



Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

19 June 2002

Second Floor, North Tower, Seventh Street Plaza, Edmonton
Edmonton Learning Centre
Athabasca University

PRESENT: Lucille Walter (Chair), Carole Byrne (representing Anne Marie Decore), Terry Cooper, Catherine Eddy, Shirley Holloway, Judith Hughes, Vance MacNichol, Rick Morrow, Jean Valgardson, Marilyn Patton (Executive Officer), Marena Fakli (Manager), Patti Papirnik (Manager),

OBSERVERS: Shirley Barg, Ed Behnke

ABSENT: Anne Marie Decore, Peter Haney, Peggy Patterson, Harry Reding

Judith Hughes welcomed members to the Edmonton Learning Centre of Athabasca University.

The Chair reported that Peter Haney, Harry Reding and Peggy Patterson expressed regret that they would not be able to attend the meeting. The Chair then welcomed Shirley Barg, who will represent the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS), and Ed Behnke, who represents the public colleges sector. Appointments will be finalized in the next few months to fill the two vacancies. The Chair expressed her appreciation to several members for whom this is their last meeting. These members are Shirley Holloway, Anne Marie Decore, Terry Cooper, Elaine Foulon, Kory Zwack and Vanessa Wood.

After members introduced themselves, the agenda was adopted as circulated with no additions or deletions.

1. Minutes, 25 March 2002

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the 25 March 2002 Council minutes be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

2. Items arising from the Minutes

There were two items arising from the minutes of the 25 March 2002 meeting.

On 18 March 2002 the Chair and Executive Officer participated in a system-wide consultation on the future of Alberta's post-secondary education system. Members had previously expressed concern about comments in the source documents about the role of Alberta Learning and whether the department is considering more regulation or legislation regarding transfer agreements. The Chair wrote to the Assistant Deputy Minister to express the concerns of Council. The ADM's response was received and shared with the members. The ADM states that it was not the intent of the strategic framework consultation document to suggest the need for new regulation or legislation. The intent was to highlight the continued need for all stakeholders to work together to improve transferability among post-secondary institutions.

Members continued to express concern over the roles and responsibilities of post-secondary institutions and their autonomy. The Chair was asked to continue her dialogue with the ADM.

R. Morrow provided additional information on the registrations for Transitional Math 101 offered by Athabasca University noting that some of the students are from out of Alberta. J. Hughes expressed a concern that students were taking Math 101 concurrently with Applied Math 30. Math 101 had been designed for graduates of Applied Math 30. In many cases, students concurrently taking Applied Math 30 did not have the theoretical basis for Math 101. Tutors have expressed their opinion that Math 101 is a heavy workload for students and could be two courses. Members felt it was important that students taking Math 101 be followed to monitor success in post-secondary institutions. Another member asked if requests have been received from high schools to offer the course. R. Morrow committed to discuss this further with divisional staff.

3. ACAT Chair and Secretariat reports

The Chair provided a list of various meetings she had attended during the months of April through June. She has also visited several institutions. Two common concerns raised at the institutions were the time it takes to finalize transfer agreements, and grade conversion. The Chair indicated she would be following up on specific institutional concerns over the next few months.

The Chair elaborated on her meetings with the Assistant Deputy Minister and the Deputy Minister of Alberta Learning noting that both expressed support for the work of ACAT. The Deputy Minister would like to see the work of ACAT recognized nationally and internationally.

The Chair presented a talk on ACAT to the Alberta Colleges and Technical Institute Students' Executive Council (ACTISEC) Leadership Conference in May. She will follow-up on this contact by arranging a meeting with the executive of ACTISEC. A meeting with the leaders of CAUS will also be pursued. These groups provide an important voice for students.

In the upcoming months, the Chair and Executive Director will be attending the ARUCC (Association of Registrars of Universities and Colleges of Canada) conference. They will meet with the Executive Director and Co-Chair of the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer. In addition the Chair will try to find ways to communicate with high school counselors and discuss secondary to post-secondary articulation with them. R. Morrow offered to assist the Chair in contacting the high school counselors. Upcoming events such as "What's New" and career fairs may be useful venues to reach counselors and students.

A written report from the Executive Officer was included with the agenda package. The ACAT Secretariat continues to monitor discussions at the colleges and technical institutes regarding the adoption of a common grading system. A summary of the status of the implementation of the common system was included in the agenda package.

