



Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

12 May 2004
Nazarene University College, Calgary

PRESENT: Lucille Walter (Chair), Shirley Barg, Ed Behnke, Fred Carnew, Joan Engel (for Raja Panwar) Matthew Glass, Peter Haney, Gretchen Hess, Judith Hughes, Lynn Mulder, Vance MacNichol, Gord Nixon, Peggy Patterson, Jean Valgardson, Marilyn Patton (Executive Officer), Marena Fakli (Manager), Guy Germain (Manager)

ABSENT: Catherine Eddy, Raja Panwar

The Chair welcomed members to Nazarene University College, and expressed regrets on behalf of Catherine Eddy and Raja Panwar.

1. Presentation from Nazarene University College, Calgary

The Chair introduced Dr. Riley Coulter, President, Nazarene University College (NUC), and Dr. George Durance from Alliance University College (AUC).

Dr. Coulter welcomed Council to Calgary, the morning after a wonderful Calgary Flames victory. He offered Council members a lunch-hour tour of the four floors of the building that make up the space shared with AUC, Canadian Bible College and Canadian Theological Seminary. Dr. Coulter outlined the association between the institutions, who cooperate and partner in student development, financial services, registrar and admissions areas. The institutions are autonomous and have separate programs, but students are able to move seamlessly between classes and receive credit. Dr. Coulter acknowledged the transfer system as a vital part of NUC's growth and success. NUC's students are mostly from Alberta, and about half of the degree students are from NUC's denomination.

Dr. Durance also welcomed Council to Calgary, and outlined the thinking behind AUC's recent relocation to Calgary, as well as the success AUC has achieved since the relocation. AUC is now fundraising to build a new campus. AUC draws students from across Canada, in fact more from Ontario and the west than from Calgary.

Together, NUC and AUC serve about 500 students. Recently NUC and AUC were approved by the Private Colleges Accreditation Board for the first jointly delivered four-year degree.

2. Individualized Learner Career Pathways

John Gunraj, Manager at Large, Basic Learning Division, Alberta Learning, provided a presentation on Individualized Learner Career Pathways.

The department is considering an Individualized Learner Career Pathways model as an educational process to develop an individual's life and work competencies to permit the individual to pursue career opportunities. The intent of the process is to move the individual as smoothly and efficiently as possible from full-time schooling into full-time satisfying

employment. The proposed model for Alberta K-12 students who are still in school is consistent with the Canadian approach to learning pathways that allows students to explore

career options by integrating academic coursework, career guidance and work-based experience over a number of years. Students will create personally relevant pathways, as variable as the students themselves. An outcome might eventually be portfolios, rather than diplomas. What's the problem the project is trying to fix? Students don't feel they have a broad and strong enough base of information and knowledge on which they can base good decisions about the next phase of their lives.

Council discussed the proposed model at length and with interest. Members indicated support in principle and provided feedback:

- Members suggested that ACAT should be involved in further development of this model, particularly in the relationship of the Pathways project to post-secondary education.
- Members pointed out that career guidance is a process, not a once-delivered item. Career guidance actually begins earlier than indicated on the flow-chart, and must continue through post-secondary. The value of the transfer system is that change in career direction can often be accommodated through transfer.
- Career thinking begins in primary grades and continues over a lifetime. Meandering from job to job or program to program can be an experience to find out aptitudes, but meandering with guidance is more beneficial.
- The more relevant curriculum can be made to a student the more likely the student is to absorb it. Why am I learning this? Why is it important to me? Students with a wealth of life-experience, and a broader base of knowledge, seem to discover the personal relevancy more easily than students with a more restricted life-experience. Adults who return to school often return with an upgraded understanding of personal relevancy, and then do better in school than they did before.
- Make sure the pathways allow for people to go into broad areas from which career change is more readily possible.
- Career guidance needs to be integrated throughout curriculum.
- As opposed to linear models, members thought models resembling clover-leaves with re-entry ramps and very fast cars were more realistic symbols.
- Career investigation and career selection require higher-level cognitive processes, such as decision making and integration. In the Pathways project where will this be brought together in the holistic concept of the individual learner?
- There is still a large number of students who are undecided about career/education direction when they leave high school. They may come back as adults, and find their way into college without high school diplomas. This can be a frustrating time.
- The model should be expressed in multi-disciplinary concepts or themes, so that learners can understand their own collection of skills, can see what you would do with a certain collection of skills, and can gain an understanding of where to fill the gaps. Students should be encouraged to think in a multidisciplinary manner, to see the connectedness between disciplines.
- Do not diminish the importance of a sound educational foundation. Also, do not end up with streaming.

3. Minutes, 11 June 2003

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the minutes of 11 March 2004 be adopted.

CARRIED

4. Items Arising From the Minutes

Student Advising at MRC

At the 11 March 2004 meeting, members passed a motion that a letter from ACAT to Mount Royal College be sent, advising of ACAT's concerns with the reduced level of advising to university transfer students, and anticipating the resumption of services consistent with ACAT's principles. A letter, dated 19 March 2004 was sent to Dr. Marshall. A letter of reply was received indicating that MRC "is committed to providing a high level of advising services and has been examining various delivery methods".

Members requested that the Chair contact Lynda Wallace-Hulecki, MRC, to provide positive closure.

Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) Student Lawsuit

Members requested that the Executive Officer determine if GPRC has filed an appeal.

Private School Enrollment Data

At the March ACAT meeting, some members requested that the Secretariat provide data on private school enrollments in Alberta, and two tables were provided. The first provides a broad overview of private school enrollment by grade. For further information on the tables, contact Barbara Pederson of Information Services Branch at 427-9034.

Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC)

Applications for membership on the CAQC were received by Alberta Learning, and are progressing through Ministerial process. The Chair of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer is expected to be a member of the CAQC.

5. Chair and Secretariat Reports

Chair's Report:

- The Chair met with the Assistant Deputy Minister, Adult Learning, to express her concern about human resources for ACAT during the transition from the Private Colleges Accreditation Board to the Campus Alberta Quality Council. The Chair was reassured that ACAT will not be negatively affected by the changes, as ACAT and the transfer system are recognized as a significant foundation for the CAQC.
- The Chair continues to provide presentations to student bodies and to career advisors. On 29 April a presentation was provided to "Building Tomorrow Today", a conference for career advisors from around the province. About 30 people attended the presentation. The Chair also provided a presentation to the ACTISEC leadership conference. It was well attended, and students asked many perceptive questions. Most heartening was that about 10 of them complimented the transfer system, and at least 3 said they would be putting their names forward to serve on the Council. The Chair has also received an invitation for the June student leadership orientation, hosted by Adult Learning in Calgary. The Executive Officer will present there.
- The Chair continues to be active with the Gateways Project at Athabasca University. What is impressive is the number of individuals from participating colleges who have a desire to be involved. Only 90 will be selected for the purposes of this project.

Secretariat Report:

- The Executive Officer reported that the second draft of the CAETO articulation user guide project was accepted. The user guide has been focus tested in the regions and has been well received. The current iteration is available as pdf on the Web site of CAETO, www.caeto.ca under Reports. The user guide is expected to be useful in jurisdictions where there is not a lot of transfer, but a need to work out portability of transfer credits for students.
- The Executive Officer attended the Council of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) Conference, as part of a panel presentation on transition from secondary to post-secondary. The other panel members were Steve MacDonald, Executive Director, Learner Transitions, and Shirley Dul, Executive Director, Apprenticeship and Industry Training. The presentation by the Executive Officer focused on some of the collaboration projects between post-secondary institutions, school districts and high schools. She provided information about the transfer system, ACAT, the importance of planning, and tools available through ACAT to help students plan. As well she invited superintendents to ask their schools to post the ALIS Web site address as well as the ACAT Web site address on high school Web sites.

Jean Valgardson noted the work of the Chinook Career Transitions Group, a cooperative venture of Lethbridge Community College, University of Lethbridge, and school districts. She offered to send material to the Secretariat so that it can be used as an example in future presentations.

- Following a meeting between representatives of northern Alberta and British Columbia (Ministers of Learning, board chairs, presidents of post-secondary institutions) focusing on ways of cooperating, the Executive Officer was asked to comment on mobility of students between the two provinces, and the two transfer systems. She reported that ACAT works cooperatively with BCCAT and BC's transfer guide is used to support BC students transferred to Alberta and vice-versa. The northern meeting representatives welcome ideas to achieve cooperation. One member suggested that transferability of student loans is an issue.
- Regarding inter-provincial discussions, recently the Secretariat was asked by Don Yurchuk, NAIT, if we had considered some method of publicizing the transfer agreements between Alberta institutions and those in other provinces. Resources are not available for the Secretariat to accurately record and update those agreements with out-of-province institutions, but the ACAT Web site could provide links to post-secondary institution web pages listing their own inter-provincial transfer agreements. Members were supportive of the Secretariat pursuing further discussion and exploration of the possibilities.
- The Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Division has a significant list of agreements that have been concluded with technical institutes and colleges regarding the credit available from certain diploma programs towards the completion of the theory component of apprenticeship programs. ACAT listing or providing this information would be a departure from current practice, since Alberta apprenticeship is not a post-secondary institution. Members were supportive of the Secretariat pursuing this further to see if it would be feasible, appropriate, or worthwhile for ACAT to list the agreements.

- A Council member noted that ACAT's Principles commit it to interest in inter-provincial transfer activities. More information about Prior Learning Assessment would also be appropriate on ACAT's Web site.

6. Proposed meeting dates for 2004-2005

The following are the adopted ACAT meeting dates for 2004-2005:

Wednesday, October 13, 2004
Tuesday, February 1, 2005
Wednesday, May 25, 2005

This meeting, 12 May 2004, is the last meeting for the two student representatives: Matthew Glass and Shirley Barg. Lynne Mulder is retiring, and Jean Valgardson will attend one more meeting before she retires in December. Lucille Walter's term concludes in August, 2004, but she is eligible for reappointment. Appreciation and best wishes were expressed to those who are leaving Council.

7. Secondary – Post-secondary Articulation

In Raja Panwar's absence, Joan Engel noted that the Implementation Schedule for Programs of Study is approved annually by the Minister. At this time, the implementation schedule is with the Minister for approval. (Since the meeting, the Minister has signed the revised schedule which means a delay of one year in implementation of the high school Social Studies curriculum {Grade 10 now in 2006} and the biology, chemistry and physics curricula {Grade 11 now in 2007}).

In response to a member's comment that nomenclature such as ELA 10-1 and 10-2 is bulky and troublesome, and the member's query about possible changes in nomenclature regarding social studies, etc., Ms. Engel indicated that nomenclature conventions are not changing.

Information about science and social studies curriculum revisions is posted on the department Web site at

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/science/default.asp

and

http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/bySubject/social/default.asp

8. ACAT Business Plan

The Manager, Policy and Planning reported that he had consulted with an expert within Alberta Learning to begin a redesign of the ACAT business plan. As a result of the consultation and internal brainstorming within the Secretariat, the business plan was revised. The hope is that as a result of the redesign, Council will have a renewed sense of ownership.

The changed format was applauded by members, who offered a number of further revisions.

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the ACAT Business Plan 2004-2007 be approved and posted on the ACAT site at www.acat.gov.ab.ca.

CARRIED

9. ACAT Annual Report

Copies of the draft Annual Report were provided. Members were asked to send comments to the Manager, Policy and Planning by the following Wednesday.

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the 2003-2004 Annual Report be adopted subject to any editorial changes suggested by members by 19 May 2004.

CARRIED

10. Alberta Transfer Guide

The 2004/2005 *Alberta Transfer Guide* is at the printers. 4,800 copies will be printed. Distribution will be similar to last year with about 1,050 copies distributed to junior high schools and high schools in the province, 2,500 copies distributed to post-secondary institutions, and the balance distributed to other locations with Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Other jurisdictions within Canada and the United States are provided with a letter that indicates that the 2004/2005 information is now available in the database on the ACAT Web site.

An additional 1,055 agreements are reflected in the Guide. This is also the first edition to list DeVry Institute of Technology – Calgary as a new receiving institution, and Prairie Bible College as a new sending institution.

11. Roundtable

At the 11 March meeting, members suggested that opportunities to exchange information on current issues in the admissions and transfer system are extremely useful. Members suggested including a “roundtable” in the agenda, to provide a scheduled opportunity for members to provide updates relative to their institution or sector. The Chair invited members to share such information.

Gretchen Hess reported that:

- the UofA committee formally known as CAAST (Committee on Admissions, Academic Standing and Transfer) has changed its terms of reference. The new committee, Academic Standards Council (ASC) now includes all faculties on campus, and functions more as an associate deans academic council. The change in name is not meant to undermine its role with respect to admissions and transfer.

Peggy Patterson reported that:

- A new competitive admissions process and enrolment policy was approved by General Faculties Council last year. UofC is implementing it this year. In this competitive admissions policy, the admissions office begins with the top applicants, and admits down until the seats are full. There are also enrolment quotas. There is no change for transfer students, because this is the way that transfer students have always been admitted. It is unlikely that the grade point average is going to be much different, but the process is different. All students will be made an offer by June 1.
- UofC is also implementing co-curricular transcripts. This is valuable to people for prior learning assessment, because it records and recognizes contributions for leadership, participation on sports, group involvement, council leadership, and community involvement. Information must be validated and this will be challenging.
- Beginning this fall, and included in all academic programs, will be an inquiry component to create a sense of community and infuse research into the programs. In some programs like engineering there is a practicum in the first year, that includes group problem solving. An inquiry component is harder to do in the humanities, but effective next year there will be an inquiry course in the first year in every program area. The inquiry component will be partnered with a capstone experience in the final year. The capstone experience provides an opportunity to weave years of study together, and provides a transition experience to career or further post-secondary study.

Public member, Fred Carnew noted that:

- He perceives employers to be doing so much “very basic” training, and feeling that employees should be coming to work with those basic skills. More attention to integration with the work world is necessary.

Gord Nixon reported that:

- SAIT is adopting the provincial grading system on a campus-wide basis effective September 2004. This will provide consistency across the campus.
- A 2-year enrolment management project has provided accurate data on admissions in 80 programs, and can now compare this data to last year. The results of this management system will be very useful for marketing.
- A new national association, the Association of Canadian Public Polytechnic Institutions has been formed to better serve polytechnic institutions. There are nine founding members, including SAIT, NAIT, BCIT, Humber, Seneca, Sheraton, George Brown, Conestoga, and Holland. Polytechnic institutions offer programs in trades, certificates, degrees, and career focused programs and also do applied research. The Annual General Meeting will be hosted at SAIT, on May 27 and 28, 2004. At the AGM the members are expected to sign a transfer protocol.

Jean Valgardson reported that:

- Lethbridge Community College is also improving processes and focusing on a learning support retention component. As well, LCC is developing learning opportunities that cross institutions' provincial and international boundaries, such as student exchanges in other countries, as they are seeing some real advantages to offering learners different opportunities outside Alberta and Canada.
- LCC has a new learner ombudsman who will register concerns about the learning process. The intent is that learners won't be trapped by administrative structures. This position reports directly to the President.
- More partnership work with aboriginals is underway. This is a unique group of learners who bring a rich culture.

Shirley Barg reported that:

- CAUS' changeover meeting is imminent and Shirley will step down as Chair. This past year has seen a highly strengthened partnership between university students, and college and technical institute students groups. CAUS will be moving to a shared office with ACTISEC.
- Working with Alberta Learning staff, especially Connie Harrison and Marg Leathem, has been a positive experience.

Ed Behnke reported that:

- Northern and rural colleges are shrinking. Despite an increased grant of funding beyond that which was planned for, most of the colleges in the north are making significant cuts to programs and services. Over a number of years a series of government policies and initiatives, for instance HRE policies and AL performance funding, have come together to cause a significant impact. Portage College had 13 sites two years ago, but this fall it will only have 7 sites.
- eCampusAlberta will help in some ways. It will have an impact on student access, but not on a college's viability.
- At one time the student population at Portage College was 70% aboriginal; it is now down to 49%. This has been caused by HRE policy changes, and changes in aboriginal organizations' student funding policies.

Peter Haney reported that:

- University of Lethbridge will be offering PhD level programming in all science areas starting next year.
- Web registration is enhanced so that continuing students can access some student services. Web registration will be available for new students by the summer. Inquiries for status of admission can be handled by web. Electronic degree audit has started at UofL.

- There are now 148 post-diploma arrangements available. To monitor them, a post-diploma Web site has been developed that interacts with a database.
- UofL is also looking at program capacity, since they will be at around 8,000 students this year. An enrolment tracking committee will look at finalizing recommendations to raise admission averages for secondary students from 65 to 68% and admission grade point averages from 2.0 to 2.50 for transfer students. The admission changes will be for fall 2005.
- Although UofL recently received money for aboriginal transitions in the last while, the project is in jeopardy because of funding realities with respect to aboriginal education. Aboriginals must be in a program leading to a credential to receive funding. This has terrible implications for fresh start type programs.

Matthew Glass reported that:

- ACTISEC and CAUS are working closely. ACAT was given a warm welcome at ACTISEC's annual meeting. ACTISEC has undertaken structural changes. Matthew expressed his thanks to Council members.

Following the Roundtable, the Chair observed that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Adult Learning had mentioned that ACAT is so representative of the post-secondary system that it can legitimately comment on issues and trends to the Minister. There were some issues that arose today that likely should be investigated and passed on to Dr. Oberg.

The Chair expressed her thanks to members for their contribution, and wished everyone a good summer. The Chair again expressed her thanks to NUC and AUC for hosting the meeting and to President Coulter and President Durance for their remarks on the strategic direction of their institutions.

It was MOVED and SECONDED that the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED