

# ALBERTA COUNCIL ON ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFER

## JULY 2009 NEWSLETTER

### CHAIR'S UPDATE



It's hard to believe that it has already been over a year since my appointment as Chair of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT). We have been very busy, and are excited about the many opportunities to enhance opportunities for learners throughout the coming year.

One of the major items on our to-do list over the past year has been to completely review the structure of Council, in order to ensure that we are able to effectively respond to changes in both the government's policies around public agencies, and to ensure that we are aligned with the significant changes that are occurring within Alberta's post-secondary system.

One area that ACAT is involved with making significant progress on is in actions related to enhancing Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition practices throughout the province. It was my privilege to participate in the Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (CAPLA) national conference where the new *Advancing PLAR in Alberta: An Action Plan* was released. We had an opportunity to promote this plan and discuss with colleagues from across the country the key strategies that ACAT will be leading.

We are also exploring several key areas for change that will impact Alberta learners. For example, Council is currently working to establish a policy that will allow post-secondary institutions from our neighbour province British Columbia to apply to become members in the Alberta Transfer System, with the hope that eventually we will be able to provide learners with increased information and tools to help them transfer credit across the country.

We're exploring ways to improve the information we provide on our website, and are talking to students about things we can do to help them. I am about halfway through the very informative process of visiting all of our member institutions, and have been hearing the types of issues that affect their learners, and gathering valuable input on the types of activities ACAT can undertake in order to assist their learners.

I believe that 2009 is a very exciting year for ACAT, and I encourage you to visit our website, [www.transferalberta.ca](http://www.transferalberta.ca), to stay informed of the changes and initiatives that we have planned.

Regards,

*Ron Woodward*  
Chair, ACAT

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## WEBSITE REDESIGN

The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfers (ACAT) website is currently in the process of being redesigned and rewritten in order to be more user-friendly and appealing to students. In addition, a new portal is being created for ACAT content designed for public users to be housed on the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website. The alignment with ALIS will create a greater awareness of ACAT as it allows a broader range of audiences to access the information.

ACAT has also created a new URL [www.transferalberta.ca](http://www.transferalberta.ca) which will eventually redirect users to the ACAT content on the ALIS website. The current web page [www.acat.gov.ab.ca](http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca) will be maintained as the ACAT Council information page.



## CHANGES TO ALBERTA SENIOR HIGH MATH CURRICULUM

Alberta Education is making significant changes to its Senior High Mathematics curriculum, and these changes will have impacts on the type of Math course that students will require for entrance into their desired post-secondary program.

The new Mathematics curriculum will be implemented for Grade 10 students in September 2010, and the approved Math Program of Studies is now available on the Alberta Education website ([http://education.alberta.ca/media/823110/math10to12\\_ind.pdf](http://education.alberta.ca/media/823110/math10to12_ind.pdf).)

ACAT is currently working with its post-secondary institution partners to determine how the curriculum changes will impact learners, so that learners will be able to make informed choices well in advance to the required math courses needed for admission to their desired post-secondary program.

Watch for more information about potential pathways in late 2009.

## ARTICULATION COMMITTEES

### Biological Sciences

This committee met January 23, 2009. For the first time, all institutions that participate in the block transfer chart are hoping to offer the complete two-year block of courses.

### Indigenous Languages (previously Cree)

A meeting was held May 15, 2008, where a decision was made to expand the committee's mandate to include other Indigenous Languages (e.g. Blackfoot) and as a result, the committee was re-named. Also, its Terms of Reference were expanded to include updates to ACAT Council.

### Computing Science

The Universities of Alberta and Calgary continue to work together in developing a table of equivalent courses for first- and second-year studies. Participants agreed to support the revised CTS Computing Science Pathway in providing desirable Computer Science outcomes at the high school level.

### Education

The University of Alberta Education Liaison committee met on November 14, 2008 to discuss current trends and issues regarding existing education transfer programs with the University of Alberta.

### Engineering

This committee met December 5, 2008 to discuss updates to the Engineering Charts in the Alberta Transfer Guide. Admission requirements and high school transitions were also discussed.

### Languages Other than English (Second Languages)

This committee met February 27, 2009. It discussed course outlines, high school grading and transition, placement testing and proposed secondary curriculum changes.

### Math

As the Math Program of Studies has been approved by Alberta Education, letters were sent to post-secondary institutions asking if they are now able to provide additional information on the acceptance of the new Math courses for admission to their post-secondary programs.

## ADVANCING PLAR IN ALBERTA: AN ACTION PLAN

The ministry of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology (AAET), has recently released an Action Plan for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) titled *Advancing PLAR in Alberta: An Action Plan*. This action plan was formally launched at the annual Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) national conference that was held in Banff, Alberta in October 2008.

The Action Plan outlines priority actions to benefit learners by supporting PLAR in the advanced education system and the community-based adult learning system.

