

# ALBERTA COUNCIL ON ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFER

## JUNE 2008 NEWSLETTER

### CHAIR'S UPDATE



It is timely to update you on some key activities that ACAT has undertaken over the last year. I have learned a great deal since my appointment last August and a lot has been accomplished since then.

Alberta's post-secondary system is evolving through the Campus Alberta vision. Recently, the Honourable Doug

Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology, undertook the development of a Roles and Mandates Policy Framework for the publicly funded post-secondary system. As well as serving as a long-term strategic planning tool, the framework establishes principles of collaboration and seamless transitions, whereby a diverse range of learning pathways are recognized to support learners transferring among institutions.

As part of that work, Minister Horner challenged ACAT to provide recommendations on a number of key policy areas in support of the framework and with an aim to furthering Campus Alberta. ACAT responded to this challenge by providing a number of recommendations to the Minister. The Minister supported the recommendations, and identified some priorities. They include:

- Furthering the vision of Campus Alberta through a learner-centered approach. ACAT is reviewing its mandate and structure to determine how best to align with the Campus Alberta vision and ensuring that a learner-centered approach is at the forefront.
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). ACAT is continuing to move forward on the development of PLAR strategies in Alberta.

- Explore the concept of a performance indicator that focuses on admissions and transfer. Lead work in developing recommendations to the ministry on possible indicators that measure success in relation to the admission and transfer system.
- Enhancing ACAT's focus on admissions – more work is needed in the area of clarifying and capturing best practices on admissions and strengthening ACAT's role with the K-12 system to facilitate learner transitions.

The complete set of recommendations can be found on our website under [Publications](#).

There are a number of other priorities that we have identified and will continue to work on including: block transfer, aligning and revisiting our policies and procedures around sending and receiving institutions, further work with Aboriginal Colleges, and profiling ACAT on the Pan-Canadian front in order to facilitate inter-provincial transfer. More details on goals and priorities can be found by viewing our 2008-2011 Business Plan on the ACAT website.

Recently, I spoke on behalf of ACAT at the Community College Baccalaureate Association Pre-Conference Forum in Prince George and Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) Quality Assurance Symposium in Quebec City. I was pleased to profile ACAT at these events and as a credit to all of you ACAT's reputation is held in high regard across the country. I have been continually impressed with the commitment and spirit of cooperation and collaboration that is part of the daily work undertaken by Alberta's admissions and transfer system on behalf of learners as they plan and navigate their way through the complexities of the post-secondary system.

*Ron Woodward*

### THIS ISSUE...

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Great planning leads to great futures - [www.acat.gov.ab.ca](http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca)

### SYSTEM REDESIGN

The Transfer Agreements and Archival System (TAARS) database houses the data for the Alberta Transfer Guide. The current iteration of the database has been in production since June 2001, so a redesign of the system's look and functionality is due. The process is starting with the development of a business case, but a date for completion has not yet been determined.

ACAT continues to work with its technical team to process minor system enhancements to update the database to make it more functional to users until the redesign has been done. ACAT will be seeking institutional feedback in determining functionality enhancements to be included in the redesign.

### PUBLIC AGENCIES GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The provincial government has recently undertaken a review of the governance practices of all public agencies, boards, and commissions. In January, the government released a policy framework setting out specific governance guidelines for all public agencies.

As a result, ACAT has undertaken a review of its governance practices, including a review of Council structure, appointment processes, evaluation, and reporting practices. A sub-committee developed specific recommendations for change, and Council recently approved moving forward with implementing the suggested changes. A specific governance section will be added to the ACAT website, so the results of this process will be made public in the coming months.

### ARTICULATION COMMITTEES

An important part of the work done by Council is to support the development of articulation committees when there are specific transfer/admissions issues that arise in specific disciplines. ACAT brings together representatives from post-secondary institutions and Alberta Education in order to discuss opportunities to enhance transfer and facilitate the admissions process for learners.

Current active committees that have met recently include Computing Sciences, High School Math, High School Second Language studies, and Indigenous Language studies.

### LEARNER PROGRESSIONS RESEARCH PROJECT

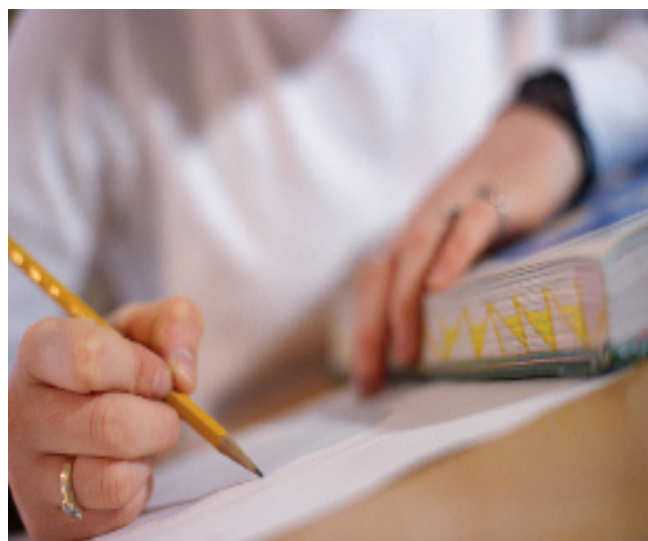
ACAT has identified the need to enhance the development of progression opportunities for learners, such as block transfer agreements, so that learners can more easily ladder their education and careers. These opportunities greatly facilitate learner mobility as the student knows what to expect when building their education path and transferring to another institution. While there is agreement that progression opportunities benefit the learner, there is little common understanding of what it takes to create such agreements and what an institution may need to consider when exploring such options.

Thus, ACAT intends to undertake a research project that will:

- examine research that has taken place nationally
- interview people in the advanced education system most familiar with learner progression
- highlight current case studies in Alberta

The ultimate goal of the project is to develop a Best Practices document for institutions to aid them in exploring their own learner progression options.

The research project is scheduled to begin in July 2008 and conclude by March 2009. Those individuals interested in participating in the research study should contact the ACAT Secretariat at (780) 422-9021.

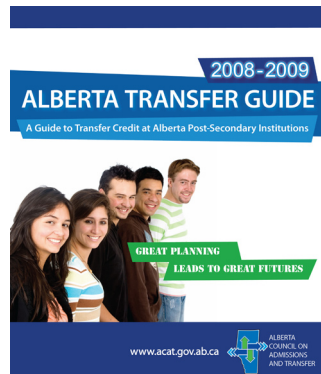


## ACAT ANNUAL REPORT & BUSINESS PLAN

Watch for the 2007-2008 Annual Report and 2008-2011 Business Plan. They are both in the final stages of completion and will be available for viewing on the ACAT website.

## ALBERTA TRANSFER GUIDE

The production of the 2008-2009 Alberta Transfer Guide has been completed and the Guides have been mailed! ACAT is appreciative of the institutions' participation in updating their admission and transfer information. The number of new transfer agreements has been maintained, while institutions have been diligent in reviewing the currency of their existing transfer data. Remember, the online Guide is the official version as the agreements are updated weekly!



## BEST PRACTICES IN TRANSFER / CP MANUAL UPDATE

Released in Spring 2005, the Best Practices in Transfer document is a review of the internal business processes used by Alberta post-secondary institutions in the administration of credit transfer agreements established through the Alberta Transfer System. It contains information compiled from feedback received from Contact Persons/Assistants, academic administrators and faculty at institutions.

As the Alberta Transfer System changes, the Best Practices in Transfer needs to be reviewed and updated. ACAT is currently reviewing this document to ensure it reflects up-to-date business practices and processes. In addition, ACAT is also reviewing its CP Users Manual, which assists Contact Persons/Assistants with entering transfer agreement data on the database. Both documents are vital to Alberta's Transfer System and assist with fostering efficiency and effectiveness in the processing of transfer agreements within and between post-secondary institutions.

