

## Jurisdictional Report from Manitoba for PCCAT Meeting – June 2011

### **Provincial**

There has not been a change in Manitoba's government in the past year, however, the Dept. of Advanced Education and Literacy has a new minister. Honourable Erin Selby was named to the Cabinet on Monday, March 28, 2011. Minister Selby replaced former Minister Diane McGifford, who announced she would not run again in the upcoming October 4, 2011 provincial election.

Very early in her mandate, Minister Selby expressed interest in raising the profile of credit transfer and articulation by examining how credits can be extended to students who change a course of study in mid-stream or switch institutions, in order to increase graduation rates. The Minister further noted the importance of looking at transferring credits or recognizing credits between universities and colleges in order to speed up the completion and support the learning that students have done.

On June 24, 2011, Manitoba's public college and university presidents signed an historic memorandum of understanding (MOU) making it easier for students to transfer credits between post-secondary institutions. Signatories to the MOU aim to at least double the opportunities for student mobility in the next four years. A task group of key stakeholders will develop a plan for articulation agreements and credit transfer arrangements between universities, colleges and other post-secondary institutions to ensure students receive maximum benefit from prior learning as a means to improving student mobility.

### **Organizations**

The Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE) is the provincial government agency responsible for planning and coordinating the development of a post-secondary education system that promotes excellence and accessibility. Created by an Act of the Manitoba Legislature in November 1996, the Council commenced operation in April 1997. The Council facilitates the coordination and integration of post-secondary education, reviews and approves university and college programming, provides advice and policy direction to the Government, and promotes fiscal responsibility and accountability in the post-secondary education system.

The Council is responsible for the allocation of funds to the province's seven public post-secondary institutions, comprising the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg, Brandon University, Red River College, Assiniboine Community College, University College of the North, and Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface which includes École technique et professionnelle. The Council also provides grants to the Canadian Mennonite University and to private religious institutions in Manitoba - Steinbach Bible College, Providence College, and Booth University College.

The Council acts as an intermediary between the post-secondary institutions and the Government. It is composed of eleven members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, including a chairperson. Reporting to the Council is a staff Secretariat of thirteen provincial civil servants. The Secretariat undertakes a number of activities and projects designed to fulfill the mandate as specified in *The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act*, and to meet the goals established by the Council and the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy. The Secretariat also works in consultation with the universities and colleges to support Council members in the development of policy and financial accountability.

The Council is funded entirely by the Government of Manitoba.

As part of COPSE's program approval process, all institutions requesting new or significantly modified programs are expected to provide evidence of ways in which the program aims to achieve credit transfer and articulation. In the past, the institutions have developed their own articulation committees in areas such as nursing, educational assistants, health care aides and environmental studies for purposes of achieving course and program credit equivalencies.

In terms of data collection, COPSE reports data on institutional enrollments, graduates, programs, tuition fees and retention rates in its annual Statistical Compendium, posted on the COPSE website. Although COPSE does not collect data on admissions, mobility or transfers, work is underway through its Data Management Strategy to eventually collect this type of data. In 2010, the provincial legislature passed *The Advanced Education Administration Act*, as well as amendments to the *COPSE Act*, enabling the government to collect student-level data from the post-secondary institutions for purposes of research and analysis of student mobility and transition patterns across the K-12 and post-secondary education systems.

COPSE is engaged in survey research involving both the publicly and privately funded post-secondary institutions. In 2008, COPSE conducted a survey of university and college graduates from the class of 2007. Currently, COPSE is conducting a survey of college and university early leavers including students who were enrolled full-time in the 2009/10 academic year, did not complete the 2009/10 session, and did not graduate by spring of fall 2010. COPSE participated in a pilot Early Leavers Survey in 2007.

For the current survey, COPSE is requesting that institutions report on the Manitoba Education (ME) number so that some preliminary analysis can be done on student transfer patterns from secondary schools into post-secondary institutions as well as between institutions.

### **Institutions**

Manitoba's public post-secondary institutions have approximately 30 joint programs, and articulation agreements as well as credit transfer arrangements encompassing thousands of credit hours of programming between the post-secondary institutions. Additionally, there have been many such agreements established with other institutions both outside Manitoba and Canada. The majority of these agreements have been undertaken by the post-secondary institutions of their own accord.

Manitoba's post-secondary institutions have actively negotiated credit transfer arrangements and articulation agreements autonomously. However, there is no single coordinated system or registry in which users can determine credit transfer opportunities between the institutions within the province. While there is no provincially-based transfer guide, most institutions have provided some degree of information about their credit transfer and articulation agreements on their websites.

In carrying out its mandate, and in accordance with its legislation, COPSE is expected to "facilitate the implementation of appropriate credit transfer arrangements between universities and colleges". With regard to the barriers to successful student transfer, COPSE could benefit from more and better data collection to assist the institutions with coordinating a system of credit transfer and articulation and improving the transparency and accessibility to information regarding successful student transfer and mobility in the province.