

# FACULTY CIRCUIT

September 2005



## Minister Launches Review of Post-secondary Education

The Minister of Advanced Education, Dave Hancock, is conducting what he describes as a ‘comprehensive review’ of the post-secondary education system in Alberta. When we met with him in June, the Minister made it clear that he wanted ACIFA, as the provincial voice of college and technical institute faculty, to participate, and over the summer months ACIFA has taken part in a series of consultations with the Department and other invited stakeholders, focusing specifically on the discussion papers prepared by Department officials to support the review. These papers are available online at [www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/alearningalberta/](http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/alearningalberta/).

ACIFA has been part of a stakeholder working group looking specifically at tuition fee policy and government investment in the system. Together with representatives of the provincial student groups, we have also met with members of the Minister’s handpicked Steering Committee, which has the responsibility for developing a ‘strategic vision’ and a policy framework for the post-secondary system as it evolves to meet the challenges of the ‘knowledge economy’ of the future.

Throughout the review process, ACIFA has argued strongly in favour of realistic and predictable base operations grants to institutions, as the necessary first step in creating an accessible, affordable, quality system, and pushed for action on concerns like faculty attraction and retention and the backlog of deferred maintenance in our sector.

The review process launched in June continues to evolve. The Minister recently announced that Advanced Ed is launching a new round of stakeholder consultations, together with an online survey, which is designed to gather input from the public to help shape the directions and ideas of the proposed new policy framework. The rationale for the review process, and the draft policy framework on which the Department is seeking feedback from stakeholders and the public, is contained in an Information Package which can be viewed online at <http://lac.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/Presentation.a.spx>.

Local association presidents have been invited to represent ACIFA at Advanced Education’s regional consultations with stakeholders, but ACIFA is also urging individual academic staff members in colleges and technical institutes across the province to participate personally in the review process. Feedback from Albertans through the Department’s online survey will be reported to the Minister’s Forum scheduled for Edmonton on November 1-2, and will (we are assured) have an impact on the final policy recommendations to the government.

Meanwhile, the public advocacy group, Public Interest Alberta, of which ACIFA is a member, has mounted its own public advocacy campaign designed to ensure that the government hears Albertans’ concerns and suggestions about the future of the post-secondary system. Visit the PIA website ([www.pialberta.org/](http://www.pialberta.org/)) for details of public forums to be held in seven centres around the province in coming weeks. PIA is also providing an opportunity for Albertans to rate the government’s performance through an online ‘Post-Secondary Education Report Card’, and to e-mail comments and concerns directly to the Minister and individual MLAs.

– John Nicholls, ACIFA staff

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## **MacEwan Degrees Receive CAQC Approval, Government Funding**

Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton is the first public college in the province to receive approval to offer its own baccalaureate degrees under terms of the new Post-secondary Learning Act (2003). (Currently, the only other public college with degree-granting status is the Alberta College of Art and Design.)

Approved programs include a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree, with eight choices of major (Anthropology, Economics, English, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology), and a four-year Bachelor of Child and Youth Care degree.

In making the announcement, the Minister of Advanced Education, Dave Hancock, emphasized that the MacEwan degree proposals were in line with the government's objective of increasing access and providing more opportunities in the post-secondary system.

Having first cleared a 'system coordination review' process within the Ministry designed to determine whether there is a real need for the programs, from a system-wide perspective, the MacEwan proposals were thoroughly vetted by the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC), an expert body specifically mandated by the Post-secondary Learning Act to make recommendations to the Minister concerning proposals for new degree programs.

In announcing approval for the MacEwan degree programs, the Ministry pointed to the CAQC's rigorous review process as a guarantee of quality: 'The Council considered the institution's readiness to deliver and sustain degree programs, and reviewed the programs themselves to make sure they met national and international standards.'

The College, which throughout the review process worked closely with both the Ministry and the CAQC to achieve the required standards, has indicated that it will maintain its smaller-class sizes and attractive learning environment, and has no plans to abandon current diploma programs.

In mid-September, the Alberta government confirmed that it will provide MacEwan with the extra funding required to run the new programs.

Media reports indicate that the College will receive about \$8 million immediately, with another \$5 million next September, to cover start-up costs and to improve the learning centre and labs. When the programs are up and running, government funding will be about \$11 million dollars a year. The plan calls for the hiring of 41 more academic staff, all of them with PhDs, and some 460 new student spaces at the College.

With funding secure, MacEwan will be able to offer 1,792 full-time spaces in the four-year BA program, and 181 full-time spaces in the four-year child and youth care baccalaureate program, in the fall of 2006.

Other colleges and technical institutes are expected to follow MacEwan in seeking approval from the Ministry to offer four-year degree programs.

## **Government Funds Innovative Community Learning Campus at Olds College**

The provincial government has committed almost \$37 million to the construction of an innovative \$47 million 'Community Learning Campus' at Olds College. The CLC, a joint initiative of the Chinook's Edge School Division and Olds College, will see construction of four facilities on the College campus – the Core High School, e-learning Core, Health & Wellness Facility, and Fine Arts & Multi Media Centre.

The CLC, which promises to provide expanded opportunities for 'seamless transition' from high school to post-secondary education for students in the Chinook's Edge Division, and broader trades education, is designed to maintain students in a rural setting and to build the local economy and the local skills base. It represents a new approach to rural development problems, and the government has joined educators and community leaders in endorsing it. The CLC is scheduled to open in 2007.

**Coming Soon in FACULTYCIRCUIT...**

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS  
ACIFA 2006 ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
Jasper**

## **2005 MORGEX AWARD for INNOVATION in TEACHING**

Murray Taylor, an instructor in the Agricultural Technology program at Olds College, is the recipient of the 2005 ACIFA MORGEX Award for Innovation in Teaching. The Award, which is accompanied by a cheque for \$1,500, was presented by Jack Basterash of MORGEX Insurance Group Ltd. at this year's ACIFA spring conference in Canmore. A further \$500 was awarded to Olds College Faculty Association, which brought forward the winning entry, 'Portable Remote Sensing – Current and Relevant Aerial Photography for Students'.

Sponsored by MORGEX, the Award was established to recognize and encourage the use of innovative and creative teaching methods and design leading to improved student learning. Member associations within ACIFA undertook their own selection processes at the local level and nominated an individual or group/team for consideration by the ACIFA Awards Committee, which made the final choice.



*Murray Taylor [left], Olds College, recipient of the 2005 ACIFA MORGEX Award for Innovation in Teaching, with Gloria Ulry, President of the Olds College Faculty Association, and Jack Basterash, of MORGEX Insurance Group Ltd., at the ACIFA 2005 Conference in Canmore in May.*

The award-winning project began in the spring of 2004 as a piece of applied research designed to bring digital aerial photography to students in their CAD and GIS labs, 'with minimal investment of time and money.' Utilizing hobby-style, electric-powered, radio-controlled aircraft, fitted with a hi-resolution digital camera and new flight stabilization technology, Taylor, with assistance from several colleagues, worked to perfect a portable, easy-to-fly system which would provide students with current and relevant digital imagery for use in a range of different applications and activities.

Taylor notes that 'most of the College's programming is based in land, environment agriculture and horticulture. These programs all have in common the need to assess and manage land inventory and quality. In order to give students experience with current technology, they regularly use digital air photography along with CAD, GPS and GIS applications in land management and planning activities....With the Portable Remote Sensing equipment, we can capture what is current and relevant to the class. Moreover, students can work with images from sites they actually visit.'

Since the equipment package was developed last year, the aerial photos collected have been used in a variety of ways - for example, as background for planning a layout for livestock facilities on a specific site, using CAD; as background for producing CAD drawings of oil and gas facilities; as background map photography for the layout of landscape designs, using CAD, with horticulture students; for demonstrating and assessing accuracy when using 'rubber sheeting' technology with digital air photos in GIS; and for a student 'I Vote' activity.

As Murray Taylor notes, the technology, because it is so portable, adaptable and economical, 'has potential in a wide variety of data collection applications that would be relevant to many post-secondary programs'.

### **ACIFA EXECUTIVE**

**2005-2006**

(following elections at the ACIFA AGM in May)

- President .....Dave Milner (GMC)
- VP Negotiations.....Paul Hawthorn (Portage College)
- VP Professional Affairs  
..... Glenn van't Wout (Keyano)
- Treasurer.....Doug Frattini (GPRC)
- Secretary..... Gloria Ulry (Olds College)

Contact us through the ACIFA office or @ [www.acifa.ca](http://www.acifa.ca).

# Post-Secondary Education Reality Check

"Post-secondary education is the field where Alberta must separate itself from the rest of the pack."

Premier Ralph Klein  
January 19, 2005

Take a Look  
You Decide

Free public forums  
on the future of  
post-secondary education

The Government of Alberta is currently reviewing the post-secondary education system. You are invited to explore the issues and add your ideas on how to address the problems facing post-secondary education. For more information and to participate in our campaign visit: [www.pialberta.org](http://www.pialberta.org) or call (780) 420-0471

 **Public Interest Alberta**  
Advocating for a Better Alberta for All

## The future of post-secondary education in Alberta Public Interest Alberta Public Forums

### Edmonton

September 28<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 – 12:00 AM  
Alumni room, Main floor Students' Union Building,  
University of Alberta

### Red Deer

October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 – 9:00 PM  
Room 2501, (2<sup>nd</sup> floor near Margaret Parson's Theatre)  
Red Deer College

### Olds

October 4<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 9:00 PM  
DMP Lecture Theatre in Duncan Marshall Place,  
Olds College

### Calgary

October 5<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 – 2:00 PM  
Cassio A+B,  
University of Calgary

### Lethbridge

October 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 -9:00 PM  
[Students' Union Ballroom](#)  
University of Lethbridge

### Ft McMurray

October 11, 12:00 – 2:00 PM  
Study lounge in the Syncrude Technology Building,  
Keyano College

### Grande Prairie

October 12, 7:00 – 9:00 PM  
Room D 208,  
Grande Prairie Regional College

## Editorial Content

The views in Faculty Circuit are those of individuals and do not necessarily reflect ACIFA's policies and positions.

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## Member Associations

Alberta College of Art and Design Faculty Association  
Bow Valley College Faculty Association  
Faculty Association of Medicine Hat College  
Grande Prairie Regional College Academic Staff Association  
Grant MacEwan College Faculty Association  
Keyano College Faculty Association  
Lakeland College Faculty Association  
Lethbridge Community College Faculty Association  
Mount Royal Faculty Association  
NAIT Academic Staff Association  
NorQuest College Faculty Association  
Northern Lakes College Faculty Association  
Olds College Faculty Association  
Portage College Faculty Association  
SAIT Academic Faculty Association