## PCCAT

The national body developed to promote collaboration of the various bodies involved in credit transfer across the country, known as the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer, held its third annual meeting June 16-18th in Toronto. The goal of this organization is to explore opportunities for the various jurisdictions to work together to enhance the mobility of students across Canada.

At this year's meeting, ACAT presented on how the changing landscape of Alberta's post-secondary system is having a major impact on Alberta's Transfer System, and the strategies ACAT is taking to respond to these changes. We also provided an overview of interprovincial mobility data that is tracked annually through the Transfer Patterns Report. For more information on this organization and the recent meeting visit [www.pccat.ca](http://www.pccat.ca).

## INSTITUTION PROFILE- MOUNT ROYAL COLLEGE

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

One institution that is seeing significant expansion in its transfer situation is Mount Royal College in Calgary, Alberta. Compared to fall 2006, MRC received 366 more transfer students than the previous year.

Fast facts:

- In fall 2007, MRC received 779 students from other Alberta institutions, ranking 4th of Alberta institutions.
- 1,195 MRC students also went on to studies at other Alberta institutions in fall 2007, ranking 2nd.
- MRC reported receiving over 600 students from institutions in other provinces or countries in fall 2007.
- Currently, MRC has 3,288 by-course agreements and 79 by-program agreements.
- MRC recently received approval to offer five new bachelor degrees starting this fall.
- MRC is an excellent example of an institution playing dual roles in the transfer system, as many students choose to attend the college as a starting point towards finishing degrees in other institutions, and they also accept many students into their programs from across the post-secondary system.

### ALBERTA TRANSFER PATTERNS STUDY, FALL 2007

Since 1979, ACAT has produced a Transfer Patterns study providing information about the volume of student transfer between post-secondary institutions in Alberta, as well as students transferring into the province from other provinces and countries.

The study is organized into a Fall 2007 Report followed by Mobility Tables. The Mobility Tables record the number of students admitted for the first time to their post-secondary institution during the Fall 2007 admission cycle who had reported prior post-secondary experience.

Highlights of the 2007 Transfer Patterns Study:

- A total of 9,278 students were admitted in September 2007 who had previously attended another Alberta post-secondary institution. This total is 2.7% lower than the previous year.
- A total of 5,009 students transferred into-province, which is an increase of 837 students or 20.1% from the previous year's total.
- Into-province transfers constitute 35.1% while transfers within the province constitute 64.9 % of the combined total of 14,287 students.

To view the entire study, visit our website and click on "Publications".

### WELCOME TO MANISHA ARORA!

The ACAT Secretariat is pleased to announce the addition of a new team member, Manisha Arora, who is the Post-Secondary Transitions Assistant. Over the course of the next two years, Manisha will be involved with a variety of research and communications projects.

Manisha recently graduated from the University of Calgary with a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations and is a transfer student herself. She most recently worked with a nonprofit organization, Calgary Technologies, as a program coordinator. Her past experience has also included the telecommunications industry and many volunteer positions.

### RECENT EVENTS

*Community College Bacalaureate Association Pre-Conference Forum* - May 24, Prince George, BC

- Ron Woodward participated on the panel to discuss transfer credit issues in Alberta.

*Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC) Quality Assurance Symposium* - May 26 - 28, Quebec City, QC

- Ron Woodward participated on national panel to discuss quality assurance issues and transfer.

*Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfer Annual General Meeting* - June 16 - 18, Toronto, ON

- ACAT presented on current issues facing Alberta transfer.
- Visit [www.pccat.ca](http://www.pccat.ca) for meeting presentations and summaries



*Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) - Recognition for Prior Learning: Building on a Decade of Collaboration Conference* - October 19 - 21, Banff Springs Hotel

- Come to Banff and be a part of CAPLA's yearly conference!
- Visit [www.capla.ca](http://www.capla.ca) for information and registration

### YOU ASK, WE ANSWER...

Do you have questions about admissions and transfer in Alberta?

Check out: [www.acat.gov.ab.ca](http://www.acat.gov.ab.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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