WWCC Auto-Confer Process

Abstract

Auto-confer is a process for identifying students who have completed degrees or certificates but have not been awarded these credentials. Often students leave the college to re-enter the workforce or begin a next stage in their education without receiving their certificate/degree. Walla Walla Community College uses an innovative approach to find these students. Our innovation involves the intersecting of three data sources, a unique computer program to intersect the data sources and the speed of modern computing to sort through tens of thousands of data records and output information most useful to increase degree completions for students.

All three data sources are in electronic form. Two data sources are very commonly in digital form at most colleges: Student Management System (SMS) and Degree Audit (DA). The third data source is not commonly available to colleges. This is what we call the “Student Survey Data” data source. One of the elements in the student survey data is the student’s permission to “auto-confer or post degrees they have earned without having to apply to have the degree posted. We gather the answer to this question by putting it in front of every student at the time they register for classes each quarter.

The Student Management System (SMS) and Degree Audit (DA) data is used to identify students who may no longer even be in attendance, but who have either earned a degree but have not had it posted to their student records, or are close to a degree but are no longer attending college. This is accomplished by using the digital data from SMS (courses the student has completed) and DA (the courses required for a degree or certificate). Using modern computer systems tens of thousands of student records can be compared to hundreds of degree or certificated requirements in a matter of minutes. The results: a rich source of degrees that could be conferred or students very close to a degree.
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Summary

1. Once a year by early August, Office of Admissions and Records (OAR) completes programming the latest degrees, certificates and short programs into the state’s Degree Audit system.

2. OAR Director requests that WWCC Technology Services Department to contact the SBCTC-IT in Olympia to obtain the latest Degree Audit template data and run a new set of Degree Estimates on the Degree Estimation Appliance.

3. Once complete, the Degree Estimation data is exposed to several programs – one being the SSRS (Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Server) where a query is available to the OAR office. At Walla Walla Community College this is accessible from the CCNET staff portal using the menu link called “College Reporting Services”.

4. Using the latest data and the desired optimum completion metric, usually 5.5, OAR runs the Degree Boost (Auto-Confer) report.

5. OAR exports report to Excel spreadsheet for easier data manipulation and extraction.

6. OAR compares “estimated” degrees for each student listed in the report file to the “actual” degree earned (if any) within the Student Management System (SMS) transcript screen.

7. OAR determines whether or not to continue the process based on degree earned or not. If no degree has been posted, OAR runs Degree Audit on individual students.

8. OAR determines which, if any, classes are needed to complete a degree and passes information on to advising for follow-up.

9. If student has earned a degree but it has not been posted, OAR Graduation Evaluator performs a detailed, manual degree evaluation.

10. OAR “Auto-Confers” any degree that has been confirmed but not yet posted.
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Detailed Instructions

Sign into CCNET by clicking on the link at the bottom of the WWCC home page.
Click on “College Reporting Services”.

Select “Published”.

Published
All end user reports should be filed under this folder. For storing reports in development.
Select “StudentRelated”…

…followed by “DegreeBoost” and “DegreeBoost1”
Select a value in “Estimated Batch” drop-down menu. This will normally be the most recent date found at the bottom of the list as it will have the most recent Degree Audit information downloaded from the State Board server. The default is 5.5 and that works perfectly for our purposes. Then click on “View Report” Button.
Note: Read information just below “Degree Boost v1”. Select Excel format from “Export” drop-down menu. This will give the user the ability to easily manipulate resulting data. Click “Export” and save. Once you have saved the Excel file, you can exit your Internet browser.

Open Excel file and delete first four rows, Degree Boost verbiage, which looks just like the verbiage above. Then delete column A, which has no data in it.

Ensure all students on list have “True” (students who have given us permission to Auto-Confer their degree) under “ICA Auto Confer Opt In”. They should all show “True”, but check anyway.
Next, highlight “CE SID” columns, then click on “Merge & Center” button. Repeat for “STDU STU PRG ENR” and “CE Batch Id” columns. Then delete all other columns containing no data and adjust column widths as necessary.

From the menu tabs select “Data”, then “Filter” to allow easier data manipulation by column. Click on down-arrow of “TDD EXIT CD” column and select “Sort A to Z”. If it sorted correctly, any row with an Exit Code (degree already awarded) should be at the top of the spreadsheet and should now be deleted.

Remove columns that are not necessary for Auto-Confer purposes: “TDD PRG COMPL”, “TDD GRAD YRQ” (2), “TDD EXIT CD”, “CE Template Yrq Begin”, “CE Batch Id”, “CE Batch Date”, “ICA Auto Confer Opt In”, “CE Auto Confer Response Date”, and “STUD RES STAT”.

Add three columns that will be used for Auto-Confer tracking process: “REC’D DEGREE? (Y/N)”, “DEGREE APP (Y/N)”, AND “DEGREE AUDIT – MISSING CLASSES”. Your spreadsheet should now look like

Alphabetize degrees by clicking on down-arrow of “CE Degree Title” and select “Sort A to Z”. Remove “**Associate Degree Nursing Support Courses”, since it is not a degree. They should all appear together making it easier to remove them.
At this point, you may choose to cut and paste all certificates and short programs listed on the report and place them in another document to handle at a later time. For instructional purposes, we will deal only with degrees; the process is virtually identical for certificates and short programs.

In the Student Management System (SMS), screen SM6015, “Student Transcript”, check if a student has previously received a degree. Press F5 or click on “MORE LIST”, as required, until you get to the end of the transcript and see if any degree has been posted. It’s possible the student may have already received the degree listed in “STUD STU PRG ENR”. If not, check to see if “CE Program Code” and/or “CE Degree Title”, the estimated degree, has been posted. Eddie only has a short program listed, but no degree.

![Screen shot of SM6015-005 Student Transcript screen showing Eddie's transcript with no degree listed.]

WARRIOR, EDDIE T
Example: Let’s assume student Eddie Warrior came up on the DegreeBoost report as being close to an Associate in Arts Degree-DTA. We checked his transcript (SM6015) and he has not earned any degree in any program, not the one listed under “STUD STU PRG ENR” or the degree estimated. We annotate an “N” in the “REC’D DEGREE (Y/N)” then check with the college’s Degree/Graduation Evaluator to see if the student has even applied for a degree. Let’s assume Eddie has not, so we place an “N” in “DEGREE APP? (Y/N)”. One last column to check is “STUD LAST YRQ ATTN” because if it is showing the current quarter, chances are he is still here and may be currently finishing his degree. See below.

It’s now time to run a Degree Audit to determine what our student needs to complete his degree.

Once again, log into CCNET, and click on the Degree Audit link on the left menu.
When the following screen appears, log into Degree Audit using the Account Name and Password set up for you by IT.

Once properly logged in, click on “SMS – Degree Audit”.

![Login Screen](image1.png)

![Application List](image2.png)
Read the FERPA notification on the next screen and click “Continue”.

When you get a screen similar to the one below, click on “Advising”.

On the following screen, type the student’s SID into the “Find Student by ID” block and click the “Find” button; the student’s name should appear in the white block just below the “Find” button.
Select a degree from the drop-down menu, check the small box next to “Open in new window” (recommended), then click the “Run Audit” button. If nothing happens or the window goes away, turn off the “Pop-up Blocker” on your Internet browser.
When the next screen appears, select “Expand All” to get the best Degree Audit indicators.

Since a green checkmark indicates completion, look for any section that does not show one. In the example below, note the missing green checkmark next to “Physical Education” indicating the student is missing some class. 3 credits of PE are required and though indications are that the student has had 3 credits applied to his degree audit, one class/grade is still missing.
Scroll up and down to see if there are any other green checkmarks missing. It appears Eddie is also missing one next to “Communications” and more specifically, next to English 102. Apparently, though, all indications are that he has at the very least registered for ENGL& 102. He is just awaiting a grade.

From this point on, you will have to run a Degree Audit on each student on the list. You consider tracking each student under the “DEGREE AUDIT- MISSING CLASSES” column.

If the student is complete and has received a degree, annotate it in that column and there is nothing left to do. If they have not completed, annotate what Degree Audit indicates is still left to be done, and you may follow up later with this student. If they are complete and have not received their degree, pass the student on to the Graduation Evaluator. If they confirm that the degree has been earned but was not posted, you may do so at this time.