

# **Privileged Access For Future Okanagan College University Transfer Students To UBC-O Circle**

May 17, 2004

## **SUMMARY**

Our circle believes that the future for the creation of a separate, post-graduate institution in the Okanagan at the college level is bright. In the long term, Okanagan College can emerge as a successful institution, able to serve the educational needs of the Okanagan-Shuswap.

In the short term, however, the viability of the new College and the University Transfer courses/programs, which lie at the core of its educational programming outside South Kelowna, will depend on maintaining the current privilege of regional students to begin a degree program in their home community and complete it in the valley.

To this end, we believe an agreement should be established between UBC-O and the new College to guarantee privileged access to UBC-O for qualified Okanagan College university transfer students on completion of two years of UT courses at the new College.

## **PREAMBLE**

The goal of the B.C. Government in creating two new post-secondary institutions in the Okanagan-Shuswap region beginning in September 2005 is to provide additional educational opportunities to students and communities in the region.

## **CENTRALITY OF UT COURSES TO THE NEW OKANAGAN COLLEGE**

As OUC transforms itself into two separate institutions, in order to accomplish the above goal, it is imperative that the program linkages at OUC that presently exist within this single educational entity be extended to the new institutions. This is particularly true for first and second year university courses/programs at the regional campuses outside Kelowna.

At present, these university transfer courses comprise the educational and budgetary core of all the regional campuses, except South Kelowna. The new College is scheduled to begin its separate existence in September 2005. Because of this, time constraints likely dictate that programming at the four campuses at that date will largely replicate existing programs, ensuring that the new College will open its doors with its strong academic program in place

After 2005, UT courses should continue to be central to the new College's programming. This is because of their broad and acknowledged educational value both for personal

development and employment. In addition, they provide choice and latitude in moving between traditional college and university systems. They are also of critical institutional importance because of the revenue they generate.

For all these reasons the success of the new College will be tied in large part to the viability of its UT courses/programs.

### **MEETING ENROLLMENT CHALLENGES IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD**

The period of transition of the regional campuses of OUC to a viable, independent College system has already precipitated enrolment challenges at the regional campuses, with declining enrolments emerging for the fall semester 2004.

A major principle on which the devolution of OUC is based should be the creation of a viable College system that has the potential, first, to bridge these immediate enrolment challenges of the transition period, and, second, to grow by the additional 1000 students projected for 2010.

For the new College to become viable in the immediate period and to flourish in the future, qualified students in the Okanagan-Shuswap region enrolled at the new College must be assured that they can progress from entry-level university courses at the new College through degree completion within the Okanagan region.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Advanced Education and the University of British Columbia on a Major New University Campus for the Okanagan calls for the development of a partnership between UBC-O and Okanagan College. In doing so, it recognizes the need to foster “credit transfer arrangements with Okanagan College to facilitate student transfer between the college and UBC Okanagan, including retaining a core of university transfer courses to enhance access.”

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following two recommendations are suggested. First, an initial objective of the UBC-O and College Transition Teams regarding UT transfer from the new College to the university should be to establish privileged access to UBC-O’s third year academic program for new College students who have completed two years of UT Transfer courses with a grade point average that meets UBC-O’s standards. Second, the period of this assured access should be for a minimum of five years.

These recommendations recognize that it is a regional imperative that special consideration be given to Okanagan/Shuswap College. It acknowledges a time limit that, on the one hand, allows UBC-O and the new College in the immediate future to fulfill the Government of British Columbia’s mandate to expand educational opportunities for students and communities in the Okanagan/Shuswap, while, on the other hand, allowing UBC-O to avoid a perception of partisanship to one college within the B.C. college system as a whole.

It also allows the new College an appropriate period of guaranteed access in which it will be able to attract those regional students who do not wish to attend UBC-O immediately for academic or financial reasons and support them in initial university degree courses for two years. This will significantly help the new College to establish itself on a firm footing as a viable, independent institution in its own right.

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