

Structure and Governance

The provincial Liberals have just been elected to stand for their third term in government. The BC Ministry of Advanced Education & Labour Market Development (ALMD) is very supportive of the work of the Council, as are BC post-secondary institutions.

The BC Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT) was established in 1989. The Council is an arm's-length agency fully funded by the Ministry, but with no statutory or regulatory authority. Council members are appointed by the Minister and are selected *from* various institutions and constituencies *but do not formally represent any specific institution or group*, a critical element in the success of our work.

BCCAT's mandate is to provide leadership and direction in facilitating articulation, transfer, and admission arrangements among BC post-secondary institutions. Its two major roles are to:

- (a) facilitate transferability of post-secondary credit courses so that credit granted at one institution can be applied toward credentials at other institutions;
- (b) examine issues pertaining to capacity, demand, and student mobility and recommend policies and practices that facilitate the admission process for direct entry and transfer students within the BC post-secondary system.

BCCAT has a staff of nine people but also contracts with outside service providers. Our relationship with the post-secondary system is enhanced through the membership of our standing committees (Admissions, Research, Transfer and Articulation, Institutional Contact Persons) and a number of special-purpose committees. Sixty-eight discipline-based articulation committees operate under our auspices.

The BC Transfer System is comprised of 25 public post-secondary institutions (of which 11 are now named as universities, 11 are colleges, and 3 are institutes), 10 private institutions, and Yukon College. Degree-granting private institutions can become members by undergoing the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) processes for degree authorization and receiving Minister's Consent for a degree.

The BC Transfer Guide, www.bctransferguide.ca, includes over 66,000 current transfer agreements for 10,192 courses, over 45,000 "grandparented" agreements, and about 900 block transfer agreements.

BCCAT also publishes Education Planner, www.educationplanner.ca, an online resource for students and advisors that provides admissions information on 1,700 undergraduate programs in our public post-secondary institutions (also including a number of private institutions). Program information is also cross-linked to career related information. Web access has been increasing quickly. In 2008-09, there was an average of 50,000 visits per month to the site.

Highlights from 2008-09

Each year the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) prepares a detailed work plan and at the end of the fiscal year prepares an Annual Report that summarizes what was achieved. Each annual report includes reference to completed research reports, newsletters, and related publications. Annual reports and other BCCAT publications are available on the BCCAT website at bccat.ca/publications.

The following summary outlines key projects and activities undertaken by the Council in 2008-09. This information is presented in detail in the 2008-09 Annual Report (see www.bccat.ca/pubs/ar08-09.pdf).

A. Transfer & Articulation

This year, BCCAT implemented a number of recommendations arising from a recent province-wide consultation which focused on the subject, *Recalibrating the BC Transfer System*. The following projects are three examples of these implementations:

- **Designation as a Receiving Institution in the BC Transfer System**

Based on feedback from the *Recalibration* consultation, BCCAT developed a policy establishing a structure and process for institutions, currently designated as “sending-only,” seeking to operate in the BC Transfer System as “receiving” institutions. See bccat.ca/pubs/receivingpolicy.pdf for details.

- **Beyond Course-to-Course Transfer**

This year, BCCAT carried out a study to examine how courses are moving through the system as students switch institutions, to help identify whether certain institutions have a case for taking on the “receiver” designation.

Research report: bccat.ca/pubs/coursescarried.pdf

4-page summary: bccat.ca/pubs/rr_coursecarried08.pdf

- **Best Practice Guide: A Resource for Receiving Institutions**

The *Recalibration* discussions clarified that BCCAT could provide a vital service to the system by developing a resource offering information on the best practices, processes, policies, and means required of receiving institutions to operate in the transfer system.

In response to this recommendation, BCCAT prepared a handbook for use as a guide by institutions seeking the “receiver” designation. The *Best Practice Guide* was released in conjunction with the Designation Policy. PDF and HTML versions of the handbook are available on the BCCAT website at bccat.ca/articulation/receiving.

Also, this year, the Transfer & Articulation Committee (TAC) oversaw a major revision to the policy governing how new institutions join in the BC Transfer System, *Policy for New Members of the Transfer System* (bccat.ca/pubs/newmember.pdf). In addition, the TAC developed a new policy, *Recording Block Transfer Agreements with PCTIA-Accredited Private Institutions* (bccat.ca/pubs/PCTIAblock.pdf).

B. Admissions & Research

The following items summarize advances made in admissions research, under the supervision of the Admissions Committee this year:

- **Student Mobility Research**

Significant progress has been made in recent years towards building a systematic approach to data collection and reporting on student mobility. The Council's work on student mobility research occurred as part of the Admissions Committee Work Plan and in close partnership with the Student Transitions Project (STP). The STP is a collaborative effort between the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and BC public post-secondary institutions to link data about students in the province's public post-secondary system with information from the K-12 system.

Most Admissions Committee projects with a focus on student mobility are now included in the STP Work Plan and are carried out under the auspices of the STP Steering Committee and its subcommittees, working closely with BCCAT staff and using BCCAT funding where required.

Here are some examples of student mobility projects completed this year:

- *Mobility of Transfer Students*
2-page summary: bccat.ca/pubs/mobilitysummary08.pdf
8-page newsletter: bccat.ca/pubs/rr_mobility08.pdf
- *Student Mobility Among Post-Secondary Institutions*
2-page summary: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/stp_highlights_nov08.pdf
Research report: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/STP-Movement-Among-Report_2008-10-20.pdf
2-page summary: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/student_transitions/documents/stp_highlights_feb09.pdf
- *ABE Student Mobility*
Research report: bccat.ca/pubs/abestudentmobility2004-05.pdf

- **Other Admissions-Related Projects:**

BCCAT undertook an environmental scan through web-based surveys to determine if BCCAT should embark upon system-wide work to examine and recommend admissions processes and practices that will benefit students. (See www.bccat.ca/pubs/admissionsscan09.pdf.)

BCCAT conducted a survey, in partnership with the Canadian Council on Learning, of 2005/06 high school graduates who did not pursue BC public post-secondary education by fall 2007. The purpose of the project was to determine other post-secondary destinations of students and the intentions of those who have not yet enrolled. (The full report is available online at www.bccat.ca/pubs/rr_apr09.pdf.)

The following are examples of research projects completed this year, under the supervision of the Council's Research Committee, that are designed to measure the efficacy of the BC Transfer System.

- **BC College Transfer Student Profile Reports**

- *Profile of BC College Transfer Students Admitted to Simon Fraser University, 2003/04 to 2007/08*
bccat.ca/pubs/SFUProfile0708.pdf
- *Profile of BC College Transfer Students Admitted to the University of Northern British Columbia, 2003/04 to 2007/08*
bccat.ca/pubs/UNBCProfile0708.pdf
- *Profile of BC College Transfer Students Admitted to the University of Victoria, 2003/04 to 2007/08*
bccat.ca/pubs/UVICProfile0708.pdf
- *Profile of BC College Transfer Students Admitted to the University of British Columbia, 2003/04 to 2007/08*
www.bccat.ca/pubs/UBCProfile0708.pdf
- *Profile of BC College Transfer Students Admitted to Thompson Rivers University, 2003/04 to 2007/08*
bccat.ca/pubs/TRUProfile0708.pdf

- **2008 Admissions and Transfer Experiences of Students Continuing their Post-Secondary Studies in British Columbia** (prepared by BC Stats) bccat.ca/pubs/bcstats08.pdf

This report presents an assessment of student responses to an extensive set of admissions and transfer questions included in the spring 2008 Diploma, Associate Degree & Certificate Student Outcomes (DACSO) Survey of students.

C. Communications/Websites

The development and improvement of BCCAT web resources is an ongoing process. This year, a number of enhancements were made to improve the efficiency and usability of BCCAT websites. One new development was the creation of a network of institutional contacts to act as advisors regarding the Education Planner site. The Education Planner Institutional Contacts (EPIC) met in May 2008 to discuss alternative approaches to the management of the EP database. This year also saw the completion of an external review of EducationPlanner.ca. (See bccat.ca/pubs/EPReview.pdf for the full report.)

Meanwhile, BCCAT continued to work to increase awareness of BCCAT resources to inform and encourage students with their post-secondary planning. We ran two transit ad campaigns, in the spring and fall, featuring two key BCCAT websites (EducationPlanner.ca and BCTransferGuide.ca). BCCAT ads were displayed on buses in every region of BC and on the SkyTrain system, posted in trains and at selected stations throughout the Lower Mainland.

Since launching our first campaign, back in 2006, our web statistics have indicated that usership of both sites has increased significantly (10-15%) year on year. We are also very encouraged to see notably high volumes of web visits during post-secondary registration periods.

In addition to this, we also undertook a number of other advertising initiatives, participated at career and education fairs, and delivered presentations and demonstrations to assist students, counselors, and career practitioners in the use of BCCAT web resources.

D. System Collaboration

- **Ministries, Agencies, Groups, and Organizations in BC**

BCCAT interacts with a number of organizations and committees serving the BC post-secondary system, on joint projects, in consultation, or in an advisory capacity, on an “as needed” basis. BCCAT also consults with Ministry staff and keeps them informed of Council activities and projects, while keeping abreast of developments within government that intersect and impact upon its work.

- **Out-of-Province, National, and International Organizations**

This year, the Council continued to participate in the broader transfer context, playing a leadership role in facilitating the improvement of student-friendly policies and practices to enhance student mobility and transfer between institutions across the country. The following are examples of activities carried out in 2008-09:

- *Alberta Council on Admissions & Transfer (ACAT):*

This year, the Council consulted with ACAT regarding the development of a policy for the inclusion of Alberta institutions in the BC Transfer System. The policy has been approved by Council and is in the first stage of its implementation. We are very pleased that the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer has recently approved a reciprocal policy.

- *Tri-Council Collaborative Initiatives:*

In September 2008, BCCAT staff members met together with members from the Alberta Council on Admissions & Transfer (ACAT) and the Saskatchewan Council on Admissions & Transfer (SaskCAT) to discuss areas of common interest and possible future cooperation.

As a result of that meeting, a letter and report was sent by the chairs of the three councils to the advanced education ministers of the three provinces to describe collaborate initiatives agreed to by the three councils that will benefit the mobility of learners. A very positive response to the letter and report has been received from Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology in Alberta. (These Tri-Council discussions continue to date; the most recent meeting was held in February 2009 and the next meeting is scheduled for September 2009).

- *Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer (PCCAT):*

PCCAT held its Third Annual Meeting in Toronto in June 2008. The meeting was co-chaired by Frank Gelin (BCCAT Executive Director & Co-Chair) and David Hinton (Registrar of the University of New Brunswick). BCCAT staff took a lead role in organizing the event and in overseeing the transfer of administrative support to Campus Saskatchewan.

BCCAT also chairs and provides secretariat support for PCCAT’s Research Subcommittee, which met by telephone numerous times in 2008-09 to design a project to assess the number of students transferring between post-secondary institutions across Canadian jurisdictions, whether these students received appropriate transfer credit, and the success of those students.

BCCAT will continue to collaborate with others in the national context in promoting the importance of achieving a pan-Canadian system of student mobility and transfer. Our work will focus on providing advice and support to Canadian provinces who wish to develop and implement their own transfer systems and to encourage support for such activities at the Ministerial level.