

Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer

Fourth Annual General Meeting

Summary of Notes

NOTE: List of registrants is available in document hosted at www.pccat.ca

June 22-24, 2009
Delta Fredericton,
Fredericton,
New Brunswick

JUNE 22

SUMMARY

Reception held
7-9 pm

The opening reception for the 2009 Annual PCCAT meeting was hosted by the Government of New Brunswick, Dept. Of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. The venue was the beautiful, historic, Old Government House, www.gnb.ca/lg/ogh/index-e.asp. The event began with a message of welcome by Co-Chair, David Hinton, and the Deputy Minister, Byron James. Special thanks were extended to the Government of New Brunswick for sponsoring the reception.

Attendees were welcomed to the event, and thanked all participants for their active involvement in admission and transfer.

JUNE 23

Meeting

Welcome & Introductions

Following a continental breakfast, the meeting was opened by the two co-chairs, David Hinton (University of New Brunswick) and Philip Cameron (Campus Saskatchewan). It was worth noting that in 2006, 12 participants attended, followed by 30 attendees in 2007, 50 in 2008, and this was the largest gathering to date with approx. 57 registrants. Philip acknowledged the work of his Co-Chair, David; as well as the efforts of Anne-Louise Hachey and Jodie Hills. Two Dean's list students were also invited to participate, and Philip thanked them for their input and thoughts as well. Lastly, Philip thanked the attendees for their willingness to create a strong, intra-provincial credit transfer system, and for the work that is being done, and will continue to be done. Round table introductions were done on an informal basis with plenty of opportunities throughout the two days to network.

The purpose of the PCCAT is to bring together institutions who are working towards a shared goal of meeting the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) protocol on credit transfer. The implementations of the set guidelines varies across institutions; however, this forum provides one opportunity to bring together the efforts of those working in credit transfer to share best practices in the processes, while discussing barriers, strategies and solutions.

Packages were distributed at the registration table including the copies of the jurisdictional reports, which are available online at www.pccat.ca.

Plenary Session with Invited Speakers

Plenary Session

8:45 - 10:15 am

Deputy Minister, Byron James, Dept. Of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

The Ministry is proud to announce increased funding and an emphasis on the Post-Secondary Action Plan, particularly surrounding building capacity. The province completed a review of the post-secondary system and in June 2008 produced a report and action plan, including 33 recommendations. A major goal is to create a cohesive and collaborative post secondary system.

**Mr. James
(cont'd):**

Five priorities, that received approx. 6 million dollars in funding, were identified by Mr. James as:

1. Increase international students due to declining enrolment projections
2. Make for easier credit transfer within New Brunswick's post-secondary system
3. Increase graduate studies and research
4. Improve collaboration with Community Colleges and Universities
5. Improve accessibility for Aboriginal and other marginalized students.

Dr. Skolnik

Keynote Speaker, Dr. Michael Skolnik, Professor Emeritus, Department of Theory and Policy Studies, OISE

Please see Dr. Skolnik's powerpoint presentation, "The Impact of Post-Secondary System Design on Student Mobility" as well as the handout in the registration package. www.pccat.ca.

The objectives of Dr. Skolnik's presentation were to:

- Explain the concept of system design
- To outline the major types of student mobility
- To indicate generally how system design may influence opportunities for student mobility
- To consider in more detail how system design may influence student mobility from college to university.

The presentation also described the many choices in the design of post-secondary systems and their implications for student mobility, and how critical it is to build student mobility INTO the design. A key concept in system design is institutional differentiation, yet differentiation can create barriers as can program specialization.

**Challenge
Breakout #1
10:45-noon**

CHALLENGE #1

Identify the perceived and real barriers to implementing the 2002 CMEC Ministerial Statement on Credit Transfer in Canada to promote mobility for students in Canada from multiple perspectives (institutional, student, government, etc.) See <http://www.cmec.ca/Programs/post/credit/Pages/default.aspx> for full report and the statement. The barriers identified are as follow:

1. Lack of buy in from faculty, even though administrators appear supportive of credit transfer(s)
2. Inconsistencies across the board
3. Institutional culture
4. Fear of the loss of FTEs, and student enrolments/competition for students
5. Regulatory bodies may limit or inconsistently assess the credit that is granted.
6. There is a lack of detailed documentation of course syllabi and transcripts, with many colleges having more than one transcript.
7. Fear of losing the competitive advantage if allowing credits to be transferred "in"
8. Fear of loss of alignment
9. Lack of big picture or long term vision related to credit transfer
10. Lack of willingness for faculties to accept change(s)
11. Lack of clear articulation or policies and procedures
12. The "philosophical focus" – focusing on inputs vs outputs
13. Residency requirements, degree regulations
14. There is a lack of data that tracks student progress (success).

**Challenge
Cont'd
Breakout #1
10:45-noon**

15. Lack of research on how transfer students perform
16. Academic chauvinism
17. Constant learning curve for faculty due to turn-over and awareness
18. Lack of incentives and lack of motivation for systemic goals around transfer
19. Inconsistency in rationale for awarding credit – institutions differ in policies
20. Lack of will by the government or by leaders to “lead”
21. Institutions lack resources including time to assess
22. Tension between institutions about many issues in course delivery such as rigor of courses, unwillingness to consider PLAR.
23. Current funding models are based on “bums in seats”
24. Institutions need to recognize that credit transfer is part of their business
25. Lack of a common language – what is a course, what is a credit...
26. Culture of transfer – BC and AB are less differentiated
27. Lack of articulation agreements between private and public institutions
28. Ministers don't offer any incentives or consequences
29. Enrolment pressures drive the credit transfer process
30. History of colleges is they were created to NOT articulate – and remain autonomous
31. Different application processes
32. Difference between applied degrees and other degrees causes a great deal of work for articulation
33. The physical location of articulation committees makes it difficult to collaborate – the geographical location
34. Branding of institutions as unique bodies results in huge barriers for movement
35. Lack of understanding on how credit transfer works for students (and STAFF!)
36. Expectations of credit transfers differ from institution to institution
37. Lack of articulated institutional principles regarding transfer policies. No follow through
38. Institutional reputations and pride
39. WHO owns credit transfer – provincial, institutional, federal? Lack of commitment on many levels
40. Standardized criteria and PROCESS needed with consistency and clearly stated policies
41. Credit transfer – not a priority for institutions, needs to be built into core business operations
42. Credit transfer needs better branding – market it, get testimonials – too much of an unknown to many students, faculty, and staff
43. Adds tension to a system designed for traditional educational purposes
44. Lack of student centeredness! No culture of transfer visible...
45. Program content differs on so many levels
46. Lack of goodwill between institutions/colleges/government
47. Guidelines to CMEC? Who remembers these? Update them.
48. Sheer volume of institutions plus colleges in some provinces is a barrier in itself...

Lunch break.

Challenge
Breakout #2
1:15-2:30

CHALLENGE #2

Propose strategies or solutions, including those that may already be working in particular jurisdictions, that will enable us to overcome the barriers identified in challenge #1 to build on past success, and correct misperceptions where they exist. The strategies suggested are as follows:

1. Prioritize the barriers first, then find solutions
2. Institutions of all sizes need to learn to communicate and not feel threatened
3. Ministries need to engage on levels of communication and be involved
4. Create a formalized structure
5. Choose programs and institutions with high affinity so that articulating is easier.
6. Create a shift to learner based outcomes
7. Track student mobility
8. Measure the performances of students who have successfully had credits transferred
9. Collect data on credits transferred – to where from where
10. Build a common understanding of terms- suggest using the BC Transfer Guide as a model
11. Develop and adopt a national best practice framework
12. Encourage dialogue with regulatory authorities
13. Reward institutions for honouring credit transfers – only reward cooperative behaviour
14. Hold institutions accountable for cooperation
15. Resources should be attached to accountability frameworks
16. Create a federal appeal board with a transfer coordinator position
17. Engage senior leaders to see the rewards of credit transfers
18. Formalize PCCAT
19. Propose a rewrite for the CMEC statements of credit transfer
20. Focus on both student support and institutional protection of academic integrity
21. Start with solutions and strategies that have already proven to be successful – get buy in.
22. Ensure a quality assessment process for private institutions
23. All institutions, colleges, and governing bodies need a clear communication message on their websites and promotional material regarding credit transfers for not only students, but for the academics and administrators alike
24. Create a culture of credit transfer by having a zero tolerance for intellectual “snobbery”
25. Strive for a common curriculum within disciplines
26. Create funding formulas that acknowledge the resources needed to effectively process credit transfers in and out
27. Share stories of learner success from a college system to a university system in an effort to address academic snobbery
28. Understand the barriers- need leadership that is willing to consider and understand all partners
29. Share best practices and meet regularly to distribute and discuss
30. Create a national data base of precedent setting decisions to streamline the process
31. Identify a champion within the institutions/colleges, and look to them for guidance and support
32. Educate all audiences on possibilities and opportunities available within transfer credit
33. Development of uniform language and database
34. Get the right people talking, build trust at faculty levels
35. Challenge the “old ways and habits” and embrace change
36. Fund credible research projects to help fill the voids in the data
37. Develop a business plan for implementing the work of PCCAT with more of an outcomes approach
38. Share the research – who transfers between what and why? The results of this should inform the types of agreements needed.
39. Provide access to review data and build the tools to reduce faculty workload (best practice)
40. Create provincial agreements and eventually a federal policy
41. Develop shared programs b/w institutions and colleges – both public and private

