

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

Biological Sciences Articulation Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2011

Rm. 123, University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta

Present: Sean Irwin, David McFadyen, Mark Degner, Andrew Taylor, Robert Cuny, Nancy Brown, Verna Penner, Gary Grothman, George Bourne, Doug Syme, Jim Thomas, Brent Selinger, Andrew Taylor, Tracy O'Connor, Franceen Dubreuil, Elaine Wong, Eric Dohei (ACAT), Wendy Pruden (ACAT) Sandra MacDougall (RDC).

Institutions Represented: Grande Prairie Regional College, Grant MacEwan University, Keyano College, Lakeland College, Medicine Hat College, Mount Royal University, Red Deer College, St. Mary's University, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge

Conference Call Participants: Declan Ali (12:15 p.m.)

Absent: Concordia University College of Alberta, The King's University College

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Doug Syme welcomed attendees, provided opening remarks and acted as chair for the meeting.

Eric Dohei thanked Doug Syme, University of Calgary for hosting the meeting.

2. Report on 2010-2011 and Admission of Transfer Students

Grande Prairie Regional College: There are no problems or issues to report at this time.

St. Mary's University College: There are no problems or issues to report at this time.

University of Lethbridge:

- Shared the statistics regarding incoming transfer. It was noted that those who transfer after one year show a drop in their average. Those transferring after two years have a much easier time with the transition.

Lakeland College:

- Better student tracking and use of the block transfer would be desirable. Typically the block is used as a back-up plan for pharmacy, medicine or veterinary students. Students do use the block for alternate pathways if their initial plan fails. Given the small number of committed biology majors at Lakeland College, the Biological Block Transfer requirements are only rarely completed.
- Discussion regarding the 60 credit total requirement. This resulted in a desire for this committee to clearly define "block transfer." There is a need to determine how to expand opportunities in block transfer and how to make blocks function more effectively. Working with the Contact Persons will ensure we accurately see how they function. There is a need to develop a model that functions seamlessly, is clear to students and the staff assessing submissions.

Medicine Hat College: There are no issues or changes.

Grant MacEwan University: We do not have any special issues related to transfer.

Red Deer College: There are no special issues but very few students leave with the block transfer.

Keyano College: There are no issues being experience. We offered 2nd year courses for first time last year.

University of Calgary (Contact Persons): There are no special issues in biological science. The numbers are remaining consistent so transfer agreements are working well in general.

University of Alberta: There are no major changes or issues. Most of our transfer students are coming from Grant MacEwan University. Transfer is working well from our point of view. We need to be careful how we administer credit for courses being taken elsewhere but we try to give maximum credits where due.

3. Biological Sciences Articulation Issues

Block Transfer 60 Credit Discussion:

- Is the 'up to 20 3-credit courses (60 credit)' statement preventing students from having block transfer in biological science? Should we narrow the definition to include courses on this list versus all other courses and options along with it?
- UofL: We look at it as a group of courses and if the student has the block they can access anything we have in 3rd and 4th year. If they don't have the block they will need to add more math/science to access courses. We thought this was the purpose of the block. We give them non-specified credit and complete for 3rd year. We don't want them sent back when they have the block and can stream into biological science and access other courses without the lack of prerequisites.
- If the student presents without 60 credits but have all courses in the block, are they evaluated on course by course? UofC: If they don't have all of the block they are really only coming into year 2 and default to a course by course review. We don't have a sense that we have turned anyone down. We did a course by course assessment. If they have met science requirements we wouldn't even pursue because they have met the prerequisites. If missing 233 but has something in the block we then look for full block for full year placement. That is how we have interpreted it.
- Is the block separate from overall university requirement? The student pursues 3rd year while making up deficiencies., As far as Lakeland College is concerned we would allow them to take 3rd year. UofC also does this. If the student is not assessed on course by course it would be helpful. Some lapses were forgiven because they were not offered in their region. Some students don't have all prerequisites.

Solutions to consider:

- This committee reviews the block and possibly redefines so not requiring 60 credits
- A move in the transfer system to a learner outcomes based system is a possible avenue. This is a long term look to try and facilitate transfer. Block transfer may change program or course outcomes. This is likely a 3 to 5 year process.
- Course/credit strictures defined the current block to create desired outcomes. It may not have all individual components and learning outcomes were important. The block allows leverage of larger portions of study the student has taken and hopefully reduces manpower needed to assess transfers. Learners are completing a 4 year program in 6 or 7 years and trying to define

what year they are in and a 60 credit benchmark doesn't work. Utility of block transfer and defining should not include 60 credits. Their body of knowledge is what should be assessed.

- UofC Contact Persons explained that anybody that did apply was not turned down.

Note: The committee agreed to keep an eye on this as they move forward.

4. Proposed Course and Admission Requirement changes for 2011-2012

University of Calgary distributed a document outlining changes that are on the horizon (see attached for change details). The committee reviewed the changes. If anyone has questions about this document contact Doug Syme and he will assist. Course outlines should be available soon. UofC (Doug Syme) will provide the lecture by lecture outline to ACAT who will forward them to committee members.

Doug Syme, UofC, will email the changes to the Biological Sciences Block in the Alberta Transfer Guide to Eric Dohej, ACAT, along with the wording for the footnote.

Course 231 233 will not be offered this Spring at UofC due to the move. Practice at UofC when a course is deleted is that it stays in effect for 3 years at least so can come across as 231-233. Changes in the block transfer will become more important in the future. This will be a case where they will have to have a block and not course by course. Blocks of knowledge are critical going forward from here. Capacity required is available and not a concern.

No other institution had course or admission requirement changes at this time.

5. Changes to the 2011-2012 Alberta Transfer Guide Biological Sciences Block Transfer Chart

UofC 2012-2013 changes will need to be done. Receiving institutions will assess 241, 243 as an individual course if not within the block. Course 241, 243 and genetics will be altered in response to changes in the introductory course. New agreements will need to be struck for those course by course for 241 and 243 but the old agreements are still in effect.

Guide production this year will be changing to discontinue the inclusion of Section IV. Chart info and other agreements are still included. The online guide is always current and a hardcopy will be updated monthly so contact persons can print them as they wish. This change was made for budget reasons as well, the most up-to-date information for the learner is the online guide.

6. Discussion re NEW Articulation Committee Model

Eric explained the new articulation committee model and provided ACAT Council updates.

Discussion included:

- 2010-2013 Council business plan
- Block Transfer Sub-committee
- ACAT is looking at moving to learner outcomes sub-committee as well.
- Sub-committee articulation model has been revised with a goal to expand the number of committees and leverage existing committees to provide feedback on proposed ideas. In order to expand we cannot continue the current model. As the number of articulation committees created increases, the role of the ACAT Secretariat must change. With limited staff resources, we are unable to continue to organize meetings, attend (unless there is a specific need), or take minutes once the committee has been created. The ACAT Secretariat will be involved in the initial creation of the committees by determining an Interim Chair and committee members. At the first meeting, the committee will select a Chair and Vice-Chair. At this point, the Secretariat

staff will no longer attend the meetings. The link between the Secretariat and the committee will continue and reports will be provided at the ACAT Council meetings.

Additional articulation committees and ad-hoc committees will be struck as the need is identified either by the respective discipline or at the request of the Minister. Recently, a need has been identified to create new articulation committees in the disciplines of Business, and Early Childhood and Youth Care and we will be proceeding accordingly.

After some discussion, this committee (Biological Sciences Articulation Committee) agreed to move to the new model. George Bourne (UofC) volunteered to act as Chair for the coming year and Mark Degner (GMU) volunteered to be Vice-Chair.

The ACAT Secretariat will provide the committee with a Terms of Reference template to review and adapt to this committee's particular faculty at the next meeting. A meeting minutes template and current contact list will also be provided.

7. Other Business

Discussions ensued regarding calendars being used as a legal binding document and planning guides being non-binding documents. The UofC online calendar is the official guide of UofC and the printed calendar is unofficial.

8. Next Meeting

Date/Location TBD

The committee is considering holding meetings in conjunction with AIBA in May 2012. It is a two day meeting and many of their attendees are part of this committee.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.