

**WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM TO
THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT STUDY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was prepared by the University of Wisconsin System (UWS) Office of Policy Analysis and Research in conjunction with the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). The primary goals of this study are to: (1) track students who were enrolled at the WTCS and subsequently enrolled at the UWS and identify both their originating WTCS program and subsequent UWS major; (2) identify potential program areas for developing new transfer articulation agreements; and (3) assess the academic outcomes of these students, including retention and graduation. This seventh report continues the programs assessed in previous reports.

The 2009 Program Assessment Study included 61,663 students who attended a WTCS district in fiscal years 1994-95 through 2007-08 and subsequently enrolled at a UW institution. Of these students, nearly half entered the UWS as transfer students.

Overall WTCS/UWS Assessment Cohort

- **WTCS Program Type:** Of the 61,663 WTCS students who came to the UWS, 30 percent were enrolled in an applied associate degree program while at WTCS, 13 percent were enrolled in a WTCS liberal arts program, and 13 percent were enrolled in a technical diploma program. Almost half (44%) took courses but did not declare a program of study while attending a Wisconsin Technical College.
- **WTCS Degree Completion Status:** Of the students in the assessment cohort, 19 percent completed a WTCS program before they enrolled in a UW. The percentage varied by WTCS program type with 12 percent for liberal arts students, 28 percent for applied associate degree program students, and 73 percent for technical diploma students.
- **WTCS Liberal Arts Program:** WTCS liberal arts students in the assessment cohort who completed an associate degree program before their UWS enrollment were more likely to enter the UWS as sophomores or upperclassmen (juniors/seniors) (94%) than those who did not complete an associate degree program (57%).
- **WTCS Applied Associate Degree Program:** WTCS applied associate degree program students who completed an associate degree program before their UWS enrollment were more likely to enter the UWS as sophomores or upperclassmen (44%) than those who did not complete an associate degree program (19%). The proportion of WTCS applied associate degree program students who completed an associate degree program and entered the UWS as sophomores or upperclassmen increased from 45 percent in 1995-96 to 55 percent in 2007-08. The efforts of the two Systems to develop and expand articulation agreements may have contributed to the increase.
- **UWS Entrance Status:** Overall, 46 percent of the students in the assessment cohort entered the UWS as transfer students, about one-third (33%) enrolled as new degree seeking students, and the remaining (21%) came to the UWS as new non-degree seeking (special) students or re-entry/continuing students.
- **Student Characteristics:** Overall, 12 percent of the students in the assessment cohort were students of color, and 61 percent came to the UWS as full-time students. Student age was almost evenly distributed among the three age groups - under 20, between 20 and 24, and 25 or over.

Grouping WTCS Programs and UWS Majors

WTCS programs and UWS majors were grouped using a common national classification system – Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP). Of the 61,663 students in the assessment cohort, over half were enrolled in a specific WTCS program while at WTCS and over half declared a UW major after they enrolled in the UWS. Table 1 shows the top six WTCS program groups from which students entered the UWS and the top six UW major groups in which students enrolled after they came to the UWS.

Table 1
Top Six WTCS Program Groups/UWS Major Groups by Student Enrollment

Top Six WTCS Program Groups	Top Six UWS Major Groups
Health-Related Professions (9,618)	Business (6,518)
Humanities/Liberal Arts (8,145)	Health-Related Professions (4,512)
Business (6,189)	Education (4,419)
Public Admin/Legal Services (2,298)	Social Sciences (3,816)
Engineering & Architecture (2,056)	Communications/Arts (3,115)
Math, Computer & Info Sciences (1,870)	Biological/Physical Sciences (2,599)

Program-Specific Enrollments and Assessment

Seven WTCS applied associate degree programs – Nursing (1,780), Early Childhood Education (699), Information Technology (1,839), Marketing (1,767), Criminal Justice (1,371), Accounting (1,189), and Engineering Technology (2,013) – along with Liberal Arts programs (7,880), were selected for specific study. These programs were selected because there were existing multi-campus agreements, they were potential areas where agreements could be developed, and/or there were a large number of students enrolling in these WTCS programs prior to their UWS enrollment. Students in the seven applied associate degree programs represented 57 percent of applied associate degree program students in the assessment cohort.

- **Top Two UWS Major Groups:** Table 2 shows the top two UWS major groups in which students in the selected WTCS programs enrolled. For example, of the WTCS nursing students in the assessment cohort with a declared UW major, 73 percent enrolled in a UWS major in Health-Related Professions and 6 percent enrolled in a UWS major in Biological/Physical Sciences. WTCS Liberal Arts programs are not listed in the table as students in Liberal Arts programs pursue a wide variety of majors at the UW System institutions.

Table 2
**Top Two UWS Major Groups in Which Students Enrolled
in Selected WTCS Programs**

WTCS Program	Top 1 UWS Major Group	Top 2 UWS Major Group
Nursing	Health-Related Professions (73%)	Biological/Physical Sciences (6%)
Early Childhood Education	Education (68%)	Social Sciences (8%)
Information Technology	Math, Computer & Info Science (33%)	Business (23%)
Marketing	Business (43%)	Education (16%)
Criminal Justice	Public Admin/Legal Services (32%)	Social Sciences (21%)
Accounting	Business (62%)	Education (9%)
Engineering Technology	Engineering & Architecture (30%)	Business (27%)

Note: The percentage is based on the number of students with a declared UW major.

- **GPA and Second Year Retention Rate at the UWS:** Table 3 shows the average first year GPA and second year retention rate of all students in the cohort for the selected WTCS programs. It also shows the second year retention rate of students in the cohort enrolling in a related UW major for the selected WTCS programs. Both student GPAs and second year retention rates varied by originating WTCS program. Students who enrolled in a related UW major had significantly higher retention rates than the overall group of students in the selected WTCS applied associate degree programs.

Table 3
Average First Year GPA and Second Year Retention Rate
for Students in Selected WTCS Programs

WTCS Program	Average First Year GPA at the UWS	2 nd Year Retention Rate at the UWS	
		All Students from WTCS Program	Students from WTCS Program Enrolling in Related UW Major
Nursing	2.9	53%	69%
Early Childhood Education	2.8	58%	71%
Information Technology	2.8	61%	72%
Marketing	2.6	68%	79%
Criminal Justice	2.5	60%	71%
Accounting	2.8	62%	75%
Engineering Technology	2.8	64%	80%
Liberal Arts	2.7	76%	87%*
Overall Assessment Cohort	2.8	65%	N/A

**This rate is for WTCS Liberal Arts students who declared a UW major.*

Students moving to the UWS were from a variety of WTCS programs – applied associate degree programs, liberal arts programs, and technical diploma programs. However, fewer than half did not declare a program of study while at WTCS. Nearly half entered the UWS as transfer students. By tracking these students and their academic outcomes, this study should contribute to the broader goal of ensuring that students have the requisite knowledge from their WTCS coursework to succeed in their UWS majors. Future reports may expand on this analysis as well as focus on areas for new WTCS/UWS initiatives.