

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

ACAT Meeting Minutes - October 15-16, 2007 Southern Alberta Institute of Technology - Calgary

Present: Peter Haney, Kelly Kennedy, Merla Bolender, Kathleen Massey, Peter Berry, Larry Hlushak, Vincent Steinhauer, Robin Fisher, Olive Yonge, Catherine Eddy, Fred Carnew, Alex Kondra, Jason Kripps (Monday only), Honourable Doug Horner (Monday only), Phil Gougeon (Monday only), Gord Nixon, Marylea Jarvis, Anne Ryton, Marg Leathem, Ron Woodward (Chair), Corey Aloisio (Monday only), Lisa Fox (Monday only)

Absent: none

Ron Woodward welcomed Council to the first meeting of the 2007-2008 academic year and his first meeting as Chair.

A. Minister Doug Horner's Remarks

Alberta Advanced Education and Technology Minister, Honourable Doug Horner, spoke to Council about the enhanced role that he envisions for ACAT.

One of the ministry's major goals is to see the vision of Campus Alberta come to fruition, and the Minister stated that he sees ACAT as an important part of this process. In order to achieve the Ministry's mandate, as set out by Premier Ed Stelmach in his letter to the minister, he will need ACAT's expert help.

Minister Horner stressed that the work of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology serves three audiences: the students, the taxpayers, and society.

Four Roles and Mandates working groups have been struck:

- **Funding and Accountability**- whose goal will be to ensure post-secondary institutional autonomy is maintained, and to ensure that the system as a whole works well.
- **Community Adult Learning**- this group will work to ensure that there is regional involvement in the success of the advanced education system through community centres, the K-12 system, and community colleges.
- **Research**- this group will explore an appropriate structure for pure and applied research
- **Planning and Access**- this group will focus on creating learner pathways, and ensuring that learners are able to make smooth transitions in order to achieve their full potential.

Minister Horner mentioned that he recently wrote to Ron Woodward to ask for ACAT's involvement in providing specific recommendations to the relevant portions of the Planning and Access working group meetings.

Phil Gougeon also added to the discussion, providing additional context for the Roles and Mandates Framework. The concept of Campus Alberta has existed for the past ten years, and was brought further by the creation of the Post-secondary Learning Act of 2000, which combined several other acts, and symbolized the system working together to achieve a common goal. The A Learning

Alberta consultation process allowed the ministry to gather information necessary to help frame future strategies, which led the way for the Roles and Mandates Framework.

A major component of the draft Framework is the differentiation of publicly-funded post-secondary institutions into six distinct categories, which recognizes that institutions must specialize in order to be globally competitive. This is a significant challenge considering Alberta's limited population base, but is crucial in order for Alberta to meet the ever growing employment needs.

B. Round Table Discussion with Minister Doug Horner

Council members discussed a variety of challenges and opportunities with Minister Horner through a question and answer session.

Next Steps for ACAT

A key focus of ACAT's discussions over the next two days is the recommendations that ACAT will provide to the Roles and Mandates Planning and Access Working Group. Marg Leathem will represent ACAT at these meetings. Each of the four working groups will be developing papers as a result of the meetings they are currently holding, and ACAT and CAQC will both be asked to look at the Access and Planning paper.

Roles and Mandates Process

- It is planned that the Framework will go through the government approval process this fall.
- The working groups are expected to finish their formal meeting process in December.
- The Framework will also go through the formal government policy approval process.
- Following this approval process, the detailed implementation work of the Framework will begin.

C. ACAT Strategic Planning Discussion

Ron Woodward led a discussion of the overall themes that will impact the future of ACAT, as well as how ACAT will respond to the Minister's request for recommendations to be provided to the Roles and Mandates working group.

Key Themes from the Discussion:

- A need to clarify and redefine the role ACAT plays in the advanced education system.
- The opportunity for ACAT to enhance its leadership role in the system.
- The need for increased research and communication with stakeholders.
- An opportunity to develop innovative strategies to promote collaboration that will facilitate learner transitions.

Next Steps

The Secretariat will draft a recommendations document to be provided to Council members for feedback before the end of November, in order to be shared with the Roles and Mandates Planning and Access Working Group.

D. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Lisa Fox, Manager of Business Integration with Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, presented the draft PLAR Policy Framework that has been developed by the Ministry. ACAT was chosen as the first stakeholder group to review the Framework and had the opportunity to provide numerous suggestions.

Next Steps

- Ministry staff will rework the PLAR Policy Framework to incorporate the feedback and suggestions that came out of Council's discussion.
- A revised draft Framework will be shared with Council by the end of November.
- Council members and Secretariat staff to look at attending the upcoming Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) conference in November

E. ACAT Key Directions, issues, and opportunities

Ron Woodward led a discussion of the key directions, issues and opportunities that are available for ACAT. He discussed how he sees his role in Council, and the types of challenges all Council members face in representing their specific sector on Council meetings.

The discussion also centred around working on key recommendations to provide to the Access and Planning Working Groups as requested by Minister Horner.

Next Steps

- Based on the discussion, a draft work plan that will address these next steps in a manageable way will be provided to Council for feedback.

F. Decision items

Council Meeting Guidelines

Members discussed the existing Council Meeting Guidelines document, which has not recently been reviewed. A number of issues related to the document were raised, including sector representation, quorum requirements, and term lengths. The Premier's Task Force on Board Governance was also mentioned as possibly having an impact on future meeting guidelines.

Next Steps

Council members agreed to form a sub-committee to examine the existing meeting guidelines, and to develop recommendations to be presented at the February ACAT meeting. Sub-committee members are Robin Fisher, Catherine Eddy, Peter Haney, and Ron Woodward.

ACAT Strategic Communications Plan

Anne Ryton, Manager of Post-Secondary Transitions with the ACAT Secretariat, presented a draft ACAT strategic communications plan. Council members expressed overall support for the plan, and had specific suggestions on key areas of focus as well as initial. Specific suggestions included focusing on the evaluation of existing communications, focusing efforts on website improvement, and ensuring links are in place with post-secondary institution websites.

Next Steps

Anne will incorporate feedback received into the strategic plan, and will move forward with developing an implementation plan, which will be shared with Council by the end of November.

Newman Theological College Application

Newman Theological College has submitted a proposal to be considered for entry into the Alberta Transfer System. In keeping with the admission process implemented for the admission of Red Crow Community College (RCCC), the next step is to establish a sub-committee to review the proposal and bring back recommendations to Council.

Next Steps

The Secretariat will do an initial review of the proposal to determine that all of the required information has been presented. Once it has been determined that the application is complete, the Secretariat will provide proposals to all of the sub-committee members and arrange for a meeting to evaluate the submission. Subcommittee members are Robin Fisher, Larry Hlushak, Peter Berry, and Glen Keeler. Council will have a recommendation on this submission to present to the February meeting.

Red Crow College Admissions (RCCC) Process Review

Members of this sub-committee provided a brief review of the admission process used for the RCCC submission. Generally, the committee felt that the process went smoothly.

Some factors that led to the subcommittee's success included:

- The Secretariat ensured that all of the required information was included in the submission
- The package of material received from RCCC was very substantial and informative
- Committee members reviewed the submission over teleconference, and members felt the process was straightforward and easy to understand
- The sub-committee was free to go to the institution (through the Secretariat) for any questions that they might have that would need to be resolved before approval

The issue of site visitation was raised, but the general feeling was that it wasn't necessary in this case, but that it would be considered on a case-by-case basis on future applications.

Next Steps

- Secretariat will contact RCCC to get feedback on how they felt about the application process.
- Also of note in this agenda item was the recommendation for addition of more First Nations institutions as members of the transfer system. ACAT will establish contact with FNAHEC in order to promote membership (Old Sun and Nechi Institute are currently not members).

Future meeting dates and locations

- ACAT Secretariat will set up a teleconference for late November in order to move forward on some of the key items identified in the meeting.
- A February meeting will be arranged to be held in Edmonton.
- There was a suggestion that the May meeting be held at the Banff Centre, and the Secretariat will contact to see if that can be arranged.
- Grant MacEwan has offered to host next year's Council and Contact Persons meeting in October 2008.

G. Discussion Items

Articulation Update

Merla Bolender of Alberta Education provided an update on the Math articulation and curriculum development process. Alberta Education is working with a variety of stakeholders in order to ensure proper pathways into work and post-secondary are in place for the new curriculum. The K-9 math curriculum is starting to be implemented optionally this year, with the Grade 10 curriculum scheduled to be implemented in fall 2010. There are now four Math streams, and the curriculum has been designed to allow for easier transitions between streams.

There has been positive feedback from Apprenticeship and Industry Training in terms of anticipated student success in the trades upon completion of the -3 stream. Students completing this stream of math may in future be exempt from writing apprenticeship entrance exams for most trades. The -1 math stream is intended to develop high level math required for highly math-focused post-secondary

options (engineering, science, etc.), and the -2 math is designed for other post-secondary programs that don't have a strong math component.

The curriculum development team is working closely with all of the post-secondary institutions in order to ensure students will be able to transition from the -2 stream into post-secondary. Alberta opted to develop its own -2 stream in order to meet the needs of post-secondary institutions. Staff can visit institutions in order to answer any questions that they might have.

The Math Articulation committee met on October 3rd, and feedback was positive about the direction of the math curriculum. This committee will develop a post-secondary acceptance chart that outlines which math streams will be accepted for specific programs, and will work towards having sign-off for December-January.

Members in Good Standing

At a previous Council meeting, members asked the Secretariat to develop criteria for institutions to remain in good standing.

A draft of the criteria that could be measured to determine successful participation in the transfer system was developed by Secretariat staff. Marg Leathem, Director of Business Integration/ACAT, shared the criteria that could be included in a draft report card. The information will be provided to individual member institutions, and will help institutions track their own performance. Trends emerging from the report card could identify areas where additional resources, training, or communication may be required.

Council provided suggestions, including the idea that even though some criteria are difficult to measure, it is important that these principles of membership in good standing be reinforced when the information is provided to institutions.

Next Steps

- The Secretariat will incorporate Council suggestions, and will send out an initial letter to member institutions letting them know that ACAT will be providing this information to each institution on an annual basis and reinforcing the principles of good membership.

Pan-Canadian activities

Council members were signed up as members to the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer in August. The next meeting of PCCAT will be held in Toronto June 16-18, 2008 at the Delta Chelsea Hotel. If members are interested in attending, they can visit www.pccat.ca for additional information on the meeting as it is added.

H. Information Items

CAQC update

Members were provided with an overview of recent proposals submitted to the CAQC. Lucille Walter will remain a member of CAQC, and is available to provide CAQC updates as needed.

First National Adult Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC)

Vivian Ayoungman and Vincent Steinhauer provided an overview of FNAHEC activities, and outlined the origins of the First Nations Accreditation Board (FNAB). They also provided insight into the accreditation process for First Nations Institutions and programs.

For additional details on the history and the accreditation process, see the FNAB Accreditation Process document that was provided to members.

I. Digital Library initiative

Dr. Ernie Ingles from the University of Alberta presented to Council on the implementation of the First Nations Digital Library initiative at First Nations post-secondary institutions across Alberta. Through this initiative, students now have access to a wealth of information that they otherwise would not have been able to access at their institution. Council saw a demonstration of how the system works for students. See the PowerPoint presentation for additional context.

Roundtable

- One item for discussion at February's meeting will be the method for setting the agenda.
- Members presented an update on admission and transfer from their institutions or sector.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.