The four key outcomes for the plan are:

- **Increased Information, Awareness and Support for PLAR-** to build support for valuing and recognizing previously acquired skills, competencies, and knowledge, and to raise awareness of the benefits of PLAR across multiple sectors
- **Quality Assurance for PLAR-** to provide direction for the development of quality assurance policies, practices and processes for identifying, assessing, and recognizing previously acquired skills, competencies, and knowledge.
- **Increased Capacity of the System to Engage in PLAR Practices-** to enhance the ability of community-based learning organizations and post-secondary institutions to engage in PLAR practices.
- **Connection of PLAR Providers and Services-** to increase individuals' access to learning opportunities by creating and strengthening alignment between and within the advanced education system, the community adult learning system and the labour market.

AET is now proceeding with implementing the action items that are designed to meet the four key outcomes, and will be relying on ACAT to lead several of the key action items. Some of the first tasks in the Action Plan that ACAT will be leading will include:

- Recruited a provincial PLAR Manager who will be responsible for the implementation of the important actions identified in the plan.
- Developing a communications strategy to raise awareness of PLAR at post-secondary institutions and community adult learning providers
- Developing an online Alberta PLAR resource database

- Establishing a provincial PLAR committee with representatives from the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT), post-secondary institutions, community adult learning providers, government, learners and other stakeholders
- Delivering training to a cohort of potential PLAR practitioners within the advanced education system.

For more information on the Action Plan, please visit [www.transferralberta.ca/plar](http://www.transferralberta.ca/plar) to learn about the progress being made to enhance PLAR activities in Alberta.



### INSTITUTION PROFILE- UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Each newsletter edition, ACAT plans to profile one of the 36 member institutions that make up the Alberta Transfer System.

The University of Alberta (U of A) in Edmonton, Alberta has been ranked the number one sending institution in the Alberta Transfer System. In 2007 the U of A has received 2,449 transfer students.

Fast facts:

- In fall 2007, U of A received 1,969 students from formal transfer programs.
- In fall 2007, U of A was ranked as the number one receiving institution in Alberta post-secondary institutions.
- The U of A enrolled 6,528 students from Alberta, 1,298 from outside Alberta and 1,341 international students in the 2007-2008 academic year.
- Currently, U of A has 4,975 by-course agreements and 64 by-program agreements.
- The University of Alberta is a great example of block transfer programs successfully allowing students a smooth transition from college to university.

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## THE ACAT TEAM

**JANICE PARK** has joined the Post-secondary Excellence division as the Director of the ACAT Secretariat. She is recognized for her strategic and leadership abilities and dedication to program and service delivery.

**Eric Dohei** has joined ACAT as the new ACAT Manager. Eric's key responsibilities will be to support the Council's endeavors through the coordination of activities in the areas of admission to post-secondary studies and credit transfer between programs.

**WENDY PRUDEN** joined as our new Administrative Assistant. Wendy's extensive administrative, communication, liaison and marketing skills will serve ACAT well.

**SONIA JEVNE** has joined ACAT as the new PLAR Manager. Sonia is passionate about PLAR and is looking forward to the opportunity to work with PLAR practitioners and learners to implement the plan.

**WENDY RICHER'S** key responsibilities are dealing with all institutions using the the TAARS database system, to ensure effective transfer agreements.

**MANISHA ARORA** is the Market and Research Specialist. Manisha's key responsibilities are executing the ACAT communications plan and bringing awareness to TransferAlberta.ca.

## GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

In order to align with the requirements in the Alberta Government's Public Agencies Governance Framework as well as Alberta Advanced Education and Technology's Roles and Mandates Policy Framework, ACAT has undertaken a significant review of its governance structure and policies.

A draft Governance and Recruitment structure for the Council has been developed and shared with each of the bodies that currently nominates members for their feedback. This consultation includes:

- Alberta Universities Association
- Alberta Association of Colleges and Technical Institutes
- Alberta College and Technical Institute Student Executive Council
- Council of Alberta University Students
- Independent Academic Institutions Council
- First Nations Adult Higher Education Consortium

Feedback from these nominating bodies will be considered and incorporated where required into the revised governance model. The revised model will then be provided to Advanced Education and Technology Minister Doug Horner for consideration. Once a revised model has been approved, the model will be implemented for future vacancies to Council once they arise.

For more information of ACAT's Governance, visit [http://www.transferalberta.ca/acat\\_information/acat\\_information.htm](http://www.transferalberta.ca/acat_information/acat_information.htm).



## YOU ASK, WE ANSWER...

Do you have questions about admissions and transfer in Alberta?

Check out: [www.transferalberta.ca](http://www.transferalberta.ca)

E-mail: [acat@gov.ab.ca](mailto:acat@gov.ab.ca)

Phone: (780) 422-9021

Toll free in Alberta, dial 310-0000, then (780) 422-9021

Deaf or hearing impaired individuals with TDD/TTY units call (780) 427-9999 in Edmonton. Other locations call 1-800-232-7215



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