



# **Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer**

25 March 2002  
Room 3-15 University Hall  
University of Alberta

**PRESENT:** Lucille Walter (Chair), Anne Marie Decore, Terry Cooper, Catherine Eddy, Elaine Foulon, Peter Haney, Shirley Holloway, Rick Morrow, Harry Reding, Jean Valgardson, Kory Zwack, Judith Hughes, Elaine Wong (representing Peggy Patterson), Marilyn Patton (Executive Officer), Patti Papirnik (Manager)

**ABSENT:** Vance MacNichol, Peggy Patterson, Vanessa Wood

Anne Marie Decore welcomed members to the University of Alberta.

The Chair reported that Vance MacNichol and Peggy Patterson had expressed regret that they would not be able to attend the meeting.

1. Minutes, 29 November 2001

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the 29 November 2001 Council minutes be adopted as distributed.

CARRIED

2. Items arising from the Minutes

There were three items arising from the minutes of the 29 November 2001 meeting.

Secondary Education in Canada: A Student Transfer Guide 1998 – Alberta Learning is working with the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) to update the Alberta section of this guide. The 2002 version of the guide should be available soon. For the information of members, R. Morrow subsequently distributed Alberta's update for the guide.

The Executive Officer updated members with respect to her telephone conversation with Patti Henley of the Alberta Tech Prep Consortium. The Consortium has received money to hire someone to assist with articulation agreements. Currently there are 83 agreements throughout the province. The Consortium will continue to work with ACAT regarding the publicizing of these agreements on the ACAT web site.

In January, the Chair wrote the Deputy Minister of Learning and forwarded the results of the review by all institutions with respect to the acceptance of Transitional Mathematics 101 in lieu of Pure Mathematics 30, and the math pathways charts. These charts have been posted on Alberta Learning's web site. The Executive Officer also shared the response received from the Deputy Minister.

J. Hughes reported that currently 24 students are registered in Transitional Mathematics 101. She noted that many students are currently high school students attempting to take this course concurrently with Applied Math 30. R. Morrow indicated he would follow-up on this.

R. Morrow also indicated he would follow-up on comments by J. Valgardson that incorrect statements had been made publicly regarding the acceptance of Applied Math in southern Alberta.

### 3. ACAT Chair and Secretariat reports

The Chair provided a list of various meetings she had attended during the months of December through March, a number of which concerned the new high school English Language Arts courses. She has also made visits to several institutions.

On 18 - 19 March, the Executive Officer attended both days of a consultation on the future direction of post-secondary learning in Alberta while the Chair attended the second day. The Chair reported that the discussions were interesting, and that the consultation focused on the distant future rather than the next 5 - 10 years. The source documents for the consultation had been shared with ACAT members for their information. Members agreed that a formal response was appropriate. During discussion of the document, *Alberta's Post-secondary Education System: Developing the Blueprint for Change*, members expressed concern about comments in the document about the role of Alberta Learning and whether the department is considering more regulation or legislation regarding transfer agreements. A response on behalf of the Council will emphasize the unique role of the Council and how learner's needs are addressed through consensus, advocacy and negotiation.

The Chair indicated that she and the Executive Officer would be making a presentation on ACAT at the Alberta Colleges and Technical Institutes' Boards of Governors Workshop in April.

The Executive Officer attended the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the Alberta College and Technical Institute Student Executive Council (ACTISEC) on 8 March at Grant MacEwan College. A special ACTISEC admissions scholarship was announced to commemorate the occasion.

The Chair and Executive Officer attended an Engineering Articulation meeting held on 18 December. One discussion item, the decision by the University of Calgary to change their first year engineering courses, has had an impact on the articulation agreements existing between colleges and the UofC. It was identified that this was the second time in recent years that a change in the Engineering curriculum negatively impacted transfer agreements.

The Minister's Working Group on Admissions and Transfer had as one of its subcommittees a committee on Grade Conversion. That subcommittee recommended that the Universities Co-ordinating Council (UCC) create a Common Grading System Committee to explore the feasibility of all four universities in Alberta adopting a similar grading system. The committee, chaired by ACAT's former Chair, unanimously agreed to recommend that universities consider the merits of adopting a version of a 4-point alpha grading system. By June 2001 all four universities and the private university colleges in Alberta had agreed to adopt the 4-point alpha grading system. At the November meeting of Council, members confirmed that the appropriate role for ACAT was one of monitoring, rather than proactively encouraging colleges and technical institutes to adopt the common grading scale.

In February 2002, UofA shared the address of a new web site they have created that incorporates information on the University of Alberta's ongoing conversion from the 9-point grading scale to the 4-point alpha grading scale. This site currently comprises a series of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) regarding the conversion process and its implications for students and for staff. The web site address is: [www.creative.ualberta.ca/9to4/](http://www.creative.ualberta.ca/9to4/).

The ACAT Secretariat continues to monitor discussions at the colleges and technical institutes with respect to possible adoption of the common grading system at those institutions. A written report was provided in the agenda package. In response to a question from the Chair, S. Holloway noted that NAIT continues to consider moving to a 4-point alpha grading system.

At the last meeting of Council, the Executive Officer had noted that several institutions in Alberta have been involved in regional consultations with respect to an articulation project sponsored by the Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations (CAETO). According to information on CAETO's web site, the organization is made up of the following members: the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), the Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA), the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education, the Canadian Bureau for International Education, the Canadian Coalition of Community Based Training, the Canadian School Boards Association, the Movement for Canadian Literacy and the National Association of Career Colleges.

Beginning with the premise that credit transfer mechanisms are essential to lifelong learning and employability, CAETO's articulation project has been examining articulation agreements between educational institutions "in order to identify the steps necessary to move Canada forward on this important educational, economic and social issue".

The Executive Officer had been invited to CAETO's National Roundtable on Articulation Agreements in Canada held in Ottawa on 28 February and 1 March, but was unable to attend. A summary of the proceedings was distributed to members. Five actions were identified at the Roundtable:

- Creating a lexicon/glossary on articulation terminology.
- Producing a 'how to' manual.
- Setting up a national inventory registry for articulation agreements.
- Conducting a clear cost/benefit analysis study of articulation agreements.
- Identifying and funding a national coordinating body to drive the action framework.

Members noted that Alberta already has a well-developed articulation agreements database in place and our best practices should be shared with other jurisdictions. They recognized that coordination of a national inventory of articulation agreements would be a significant undertaking.

One member noted that individual assessment of prior learning takes a great deal of the receiving institution's time and resources for which there is no funding recognition.

#### 4. Secondary – Post-Secondary articulation

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

- (a) English Language Arts

Following the decision at the November meeting to establish the English Language Arts Articulation Committee, members met on 27 February to facilitate discussion of the new courses and to aid decision-making with respect to acceptance for admission to post-secondary programs. One of the outcomes of the Committee will be 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 timeline for completion of a report was discussed. A member indicated that, if possible, getting the report out to the post-secondary institutions by early May would be advantageous as some post-secondary institutions are well along the process of developing admissibility recommendations. Members commented that it is necessary to have more content-specific information about the proposed new courses. R. Morrow stated that this is a moderate degree of change to the curriculum. One member noted that the emphasis on grammar and on metacognition strengthened the new curriculum.

(b) Further consideration of an Articulation Standing Committee

The topic of establishing a standing committee to deal with secondary to post-secondary articulation was first discussed at the Council meeting of 19 November. At that time, members agreed to think about the need for such a committee and discuss it further at the next meeting.

As the English Language Arts Articulation Committee is underway and will bring forward a report and recommendations by the end of May, members decided to wait until this process was complete. They could then assess the process and see if it worked with regard to formulating recommendations regarding acceptance of secondary courses for admission to post-secondary programs. This will be considered further at the next Council meeting.

(c) Updates on curriculum developments

The Chair invited R. Morrow to speak about development of curriculum at the secondary level. He noted that labour conditions have resulted in increased challenges for curriculum development. He reported that the Alberta Teachers' Association has advised members not to participate in the development and assessment of curriculum. The Basic Learning Division is looking at alternative processes in order to maintain implementation schedules.

R. Morrow briefly reviewed "A Renewed Vision for the Kindergarten to Grade 12 Learning System". This is a discussion paper that will be used to guide discussion on new curriculum for the basic system. R. Morrow noted that the recently announced comprehensive review of the learning system might impact this plan. A brief discussion of the notion of grade 10 as a foundation year and the pathways for students in grades 11 and 12 ensued.

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 introduced the discussion of the new business plan by asking members to reflect on what ACAT's role, vision and mission will be in five years. One member

suggested that ACAT would have a stronger role in the future as the issue of inter-provincial transfer of credits is raised. Several members reaffirmed the importance of the independence of the Council. A member suggested that learners are becoming more and more sophisticated and the demands and expectations of learners will push curriculum design and assessment. As the transfer component of ACAT is well-developed, members saw a need to devote more effort to secondary to post-secondary articulation. Members agreed that the assessment of prior learning would become more important, especially as the recruitment of international students increases. One member stressed the role of ACAT as a facilitator and advocate for students. Another member suggested ACAT should have more involvement of parents.

A member expressed concern for students who take courses from unrecognized institutions. At the root of this concern is “quality”. This led to a discussion of the idea that what a learner knows and can do, may be equally or more important than where the student has studied. This is particularly true as e-learning evolves. The tension between residency, where students interact on campus, and a degree being an accumulation of courses may intensify. This challenges the accepted notion of a “degree”.

At this point, the Chair began discussion of specific wording of the goals, objectives and performance measures in the draft business plan. The ACAT Secretariat will update and amend the business plan to respond to the suggestions of members. The business plan will be brought back to the June meeting for further review and approval.

#### 6. 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 working with institutions to prepare the next edition of the printed *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

The Executive Officer noted that this year’s production is challenging in that both the institutions and ACAT Secretariat are using the new application and database. We are still working out the best practices and hope to converse with Contact Persons following production of the Guide to determine how we can improve the process.

The Executive Officer raised the question of the merit of continuing to print the Transfer Guide rather than relying solely on the Online version. Members concurred that the printed version still has merit and should be continued at this time.

The Executive Officer indicated that she would report fully at the next Council meeting on the 2002-2003 version of the *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

#### 7. 2001 Duplicate Application Detection (DAD) project

The purpose of participation in the DAD 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 Executive Officer introduced the Report and Summary Tables document which provides the results of the Fall 2001 project. She drew members' attention to the following highlights:

- 76.8% of applicants received at least one offer of admission.
- 80.9% of applicants who received an offer of admission attended an institution in Fall 2001.
- The number of applications to the three residential universities increased by 4%.

The final page of the document features a table titled "Learner Application Activity" which summarizes results over the seven-year period from 1995 through 2001. Despite one fewer participating institution, there were increases in the number of (a) learners who applied, (b) offers of admission, as well as (c) learners who attended.

The Table 10 reports are institution specific and display information on records that duplicate between pairs of institutions. These tables are sent to the institutional DAD project delegates in electronic format for the purposes of institutional analysis. Based on discussions with several DAD delegates last fall, rather than creating a series of files with each partner institution, this year the Secretariat combined all the cross tabulations concerning one institution into one file. Each unique DAD Identifier was numbered so that the DAD delegate could now tell not only if that student applied to his/her institution and one other, but if the student also applied to a third or fourth institution.

Members also received copies of the DAD Trends document, which covers the period from 1995 through 2001 for each table of the DAD project. The tables can be very useful in spotting trends or anomalies.

Noting that it had been raised at a previous meeting, one member questioned whether the DAD project should be continued every year or whether conducting the study every second year would be advantageous, particularly if it freed up resources for other research. The Executive Officer replied that the DAD data are used for some KPI calculations and the Transitions Report. Until the Alberta Student Number is fully operational, there is no other easy mechanism to track students from one institution to another or from high school to post-secondary. She indicated that the DAD Contact Persons would need to be contacted to determine their opinion regarding the frequency of the study. The Executive Officer will report on the results of this survey at the next Council meeting.

#### 8. Items for information

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

- "Bridging the Great Divide between Secondary Schools and Postsecondary Education", Phi Delta Kappan, September 2001. Albeit written for the American college system, the article highlights interesting considerations for increased collaboration for K-16 to improve academic opportunities and the chances of success for learners.
- "GFC changes required to withdraw regulations", University of Calgary Gazette. General Faculties Council approved changes to the regulations related to requiring students to withdraw. The changes raise the minimum grade point average for an undergraduate to be required to withdraw.

- “Proposed legislation would make Alberta’s student finance system more responsive”, Alberta Learning, March 6, 2002. The Student Finance and Loan Amendment Act is expected to strengthen Alberta’s student finance system and build greater flexibility and responsiveness into the system.
- “New Routes to Transfer”, BC Council on Admissions and Transfer, *The Advisor*, November 2001. All public universities and university colleges in B.C. that offer traditional arts and science degrees now give special transfer credit and priority admission to students who have completed an Associate Degree.
- “Researchers Suggest Model for Evaluating Success of Transfer Students from 2-Year Institutions”, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 22, 2002. Researchers suggest a model for evaluating success of transfer students from 2-year institutions.

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

#### 9. Other Business

The Chair expressed thanks and appreciation to Anne Marie Decore and Kory Zwack who both indicated this was their last Council meeting.

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED