



Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

29 November 2001
Governors' Boardroom, Room 224
NorQuest College

PRESENT: Lucille Walter (Chair), Carole Byrne (for Anne Marie Decore), Terry Cooper, Catherine Eddy, Elaine Foulon, Peter Haney, Shirley Holloway, Vance MacNichol, Rick Morrow, Peggy Patterson, Harry Reding, Jean Valgardson, Kory Zwack, Marilyn Patton (Executive Officer), Linda Janz (Research Officer)

ABSENT: Anne Marie Decore, Judith Hughes, Vanessa Wood

Wayne Shillington, President of NorQuest College, welcomed members to NorQuest and congratulated L. Walter on her appointment as Chair of Council. He commented that Alberta has an excellent transfer system and encouraged members to continue working on behalf of Alberta learners.

The Chair reported that J. Hughes and V. Wood had expressed regret that they would not be able to make the meeting because of road conditions.

1. Minutes, 24 September 2001

It was MOVED by C. Eddy, and SECONDED by H. Reding, that the 24 September 2001 Council minutes be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

2. Items arising from the Minutes

There were three items arising from the minutes of the 24 September 2001 meeting. At the last meeting, the Executive Officer had noted that she planned to follow up with the three universities regarding Statistics articulation. She reported that she recently reminded Dr. Wolfgang Holzmann of the University of Lethbridge of his commitment to coordinate a review of introductory statistics courses at the universities.

With respect to the findings from the Duplicate Application Detection (DAD) 2000 project the Chair recalled the discussion about reasons why a high number of qualified students accepted to Alberta post-secondary institutions do not attend. She drew attention to a recent University of Alberta Senate Task Force report entitled *Degrees of Opportunity: Examining Access to Post-Secondary Education in Alberta*, which was included in the agenda package. The report cites rising tuition as one possible barrier to access to post-secondary education in Alberta. As well, the Chair referred to the *Post-secondary Accessibility Study* commissioned by Alberta Learning. It reported that high school students overestimate the amount of tuition for post-secondary education and are often not aware of supports (e.g., loan remission) available to them. The report is available on Alberta Learning's Web site at www.learning.gov.ab.ca/news/2001/may/report.asp.

At the previous meeting it was agreed that minutes from Council meetings would be made available on the ACAT Web sites rather than mailed out to recipients. Following the meeting, recipients were notified by e-mail that minutes from the March 2001 meeting had

been posted on the Web sites. The Executive Officer reported that subsequent feedback indicated that this seems to have worked well for stakeholders.

3. ACAT Chair and Secretariat reports

The Chair provided a list of various meetings she had attended during the months of October and November. Citing her personal mission to raise awareness among high school students and counselors about the *Alberta Transfer Guide* and the work of ACAT, the Chair highlighted two conferences she recently attended. At the Educational Liaison Association of Alberta (ELAA) conference she advocated for inclusion of ACAT on ELAA, noting that this would be a vehicle to increase exposure to ACAT reports and information. The majority of conference attendees agreed that this would be beneficial and the issue will be included on their February meeting's agenda. While most of the ELAA conference attendees were already aware of ACAT and the *Transfer Guide*, the Chair commented that this was not so among guidance participants attending the ATA Guidance Council Conference. At the request of ACAT's Chair, both organizations agreed to include a presentation by ACAT on their 2002 conference programs

At the Committee of Contact Persons in October, the Chair had suggested that she and the Executive Officer try to attend one guidance counsellor meeting in each geographic area in order to speak to as many counsellors as possible. Subsequently, Tony Norrad, Director of Admissions at Concordia University College, invited the Chair and Executive Officer to speak briefly about ACAT and the *Guide* at their annual brunch with counselors in December. The Chair also reported that since the September meeting she had a number of discussions with officials in the Basic Learning division of the department regarding high school curriculum development.

The Executive Officer reported that she and the Chair had attended two articulation initiatives, the Provincial Academic Upgrading meeting and the Education Articulation meeting. At the Education Articulation meeting they learned that the University of Alberta (UofA) would be changing the mathematics requirement for Bachelor of Education students in the elementary education stream. Participants at the meeting were concerned that insufficient notice had been given with respect to the change. Fern Snart, Associate Dean of UofA's Faculty of Education, undertook to have the effective date revisited. She will provide the outcome of discussions to Contact Persons via the ACAT listserv. As well, the issue of applied degrees for admission to after-degree programs was discussed at the meeting. While UofA and The University of Lethbridge do not accept applied degrees for admission to after degrees, University of Calgary (UofC) accepts them as a first-degree needed for admission to the elementary route of their after degree in Education program.

The Chair and Executive Officer have convened an Engineering Articulation meeting in December. UofC is changing at least four first-year engineering courses that will impact existing transfer agreements with other institutions.

4. Committee of Contact Persons meeting

Each year, the Chair and Executive Officer meet with Contact Persons and their helpers to discuss issues of importance to the work of ACAT. This year's meeting was held on 24 October and was hosted by Lethbridge Community College. The backgrounder in the Council members' agenda package summarized the issues discussed at the October meeting.

The Executive Officer drew attention to several items. First, she explained the issue related to block transfer agreements. The majority of agreements in the *Alberta Transfer*

Guide are course agreements and some Contact Persons had commented that negotiating and maintaining such a heavy volume of agreements is resource intensive. As an alternative they favored more block transfer agreements. One member clarified the difference between block transfer agreements and acceptance of two-year diplomas for admission to post-diploma degree programs (i.e., 2+2 agreements). Another member commented that learners are asking for more block and 2+2 agreements, and so her institution is focusing on development of more of this type of agreement. Another member observed that there is a certain rigidity to block agreements because students often change their minds before completing the complete block of courses. As a result, on transfer these students may not get any credit unless course-by-course agreements also exist. Block transfer does not work for these students. One member asked if it were known how frequently transfer agreements are used. She observed that new agreements are added on an ongoing basis and wondered if there were some that were never used by transfer students. We know how many students move between institutions but determining the transfer credit awarded is more complex. Another member commented that monitoring is built in when there are University Transfer programs. For example, colleges will not offer courses that students are not interested in taking. The Executive Officer explained that if a course is no longer in an institution's calendar, transfer agreements involving that course should not be included in the *Transfer Guide*. She noted that Contact Persons are encouraged to remove such agreements each year prior to publication of the next edition of the *Guide*.

The Executive Officer then turned to the issue of implementation of a common grading system among Alberta post-secondary institutions. At the September Council meeting, it was agreed that ACAT should continue to monitor progress at the colleges and technical institutes. The Executive Officer noted that, since the Contact Persons meeting, several more institutions have reported that either discussions regarding implementation had begun on their campuses or that their academic councils would discuss the issue shortly. At the Committee of Contact Persons meeting participants had asked if there was a more proactive role for ACAT with respect to implementation of the common grading system. Several Council members commented that most institutions are moving towards adopting and implementing the new system. Therefore, members AGREED that Council's monitoring role was appropriate and that taking on a more proactive role could change the way in which institutions relate to Council.

The Executive Officer asked P. Haney, who also serves as Contact Person for the University of Lethbridge, to summarize the discussion from the Contact Persons meeting with respect to information on the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) Web site. He explained that several years ago Alberta Education stopped translating high school courses from other provinces for high schools. Since then contacts in post-secondary institutions frequently are asked by high school counselors for assistance in this area. As well, CMEC's paper document called *Secondary Education in Canada: A Student Transfer Guide* was disbanded although they did produce one version on their Web site. This was a very helpful resource; however, the 1998 version has never been updated on the site. As well, the list of out-of-province contacts provided on the site is also out of date. The Executive Officer added that Council's chart (i.e., *Other Provinces' 2000-2001 Grade 12-level Subjects Acceptable for Admission to Alberta Universities and Private University Colleges*) on page vii of the *2001-2002 Guide* reflects the ACAT Secretariat's and the Contact Persons' efforts to provide information to high school counselors and students coming to Alberta from outside the province. She noted that it is becoming more difficult to update this chart on an annual basis given the lack of current information from CMEC. R. Morrow was asked if, in his role as an Assistant Deputy Minister, he could assist with this issue. He replied that he would follow up and report back to Council at a future meeting. One member added that, in addition to updated

information, it would be helpful to have a process in place that would ensure regular updating of this important information.

The Executive Officer next spoke briefly about the Tech Prep presentation made at the Contact Persons meeting. Alberta Tech Prep studies are aimed at providing secondary students with applied academics in combination with career education and work experience. According to the two presenters, the Alberta Tech Prep Consortium has made arrangements with Alberta Learning to have the Tech Prep credential recorded on high school transcripts. The presenters asked for Contact Persons to support a funding proposal to Alberta Learning to create a database of articulation agreements involving post-secondary institutions and Tech Prep. The Contact Persons responded that they were not able to speak for their institutions and, furthermore, post-secondary institutions were competing for the same resources. In conclusion, the Executive Officer had offered to explore ways to make formally negotiated articulation agreements between school districts and post-secondary institutions available, perhaps in pdf format, on the ACAT Web site. J. Valgardson commented that Lethbridge Community College's articulation agreements for Career and Technology Studies (CTS) were already published in their calendar. She noted that advance credit for specific CTS courses is given to all students whether they have the Tech Prep credential or not. She advised Council that the southwest part of the province has not fully accepted the concept of the Tech Prep credential. Another member explained that some CTS courses have been altered locally so they meet requirements for specific post-secondary programs. It would be difficult to formalize articulation agreements for such a wide range of CTS courses throughout the province. One member commented that as an advocate for learners, ACAT should continue to monitor developments regarding Tech Prep. R. Morrow added that Basic Learning is looking into several issues with respect to CTS courses.

The Executive Officer then recounted the Contact Persons' discussion about transcribing of CTS courses. P. Haney and J. Valgardson commented that this is an issue for their institutions and explained that problems arise when there are discrepancies between a student's unofficial high school statement of grades for CTS courses and the official Alberta Learning high school transcript. Evaluating such records and transcripts requires a great deal of time and manual work on the part of evaluators at post-secondary institutions. This issue is particularly a problem when students are offered early admission. R. Morrow asked about the frequency of this problem and if it is a problem throughout the province. While UofA and UofC accept CTS courses in some instances, they do not accept them for admission in the same way as UofL. Therefore, the issue does not appear to be as great a problem for these institutions. R. Morrow undertook to follow up with the person responsible for the CTS program in Basic Learning and asked P. Haney and J. Valgardson to provide him with more detailed information that would inform the discussion.

As directed at the September Council meeting, Contact Persons were asked to comment on findings from the DAD 2000 project with respect to the 12% increase in Fall 2000 in the number of applications and learners. Although several reasons were suggested, no single one could account for the increase.

Grande Prairie Regional College has agreed to host the next Committee of Contact Persons meeting on 23 October 2002.

5. Secondary – Post-Secondary articulation

- (a) Update regarding follow-up from 16 July Mathematics meeting between Alberta Learning and post-secondary institutions

In July 2001 Alberta Learning officials met with post-secondary institutional representatives to discuss issues related to secondary school mathematics. On 21 August, the Deputy Minister wrote to all presidents outlining the outcomes of the meeting and attached an Action Plan that included three areas involving ACAT. The Chair updated members regarding these three areas.

The first item in the Deputy's letter involving ACAT was with respect to Transitional Mathematics 101, the bridging course developed by Athabasca University and a transitional mathematics committee. The course is designed for students with Applied Math 30 who find they need Pure Math 30 for admission to post-secondary programs. In mid August, curriculum material for this course was distributed to post-secondary institutions. After reviewing the material, senior academic officers were asked to report to ACAT as to the appropriateness of Transitional Mathematics 101 for admission to programs at their institution in lieu of Pure Math 30. Included in the agenda package was a list of institutions that had reported their decision to ACAT. At the meeting, the Executive Officer provided an updated list.

The second point in the Deputy's letter was a request that post-secondary institutions develop a map or flowchart illustrating the pathways a student might follow from grade 10 mathematics to post-secondary programs. A package of all maps and charts received by the ACAT Secretariat was distributed to members. Referring to NAIT's chart included in the package, S. Holloway noted that there was an error in the chart as the Computer System Technology program should be included with the programs requiring Pure Math 30 as the prerequisite.

Finally, the Deputy's letter called on ACAT to coordinate the development of an overall communications package using the Mathematics pathways flowcharts which were to be submitted by post-secondary institutions. Referring to institutions' decisions regarding Transitional Mathematics 101 and the flowcharts received to date, the Chair asked members for ideas as to how this information might be presented to stakeholders. One member commented that institutions will be monitoring this issue and that prerequisites may change from time to time. Therefore, rather than attempting to provide some type of summary of the information submitted by post-secondary institutions, it would be best to refer students directly to individual institutions for further information about mathematics requirements for admission. The Chair commented that students are used to checking calendars and admissions information of the institutions they wish to attend. The Executive Officer reminded members that information about acceptance of the new mathematics courses by post-secondary institutions is already posted on Alberta Learning's Web site. As the information recently submitted to ACAT by post-secondary institutions is more helpful, it might be wise to use it as a replacement for the existing information on the Web site. Several members concurred that parents, teachers and superintendents need to have this information. Once information from institutions is complete, R. Morrow offered to discuss the information with the Deputy Minister. The Executive Officer said that if all responses regarding Transitional Mathematics 101 are positive, the course can be added to the next edition of the *Transfer Guide* on the chart that lists the college and technical institute upgrading courses that are acceptable for admission to Alberta universities and private university colleges. She also recommended that copies of the flowcharts be sent to all post-secondary institutions so that they can see what other institutions have decided with respect to pathways and acceptance of the Transitions course. One Contact Person had already suggested to her that business

diploma programs might strive to agree on common admission requirements with respect to mathematics.

One member suggested that institutions will need to track the success of students admitted to post-secondary programs with Applied Mathematics. P. Patterson noted that UofC now has a standing committee of its Committee on Admissions and Transferability to deal with secondary articulation. Post-secondary institutions have to identify secondary outcomes needed for admission to their post-secondary programs.

In response to a comment that discussions with respect to high school mathematics curriculum need to continue, R. Morrow noted that Alberta Learning is still receiving feedback and that more data are needed. He welcomes feedback from institutions on students admitted to post-secondary programs with the new mathematics courses.

Several members expressed concern regarding the length of time it will take students to complete the Transitional Mathematics course. Given the amount of material to be covered, they suggested that it would likely take as much time to complete as it would for a student with Applied Mathematics 30 subsequently taking Pure Math 20 and 30. It is important that students understand this. (The course is designed to be an 80-hour course while Pure and Applied Mathematics courses are 125 hours each. There is deemed to be a 30% overlap between Pure and Applied Mathematics at the 30 level.)

One member flagged two other potential issues: increased emphasis on calculators in Pure Math 30 and the change in designation of 30-level curriculum (i.e., the move from 30, 33 to 30-1 and 30-2 or 30 Applied and 30 Pure).

(b) English Language Arts

At the September Council meeting, several members indicated that their institutions had not yet received the information they needed to make decisions as to the appropriateness of the new English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum for admission to post-secondary programs. Following the Council meeting, the Chair met with Janet Hancock, ELA Program Manager in Basic Learning, to discuss concerns raised by members. As a result of their meeting, it was discovered that contact has primarily been with faculty members, especially those in Faculties of Education. Senior Academic Officers or individuals involved in making decisions about use of the ELA courses for admission to specific programs may not have been involved. Following the discussion, Alberta Learning immediately sent information (i.e., Program of Studies for Senior High School English Language Arts, Interim 2001 and Guide to Implementation: Grade 10 English Language Arts) to post-secondary senior academic officers and to Council members.

The Chair had also asked a number of Council members to comment on what more information their institutions needed. In response, C. Eddy had e-mailed comments on the most recent ELA package received from Alberta Learning, as well as suggestions for dealing with future secondary-level curriculum changes. She suggested that it would be helpful for post-secondary institutions dealing with curriculum changes to know the scope of the change, the range of programs or courses for which the course is required, and the potential impact on other subjects or courses. Providing this information to post-secondary institutions when high school curriculum change is proposed would help facilitate the consultation process. The Chair thanked C. Eddy for sharing her insight and proposed the creation of two committees: one to concentrate on articulation of the ELA curriculum, and the other, working with ideas suggested by C. Eddy, to suggest a process for facilitating consideration of high school curriculum change in order to ensure timely policy decisions with respect to admission to post-secondary programs. The ELA

committee would review the information available from Learning and collectively make recommendations that would inform admission and prerequisite decision-making that post-secondary institutions will need to make.

Several members supported the idea of a committee with respect to ELA. Some members commented that there may only be a need for one committee rather than two. They suggested that a standing committee of ACAT could be formed to deal with secondary – post-secondary articulation and subgroups could be established depending on the content area. Members agreed to give more consideration to the idea of standing committee and discuss it further at a future meeting. Because the ELA curriculum is already being implemented, members decided that the priority was to move ahead with a committee that would deal with ELA curriculum changes. This committee could make recommendations that would feed into the larger, ongoing process.

It was MOVED and SECONDED that ACAT convene a secondary to post-secondary articulation committee for English Language Arts.

CARRIED

It was agreed that membership of the committee be determined by the Chair and Executive Officer. Keeping in mind the need for representation from different types of programming, the Chair asked members to e-mail suggestions regarding membership to the Executive Officer. Included in the agenda package was a draft Terms of Reference for the Secondary to Post-Secondary Articulation For English Language Arts committee. Members were asked to review this document and forward comments and suggestions to the Secretariat.

The Chair thanked members for their recent input regarding ELA and noted that, in particular, C. Eddy's comments had been helpful for Council and for individuals in Basic Learning.

During the lunch break, E. Foulon conducted a short tour of NorQuest College's new Learning Centre. Following the tour, the Chair expressed Council's appreciation to E. Foulon for making the arrangements and to NorQuest College for hosting the meeting.

(c) Updates on curriculum developments

The Chair invited R. Morrow to speak about development of curriculum at the secondary level. Before giving a brief overview of the process, he distributed two diagrams: *Six Steps in the Alberta Curriculum Development Approval and Implementation Process* and *10 Steps in Resource Development Process*). He explained that these diagrams are used internally in order to be consistent. One member observed that step 3 of the first diagram appears to be a good link to the articulation process (i.e., secondary to post-secondary) discussed earlier.

R. Morrow also explained the Minister's recent comments to school trustees about grade 10 being a foundation year to pathways for grades 11 and 12. He indicated that a discussion paper was being developed and that Donna Smith, Executive Director for Basic Learning's Standards and Processes sector could provide further information. He suggested that Donna might attend a future meeting to explain the process of curriculum development, although one member suggested it might be more useful for her to act as a resource to the articulation committee.

The Chair noted that she and the Executive Officer had met with Pat Lychak, Basic Learning's Social Studies Manager and it appears that they have already adopted a

different approach. It looks like they will be developing all three years of curriculum and then field testing before they implement the 10-level.

Some members recommended that it would be helpful to have students involved in the curriculum development process. R. Morrow agreed although he highlighted some of the logistical difficulties in doing so.

6. Council meeting schedule

Members agreed that the next two meetings of Council would be on 25 March and 19 June 2002. The Executive Officer recommended that the March meeting be held in Edmonton and the June meeting in Calgary.

7. 2001-2004 ACAT Business Plan

Turning to ACAT's most recent Business Plan, the Chair clarified that it is a rolling plan that is updated annually. She observed that the language of the mandate and vision of the plan appears to speak more to transfer than to admissions and noted that she would like to see a stronger emphasis on admissions. One member questioned if this would be in keeping with ACAT's Terms of Reference. Another member commented that a few years ago Council had revisited ACAT's mandate, mission and vision. The Executive Officer agreed to review the minutes from those meetings in order to determine if a stronger emphasis on "admissions" had been discussed at that time. She agreed to report back to Council at its next meeting.

One member noted that the post-secondary system and Alberta's transfer system have changed since Council was first formed. Students now have greater of choice with more private institutions offering programming. She wondered if this needed to be reflected in ACAT's mandate.

One member commented that in the Vision section of the plan, the reference to Council's Principle A is not clear. Members agreed that Council's Principles would be included as an appendix in future editions of the plan.

In reviewing the items listed in the Opportunities and Challenges section of the plan, it was noted that while there has been progress made with respect to most items, many are ongoing. In particular the Chair referred to the recommendations and outcomes included in the final report of the Minister's Working Group on Admissions and Transfer, noting that in many cases recommendations applicable to ACAT have been implemented, are utilized on an ongoing basis, or plans are underway for such implementation. The following items were discussed and it was generally felt that they were areas that still needed discussion at future meetings:

- "Similar university programs have similar admission requirements. Universities should adopt a common presentation format for admission requirements."
- "Alberta Learning should develop...an integrated, interactive computer program to organize and present information on available post-secondary programs in Alberta and their admission requirements to prospective students, parents and teachers." On this matter, the Chair pointed out that several commercial companies have created programs (e.g., Choices, Bridges, School Finder) which do what was suggested by the Working Group. The suggestion was made that the names of these programs be passed on to Lois Hawkins for possible follow-up.
- "ACAT will convene an annual forum on admissions and transferability issues jointly with the Universities Coordinating Council, the Council of Presidents, the Private University Colleges Coordinating Council, and with appropriate representation from

ACTISEC, CAUS, and the K-12 system including students, parents, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the guidance Council and Alberta Learning. This forum will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to identify issues, flag emerging opportunities and share information for the subsequent attention of the appropriate body.” Members suggested that this is something that ACAT did not currently have the financial or human resources to organize.

Members were asked to review the Business Plan prior to the next meeting and forward any suggestions regarding updating it for the coming year. One member commented that it would be helpful if members were provided with a revised draft to which they could respond.

8. Alberta Transfer Guide

The Executive Officer referred to the backgrounder in members’ agenda package and, in particular, encouraged members to visit the Web site of The King’s University College. Glenn Keeler, Registrar, has developed a means to link his institution’s site to the ACAT transfer agreements database, allowing students to see quickly how their courses at King’s will transfer to other institutions. Glenn has shared the instructions with Contact Persons so that other institutions can link their sites to enable searches of the transfer agreements database. The Executive Officer encouraged others, especially colleges with University Transfer programs, to consider adding this feature to their sites. In addition to providing helpful information for students, it would be another way to use the considerable work of Contact Persons in ensuring the accuracy of the database.

9. Items for information

The Chair drew members’ attention to the following news articles and documents included in the agenda package.

- “A strong learning system continues to improve opportunities for Albertans” 28 September 2001 and Alberta Learning’s *Results Report 2000/2001* (a news release from Alberta Learning and the companion document to the department’s annual report).
- “Local students make post-secondary jump”, *Red Deer Advocate*, 10 October 2001 and “Students’ plans offer snapshot of education”, *Red Deer Advocate*, 11 October 2001. (Both articles are based on the *Post-Secondary Transitions in Alberta: Educational Outcomes of 1998/1999 Grade 12 Students*, which is a co-operative venture between ACAT and Alberta Learning.)
- “Students log on to new online resource – *myfuture.ca*” (This press release describes a collaborative initiative in Ontario that is intended to help students make wise choices with respect to their post-secondary studies.)
- “British Columbia: Review ordered whether Grade 12 should keep focus on university readiness” (This article is a reminder that a good portion of students do not go directly to post-secondary studies. The article summarizes discussions taking place in BC with respect to this dilemma.)
- *Brain Gain: The Economic Benefits of Recognizing Learning and Learning Credential in Canada* (The Conference Board of Canada has produced this 53 page report about improving the system for recognizing the learning of immigrants and other Canadians

as a way of “turning the brain drain into a brain gain”. The report is available as a pdf on the Conference Board’s Web site at: [http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education/.](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education/))

The Executive Officer invited members to forward articles of interest that could be included in future agenda packages.

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED