

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/.

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/) 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**

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

Red Deer

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

Olds

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

Calgary

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

Lethbridge

October 6th, 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