

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

ACAT Meeting Minutes – February 11, 2010
Bow Valley College, 332 – 6 Avenue SE, Calgary, AB

Present: Ron Woodward (Chair), Alastair MacKinnon, Geoffrey Tate, Alice Wainwright-Stewart, Catherine Eddy, Peter Haney, Olive Yonge, Vincent Steinhauer, Dietmar Kennepohl, Larry Hlushak, Robin Fisher, Lee Haldeman on behalf of Gordon Nixon, Stella Shrum on behalf of Wesley Oginski, Janice Park (ACAT Director), Eric Dohei (ACAT Manager)

Absent: Gordon Nixon, Anna Kae Todd, Fred Carnew, Ann Tierney

Guests: Sharon Carry (President and CEO of Bow Valley College); Dr. Bob Brennan (University of Calgary, Associate Dean, Academic Planning and Research); Kathleen Morrow (Director, Foreign Qualification Recognition Unit, Alberta Employment and Immigration); Tony Coulson (Environics Research Group)
Lunch Guests: Contact Persons - Lorrie Keon-Morris (Assistant Registrar) and Andrea Kennedy (Transfer Credit Officer)

Recorder: Wendy Pruden (ACAT Administrative Assistant)

1. Welcome and Introductions

- All attendees introduced themselves for the benefit of those new at the meeting.
- Ron Woodward introduced Bow Valley College (BVC) President and CEO, Sharon Carry, and provided background regarding her lead in establishing the recently launched ApplyAlberta.
- Sharon Carry provided opening remarks detailing the journey of ApplyAlberta and the evolution of BVC. A vision of education in the future was discussed including the progression towards competency rather than content based education structures and changing from an input to outcome philosophy.

2. Chair's report – Ron Woodward

- Thank you to the Chairs of the Engineering Technology and Nursing Task Groups, plus the Articulation and Governance Sub-committees for their work over the past few months. Further details regarding progress will be discussed as the agenda progresses.
- Dietmar Kennepohl and Robin Fisher reported on their attendance at the December 7, 2009 CAA meeting. The relationship between ACAT and Campus Alberta Administration (CAA) is still in the development stage. ACAT will continue to keep communication lines open and sharing outcomes of our work and discussions.
- Ron Woodward thanked Dietmar Kennepohl and Robin Fisher for attending the December 7, 2009 CAA meeting.

3. Decision Items

a) ACAT Governance Sub-committee

i) Governance Model

Robin Fisher, Sub-committee Chair, reported on the progress made by the committee and reviewed the revisions made to the Governance Model document being submitted to Council for approval.

Discussion:

- The membership was reviewed and it was decided to revise the numbers as follows:
 - Universities increased to a minimum of 4 representatives
 - Public Members should read two – reduced from 4 to 2
 - An option of three additional representatives bringing the institution sector to a total of 12 to 15 members.
 - The full Council will be comprised of approximately 17 – 20 voting members and two advisory non-voting members.
- The goal is to allow for the flexibility to change meeting the needs of the system/learner.
- It is advised to explore the thoughts of Grant MacEwan University and Mount Royal University to see if they feel a need to use one of the remaining memberships.
- This new structure and logic will be communicated to the Minister.
- Recruitment will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

ii) Mandate & Roles Document

The document presented for approval was reviewed and edits requested with the following in mind:

- Consistency review between all documents will be undertaken by the Sub-committee.
- The Council Member nomination process was discussed and an open and transparent process will be formalized as this process progresses.
- Add to the document the relationship between ACAT and Contact Persons.
- On page 2/Accountability: incorporate the spirit of ACAT as having the mandate of looking after the health of the transfer system by advancing the mission of ACAT and the public interest.
- Discussion regarding scholarship eligibility needs to be reviewed at a future date.

iii) Code of Conduct Document

Robin Fisher, Sub-committee Chair, explained the revisions made to the document being presented for approval.

- ACAT mission was added.
- Some wordsmithing was requested regarding #7.

Discussion:

- After discussion, it was determined that:
 - An ethics committee will be established as needed.
 - The process to deal with a Council member's code of conduct breach was discussed and agreed upon.

MOTION: *Moved by Dietmar Kennepohl, seconded by Robin Fisher that all three documents be accepted in principle upon making the revisions requested at this meeting.*

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Discussion Items

a) Instructor Qualifications Feedback

A sub-committee was created to look at developing this information into a document that will show best practices for both sending and receiving institutions.

- Sub-committee members include Catherine Eddy, as Chair and Alice Wainwright-Stewart. Ann Tierney and Karen McDaniel (SAIT) will be asked if they will join.
- Sub-committee to determine best method of distributing this information to institutions.

b) Engineering Technology Task Group Update

Dr. Bob Brennan, University of Calgary, Associate Dean, Academic Planning and Research, provided an update to Council regarding the progress made by this task group. There have been two meetings with representatives for University of Alberta, University of Calgary, NAIT, SAIT and Lethbridge College. On reviewing the current situation, the Committee felt that it was not practical to map engineering technology programs directly to engineering degree programs. In particular, since most first year engineering courses are required after an engineering technology diploma, it is not possible to have direct transfer to second year engineering. Any changes to engineering technology and/or university engineering curricula to accommodate direct transfer would very likely compromise the intended learning outcomes of the respective programs as well as risk program accreditation. As a result, there are three options that are most promising – a bridging program, a course-by-course transfer credit (which is status quo), and concurrent “bridging”. An initial explanation of each is included in the report and these options could be researched further.

An appendix to accreditation guidelines for engineering programs will be coming into effect in 2012.

A study would be required to assess the need or demand for change but funding is not currently available. This task group has agreed to continue to meet and continue collaboration to foster relationships and better serve students.

c) Nursing Task Group Update

Dr. Olive Yonge, Sub-committee Chair, provided a draft report and recommendations to Council for their approval. The final document will be ready shortly. The uniqueness of programming has been mandated and diversity and choice is the ideal for the learner. The task group felt that there are very few transfer problems and institutions are doing their best to accommodate students through assessments. Better communication focused at the learner is a priority. The final document will clearly state the barriers at each level and the recommendations will be reorganized to reflect Council's discussion. The need to track transfers has been identified amongst the task group members and will be done in future.

The revised report/recommendations and a cover letter to the Minister will be created with the ACAT Secretariat. The cover letter will be prepared for the Chair's signature.

Next Steps:

- The Engineering Technology Task Group and Nursing Task Group reports and recommendations will be presented to the Minister shortly and then discussed with the Minister at a meeting, with the ACAT Chair, to be scheduled in April 2010.
- A letter of thanks will be sent to the committee members of both task groups acknowledging their contributions.

Note: Guests - Lorrie Keon-Morris and Andrea Kennedy (BVC Contact Persons) joined Council for lunch.

5. Discussion Items

a) Articulation Sub-committee Report

Robin Fisher, Sub-committee Chair, reported on the progress of this committee regarding the new articulation committee roles and terms of reference. Three pilot articulation committees for english, business, child and youth care. Aboriginal education was also discussed as a possible articulation committee. Council was told there would be a meeting of Aboriginal Institutions, representative groups, and ACAT representatives the following day at Mount Royal University to discuss the feasibility of an aboriginal education articulation

committee. Council agreed to proceed with these three pilot articulation committees. Note: Alberta Education representation will be included as required.

Next steps:

- Determine interim chair.
- Determine committee members.
- ACAT Secretariat facilitate first meeting.
- Report progress at next Council meeting.

b) Learning Outcomes – Guest Kathleen Morrow, International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS)

Ms. Morrow's presentation included:

- An overview of IQAS.
- Copies of the international education guides for China, the Russian Federation, Republic of India, the Philippines, Korea and United Kingdom/Northern Ireland. Two new guides are in development at present. These guides are a first within Canada and provide support for people to make decisions regarding credentials. Ms. Morrow explained how the assessments are carried out.
- Review of the 2009 workshops on international credentials and education systems provided to educational institutions and professional bodies.
- Discussion on the Bologna process from the IQAS perspective. Restructuring in Europe creates challenges when evaluating a new and old system.
- Discussion regarding foreign qualifications recognition plan for Alberta. Consistency of information is a challenge and assessments enormously complex.
- Challenges for the future. Most immigrants have completed a post-secondary credential but it might not meet the licensing requirement of Alberta. We need to build flexibility in programs so they can take the necessary courses to meet the standard.

Note: Check to see if there is a link on the ACAT website to IQAS. If not, it will be added.

c) Learner Progression Project Update

Tony Coulson provided an overview of the project process and outcomes. As a result of the research a Best Practices Report with the following recommendations:

- Transfer is a human process and there will be more pressure on the system as it grows and becomes more complex. Recommend looking into investments of information technology to reduce these stressors.

- Clarity of purpose and terminology is required, for example definition of block transfer. Recommend ACAT lead the effort in this regard and use the BCCAT principles and guidelines as a starting place for discussions.
- Communication with students is imperative. As the system grows and mobility demands increase, the principles of transfer must be clearly communicated. Institutions need to invest in communicating to all students and communicate in terms of the amount of time they have left in their journey.

Next Steps:

- Determine how to share this Best Practices Report with our members (May agenda item).
 - When report released post it on the ACAT website.
- d) Private-for-Profit Institutions Request for Membership
Council was provided extensive background material in the meeting package regarding this topic. It was pointed out that although private-for-profit institutions cannot apply for ACAT membership, they are not restricted from entering into transfer agreements with institutions.

After lengthy discussion, it was decided that Council will continue to explore how to proceed with this topic and will revisit it at the next Council meeting.

6. Information Items

There were no questions brought forward regarding the information items provided in the meeting package.

7. Confirm Meeting Date/Location for Spring 2010 Meeting

- a) May 4, 2010 – Blue Quills First Nations College, St. Paul
- Confirmed.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.