Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

13 October 2004
ACAT Secretariat office, Edmonton

PRESENT: Lucille Walter (Chair), Ed Behnke, Michael Bosch, Fred Carnew, Catherine Eddy, Doug Hart, Peter Haney, Gretchen Hess, Dietmar Kennepohl, Vance MacNichol, Raja Panwar, Jean Valgardson; Kaley Williams, Marilyn Patton (Executive Office), Marena Fakli (Manager), Guy Germain (Manager), Kyra Kubrak (Research Assistant)

ABSENT: Gord Nixon, Peggy Patterson

Welcome

The Chair welcomed Council to the first meeting of a new academic year. She also welcomed new members Michael Bosch (CAUS), Doug Hart (the colleges sector), Dietmar Kennepohl (the universities sector), and Kaley Williams (ACTISEC).

Raja Panwar reported he is now Director, Provincial Standards and Processes, Learning and Teaching Resources Branch.

The Chair indicated that Agenda #3, Report on Transfer Questions from the Graduate Survey is not available. Instead, Agenda #3 will be Requests from Private University Colleges.

1. Minutes, 12 May 2004

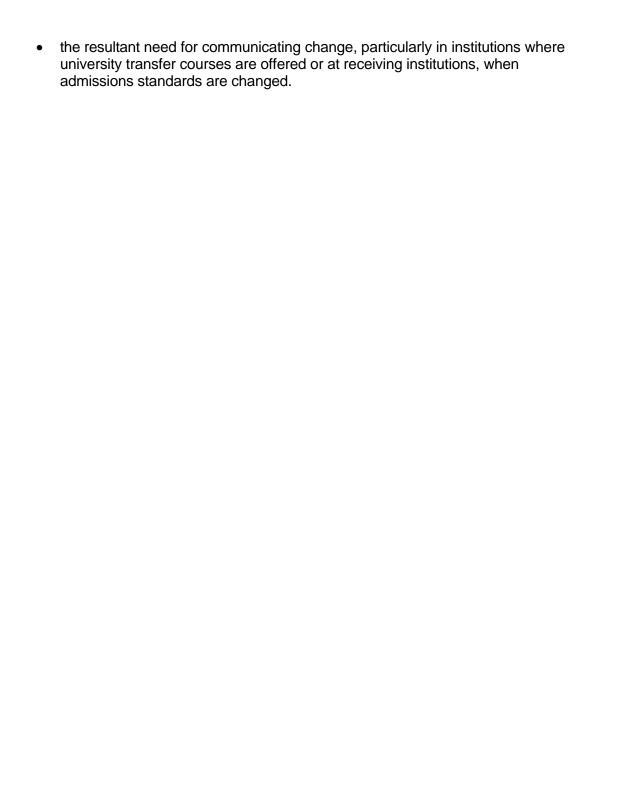MOVED and SECONDED that the minutes of 12 May 2004 be adopted.
CARRIED

2. ACAT Chair and Secretariat Report

Chair's Report
The Chair reported a very successful meeting with Mount Royal's Contact Person Lynda Wallace-Hulecki to discuss concerns around changes to the College's student advising. The Chair was reassured that a new advising process is now in place. Members commented on:
- the inter-relationship of post-secondary institutions,
- the magnitude of impact on others when one institution makes a significant change in process,

- the resultant need for communicating change, particularly in institutions where university transfer courses are offered or at receiving institutions, when admissions standards are changed.

Secretariat Report

Membership Changes
- Outlined recent ACAT membership changes
- Announced that Peter Haney has been reappointed for a second term.

Duplicate Application Detection (DAD) report.
As a result of an earlier Council decision, DAD data will not be collected this year.

A member relayed a request from University of Lethbridge to revisit the decision to discontinue DAD because the data are particularly useful at this time.

The Executive Officer responded that there are some potential difficulties preventing ACAT from implementing DAD:
- Institutions may no longer have applicant data, since we are significantly into the academic year.
- DAD application runs on Windows 95 operating system, and has been running on borrowed time for a number of years.
- Adult Learning is exploring another solution in the future that will be designed to collect application data.

Discussion:
- ACAT should be a broker for particular types of information – collect data from all post-secondary institutions about admissions and transfer such as admission averages.
- ACAT would be a good broker for this type of information because of its neutrality, the nature of its membership and the existence of the Committee of Contact Persons.
- DAD is a clumsy mechanism, but the data that DAD collects should be done every second or third year. Other data relative to admissions or transfer could be collected in the intervening years.
- The Campus Alberta system needs to make evidence-based decisions.
    - Need to determine the decisions for which information must be gathered.
    - Make sure we clearly understand the purpose of any research
- We should commit to being the data source for informed decisions concerning our portfolio.
- We need to review ACAT's Terms of Reference to see if we should be collecting data.

