INTRODUCTION

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is always looking for ways to improve retention and graduation rates. The Office of Institutional Research completed a project focusing on student movement with the goal of following student major changes from term to term. Previous “Major Changers” projects attempted to analyze this data in a tabular format which was difficult to read and understand. A Sankey diagram was used to better visualize this data. The Sankey diagram is an innovative way to visualize the flow of data between points in time. These diagrams have not been very widespread in higher education due to the complexity of creating the graphic. Additionally, many universities do not have organized retention and graduation data to complete a Sankey diagram.

RETENTION AND GRADUATION DATA MODEL

- Worked hard with IT department to build permanent custom data model
- One row per student
- Has 12 terms per student (six years)
- Calculates Time to Degree and Credits to Degree
- Now contains 234 columns
- Easily join retention and graduation data to anything we want
- Output was still difficult to work with

BUILDING THE SANKEY

- The Sankey is DELICATE!
- Excel model tab
- Types of Sankeys
- Sigmoid function & flow size
- Min & Max position formulas
- Curve formulas

UNIVERSITY FEEDBACK

Looking from the perspective of a graduating major, this view shows the majority of students who graduate in this major start elsewhere.

Application

Looking from the perspective of a graduating major, this view shows the majority of students who graduate in this major start elsewhere.