

Jurisdictional Update — June 2010

The mission of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) is to be a catalyst for beneficial change and an advocate for learners in the areas of post-secondary admission and transfer throughout Campus Alberta. ACAT provides leadership and direction, as a cornerstone of Campus Alberta, in the improvement of educational opportunities for Alberta students through inter-institutional transfer. ACAT is committed to supporting and improving communication among Alberta post-secondary institutions and to promoting the advantages of a system of education, with all that this means for educational planning for the benefit of learners.

Overview of ACAT Structure

- ACAT is an independent body that operates with support of the ministry of Advanced Education and Technology (AET), and through the cooperation of Alberta's post-secondary institutions. The Council is advisory to the Minister on issues related to admissions and transfer.
- The Council is supported by the ACAT Secretariat, a team of six AET staff members. In addition to providing Council support the Secretariat is responsible for the day to day operation and maintenance of the database which supports the Alberta Transfer System.
- *New: ACAT has adopted a new competency-based governance model. The recruitment to this new model is currently underway. The new Council representation will be made up of 17-20 voting members, and 2 non-voting members. While Council continues to be comprised of institutional, student, and public representation, the new model serves to ensure inclusive participation from across Alberta's post-secondary transfer system.
- *New: In alignment with requirements of the pending *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act*, ACAT has developed and adopted the ACAT Mandate and Roles and the Code of Conduct documents, which are available at www.acat.gov.ab.ca.

Alberta Transfer System

- Alberta's Transfer System is currently made up of 36 ACAT member institutions.
- ACAT maintains the *Alberta On-Line Transfer Guide*, which serves as the official guide. Additionally, ACAT annually produces a paper version of the transfer guide on the basis of stakeholder demand. The 2010 paper version of the transfer guide is tentatively set for release by mid-June.
- Currently, there are over 29,828 active by course agreements and by-program agreements. In total, there are over 75,000 agreements on the system, both active and grandfathered transfer agreements. This represents an 11% increase from 2009.
- Student mobility statistics from the 2008 Transfer Patterns study indicated 16,690 students received transfer credit across Alberta representing a 17% increase from the previous year. Transfer between Alberta institutions represented the bulk of this transfer, with 11,541 students receiving transfer credit, which was a 24% increase from the 2007 figures.

Other New Initiatives

- **Articulation Committees:** ACAT facilitates the implementation and maintenance of discipline-specific articulation committees. These committees provide a context within which effective communication and collegial relationships among different stakeholders across Alberta's Transfer System can be maintained. These committees address post-secondary to post-secondary and secondary-post-secondary issues.

ACAT has committed to expanding the number of articulation committees in Alberta's post-secondary system. To coordinate this expansion, ACAT established an articulation sub-committee to examine how to proceed. The committee developed a new articulation committee model. The resulting new model limits the role of the ACAT Secretariat to assisting in the formation and launching of new committees. The new model offers an opportunity to expand the number of articulation committees in Alberta's system slowly, while ensuring effective communication is maintained with the ACAT Secretariat and, ultimately, Council.

Council has endorsed staggering the implementation of new articulation committees in the areas of English, Business, and Child and Youth Care. In addition ACAT is working with Aboriginal Colleges and the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium to establish an aboriginal education articulation committee designed to strengthen relationships between aboriginal institutions and the broader system.

- **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR):** The implementation of Advanced Education and Technology's (AET) *Advancing Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in Alberta: an Action Plan* is well underway. Most of the ten action strategies in the PLAR Action Plan are currently under development.
 - A standard definition of PLAR has been developed.
 - A new policy statement for reporting PLAR credits through the Learner and Enrolment Reporting System has been approved.
 - Four PLAR Stakeholder Committee meetings have been held
 - Workshops and courses have been offered via a contract with Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST).
- **British Columbia Institution Policy:** In October 2009 ACAT implemented a policy which allows British Columbia (B.C.) degree granting institutions to apply for ACAT membership. A reciprocal policy was adopted by British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer allowing Alberta based institutions to apply for membership in the B.C. Transfer System.
- **Saskatchewan** – ACAT intends to work more closely with Saskatchewan to consider mechanisms to help improve student transferability and mobility.
- **Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) – Credit Transfer working Group:** Alberta supports the CMEC Ministerial statement on Credit Transfer and plans to continue working with CMEC.

Research

- In February 2010, Environics Research Group and Stormy Lake Consulting provided the final draft of the *Learner Progression Best Practices Research Report*. The report provided insight into the steps required to develop and enhance progression opportunities for Alberta learners, and to facilitate smooth transfer processes. The report provided analysis into the various aspects of transfer and organized the eight best practices into six categories, including examples and testimonials from students and institutions.
- The ACAT Secretariat is reconvening a Best Practices Committee comprised of institution Contact Persons. This committee will examine current practices and review best practices research work that has been undertaken.
- Western Consortium on Admissions and Transfer, which is a collaborative effort between ACAT, BCCAT and the province of Saskatchewan, is undertaking research into the viability of an online repository of interprovincial post-secondary institution transfer agreements. The first step of this research occurred in the form of an environmental scan of post-secondary institutions in all three provinces to determine the extent to which institutions are currently involved in interprovincial transfer agreements. ACAT is planning to host the next WestCAT meeting in Edmonton in the fall, 2010.

Campus Alberta

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology provides long-term strategic direction to the evolution of Campus Alberta and works with partners to create a quality, globally-recognized advanced learning system that is sustainable, resilient and responsive to learner, economic, and social needs.

Publications

To view ACAT publications, please visit our website at: www.transferalberta.ca