The Chair confirmed that ACAT will check with institutions for the kind of data that are useful, that would benefit institutions and students, and that would improve student access to post-secondary education. The Secretariat will develop the questions to ask, call together a committee to confirm what direction ACAT should take, and raise it with the Assistant Deputy Minister, Adult Learning.

Best Practices in Prior Learning Assessment Advisory Committee
- A request for proposal for a researcher to explore the status of PLAR in Alberta and to collect best practices has been posted.
- A proposal was received and is being reviewed.

Best Practices in Transfer Advisory Committee
- Contracted Gordon Preston, Can-Reg, to undertake best practices research and develop a handbook.
- The Best Practices in Transfer Advisory Committee will consult with the contractor and provide interview sources.
- The project is expected to be completed by the end of May 2005.

Inter-provincial Transfer Agreements
A question was recently raised as to whether those post-secondary institutions which have inter-provincial transfer agreements should have them recognized in some manner in the *Alberta Transfer Guide*, for the benefit of students.

The results of a survey of Contact Persons on the topic were presented.
- Some post-secondary institutions have many inter-provincial agreements, while others have a few or none.
- Some institutions were interested in making their "outside-of-Alberta" transfer agreements more visible by linking through ACAT's Web site.
- There was no support for ACAT maintaining a database of transfer agreements with out-of-province institutions, nor was there support for listing them in the *Guide*.

Council agreed that the Secretariat should continue to explore developing a link from ACAT's Web site to those of interested institutions.

Advanced Credit for Apprentices
Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) provides advanced credit into certain apprenticeship programs where apprentices have recently received specified diplomas or certificates from colleges or technical institutes.
- Credit can reduce technical training and/or examinations, and/or it can reduce the number of hours required for the apprenticeship.
- Information is readily available to AIT staff and freely provided to potential apprentices who ask for it, but is not readily available publicly.
- The information is not written in a form that makes for easy public consumption.
- The Secretariat continues to explore with AIT staff the possibility of providing this information by link from the ACAT Web site.

News Release: Alberta and B.C. Discuss Choices for Northern Students
The article highlights BC-AB transfer opportunities that have already been formally negotiated.
- A link from ACAT to Alberta post-secondary institutions that host these kinds of agreements would allow students to plan better.
- Links would be a separate page on the site with instructions and appropriate help and advice.

BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)
BCCAT is doing a number of research projects to do with private to public articulation agreements and has consulted with the Executive Officer.
- Have hired a consultant to look at charging private institutions to set up transfer agreements with public institutions.
- ACAT will share results when announced.

Admission Averages Report
- Institutions were surveyed by the department to discover what the stated admission averages were for entry into university-level programming, what the actual admission averages were, and how admission is decided based on averages – competitive, first qualified or combined.
- Members commented that this package is potentially misleading because important context is missing. Institutions do not use the same courses nor the same number of courses on which to base admission averages, and the document should be footnoted with that information.

3. **Requests from Private University Colleges**

Taylor University College and Seminary
A letter from the President of Taylor University College and Seminary (formerly North American Baptist College) requests that ACAT approve Taylor as a receiving institution in the *Guide*.
- Offers undergraduate programs that have been approved as a result of the Private Colleges Accreditation Board process.
- Has been listed as a sending institution since 1990-91 edition of the *Guide*.

Members spoke in support of Taylor.

MOVED and SECONDED that ACAT approve the inclusion of Taylor University College and Seminary as a receiving institution in the next *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

CARRIED

Alliance University College (AUC)/ Nazarene University College (NUC).
- AUC recently moved from Regina to Calgary and shares a campus with NUC.
- AUC is authorized by the province through the PCAB process to offer certain degree programs.
- The two institutions have worked out a memorandum of agreement whereby a number of services (such as registrar, student services, marketing) and courses are shared.
- Have jointly developed an academic plan where each specializes in certain areas, and have agreed not to duplicate offerings.
- Have one approved joint program and intend to offer more in the future.
- Students can choose courses from the AUC/NUC joint calendar, but which institution actually owns the course is not noted.
- Transcripts for AUC registered students show all courses as AUC courses, regardless of which institution actually provided the course.

AUC wants to become part of Alberta's transfer system. They had approached the University of Calgary before they moved from Regina to set up transfer agreements but were advised by U of C to wait until they moved to Alberta. Now that AUC is resident in Alberta, they are asking what process they should follow to become listed in the *Guide* as a sending institution? They would prefer to have a joint listing as AUC/NUC.

Discussion:
- AUC is not yet a member of Alberta's transfer system. NUC does not yet have receiving institution status in the *Guide*.
- AUC/NUC have agreements between themselves that result in unique transcription processes.
- Although AUC and NUC have entered into a memorandum of agreement between themselves, it is not a merger, and doesn't warrant the use of AUC/NUC in the *Guide*. They are separate legal entities.
- If their memorandum of agreement were to be dissolved, separating the joint listings would be very difficult for ACAT.
- In order to protect students, each institution should negotiate its own transfer agreements. When both are members of the transfer system, ACAT may be prepared to look at a joint entry in the *Guide*.

MOVED and SECONDED that the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer approve Alliance University College as a sending institution for inclusion in the next issue of the *Alberta Transfer Guide*.

DEFEATED

Discussion:
- AUC must be treated separately from NUC, and must work out transfer agreements with a public institution, and have that institution recommend its agreements be published in the *Guide* before AUC can be accepted in the transfer system.

4. Roundtable

Gretchen Hess, University of Alberta
- Reported that the merger of Augustana University College with the UofA has gone well; became official in July.
- Is now known as Augustana Faculty of the University of Alberta.
- Augustana Faculty will produce its own calendar this year.
- Augustana programs are being reviewed faculty by faculty by the University of Alberta in order to become UofA courses. Should be finished by next year.
- Next year, all students currently in Augustana Faculty will have a choice of Augustana programs or UofA programs.
- At the moment, Bachelor of Arts programs offered by Augustana Faculty have different content than those offered by the UofA in Edmonton. The BSc degrees are very similar.
- Work that relates to transfer agreements currently in the *Guide* is ongoing. Augustana will appear as a receiving institution in the next edition.

Doug Hart, Grande Prairie Regional College
- Reported that the College had won its appeal in the case of Crerar vs GPRC.
- Agreements are being developed between GPRC and British Columbia's Northern Lights and UNBC, who are interested in pursuing collaborative agreements.

5. Presentation by Phil Gougeon, Assistant Deputy Minister, Adult Learning

- Outlined processes for government once an election is called.
- Commented that Adult Learning is seen as a very strong division, as is the post-secondary system.
- Bill 43 seen as a success, as has the increased national reputation of the transfer system which has accomplished a great deal over the past few years.
- The Private Colleges Accreditation Board, its successor, the Campus Alberta Quality Council, and the Access Fund are other leading initiatives.
- Challenges for ACAT in the future are likely to be its response to e-learning and the parameters around it.
- A member commented that costs around prior learning assessment should be considered in any funding review. It is a costly mechanism, without any way of attaching evidence of productivity in current funding formulas.
- The ADM encouraged ACAT to review its own Terms of Reference and revise it to be appropriate for the next ten years.

Discussion:
- The new grading system is good, but it is not being used the same way across the system. Admission averages are calculated differently. ACAT provides a good base to be the centre of data gathering for the system, because it has members from government, from institutions, from students and from the public. Based on this, institutions could voluntarily provide information to make it a true Campus Alberta, but maintain institutional autonomy.
- Both government and institutions need accurate applications and admissions data in order to depict an accurate picture of admissions. A common applications system might be one way of achieving that accuracy.
- Urban drift of students is a difficult reality for rural areas and rural institutions. Rural development is an important priority for this government. How do you sustain rural institutions and quality education in rural Alberta?
- A group like ACAT is in a better position to support a Campus Alberta interest in tracking application and transfer information across the system. There is real merit to devoting resources to identifying those things which need to be tracked and developing an effective data gathering and reporting system.

6. Presentation by Dan Vandermeulen, President, Northern Lakes College

- Commented on the changing student, the rural student and the desire to change post-secondary education delivery to meet needs.
- Learning has changed significantly and includes more and more distance and blended delivery. Learners are selecting courses, rather than programs, then wishing to meld their portfolios into a credential.
- E-learning curriculum has high commercial value, and is producing an emerging market in curriculum development.
- Services such as student services, curriculum development and instruction are being unbundled from each other.
- Northern Lakes is looking more and more at learner support as its niche. This unbundling produces multiple partners and specialists.

