

## local news

### ▼ POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

# New provincial report tries to track college students on the move

**W**e all know that students move around — we just didn't

know to what extent until last week when the Ministry of Advanced Education and

Labour Market Development and the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with all

public post-secondary institutions, published the findings of its Student Transitions Project.

The project tracked students over a five-year period to determine the flow of students between the public post-secondary institutions in B.C.

It included all the universities, technical schools such as BCIT and the community colleges and looked at what was referred to as the student stability rate (students who remain with the same institution) and the student mobility rate, which is the percentage of students who switch schools.

On average from 2002 to the fall of 2007, the stability rate increased while the mobility rate decreased. In 2002/03, 19 per cent of students switched schools and by 2006/07 the number dropped to 13 per cent, whereas the stability rate increased from 81 to 87 per cent.

According to the project, the decrease in the mobility rate can be partially attributed to the increase in degree programs at community colleges, university colleges and the new universities, leading fewer students to transfer from college to university.

But what I found really interesting about this report was the trends in which students moved through the system.

Okanagan College has the lowest mobility rate of all the community colleges. Eleven per cent of our students leave and most of them



**JANE MUSKENS**

#### School's In

(35 per cent) transfer to UBC Okanagan, 11 per cent go to Thompson Rivers University and the rest to various other

Okanagan College has the lowest mobility rate of all the community colleges.

have students leaving to go to other schools, with the University of Northern British Columbia having the highest rate at 18 per cent. Royal Roads University has the lowest rate at five per cent.

UBC Okanagan's mobility rate is 13 per cent with 25 per cent of those students transferring to UBC Vancouver and another 22 per cent transferring to Okanagan College.

Overall, the most popular transfer institution is BCIT, which captures 14 per cent of all the students who move from one institution to another. SFU is second at 12 per cent and UBC Vancouver third at nine per cent.

Students move for a number of reasons and it's not always forward movement where they transfer credit from one school to another. Sometimes they switch their focus and will go from an academic to a vocational program or vice versa.

I suspect that for some students, they move because they realize they made the wrong program choice and decide they want something different. That is why it is so important to research all your educational and career opportunities: don't pick a school or a program just because your friends are planning to go there or your parents completed the same program way back when.

Jane Muskens is manager of student recruitment at Okanagan College.  
jmuskens@okanagan.bc.ca

schools.

The community college with the highest mobility rate is Langara in Vancouver with 33 per cent. Many of these students transfer to UBC, SFU and BCIT.

But mobility rates are not just a community college phenomena. Universities also