Summary Session
3-3:45 pm

Summary by Dr. Skolnik

Dr. Skolnik admitted he was very impressed with the ingenuity and the calibre of the discussions from both challenges held earlier (barriers and solutions). He also stressed the importance of creative problem solving, and how it involves removing oneself from the problem. The solution, therefore, is not necessarily a response to the problem.

A brief overview of his suggestions include:

- Consider economics, supply and demand, and complete a cost benefit analysis.
- Think about the question, “Do applied degrees emerge because of the institutions inability to embark on a credit transfer process for their learners?”
- Build bridges rather than blended institutions- accept differences and strengths.
- Will a national data base may be practical to maintain? Who will ultimately be responsible?
- Faculty attitudes are critical to moving forward. Bring this discussion forward. Refer to background paper by Giles Piquette, Campus 2020.
- The lack of knowledge, and/or lack of communication about the programs, etc will result in an unproductive demonizing of institutions. Tread carefully.
- Federal and provincial governing bodies need to become more engaged as leaders. Great opportunities exist here.
- Criticisms are often too focused on receiving institutions, but sending institutions should bear a fair share of the responsibility as well.
- Create report identifying the necessary feedback to sending institutions regarding gaps
- Create incentives for educational institutions to embark on a journey of credit transfer
- Build credit transfer in the ground level architecture of new programs
- Recognize that Quality Assurance can often have negative effects, such as creating barriers.
- Identify best practices, and begin collecting data at a national level.
- Challenge your thinking around a National Post Secondary Currency Exchange?
This could be a national organization through which core curriculum content would be posted and receiving institutions would compete according to the credit awarded, similar to a bank.
- Break down the barriers and the language for students
- Learn from others, build champions, share knowledge, work together
- Cater to your learners, in some provinces, diplomas and certificates are in demand – build this into your credit transfer plans and agreements
- Grant credit rather than deny – let students hear this, be sure faculty know this too.

After summarizing the findings, and briefly discussing and expanding Dr. Skolnik’s summary, the day adjourned and reconvened at 6:00 pm when attendees had an opportunity of attending a wonderful dinner at King’s Landing Historical Site, <http://kingslanding.nb.ca>. Thank you Anne-Louise for organizing!

JUNE 24

Research
Project
8:30-8:50 am

PCCAT Research Project

Devron Gaber, Chair, spoke on behalf of the Research Sub-committee, which includes: David Hinton, Philip Cameron, Janice Park, Jean Karlinski, and Shannon McKenna-Farrell.

Background: Last year, in Toronto, this group was formed as a need was identified to collect data surrounding student mobility from an under-graduate level. A stronger and better understanding of where these students are requesting and receiving credit from, how many students are engaged in this process, what their characteristics are, and finally, are they succeeding? In 2008-09, over the course of four audio-conference calls, the Terms of Reference were drafted. Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan have all committed funds. Remaining provinces are making or considering in kind donations.

**Cont'd
Research
Project
8:30-8:50 am**

By late July, a contract employee will be hired to collect data. This data will be completed by Dec. 31, '09. Once compiled and collated, a final report will follow with recommendations to be presented at the June 2010 AGM. At this point, six universities plan to participate, Dalhousie, UNB, York, U of S, U of A, and UBC. Colleges were not included. Updates will be available shortly on the PCCAT website, www.pccat.ca, including the five reports done by BCCAT.

Note: Terms of reference were inserted into the PCCAT meeting packages.

Due to PCCAT not having a budget, obvious limitations exist. The BCCAT Council approved funding to be used for this research committee.

**Tri-Council
8:50-9:10 am**

Tri-Council Update

Frank Gelin, Philip Cameron, and Ron Woodward provided updates between BCCAT, SaskCAT and ACAT. A protocol was collaboratively written and signed between BCCAT and ACAT. SaskCAT and ACAT are considering developing a protocol.

The councils are looking for areas of high mobility which equates to great opportunities including a goal of logging all the inter-provincial agreements in a shared repository. Through Tri-Council discussions, the activity and collaborative spirit between the provinces has flourished. The BC Transfer Guide will be shared to the members.

The next Tri-Council meeting will take place on September 21, in Regina, Saskatchewan. Manitoba will be represented.

**Jurisdictional
Reports
9:10-10:30 am**

Jurisdictional Reports

Note: Reports were available in the handout packages at the meeting, and available on www.pccat.ca. The provincial delegates were to report on the key issues and how these were being addressed.

British Columbia (F. Gelin)

- Admissions has been a priority for ~ the past five years in BC
- A PEN (Personal Education Number) is assigned to each learner
- Student tracking is a key to success
- Recalibration of the transfer system is due to students leaving. Data collection is critical for receiving institutions
- BCCAT is also writing a handbook on Expectations
- Articulation agreements also include the six private degree granting institutions of BC
- Congratulations to all involved in the work of the Tri-Council.

Alberta (J. Park)

Five key priorities are:

1. Collect data on learner progression, tools will be on website soon.
2. Instructor Qualification Policy
3. First Nations Colleges: (6) AB will ensure their needs are being addressed
4. Articulation Committees: currently, nine are identified
5. PLAR Action Plan: launched in October 2008

**Jurisdictional
Reports**
9:10-10:30 am
Cont'd

Manitoba (R. Rennie)

- A one-stop source for current documents does not exist, and this is now a priority
- Credit Transfer has garnered a higher level of engagement, and serious discussions are taking place
- The process of credit transfer is just as important as the outcome, as it provides the foundation for institutions to collaborate
- Rick is the dedicated resource in the Ministry
- Aboriginal Institutions in the province are also working towards credit transfer agreements

Ontario (A. Woolley)

- Significant growth in the PSES with respect to credit transfer in Ontario
- "Made in Ontario" initiative has a designated steering committee
- With more "block transfers" desired, 12 projects have now been funded
- As identified by other jurisdictions, getting the partners to the table WANTING to contribute remains a challenge, but they are addressing this concern.
- One goal is to have a strong system in place by 2012.

Quebec (no representative)

The PCCAT will continue to invite and welcome representatives.

**Jurisdictional
Report**
9:10-10:30 am

New Brunswick (P. Belanger)

An action plan was released in 2008, and much of the work is underway, with a key emphasis on credit transfer. By 2010, the Ministry indicated that a solid structure will be coordinated.

Nova Scotia (John McLeod)

At this point, a credit transfer system has not been a high need for NS learners; however, an agreement of articulation is underway between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Prince Edward Island (Donna Sutton)

PEI is a bit more of the anomaly with only one institution and one college.

Both institutions work very well together and meet regularly with the Ministry. With 19 existing agreements in place – mostly block transfers, credit transfer is working quite naturally, with a "variety of pathways" for the 130,000 students.

Newfoundland & Labrador (Julie Green)

With 17 campuses, and very mobile learners, articulation agreements need to be clearly mandated, and cooperative transfer agreements have existed since early 1990s. Block transfer programs and ladders continue to work well, and continue to be developed. A challenge is the sheer volume of work, including international credentials. Data indicating where students have been and a better sense of where they are going would be very helpful.

Saskatchewan (Philip Cameron)

Since SaskCAT was developed five years ago, progress has been steady. With 7 articulation committees, the institutions are realizing the advantages to credit transfer, and certainly block transfer agreements. A strong commitment in SK is within the Engineering programs and the three institutions who see the benefits, and are setting a very encouraging example for others. With low enrolment, credit transfer needs to be built into the institutions' enrolment plans/forecasts, and strategies. SaskCAT is certainly finding difficulty at the policy level, as the council needs to see the right people initiating in the dialogue, and making the decisions from inside the institutions. Resources are slim, and in order to gain more momentum and faculty buy in, funding is needed.

Business Meeting
10:45-11:15 am

Business Meeting

The meeting was opened by the two co-chairs, Philip Cameron (Campus Saskatchewan), and David Hinton (University of New Brunswick).

A. Carry Forward of Funds

It was reported that an approximate \$3018.00 is available after the meeting last year. Following the New Brunswick Consortium, a surplus is anticipated, which should allow for the 2010 planning to proceed.

B. Election of Incoming Co-Chair (West)

David Hinton's term as Co-Chair has come to an end, and Karen Maki, from Trent University in Ontario, has graciously agreed to Co-Chair for 2010. Frank Gelin, BC Council on Admissions & Transfer, formally nominated Ron Woodward, Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer. Nominations were requested again, no other replacements were identified. Nominations closed, and Ron accepted the role of incoming Co-Chair. Thank you to David for the work done for PCCAT.

C. 2010 AGM Location/Host

Both Frank Gelin and David Hinton envisioned an agenda with a collaborative spirit. A recommendation was put forward with June 24-26 as the proposed dates for 2010 in Vancouver, BC. The event will be hosted by BCCAT in terms of looking after logistics surrounding accommodations, the venue, etc. The dates will coordinate with the Association of Registrars' of Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC). The Saskatchewan Co-Chair, Philip Cameron, will work on the registration, database, agendas, special guests, etc. More information to follow shortly, at www.pccat.ca, and distributed to the list serve.

AGM Business Meeting adjourned.

Spotlight Session on "Hot Topics"
11:15-12:15

Stephanie Oldford, Canadian Council on Learning

"Canadian Council on Learning Surveys, Information Systems, and System Structures: What can be learned about student mobility and transfer across different Canadian jurisdictions?"

Ms. Oldford provided a quick overview of how data can compare outcomes, show comparison in experiences, better understand barriers that learners need to overcome, and current trends that are being monitored. The methods include longitudinal data tracking a cohort over time, as well as administrative data, which is more restricted to a region or even an institution. Without common definitions, it can be challenging to compare data.

Ms. Oldford suggested several reports including:

- British Columbia's Student Transition Project;
- Youth in Transition Survey (YITS Statistics Canada);
- National Graduate Surveys;
- 2009 Statistics Canada report by Finnie and Qui, "Moving Through, Moving On..."

Ms. Oldford's powerpoint presentation will be made available to all at www.pccat.ca.

**Spotlight Session on
“Hot Topics”
11:15-12:15**

Robert White, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC)

The Bologna Process - Implications for Canada

http://www.aucc.ca/publications/auccpubs/brochures/bologna_report_e.html

Bologna is a significant development in higher education. AUCC members were interested in the implications for Canada, which resulted in a report being written with the implications for Canada. It is worth noting that approx. 46 countries in Europe participate.

Overall, the report focused on three issues:

1. Implications for student recruitment;
2. Graduate admission implications (three year degree in Europe); and lastly,
3. Student mobility.

AUCC is committed to pursuing dialogue with Europeans and communication with membership to enhance the overall collaborative opportunities for Canada. This is critical to position our country globally.

It is worthy to note that there are various levels of engagement, and this could be quite attractive to institutions in Canada. Expectations arising from the spirit of the Bologna process include:

- A focus on learning outcomes and the benchmarking of student accomplishments;
- Buy in from government including resources and leadership;
- Potential for opportunities with European partners; and,
- Increased credit transfer and block transfer agreements.

The diploma supplement is also a valuable tool, as it identifies core competencies, what was studied in the form of learning outcomes, and makes transfer articulation a much easier process to manage.

**Closing &
Adjournment**

Philip Cameron (Co-Chair for the event), thanked the Ministry for the reception at Government House, David Hinton and Karen Maki, Anne-Louise Hachey and Jodie Hills for organizing, the presenters, Rob Keys (website manager for PCCAT), as well as the attendees for their participation and continued work in the PCCAT initiatives. Travel safe.