- With the tuition fee policy, the core of a post-secondary institution's business is regulated. The tuition fee policy does not include distance learning. This provides either a revenue source, or a way for institutions to choose which programs can be self-funded. Learning then becomes more market driven.
- Learning centres stocked with high speed internet are being developed in communities.
- Collaborative agreements are being developed between and among many institutions. E-campus Alberta is developing a statement of relationship with Athabasca University.
- Libraries are moving to the centre of communities in order to provide access points. People need to find access points.
- Students finance process hasn't kept pace. Brokered programs are bought from another institution. But the default list from Students Finance comes to the college who bought the program.
- Traditional curriculum is sequential. An e-learner resists that because it limits accessibility. Many college programs don't require a high school diploma, but depending on the career, many students get stopped by not having a high school diploma.
- There is not a lot of articulation between some parts of post-secondary system and others, particularly between technical institutes and the rest of the system.

Dan sees four challenges for ACAT:
- the growing number of "course tasters",
- the need for consistent marking and admission strategies across institutions,
- the growing resistance to residency requirements,
- cross-border issues – people are more mobile. At the northern roundtable, ministers are promoting cross-border programs (BC, Alberta, Yukon and Nunavut).

Discussion followed.

7. *Alberta Transfer Guide*

Printed Guide
- The 2005-2006 *Alberta Transfer Guide* will be the 30th annual edition.
- Work has begun on a more user-friendly version of the *Guide*.
- Draft pages were provided for members' consideration.
- ACAT endorsed the need to update the *Guide*
- Confirmed that print versions of the *Guide* are still necessary.
- A focus group with Contact Persons and Contact Persons Assistants will take place at the Committee of Contact Persons meeting, next week.
- A member suggested that the table showing the members of Alberta's transfer system continues to be necessary in the *Guide*, because it provides an immediate visual image of the transfer system in the province.

Web site
- A prototype of a revised ACAT Web site based on ACAT's new graphic design was provided.

- Members endorsed the new Web site concept and agreed that Secretariat staff should continue to enhance the site.

Revised credential category labels for the *Guide*
- A prototype of revised credential category labels was also provided
- If new degrees are approved at public colleges or at technical institutes we expect them to become receiving institutions. Therefore, the credential label "to universities and private university colleges" will no longer be appropriate.
- The credential label "to degree programs" was proposed and endorsed by ACAT members. In this model, applied degrees will remain separate, as will "to certificate and diplomas".
- It may at some time become necessary to further re-align the categories, based on volume.
- The Secretariat will meet with NAIT to discuss the implications of the Fairview College merger.
- In the 2005-06 edition of the *Guide*, the sending institution agreements for Augustana Faculty of UofA will be shown as a subset to UofA's sending institution agreements. In the future, the agreements will be reviewed and realigned. A preamble to Augustana agreements will be placed on the ACAT Web site.

Disclaimer statement
- ACAT members discussed the potential need for a disclaimer statement in the *Guide*. The need for a disclaimer statement was not supported at this time.

8. Committee of Contact Persons meeting

- ACAT members reviewed and endorsed the draft agenda for the Committee of Contact Persons meeting.

9. Articulation Committees

Secondary – Post-secondary Articulation
- Raja Panwar provided the May 2004 implementation schedule for approved programs of studies in the K – 12 sector.
- Some challenges include the increasing emphasis on second language programs, and the implementation of daily physical activity up to grades 12.
- The new ELA program was implemented last year. Eng 30 and Eng 33 should now be finished.
- Significant effort is involved in a Western Northern Canada Protocol consultation on mathematics. There will be two rounds of Alberta consultations. Post-secondary institutions are urged to be involved in the consultations.
- The Deputy Minister has spoken to post-secondary institutions about the need to ensure elementary teachers are sufficiently able to deliver the math content at K – 9 levels. Need to strengthen 7 – 9 and 10 – 12 specialization.
- The final report of the consultation will be provided to ACAT for discussion and information when available.
- May bring the final report to this table for discussion/information when available.

- Career and Technology Studies has just begun a five-year revision process. ACAT will be an observer. The CTS curriculum relates to the Individual Learner Pathways model. Pathways will articulate with CTS.
- A draft report on Science articulation is going forward to the committee.
- A January meeting regarding Social Studies articulation is anticipated.

10. <u>Items for Information.</u>

- Information items were provided for review.

MOVED and SECONDED that the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED