

NT Report to the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer

As prepared by the Advanced Education Division of the Department of Education, Culture & Employment with the Government of the Northwest Territories, for submission at the PCCAT Conference, June 20-22, 2011, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec

Overview

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is the primary funder for the Northwest Territories' (NWT) only public post-secondary institution, Aurora College. ECE works with Aurora College in the area of curriculum development for Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) programming, which is ultimately ECE's responsibility under the Adult Literacy and Basic Education Directive established in 2000.

Aurora College is the primary delivery agent for adult and post-secondary education in the Northwest Territories. Its programs are designed to meet the needs of the Northern workforce and economy, and include ALBE, skills-based training, and certificate, diploma, and degree programming. These programs are offered at three campuses in Inuvik (Aurora Campus), Fort Smith (Thebacha Campus), and Yellowknife (Yellowknife Campus), as well as through 23 Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in NWT communities.

Through its Aurora Research Institute (ARI), the College licenses research activities and supports science, technology, and research projects, in cooperation with the business and scientific communities. The College serves approximately 1,450 full-time-equivalent students¹ annually and is directed by a Board of Governors appointed by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Aurora College is a member of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) and has transfer agreements with several southern post-secondary institutions. Through these partnerships, Aurora College is able to offer ALBE programming, as well as Certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's level programs.

The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories does not have political parties and operates on a consensus system. A territorial election will take place this fall. The Premier and Cabinet will be selected by the MLAs as a group, and they will establish

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¹ 2009-2010 Aurora College Annual Report

new priorities at that time as part of the business planning process for the new government, which may include new priorities for adult and post-secondary education.

Priorities and Projects

Recently, ECE, in partnership with Aurora College, is working towards the development of the Adult Recognition Model (ARM). This is an alternative route to the NWT Senior Secondary School Diploma. ARM combines credits adults have earned through completion of academic courses with credits granted through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). To facilitate this process, the learning outcomes of NWT ALBE courses are aligned with the learning outcomes of the K-12 curriculum in an ongoing process of review and revision. The PLAR component of the ARM recognizes the value of learning that occurs outside the formal classroom. As part of this development, regional consultation is taking place. Aurora College will pilot the PLAR Portfolio Development Course, as part of the Developmental Studies Program, in January 2011.

The GNWT is working with the Yukon and Nunavut Governments and the three territorial colleges in order to develop a University of the North which would best serve the post-secondary education needs of all Northerners. An MOU has been drafted and, once signed, a Working Group will meet to discuss options and prepare a report for consideration by each of the three territories. This is a pan-territorial initiative that will have a significant, positive impact on post-secondary education in the North.

ECE does not currently grant accreditation to private post-secondary institutions nor does it track the activity of private post-secondary institutions operating in the NWT. Aside from the Private Vocational Training Designation (PVTD) Directive, which provides a measure of protection to students and ensures eligibility for access to Student Financial Assistance (SFA), the GNWT does not currently have legislation in this area.

Facilitating Admissions, Transfer, and Articulation

1) Overview of Admissions Practices at Aurora College

Aurora College delivers adult upgrading, through the ALBE program, to support students' transition into post-secondary programs. Admission requirements are dependent on the student's program of choice and both Aurora College and its partner university's requirements. All students are required to fill out an application form with the appropriate fee, arrange to have transcripts of past senior and post-secondary education sent to Aurora College, and provide a one-page Letter of Interest explaining why they are interested in the program. Aurora College considers prior learning, including life and work experience, when determining whether

students meet the academic requirements for a given program. This is done on an individual basis and is a separate process.

2) English Proficiency Requirements at Aurora College

Students's English language skills are assessed through the use of placement tests before entry into an ALBE program. Students who need to develop their English language proficiency have access to tutors through Student Success Centers and to ALBE courses (equivalent to levels taught in Grades 1-12 of the school system). In addition, Aurora College offers English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) programs for New Canadians through two of its Outreach Centres. Otherwise, Aurora College does not test entrants for English-language proficiency, as such.

In many programs, such as Nursing, students are taught to 'write across the curriculum' in order to support students in bridging the gap between senior secondary and post-secondary education. The specific English level required for entry into a program is dependent on that program. For example, to enter the Environmental Monitoring Technician (EMT) Certificate Program, the student must demonstrate a minimum Grade 8 level education. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program requires a minimum of Grade 12 English, which is more typical. Given that the NWT has 11 official languages, 9 of which are Aboriginal, many of the NWT post-secondary students are English-as-a-second-language learners.

3) ALBE Course Equivalencies

ALBE courses offered through Aurora College, also known as Developmental Studies, are recognized by the Department as equivalent to K-12 program courses through an established table of equivalencies reviewed by the parties each year.

4) Accreditation and Transfer Credit Agreements

Aurora College is not a degree-granting institution. However, the College has a wide variety of accreditation and transfer credit agreements with other post-secondary institutions that allow Aurora College students to transfer into and/or receive external degrees, including:

- Certificate in Adult Education— transfer credit to U of Alberta B.Ed. in Adult Education
- Environment and Natural Resources Technology Diploma— transfer credit to U of Saskatchewan BA Northern Studies, U of Lethbridge

- Business Administration Diploma— transfer credit to University of Saskatchewan BA Northern Studies, U of Lethbridge
- Social Work Diploma— students receive AC diploma and University of Regina Certificate in Social Work, with transfer credit to BSW program
- Bachelor of Education— University of Saskatchewan, complete program fully delivered in the NWT
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing— University of Victoria, complete program fully delivered in the NWT
- Master of Nursing— Dalhousie University, complete program fully delivered in the NWT

3) Private Vocational Training Designation (PVTD) Directive Committee

As identified above, the PVTD Directive is designed to provide a reasonable level of protection to the students registered in private post-secondary education programs in the North, both in terms of students' eligibility for accessing SFA and in the expectation of employment upon completion of their programs. ECE does not currently accredit private post-secondary institutions.

Advancing Inter-Provincial Transfer

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is committed to ensuring that Northern students have access to high quality post-secondary programs, both in the Northwest Territories and across Canada. ECE will continue to ensure the successful implementation of the PVTD Directive and look to future initiatives that would enhance opportunities for the territories' post-secondary students.

Aurora College has established partnerships and transfer agreements with southern post-secondary institutions. These partnerships have increased students' access to post-secondary diploma and degree programs in the North.