At its last meeting in April, the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) considered the portability of transfer credits. Subsequently, provinces were asked to name individuals to a working group on credit transfer which will make recommendations to the

Ministers this fall. The Executive Officer has been named as the Alberta delegate. To date she has participated in two national teleconferences. Alberta's transfer system is well developed whereas other provinces have foundational work to do on a transfer system.

The Executive Officer met with a delegation from Thailand in early June to discuss Alberta's transfer system. They are undertaking educational reform of their post-secondary system.

The Executive Officer distributed a copy of the Campus Alberta report and noted that the work of ACAT underpins the concept of Campus Alberta. ACAT is a prime example of collaboration in the learning system.

A draft copy of the 2000 edition of the Post-Secondary Transitions in Alberta was examined. This report, which is a cooperative venture between ACAT and Alberta Learning, tracks the 1999/2000 Grade 12 students and their transition to post-secondary institutions. About 70% of the students who applied to post-secondary institutions in fact went on the post-secondary studies. One member noted that it was important to track these students. It is important to consider the capacity of the system. Members suggested that the student of the future will be a part-time learner and that there may be a need to study a cohort of part-time learners. When the report is released it will be forwarded to post-secondary institutions and school districts.

4. Secondary – Post-Secondary articulation

ACAT seeks to promote smooth transitions as students move from high school to post-secondary programs.

(a) Updates on curriculum developments

The Chair invited R. Morrow to provide updates about the development of curriculum at the secondary level. R. Morrow noted some key staff moves within Basic Learning Division of Alberta Learning that affect the Curriculum Branch. He commented that some timelines for curriculum revisions have been extended, particularly for Social Studies. Implementation of the new curriculum for Grade 10 is scheduled for September 2006. Work is underway to determine outcomes for Social Studies 30 before implementation of the new curriculum at the Grade 10 level. Effort will be made to work closely with post-secondary institutions regarding articulation of Social Studies.

In addition, R. Morrow provided a summary of developments to date regarding the Education Commission.

(b) English Language Arts

At ACAT's last meeting, members agreed to establish an English Language Arts Articulation Committee to help facilitate discussion of the new ELA courses and to aid in decision-making with respect to acceptance for admission to post-secondary programs. One of the outcomes of the Committee was a report that will help post-secondary institutions make decisions about acceptance of the English Language Arts courses for admission to post-secondary programs. The report was forwarded to all post-secondary Vice Presidents Academic and Senior Academic Officers in May 2002. The ACAT Chair asked each institution to develop and submit to ACAT an advising chart illustrating the

pathways students might follow from Grade 10 English Language Arts to post-secondary programs. These advising charts will be forwarded to Alberta Learning with a request that they be posted on its Web site as information for parents and students.

T. Cooper noted that Medicine Hat College, as a college offering university transfer programming, would wait to see what the resident universities decided.

(c) Further consideration of a Standing Articulation Committee

The topic of establishing a standing committee to deal with secondary to post-secondary articulation was first discussed at the Council meeting of 25 March. At that time, members agreed to think about the need for such a committee and discuss it further at the next meeting.

The Chair introduced the discussion by asking for comments on how the process worked with respect to the English Language Arts Articulation Committee and how members saw this process working in other subject areas in the future. Several members liked the idea of post-secondary institutions identifying the skill sets needed on entry to post-secondary programs. A member commented that to be useful to post-secondary institutions, articulation committees should happen about one year earlier than implementation of curriculum. It is noted that the role of articulation committee post-secondary members is not to commit the institution to any recommendations made by the committee, but to provide advice and to potentially identify problematic areas for admission or prerequisites to post-secondary programs.

Members saw the need for two roles for the articulation committee. An early committee consisting of subject specialists with a broad knowledge of the post-secondary system would identify skill sets necessary for success at the post-secondary level. A later committee would then study the curriculum and resources used in order to advise on suitability for admission to various post-secondary programs. The composition of the two committees may be very similar or may be different, depending on the time between the two activities. The latter committee should have individuals with a broader perspective of post-secondary decision-making with respect to admission and prerequisites.

Members felt that ACAT should coordinate nominations to the committee and that either the ACAT Chair and/or Executive Officer should chair the committee. Institutions or sectors should carefully choose their delegates so they have subject area specialty but also administrative experience.

In conclusion, members AGREED to support subject specific secondary to post-secondary articulation committees rather than a standing committee. Such a committee should be established earlier in the curriculum development process to identify skills and knowledge necessary for success at the post-secondary level. Then later in the process the committee would advise on suitability of the proposed curriculum for admission to the post-secondary institutions.

5. 2002 - 2005 ACAT Business Plan

The Business Plan identifies the vision, mission and goals of ACAT and relates the core businesses to their achievement. For each goal, there are specified 2002-2005 strategies,

actions, and expected results. Performance indicators are then developed to help determine whether ACAT has made progress in achieving what it set out to accomplish.

The Chair highlighted revisions to the Business Plan since members reviewed it originally at the March meeting. One change was made to the Vision to capture the idea of a national and internationally recognized admissions and transfer system. Another addition was the fourth Core Business. The addition of 'Education and Advocacy' acknowledges the effort in providing advice and assistance to others about the procedures for and benefits of establishing and maintaining an efficient and effective admissions and transfer system.

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the 2002-2005 ACAT Business Plan be adopted with the noted changes and posted on the ACAT Web site at www.acat.gov.ab.ca.

CARRIED

One member then asked about the distribution of the business plan. Once the plan is printed, it is distributed to Council members, department officials, and post-secondary institutions.

After this discussion of the Business Plan, the Chair presented a document which she had developed to support a discussion of the future directions and activities of ACAT. The question posed to frame the discussion was "what would improve the transfer system?"

- a) Increased profile of ACAT and greater public communications – A number of ideas were proposed to raise the profile of ACAT and the transfer system, particularly with secondary students and parents. This may include better use of Web links, or promotional material like the British Columbia Council on Admission and Transfer's *Transfer Tips*. A brochure like *Transfer Tips* was supported by members.
- b) Research on transfer success – Members identified that research specifically on students who had transferred was needed. A retrospective examination of transcripts may be helpful. The Chair noted that the ADM of Adult Learning indicated that the department may be able to support ACAT's research activities and requests that any proposals be sent to him.
- c) Remove barriers to student admission – Some members suggested that a common format for admission requirements would be helpful. Alberta has a mature and rich educational system. Other members suggested that ACAT's efforts should be directed toward simplifying and facilitating a smooth process for students, not necessarily making the system standardized.

After further discussion, it was AGREED to table this topic until the next meeting. The Chair will revise the discussion document to reflect the present discussions.

6. ACAT Annual Report to the Minister of Learning

The Terms of Reference for ACAT require that the Council report annually to the Minister of Learning on its activities. The draft Annual Report for 2001-2002 was distributed in the agenda package.

Members felt that the report had been enhanced with this year's actions and noted the ongoing important role of the Annual Report as a communications tool.

In discussing Addendum C, of the Annual Report, one member suggested that the section, Procedures for Transfer of Credit Among Alberta Post-Secondary Institutions, should include standards with respect to notification of changes to admission policies. Members agreed that this topic should be discussed at the upcoming meeting of Contact Persons in October.

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the Annual Report for 2001-2002 be adopted.

CARRIED

7. Production of the 2002-2003 Alberta Transfer Guide

Transfer agreements are being negotiated continuously throughout the year. As they are finalized and verified, they are then viewable via the Online Alberta Transfer Guide. Each February, the ACAT Secretariat begins to work with institutions to prepare the next edition of the printed *Alberta Transfer Guide*. This year approximately 4800 copies were produced and forwarded to post-secondary institutions and high schools in Alberta. Limited copies were forwarded to institutions in Saskatchewan and British Columbia. The distribution of the *Guide* went smoothly and expeditiously.

The Executive Officer highlighted the salient points of this year's *Alberta Transfer Guide*. She specifically noted increased activity involving transfer agreements to applied degree programs. This edition of the *Guide* contained approximately 27,500 course and program transfer agreements.

Members accepted the *Alberta Transfer Guide* for information.

8. Transfer Pattern Study – Fall 2001

Annually since 1979 Council has been collecting information from each institution about the number of students with prior post-secondary experience transferring to each of the post-secondary institutions. These data now provide a twenty-two year span of information regarding the volume of student transfer between and among post-secondary institutions in Alberta and from out-of-province post-secondary institutions.

This year, 29 institutions participated in the study. Selected highlights show:

- Within-province transfers increased by .9% in 2001.
- Despite increases to both UofA and UofC, within-province transfer to universities declined overall. This is largely due to a significant drop in reported transfers to Athabasca University.
- A record number of Alberta students transferred to public colleges. Increases of 21% and 22% were reported to public colleges and technical institutes, respectively.
- Transfers to both private university colleges and private colleges declined.
- The proportion of within-province transfer to public colleges and technical institutes rose from 39% to 44% in 2001. Within-province transfer to universities and private university colleges declined from 61% to 55% over the same period.
- Transfers from outside Alberta increased slightly and account for 32% of the total reported transfers in the system.

As Athabasca University plays a unique role in helping students obtain the courses they need to graduate at other institutions, Council agreed to ask Athabasca to separately report on the number of 'Visiting Students' attending AU for the fall 2002 reporting period. This will supplement the information ACAT receives about the mobility of transfer students in Alberta.

Members raised a point concerning the continued use of the advance credit tables. It may be advantageous to discontinue this advance credit study until a reliable Alberta Student Number (ASN) is in place. Then a more complete picture of student transfers might be available. Another suggestion was that a retrospective study examining student transcripts could also provide useful information. One member agreed to draft a proposal for such a research study.

The Executive Officer agreed to send out an email to missing members to see if they would support discontinuing the advance credit tables while continuing with the mobility data. (*Note: this was done and all responses were positive. Advance credit study will be discontinued for Fall 2002.*)

The Transfer Pattern Study – Fall 2001 will be distributed in July.

9. Duplicate Application Detection (DAD) Survey

In order to facilitate communication and working relationships among institutions and to help students, ACAT has conducted an annual Duplicate Application Detection (DAD) project since 1992. The purpose of participation in the project is to provide post-secondary institutions with data that can be useful for informed planning, particularly in such areas as enrolment management, program rationalization, recruitment strategies, and performance indicators. With the ACAT Secretariat acting as a communication hub linking the post-secondary institutions, the DAD project provides the participating institutions with data that they would otherwise not be able to acquire. The Secretariat provides the data for internal planning purposes. As well, DAD data are used to assist institutions in some of their key performance indicator (KPI) reporting.

At the ACAT meeting in February, the frequency of the DAD project was questioned. The Executive Officer conducted a survey of the DAD delegates to solicit their views on changing from an annual project to one completed every two or three years. Some respondents indicated they found the information very useful and wanted it to continue annually for the near future. Other respondents felt it could be conducted every other year. It was noted that one KPI for post-secondary institutions is based on DAD data. As well, the Transitions Study relies on the DAD database.

It was AGREED that ACAT would continue with the Duplicate Application Detection project for Fall 2002. Its usefulness will be reviewed before initiation of the next year's study.

10. Proposed Meeting Dates for 2002-2003

Each year, the proposed meeting dates for the coming year are discussed. Members were asked to consider whether they felt four Council meetings a year were required or would three meetings suffice. Two sets of meeting dates were proposed.

It was AGREED that four meetings a year were necessary. The following meeting dates were AGREED upon:

Thursday, 26 September 2002
Monday, 18 November 2002
Wednesday, 12 March 2003
Thursday, 22 May 2003

Members recognized that there will be six new members in the fall so these meeting dates could be adjusted if needed.

11. Items for information

The Executive Officer drew members' attention to the following news articles and documents included in the agenda package.

- "High Grades Are No Longer Enough: Essays, Art, SAT Test Among New Criteria", *National Post*, 4 May 2002. Canada's universities are using increasingly U.S.-style admission criteria to decide admission.
- "Alberta Boom Places Strain on University: Soaring Applications Pose Problem for all Learning Institutions", *Edmonton Journal*, 8 May 2002. Rising demand for university spaces, at a time of provincial spending restraint, is putting more strain on university's finances.
- "Life Skills May Translate into University Credits", *Star Phoenix (Saskatoon)*, 26 April 2002. The Challenge for Credit program at the University of Saskatchewan will allow departments to award credit for such experience where appropriate when students can demonstrate that learning has taken place and that it contributed to an appropriate balance of theory and practical application found in a university-level course.
- "Northern Lakes, Fairview, and Grande Prairie Colleges Form Pact", *High Prairie Spotlight*, 13 February 2002. Three northwestern Alberta colleges have agreed to work together for the benefit of adult learners.
- "Students get chance to scope out careers: NAIT, Parkland partnership is one-of-a-kind project", *Edmonton Journal*, 27 February 2002. A unique partnership between NAIT and Spruce Grove Composite High School exposes students to NAIT technology programs.
- "Post-Secondary Education Background" *Government of Canada*. Information is provided on the Web Site for Canada's innovation strategy, specifically related to post-secondary education.
- "Alberta Learning 2002-2005 Business Plan", Alberta Learning. The work of ACAT is recognized in Goal 2 – Excellence in Learner Achievement, Strategy 2.1.3 – Expand transferability of prior learning within the post-secondary system.

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

9. Other Business

The Chair again expressed her thanks and appreciation to Terry Cooper and Vanessa Wood who both indicated this was their last Council meeting.

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED