



## News for Immediate Release

**April 29, 2010**

### **Report: PA College Credit Transfer System Makes Higher Education More Affordable, Accessible**

Students Saved \$35.4 Million by Not Having to Retake Courses

**Abington**— Thousands of college transfer students from across Pennsylvania have benefited from a new, statewide system designed to maximize the number of credits they can transfer and count towards a college degree, according to a new report announced today by Education Secretary Gerald L. Zahorchak.

The report on the Pennsylvania College Credit Transfer System revealed that in 2009 alone, students saved nearly \$35.4 million by having their transferred credits count towards a degree.

The report also shows that since 2007, there has been a 15 percent increase in the number of students transferring from Pennsylvania community colleges to the universities in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, or PASSHE. In 2006, Governor Edward G. Rendell signed into law Act 114 which required all community colleges and PASSHE schools to identify a minimum of 30 credits that would be guaranteed to transfer between schools.

"Our new transfer system has made college more accessible to thousands of students while helping to reduce the cost of earning a degree," Dr. Zahorchak said. "The new system was essential because many students earn credits at multiple institutions over many years as they work toward a degree."

"The new law has clearly worked to make college more affordable and accessible for Pennsylvania students," said Rep. Josh Shapiro, the author of the transfer language in Act 114. "Prior to Act 114, college credits were not fully transferable and students were often forced to pay to retake – and pay for - classes when they changed schools."

As part of the new law, the state established the Pennsylvania Transfer and Articulation Center (PA TRAC) website at [www.PAcollegetransfer.com](http://www.PAcollegetransfer.com). The site allows users to search for transferable courses, find information about participating institutions and get step-by-step instructions for transfer credits.

"As stewards of the public higher education system in the Commonwealth, the PASSHE university presidents and I are committed to assuring that students have

access to a quality education at an affordable cost," PASSHE Chancellor Dr. John Cavanaugh said. "We believe that means ensuring that students can transfer seamlessly from community colleges to any of the 14 PASSHE universities."

Thirty-two institutions have guaranteed credit transfers through PA TRAC. Three private institutions and one state-related university also participate. Penn State, Temple and Pitt will join Lincoln University and the Pennsylvania College of Technology in the credit transfer system starting this fall.

"When a transfer student has to repeat at their new college the same class they took at their previous college it not only costs them extra, it costs extra for the taxpayers who support students' education at the 14 state-owned colleges and universities," said Sen. Andy Dinniman, Minority Chair of the Senate Education Committee. "This study shows that Pennsylvania's transfer and articulation program is working – it's facilitating the process for students, it's saving taxpayers' money and it should be expanded."

The report shows that transferring college credits used to be time consuming, frustrating and often unsuccessful as students learned to their dismay that credits taken – and paid for – at one institution were not accepted at another.

"Thanks to this law, the 'tuition tax' has been repealed," Shapiro said. "Last year we passed another law I authored, and introduced by Senator Dinniman, to expand the credit-sharing agreements from 30 to 60 credits to make it even easier and more affordable for students to get a college degree in Pennsylvania."

The new system created a "Transfer Credit Framework," which is a list of courses that represents the type of coursework that is generally completed during the first and second year of a student's bachelor degree program. Students can transfer up to 30 credits, or 10 courses, of Framework courses to any of the participating institutions and have those credits count toward their degree.

"As the son of my late, single, working mother, I understand the struggles of working your way through college; for this reason, I am proud to have worked with my colleagues to push through this important articulation law," Rep. Tom Houghton said. "I applaud the many community colleges and state universities that work together to make this dream a reality for young men and women, and thank my colleagues for helping to ensure that a college degree is attainable by all, regardless of income level."

Transfer and articulation systems like Pennsylvania's are becoming a critical tool in boosting the number of adults who earn college degrees, as more students attend multiple colleges on their path to a degree. Nationwide, six in ten college students attend more than one college or university before graduating with a bachelor's degree, and two-thirds of transfer students change schools in order to graduate with a more prestigious degree or to access a degree program not offered at their current school.

"PASSHE, along with our community college colleagues, have been key drivers in the development and implementation of the Pennsylvania College Credit Transfer System, which already has provided great benefit to students and their families," Chancellor Cavanaugh said. "We look forward to continuing to work with the community colleges and other members of the higher education community in Pennsylvania to ensure students get the credits they deserve when they transition from one institution to another and that they all count toward their eventual degree completion. This is just another way that students are PASSHE's first and highest priority."

For more information on Pennsylvania's higher education initiatives, visit the Department of Education Web site at [www.education.state.pa.us](http://www.education.state.pa.us).

To view the report, visit [www.PAcollegetransfer.com](http://www.PAcollegetransfer.com).

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# The Pennsylvania College Credit Transfer System

Helping Pennsylvania College Students Stay on Track to a College Degree...



April 2010



**pennsylvania**

TRANSFER AND ARTICULATION CENTER

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### **A System That Works...**

Starting in the Fall of 2008, students have been able to use the Pennsylvania College Credit Transfer System to make the transfer of college credits easier. And since then, Pennsylvania has seen a 13% increase in the number of students transferring from Pennsylvania community colleges to the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities and a 9% increase in the total number of credits transferred.

With an average cost of \$231 per credit hour, the credits transferred in 2009 alone saved students nearly \$35.4 million in “credit transfer taxes,” i.e. the cost of having to pay to repeat a course not accepted for transfer by the student’s new college.

“The pursuit of a college degree has grown more complicated due to the nature of our increasingly mobile and multi-tasking society. More and more, students are amassing credits from multiple colleges that are difficult to transfer or retain. Pennsylvania’s College Credit Transfer System saves time and money by allowing students to take their hard-earned credits wherever they go.”

Dr. Gerald Zahorchak  
Secretary  
Pennsylvania Department of Education



“By reducing barriers to the transfer of credit between and among community colleges and four-year institutions, Pennsylvania’s statewide transfer and articulation system has improved access, reduced time to completion and decreased the amount of lost time and money for transfer students.”

Dr. Peter Hawkes, Dean  
College of Arts and Sciences  
East Stroudsburg University of PA

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
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Department of Education  
Gerald L. Zahorchak, Secretary

Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education  
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# The Challenge



## Across the Nation...

- Six in 10 college students attend more than one college before graduating with a bachelor's degree
- Two-thirds of transfer students change colleges in order to graduate with a more advanced degree or to pursue a program not offered at their current institution
- 44% of community college students transfer to four-year institutions

## What College Students Face Today...

Students enrolling full-time in a single institution and graduating in four years is fast becoming the exception, not the rule. Today's college students are increasingly mobile. They are working. They have families. And more likely than not, they will earn credits from two or more institutions as they make their way toward a college degree.

Students need to know that the credits they have earned and paid for at one college can be applied toward a degree at another. Colleges and universities must work together to identify and accept coursework toward degree requirements so that students don't end up paying a "credit transfer tax" to repeat courses at significant expense in time and money. Nationally, this credit transfer tax is estimated at \$10 billion per year.

**For these reasons and so many more, students need to know which courses from one college will transfer and count toward graduation at another so that they do not waste time or money in pursuit of a college degree.**

"Prior to Act 114, college credits were not guaranteed to be 100% transferable. That meant students wishing to transfer from one college to another could be forced to pay money to retake classes. I call that a 'tuition tax', and it's unfair. I am proud that today we are making it easier for students to complete college on time and for less money."

Rep. Josh Shapiro, Author of Transfer & Articulation Legislation  
 Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
 153<sup>rd</sup> Legislative District

# The Solution

Act 114, signed into law by Governor Edward G. Rendell in 2006, required all of Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges and 14 PASSHE universities to work together to identify a minimum of 30 college credits that would easily transfer among them. Pennsylvania now facilitates collaboration among colleges and universities through the creation of the commonwealth's first seamless statewide transfer and articulation system.

Since the passing of Act 114 of 2006, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the participating colleges and universities have:

- Identified 49 courses in six unique disciplines – English, Public Speaking, Math and Natural Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences and Fine Arts and Humanities – that are guaranteed to transfer among the 32 participating colleges and universities;
- Created the “Transfer Credit Framework” as an advising tool to assist students with selecting coursework, regardless if they know where they plan to transfer or what degree they plan to pursue;
- Launched an interactive website – [www.PAcollegetransfer.com](http://www.PAcollegetransfer.com) – to provide students with online access to transfer information, the Transfer Credit Framework and transferable courses;
- Developed a comprehensive marketing campaign to increase awareness of the transfer and articulation system and to educate students and advisors of the system's many benefits.



“Pennsylvania’s College Credit Transfer System is a great resource, because it helps students like me, who are trying to transfer from a community college to a four-year university but don’t have a clue what to do about it. The website gives students all the information they need to make a smart decision on their transfer destination and field of study.”

Tyler McClenithan  
Student  
Lehigh Carbon Community College

## Institutions Partnering to Benefit Students...

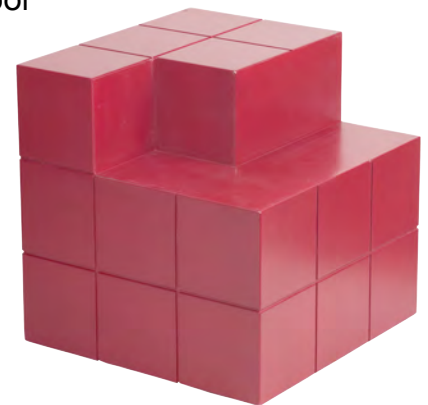
This successful collaboration of 32 colleges and universities through the Pennsylvania College Credit Transfer System has made possible the easy and certain transfer of specific credits, which in turn helps students make the best use of the time and resources they invest in higher education.

<p><b><u>Community Colleges</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Bucks County Community College</li> <li>▶ Butler County Community College</li> <li>▶ Community College of Allegheny County</li> <li>▶ Community College of Beaver County</li> <li>▶ Community College of Philadelphia</li> <li>▶ Delaware County Community College</li> <li>▶ Harrisburg Community College</li> <li>▶ Lehigh Carbon Community College</li> <li>▶ Luzerne County Community College</li> <li>▶ Montgomery County Community College</li> <li>▶ Northampton County Community College</li> <li>▶ Pennsylvania Highlands Community College</li> <li>▶ Reading Area Community College</li> <li>▶ Westmoreland County Community College</li> </ul> <p><b><u>State-related Institutions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Lincoln University</li> <li>▶ Pennsylvania College of Technology</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>State System of Higher Education</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ California University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ Cheyney University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ Clarion University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ Edinboro University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ Indiana University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ Kutztown University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ Mansfield University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ Millersville University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania</li> <li>▶ West Chester University of Pennsylvania</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Private Institutions</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Lackawanna College</li> <li>▶ Saint Francis University</li> </ul>
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## Building the Tools...

An important part of the College Credit Transfer System is an advising tool called the “**Transfer Credit Framework**”, which contains a menu of courses from which students can select up to 30 credits. Students may then transfer these courses toward the degree requirements of nearly every major offered by the 32 participating colleges and universities.

The Transfer Credit Framework consists of 49 courses in the areas of English, Public Speaking, Math and Natural Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences and Fine Arts and Humanities. It’s the type of coursework generally completed during the first and second year of any bachelor degree program.



By enrolling in Framework courses, students can earn the equivalent of one full-year of study, while having peace of mind in knowing that if or when they choose to transfer, they can take their credits with them.

## Demystifying Transfer...

Transferring college credits used to be time consuming, frustrating and ultimately often unsuccessful. Prior to 2008, students seeking to transfer college credits from one institution to another had to contact each institution individually to find out if their credits would be accepted *and* if those credits would count toward their degree. This inconvenient process left students frustrated and confused.

All of that changed with the launch of the **Pennsylvania Transfer and Articulation Center (PA TRAC)** – a free interactive Web site that enables students to easily identify courses that transfer among the participating colleges and universities.

Accessible at **[www.PAcollegetransfer.com](http://www.PAcollegetransfer.com)**, the site offers the following resources:

- Profiles for each of the 32 participating colleges and universities
- Guide to the Transfer Credit Framework
- Databases that allow students to search for transfer institutions and majors, as well as find out how specific courses taken at one college will transfer to another college
- Transfer tips and checklists

PA TRAC gives Pennsylvania students access to college credit transfer information 24/7 so the information they need to make their college plans is always only a mouse click away. Likewise, admissions counselors and student advisors are able to recruit and connect with students well in advance of a student's transfer from one college to another, a step that has been found to dramatically increase a student's chance of academic success.

Pennsylvania's College Credit Transfer System is helping Pennsylvania students every day to make the most of their investment of time and resources in higher education. Helping students on their path to a degree is good for students, their families and the citizens and taxpayers of Pennsylvania.

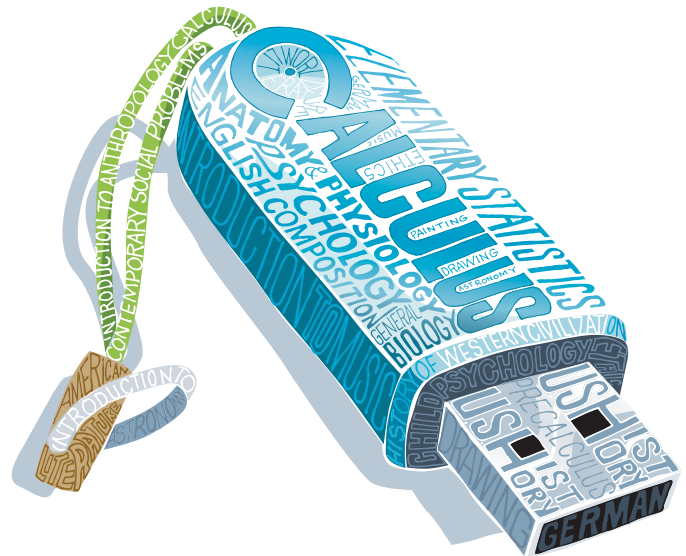
“As a community college student and a future transfer student, the PA TRAC website was a tremendous help. Every link gave me knowledge and comfort with my transferring needs and worries. I really liked that I could use a search to find out if courses transfer or not. The information on the site seems to recognize what a “community college” student goes through.”

Lauren Smith  
Student  
Lehigh Carbon Community College

Reaching Out ...

Pennsylvania has worked hard to spread the word about our College Credit Transfer System. “Take Your Credits With You” publicized the website using online advertising on college websites as well as posters and brochures to tell students – and the advisors and faculty that work them – that before they pack up their credits and head off to their next institution, they should use **www.PAcollegetransfer.com** to learn how they can make the complicated task of transferring easier.

“Take Your Credits With You” has significantly increased use of the online system. In 2009, more than 22,000 people visited the PA TRAC website – seven times as many visitors as in 2008. Through partnerships with the participating colleges and universities and other state agencies that serve students, nearly 400,000 students, including dislocated workers, service members and veterans and adult students, have been exposed to the college transfer system.



TAKE YOUR CREDITS WITH YOU.  
Visit [PAcollegetransfer.com](http://PAcollegetransfer.com)



"This transfer system and PA TRAC website is an excellent tool for any individual who has intentions of transferring. It has given me more options than I thought I had. If more people knew about this, more would be understood about the transfer process."

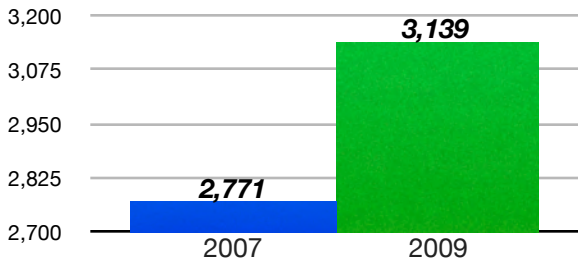
Michelle Anthony  
Student  
Harrisburg Area Community College

# The Impact

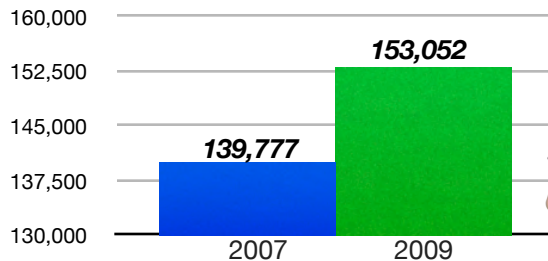
Students and institutions began benefiting from the Pennsylvania College Credit Transfer System in the Fall of 2008. Since then, Pennsylvania has seen a 13% increase in the number of students transferring from Pennsylvania community colleges to PASSHE universities and a 9% increase in the total number of credits transferred.

## Two-Year Comparison of Transfer from Community Colleges to PASSHE Universities

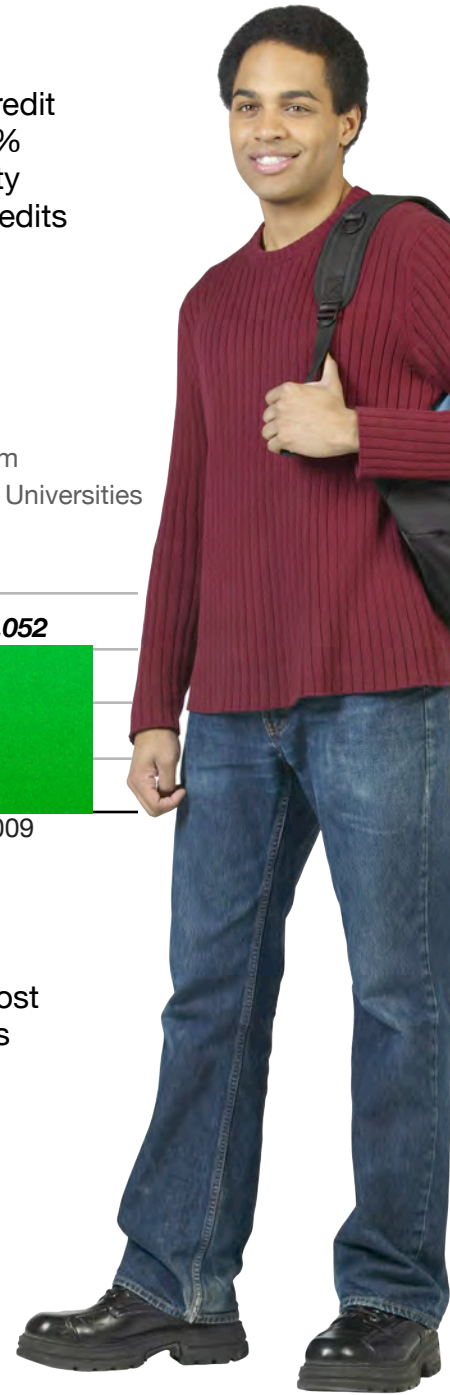
Transfer Students from Community Colleges to PASSHE Universities



Credits Transferred from Community Colleges to PASSHE Universities



With an average cost of \$231 per credit hour, the credits transferred in 2009 alone saved students nearly \$35.4 million in “credit transfer taxes,” i.e. the cost of having to pay to repeat a course not accepted for transfer by the student’s new college.



“Since 2006, we have seen nearly a 20% increase in the number of transfers with a 36% increase in those transferring with more than 60 credits. One in four of our new admissions are now transfer students – now that’s success!”

Dr. John Cavanaugh  
Chancellor  
PA State System of Higher Education

# Moving Forward

The majority of today's college students will likely earn credits at more than one institution in pursuit of a degree. For this reason, it is imperative that Pennsylvania continue to assist students in making the most of their investments in time and resources along the way.



To this end, Pennsylvania is expanding its initial commitment to the College Credit Transfer System with the enactment of Act 50 of 2009.

## **By 2011, Pennsylvania's College Credit Transfer System will include:**

### **Statewide program-to-program articulation agreements:**

The participating colleges and universities are currently developing agreements that will allow students to transfer full Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees into parallel bachelor degree programs at the participating institutions.

Once implemented, students will be able to transfer the equivalent of the first two years of a bachelor's degree to a four-year university and complete the remainder of their degree program in just two more years of full-time study.

### **Expansion of the participation to state-related institutions:**

By Fall 2010, the Pennsylvania State University, Temple University and the University of Pittsburgh will join Lincoln University and Pennsylvania College of Technology in identifying at least 30 credits from the Transfer Credit Framework that they will accept for transfer from any of the participating colleges or universities.

By including all of the state-related institutions in the College Credit Transfer System, students will be able to transfer seamlessly to all of the commonwealth's public institutions.

“Act 50 recognizes that it makes no sense when a student has to repeat at their new college the same class they took at their community college. It not only costs the students extra, it costs extra for the taxpayers who support higher education at the 14 state-owned colleges and universities.”

Senator Andy Dinniman  
Senate of Pennsylvania  
19th District

# Making a Difference

## ***For Students***

“This website provides a quick, easy and informative way to solve the puzzle of transfer. The "Plan Your Transfer" section gave me step-by-step advice through the transfer process, making it much less confusing. PA TRAC is a valuable tool for any transfer student to use.”

Julian Costa, Student  
East Stroudsburg University of PA

“PA TRAC is very convenient and fast. In no time, I found the course equivalency for my summer class. It’s truly a great website for students wishing to transfer.”

Cassie Bigi, Student  
California University of PA

## ***For Colleges and Universities***

“The greatest impact for community colleges has been the increase in awareness of transferability to PASSHE universities among our students. The legislation has helped to counter myths about community college credits not transferring.”

Dr. Art Scott, President  
Northampton Community College

“The Pennsylvania College Credit Transfer System allows students to make college plans that include a less expensive beginning at a community college and complete their education with us. We gain by making better use of our capacity at the upper-division course level. Students gain by having a system they can trust will provide seamless transfer. Families gain when they maximize their resources to achieve an educational goal for a family member.”

Dr. Robert Smith, President  
Slippery Rock University of PA

## ***For Pennsylvania***

“The commonwealth’s College Credit Transfer System will encourage Pennsylvanians, who move or are unable to remain at their initial school of choice, to continue their education without fear of losing credits already completed at another institution.”

Sandi Vito, Secretary  
Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry

“The PA Workforce Investment Board encourages all of the commonwealth's institutions of higher education to become fully participating members of the statewide transfer and articulation initiative and work together to maximize the higher education experience of students.”

David Malone, Chair  
PA Workforce Investment Board



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PA TRAC - KEEPING YOU ON TRACK TO A COLLEGE DEGREE