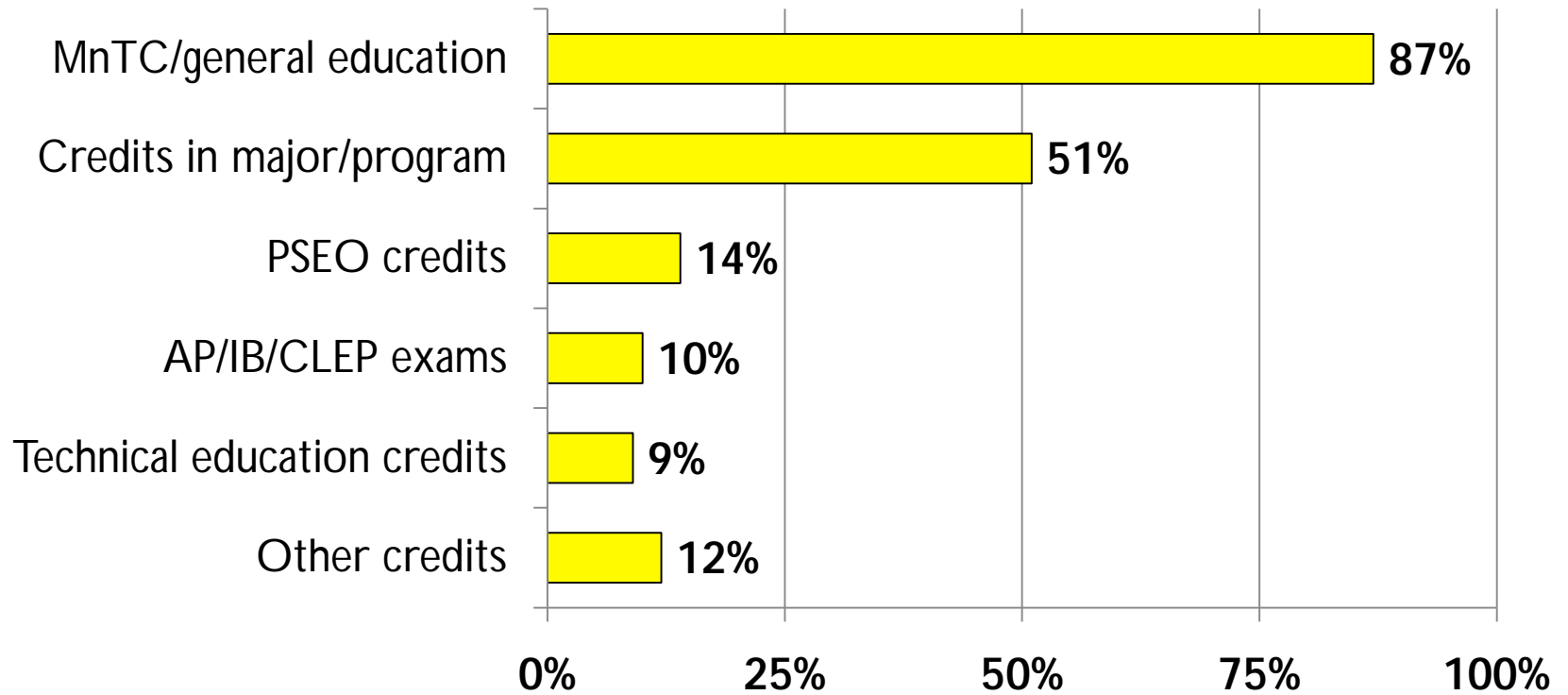
- Did not complete degree/certificate/diploma
- Associate
- Bachelor's
- Certificate/diploma

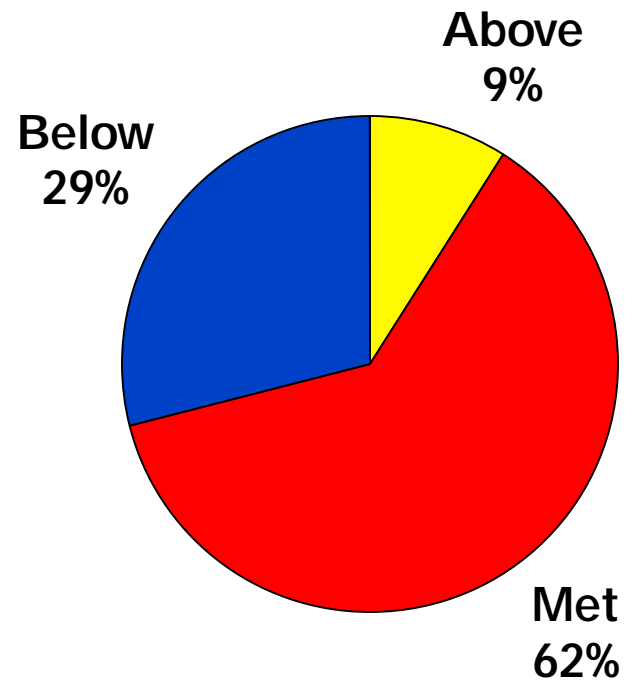
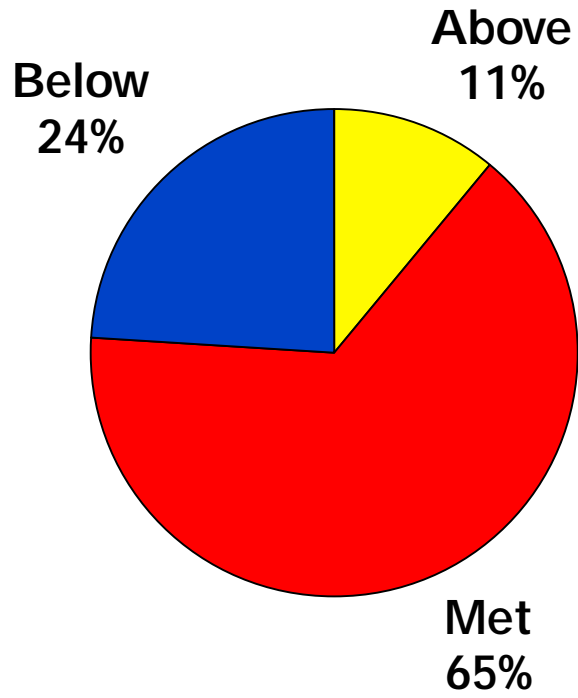




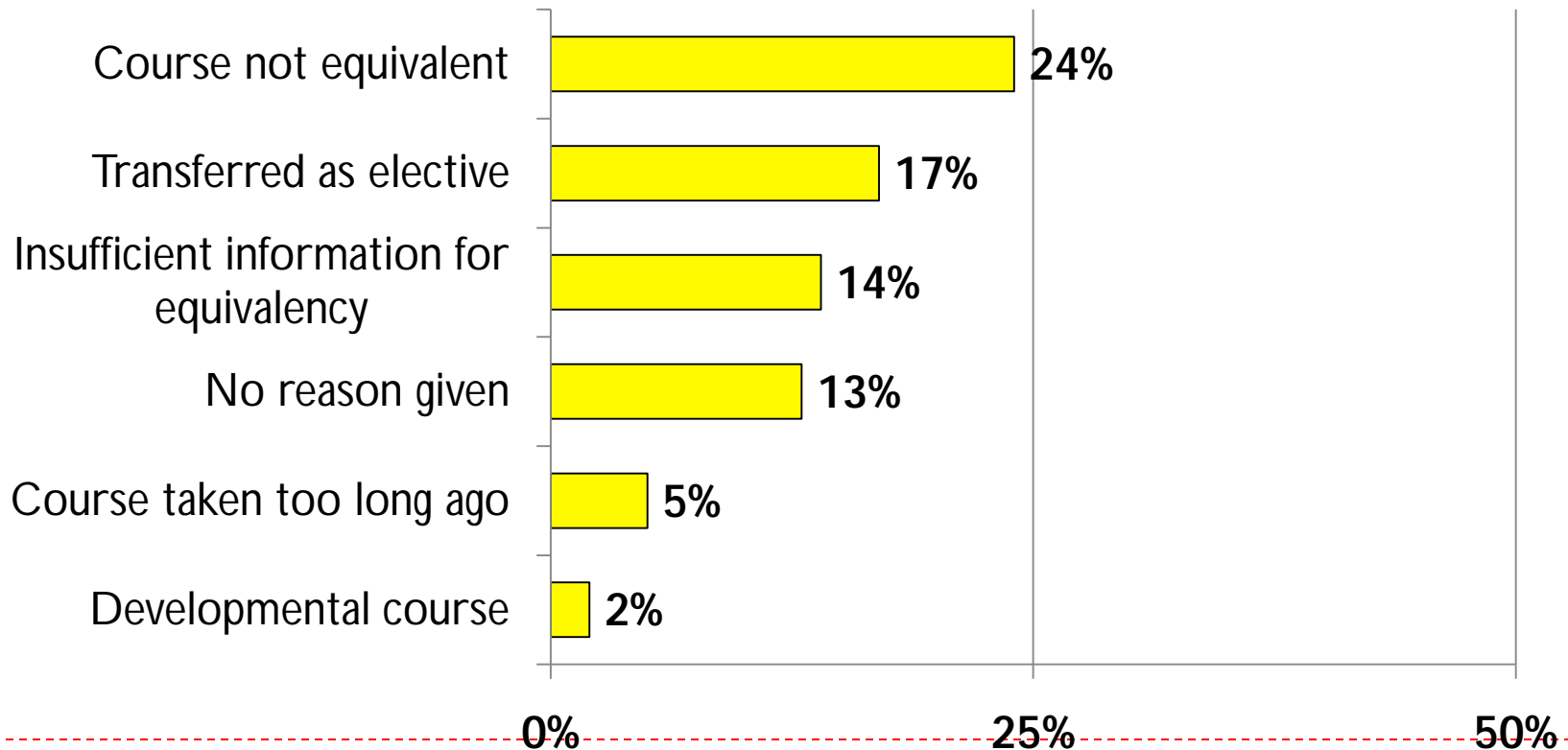
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- 63% of respondents used online resources during transfer



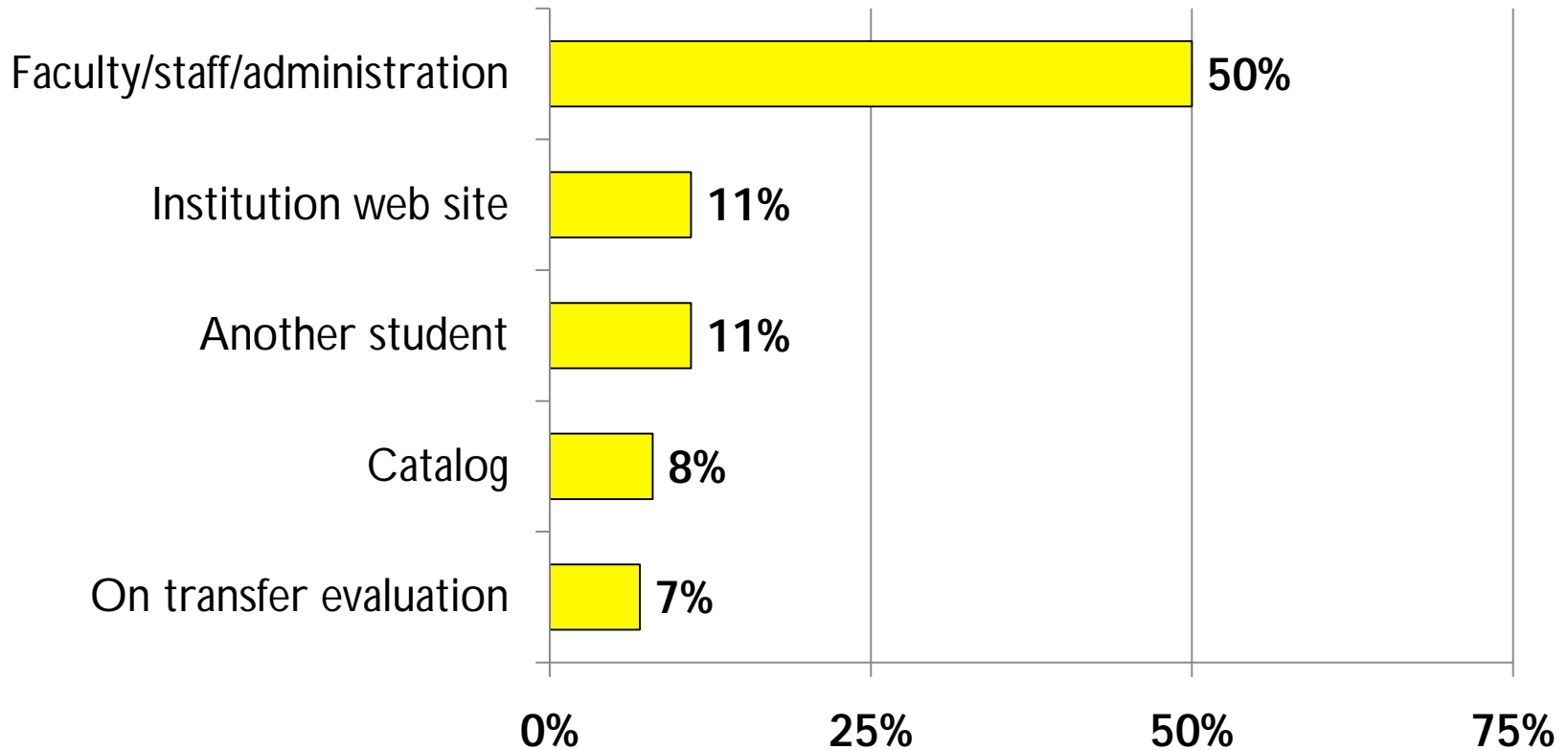


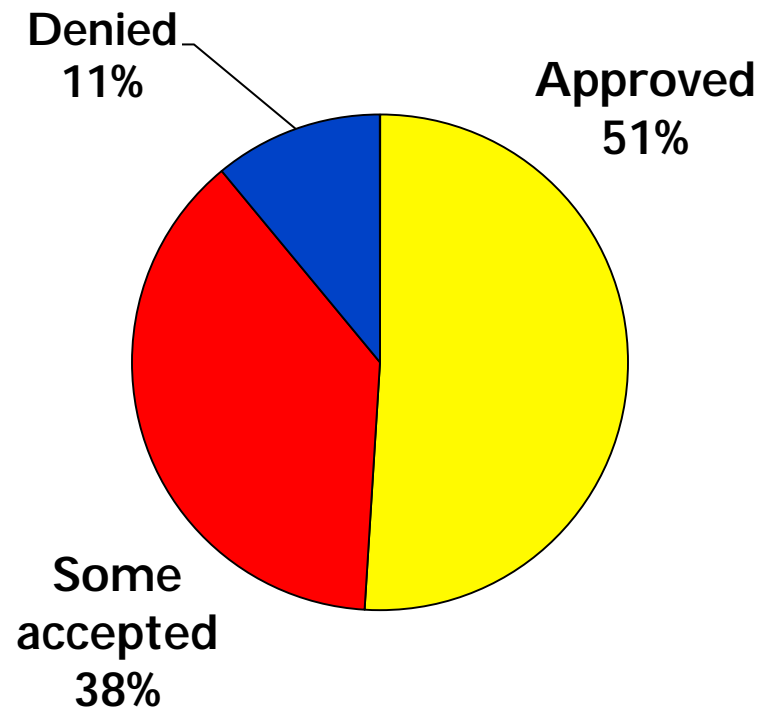
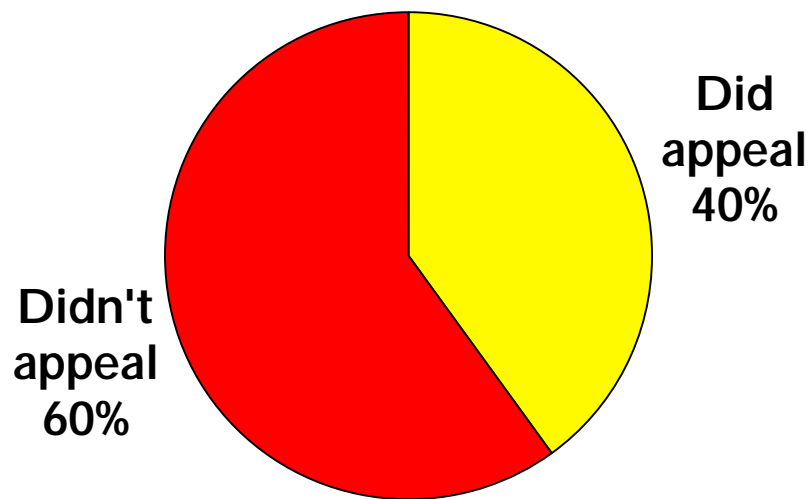


- 47% of respondents reported credits transferred as expected
- Reasons credits didn't transfer as expected:



- 67% were not aware of appeals process
- 33% of respondents who were aware learned about process from:





Summary of Student Credit Transfer Testing
May 2010

Background:

On February 10, 2010, the Audit Committee met with Legislative Auditor Jim Nobles and the System Office to review and discuss their program evaluation report, MnSCU System Office. In the discussion, the Audit Committee Chair made several recommendations to the Board Chair to address the report findings. February 17, 2010 letter, Chair Olson assigned the responsibility for studying student credit transfer to the audit committee.

The Office of Internal Auditing tested fiscal year 2009 student transfers to determine the extent that credits may not have transferred between MnSCU colleges and universities and the reason for unsuccessful credit transfers. Part of the testing included a random sample of approximately 16,000 students that earned credits at an MnSCU college or university in 2009 that transferred to another MnSCU college or university. An additional test included the transfer experience of students who earned a degree in either Psychology or Accounting in 2009.

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In addition to projecting the incident rates, we also estimated the magnitude of credit loss for the 2009 graduates. For the student graduates who experienced a transfer problem, the number of credits lost was similar to the accounting graduates, however, lost more than 30 credits, pushing the mean number of lost credits of accounting graduates to 16. The mean credit loss for psychology graduates remained the same as the median, at six credits.

From the statistical sample, we also estimated that 20% of graduates experienced some type of process problem when transferring credits. These problems did not always result in students losing transfer credits, but included issues such as

- x Transcript included errors transfer credits or it was not evident how the transferred credits was calculated.
- x Developmental credits were included in the number of credits transferred on the transcript and overstated the number of credits eligible for degree completion.
- x Inconsistent methods were used to convert quarter credits to semester credits.
- x Transcript did not conform to the System requirements for flagging developmental or repeated courses

Policy Considerations

- x Work to align two and four year programs to reduce the loss of credits. The 2+2 program in Accounting offered in partnership between Rochester Community & Technical College and Winona State University is an example of a successful alignment.
- x Consider whether a System-wide policy is needed to establish consistent treatment of grades for transferability.
- x Consider whether a System-wide policy is needed on the age at which coursework loses its eligibility for transfer.
- x Consider creating the "Credit Transfer Ombudsman" to provide students with an Ac10v24

Management Recommendations:

x Minnesota Transfer Curriculum:

- o Colleges and universities need to ensure that staff understand the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum requirements.
- o Colleges and universities should advise students on the importance of completing courses and goal areas within the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.
- o The Office of the Chancellor Academic and Student Affairs and Public Affairs divisions should work with colleges and universities to communicate the value of completing the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum courses and goal areas.
- o The Academic and Student Affairs division should develop a common way for students to assess their progress toward completing the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.

x DARS

- o The Academic and Student Affairs division should develop a standardized degree audit template for colleges and universities to use for degree requirements.
- o Colleges and universities should progress courses on degree audits.
- o Colleges and universities need to ensure that they are using DARS degree audits for verifying that program requirements have been met for graduation.

x The Academic and Student Affairs division should develop a standard conversion for quarter hour credit conversion.

x The Office of the Chancellor Public Affairs and Academic and Student Affairs divisions should work with colleges and universities to develop a unified portal for accessing transfer information Web site and to the extent possible create consistent content for informing students about transfer

Summary of Student Credit Transfer Findings and Integration of Recommendations

Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA)
Minnesota State University Student Association (MSUSA)
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of Internal Auditing

May 19, 2010

The Minnesota State College Student Association (MSCSA) began to hear pronounced student concern on transfer beginning around 2006. In 2007 MSCSA identified transfer as top issues and continued to work with students to identify specific concerns. Staff within the Office of the Chancellor began to work with the student associations to improve communication on transfer. In the spring of 2009, MSCSA students led a transfer hotline campaign across the system college campuses to identify student transfer problems. In the fall of 2009, the leadership of the Minnesota State University Student Association (MSUSA) prioritize credit transfer as an issue to address and conducted

x **Management Recommendations:**

- o Colleges and universities need to ensure that they understand the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum requirements.
- o Colleges and universities should advise students of the advantages of completing courses and goal areas within the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.
- o The Public Affairs and Academic and Student Affairs divisions should work with colleges and universities to communicate the advantages of completing the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum courses and goal areas to students.
- o The Academic and Student Affairs division should develop uniform required

Finding 3 – Transfer Information and Resources

Student Survey Two-thirds of survey respondents whose credits did not transfer as expected were not aware of the appeals process. Eighty percent of those who did appeal had all of their credits accepted. Forty percent of respondents reported that they did not seek advice from college or university staff regarding transfer until 41 percent did not start planning for transfer until their last semester before transferring or later. Respondents reported that institutional websites were their primary online source for information about transfer. Six percent of respondents reported that they had used the uSelect Applicability System) during the transfer process. Finally, among respondents who submitted written complaints, the most frequent topic was with transfer advising and information.

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x **Management Recommendations:**

- o The Academic and Student Affairs should:
 - Ensure that colleges and universities have implemented eTranscript.
 - Ensure that colleges and universities list progress courses on DARS degree audits.
 - Communicate the system standard for conversion of quarter credit hours to semester credit hours and verify that colleges and universities are using standard
- o Colleges and universities need to ensure that they are using DARS degree audits for verifying program requirements have been met for graduation.

x **Success Criteria** Need to be defined

Finding 5 – Accountability

Comment:The Board of Trustees has had limited discussion related to student credit transfer since 2007. In addition, the accountability framework does not contain a measure related to student credit transfer.

x **Suggested Action** Refer to Academic and Student Affairs Committee

x **Policy Considerations:**

- o Implement systematic monitoring of transfer with periodic reporting
- o Add a transfer measure to the accountability framework
- o Engage the board in a study session to review other states' transfer models, successes and challenges

x **Success Criteria** Need to be defined