

THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY  
PLANNING COUNCIL FOR OPEN LEARNING  
MEETING OF JUNE 4, 2008

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Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Council for Open Learning, held in the CN Boardroom of the Clock Tower Building, Kamloops, B.C.

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ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
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<b>Planning Council Present:</b>	M. Evered, Chair J. Murray, Vice-Chair G. Tarzwell C. Beddome D. Noakes J. Keller M. Young I. Rich-McQuay D. Loblaw (Teleconference) D. Stanley (Teleconference) C. Golding (Teleconference) J. Bagan D. McBain	<b>Planning Council Absent:</b> J. LaBrie L. Jacques J. Gaskell
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**Executive and Others Present:** J. Sparks, Associate Vice President, Legal Affairs  
S. Jackson, Executive Assistant, Office of Vice-President, Open Learning

**CALL TO ORDER**

M. Evered in the chair.

The meeting being duly constituted for the conduct of business, the Chair called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

*On motion duly made and adopted, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the agenda as amended to include the following items:*

- Member recognition*
- ENGL 12 First Peoples*
- Water Treatment program and Bachelor of Public Administration - update*

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

*On motion duly made and adopted, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes from the meeting of November 15, 2007 as circulated. **S.Jackson***

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**PLAR UPDATE**

C. Wihak, Director, PLAR gave a short presentation on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). She explained that PLAR is mandated at the college level in most other provinces, but not at the university level; however most BC universities engage in some level of PLAR. Quality assurance is needed to enhance the transfer of PLAR credits between institutions. Clear learning standards, assessment criteria, assessment tools and assessment processes are required. Assessors must be qualified and meet standards, to ensure the PLAR process is rigorous. TRU-OL has a mandate to provide an Open Learning educational credit bank for students.

C. Golding requested a breakdown of challenge exams vs. portfolio; C. Wihak will work on this. **C. Wihak**

C. Wihak read a paragraph received from a student highlighting their PLAR experience. "I've been PLAR'd" bags were distributed to Council members; C. Wihak explained that these bags will be given to PLAR students.

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**Revised Program Committee flowchart – G. Tarzwell**

G. Tarzwell reported that the OL Program Advisory Committee is now called the OL Program Market Analysis Committee, to better reflect the work of the members. Small housekeeping changes have been made to the Committee flowchart, and copies were distributed for information.

**Clarification of admission requirements for Return to Registered Nurse Practice Program – G. Tarzwell**

G. Tarzwell reported that a concern had been raised at the last PCOL meeting regarding having a health declaration as an admission requirement. He explained that the category of "progression requirements" has been created, in addition to the existing admission requirements, and the health declaration has been moved to a progression requirement. Only one course in the above program requires a health declaration where students come into contact with clients/patients.

**Residency requirements – J. Murray**

J. Murray gave a short presentation on residency requirements. She explained that on average, approximately 36% of TRU-OL graduates obtain their credential with less than 15

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credits from TRU-OL. Competitor residency requirements were examined, to determine if OL residency is an admission issue with other universities. It became evident from the study that both course content and PLAR are issues.

The Planning Council for Open Learning had requested that the OL designation be removed from the Bachelor of Arts degree. The Faculty of Arts had raised concerns regarding the residency requirement attached to the degree. J. Murray presented three options for consideration, as follows:

Option A1: Status quo. Residency remains at 6 TRU credits. Any program requesting a different residency would require approval from PCOL.

Option A2: Residency requirements vary by credential level. Degree programs would require a residency of 15 TRU credits; diploma programs would require a residency of 9 TRU credits and certificate programs would require a residency of 6 TRU credits.

Option A3: Residency requirements vary by credential level and by credit source. Degree programs would require a residency of 15 credits from a BC institution, 6 of which must be TRU credits. Diploma programs would require a residency of 9 credits, 6 of which must be TRU credits. Certificate programs would require a residency of 6 TRU credits.

It is not anticipated that any of the above proposals would have any negative effect on enrolments.

R. Nelson, Academic Director for Arts, and former Chair of Geography, gave the Faculty of Arts perspective on the issue. R. Nelson explained that the Faculty of Arts is reluctant to remove the OL designation from diplomas and degrees, and they would like to see a residency requirement of 15 credits for degrees. Arts faculty have concerns regarding the quality/integrity of courses. R. Nelson indicated the Faculty of Arts would support Option A1.

Discussion centred around Option A2, with the addition of a friendly amendment to allow lower or higher residency requirements to be accommodated.

*On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to serve notice of motion to adopt Option A2: Residency requirements vary by credential level. Degree programs would require a residency of 15 TRU credits; diploma programs would require a residency of 9 TRU credits and certificate programs would require a residency of 6 TRU credits. Any program requesting a different residency would require the permission of the Planning Council for Open Learning.*

**M. Evered**

If adopted, the above motion would only apply to new students entering programs, and not

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students currently in programs.

The type of credit that can be used to meet Open Learning Residency requirements was discussed, and the following two options were introduced:

Option B1: TRU course credits only

Option B2: TRU course credits and/or PLAR

*On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to serve notice of motion to adopt Option B1: TRU course credits only.*

**M. Evered**

If adopted, the above motion would only apply to new students entering programs, and not students currently in programs.

**WATER TREATMENT PROGRAM / BACHELOR OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

G. Tarzwell reported that the Water Treatment program is now being offered, and the Bachelor of Public Administration has gone through some of the internal approval process but still has to be reviewed by the Degree Quality Assessment Board.

**REPORT OF OFFICERS**

**Provost and Vice-President, Academic**

M. Evered reported that TRU had appointed a new President, effective 1 September 2008. Dr. Kathleen Scherf is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Culture at the University of Calgary. As one of the most senior Deans at the University of Calgary, Dr. Scherf has served as Chair of Deans' Council and as the Deans' representative on the University Budget Committee and the University Planning Committee, as well as taking a number of other significant, pan-institutional leadership roles.

M. Evered also reported that, since the last PCOL meeting, TRU has established a procedure for developing an implementation plan for the TRU Strategic Plan. Campus-wide consultations have been held, and town hall meetings will be held next week. The implementation plan will be presented to PCOL, Senate and the Board of Governors.

M. Evered informed Council that TRU had commissioned a review of its academic structure. The review had drawn attention to the enthusiasm expressed for opportunities that OL is providing, but also concern as to how OL fits into the rest of the university. The recommendations have been turned over to the TRU Executive.

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### **Vice-President, Open Learning**

#### **Enrolment Report**

J. Murray reported that TRU-OL achieved an enrolment of 15,698 course registrations for 2007/08 which converted to 1,621 total FTEs (including international) and 1,573 funded FTEs. FTEs were down 4.5% overall in 2007/08, which compares favourably to a decrease of 9% in 2006/07 and 16.5% in 2005/06. Declining enrolments were concentrated in ABE, PLAR, Consortium and Open College programs. For 2008/09, we are projecting an enrolment of 18,800 course registrations which represents an increase of 20% over last year. 18,000 are expected to come from existing courses and programs, and 800 are expected to come from new initiatives.

#### **University Consortium for Open Learning**

J. Murray reported that current Consortium members are: UBC, SFU, TRU and Royal Roads. UNBC has been offered a seat at the table but has not sent a representative to date. A number of areas have been identified by the Consortium as being areas of common interest that they intend to cooperate in, in collaboration with BC Campus, including a joint licensing initiative for Elluminate; media hosting technology and services; digital lockers for students (to facilitate easy storage/movement of students' e-portfolios and digital work); digital sandbox for faculty (to facilitate investigation of new technology and tools); and an applied research fund.

#### **Planning Activities**

J. Murray reported on three concurrent planning activities:

- OL Implementation Plan for the TRU 2007 – 2012 Strategic Plan. Consultations have taken place with OL students, OL staff, OL tutors, TRU faculty and the broader TRU community. A working draft has been produced based on the consultations. The final OL Implementation Plan is due to be submitted on June 20, 2008.
- Academic Plan. TRU-OL received \$50,000 from AVED at the end of December 2007 to develop an Academic Plan for Open Learning. Extensive consultations have been undertaken in support of this project, and a draft of the Academic Plan will be shared with the Academic Directors and the Deans for input prior to submission to AVED.
- Open Learning Strategic/Business plan. This will be the master plan for TRU-OL going forward and will encompass our mandate as the BC Centre for Open Learning. To date, internal consultation has taken place with OL students, OL staff, OL tutors and TRU faculty. External input will be sought from BC Campus, BCCAT, the University Consortium for Open Learning, AVED, ITA, Industry, other colleges and universities, and Aboriginal People and First Nations Communities. These consultations will be incorporated into the Business Plan for Open Learning. The Business Plan will also incorporate the OL Implementation Plan for the TRU 2007 –

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2012 Strategic Plan, and the OL Academic Plan.

**OPEN LEARNING PROGRAMS**

G. Tarzwell presented a report detailing the admission requirements for new courses/programs, and also showing course/program closures, as follows:

**New Courses:**

ECON 122  
ENGL 110  
MATH 107  
ECON 263/264/265/270  
HLTH 361/362/363  
NURS 364/365/366  
BISC 300/304/313/323/414  
HIST 399  
XXXX 399  
LEAD 310/490  
BBUS 137  
ASHS 301/302/303/451  
MLAP 112/113/121/131/051/141  
CEHS 201/204/214/216  
ANES 420/421/425/450  
EDDL 510/511/513/514/515

*On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to accept the prerequisites for the new courses as presented.*

**G. Tarzwell  
/ M. Evered**

**New programs:**

Post Baccalaureate Certificate in Pre MBA Studies  
Certificate in First Nations Applied Economics  
Anaesthesia Assistant Certificate and/or Diploma  
Medical Laboratory Assistant Certificate  
Polysomnography Certificate  
Graduate Certificate in Online Teaching and Learning

*On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to accept the admission requirements for the new programs as presented.*

**G. Tarzwell  
/ M. Evered**

**Program/course closure:**

Home Support Attendant Certificate Program

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HOME 143/144/150/160/181/187  
HOME 170/190/179/199

G. Tarzwell explained that the above OL program did not include a resident care component and the curriculum was old; the program was too outdated to be useful. As students complete the program, registration will be closed. G. Tarzwell will approach the Academic Directors re. encouraging existing students to take other courses, as it may be difficult for them to secure employment with these outdated courses. Program Coordinators and Academic Directors have already talked to students to try to minimize the issues that the program closure may cause.

*On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to recommend the closure of the Home Support Attendant Certificate program and HOME 143/144/150/160/170/181/187/199 to the Board of Governors.*

**G. Tarzwell  
/ M. Evered**

**Revised Terms of Reference for Program Market Analysis Committee**

G. Tarzwell explained that the OL Program Committee has been renamed the OL Program Market Analysis Committee, to better reflect what the committee does. Reference to academic soundness has been removed as this is handled by the faculties/schools, and the membership has been revised slightly.

**Program Development Charts**

Charts were circulated showing the course/program revision process, for Council's information.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Tutor Excellence Award**

J. Murray explained that TRU has annual awards for research, teaching and service. OL Tutors are only eligible for the service award, so OL would like to create a Tutor Teaching Excellence Award for the OL Division. As Council was receptive to the creation of such an award, it was agreed to bring a proposal to the next meeting.

**ED 3-3 Course and Program Repeaters**

G. Tarzwell explained that he was recommending amendments to the policy and regulations re. course and program repeaters, so as to meld OL and face-to-face policy.

*On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to recommend to Senate amendments to policy and regulations ED 3-3 Course and Program Repeaters as presented.*

**M. Evered**

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**Prerequisites for existing OL programs and courses**

C. Beddome, Chief Recruitment Officer, reported that on reviewing the calendar, he had noted that a number of OL courses have prerequisites. OL courses are not supposed to have prerequisites other than those instances where it has been deemed necessary, in which case the individual courses would have to come to the Planning Council for approval. It is proposed to take all required prerequisites and move them to a “recommended” category. C. Beddome will bring a proposal to the next meeting noting the prerequisites course by course, and including a preamble with basic principles. This should discourage students from falsely declaring that they meet prerequisites.

**Senate approval process regarding delivery modality for courses**

G. Tarzwell explained that currently the Educational Programs Committee has jurisdiction over changes to the method of delivery of a course, especially if it affects students or programs of other academic units. The implications of this are that when Open Learning wishes to convert a campus-based course to an Open Learning course, OL must take the course through all of the Senate sub-committees, even though the course has already been vetted by all appropriate Senate committees when it was proposed as a campus-based course. The same applies if Campus wants to convert an Open Learning course for face-to-face delivery. This duplication of academic approval is proving to be a hindrance to Open Learning.

*On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to request that Senate revisit its current policy concerning changes to the method of delivery of courses. Specifically, the Planning Council for Open Learning recommends that no additional Senate approval be required when the modality of delivery for a course is to be added to existing modalities.*

**M. Evered**

**ENGL 12 First Peoples**

M. Evered led a discussion on this new course, developed by the Ministry of Education partnering with the First Nations Steering Committee of BC. The course is designed to be equivalent to ENGL 12 to meet Grade 12 graduation requirements, but with an emphasis on First Peoples. It involves oral stories, dance, song, film and prose, and secondary schools will begin to offer it this Fall. Some institutions have already approved the equivalency, i.e. ENGL 12 First Peoples be accepted as ENGL 12 for the purposes of admission to TRU.

*On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to accept ENGL 12 First Peoples as equivalent to ENGL 12 for admission purposes.*

**M. Evered**

**Member Recognition**

M. Evered reported that this would have been J. Gaskell’s and J. LaBrie’s last meeting, and thanked them in their absence for their past contributions to the Planning Council.



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**Correspondence**

None.

**CLOSING REMARKS**

M. Evered thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

November 13, 2008 is the tentative date for the next meeting of the Planning Council for Open Learning.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

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Planning Council Chair

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Planning Council Vice-Chair