

MEETING OF THE PLANNING COUNCIL FOR OPEN LEARNING

Wednesday November 17th, 2011

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
------	------------	--------

**PLANNING COUNCIL PRESENT:**

J. Murray, Vice-Chair (TRU)  
D. Stanley (Teleconference)  
M. Lamberson (UBC) (Videoconference)  
M. MacDonald (UVic) (Teleconference)  
G. Tarzwell (TRU)  
P. Campbell (TRU) (Teleconference)  
I. Rich (TRU)  
L. Doan (TRU)

**PLANNING COUNCIL ABSENT:**

U. Scheck, Chair (TRU)  
C. Axworthy (TRU)  
C. Beddome (TRU)  
D. Loblaw (TRU)  
C. Golding (BCIT)  
K. Denton (Douglas)  
W. Koczka (TRU)

**EXECUTIVE AND OTHERS PRESENT:**

S. Jackson, Notetaker, Office of the Vice President, Open Learning (TRU)  
I. DeVries, Director, Instructional Design (TRU)  
G. Bunney, Program Review Officer (TRU)  
C. Wihak, Director, Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (TRU)

**CALL TO ORDER**

J. Murray in the Chair. The meeting being duly constituted for the conduct of business, the Chair called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to approve the agenda as circulated.**

## **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to approve the minutes from the meeting of 8 June, 2011 as circulated.**

*S. Jackson*

## **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

None.

## **REPORT OF OFFICERS**

### **a. Provost and Vice-President, Academic**

The Provost and Vice-President, Academic was unable to attend. In his absence, J. Murray explained that, since the last Planning Council meeting, TRU has released a draft Academic Plan which is now on the TRU website. The draft Academic Plan has been discussed at a number of Town Hall meetings, and it will be submitted to the Board of Governors as a final document in December.

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

J. Murray reported that Greg Link from BC Campus has been hired as the new Director of Admissions and Enrolment Services for Open Learning. We have also hired the former Registrar from Corpus Christi College and St. Mark's College, Marjorie Budnikas, as Manager, Admissions and Advising.

At the last Planning Council meeting, C. Wihak gave overview of Prior Learning, Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), which included the setting up of an international research centre. The centre has now published its first book called Research in Prior Learning. Further information is available at website <http://www.tru.ca/distance/plirc/plirc-news.html>

TRU has joined the Open Education Resource University, a global initiative to provide greater accessibility at a more affordable cost around the world.

## **PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS**

G. Bunney, TRU Program Review Officer, attended the Planning Council for Open Learning meeting in November 2011 and gave an overview of the program review process. He attended the current meeting to give an update.

Five on-campus program reviews have now been completed (Math & Stats; Carpentry; Bachelor of Business Administration; History; Visual Arts). By January 2012, it is anticipated another 3 or 4 reviews will be complete. All the Program Review Reports are forwarded to Senate for information, and will eventually be posted on the TRU website to be accessible internally.

TRU's preferred program review practice is to review OL programs soon after reviewing comparable on-campus programs. However, the goal is to do the reviews concurrently.

Working with the Associate Vice President - Open Learning, G. Bunney has revised the program review Self-Study Template, Faculty Survey, and the Current Student Survey. These tools are currently being reviewed by the Open Learning Academic Director for Arts, and may be modified to make them more useful for Open Learning programs.

### **STUDENTS HAVING TO PASS THE FINAL ASSESSMENT IN A COURSE TO PASS THE COURSE**

G. Tarzwell explained that it had been practice with BC Open University, the Open Learning Agency and the Open Learning Institute to require students to pass the final exam in order to pass the course. The final exam is the only piece where we can be assured that the student that signed up for the course is actually the student that is doing the work (i.e. this is the only opportunity we have to check the student's ID). Do we want to make this a rule, or do we want to be more flexible? One alternative would be to simply calculate the total grade for the course and that would determine whether the student had passed or failed. In those circumstances, they could fail the exam but do well on the rest of the course and receive a passing grade.

Athabasca University requires students to pass a final exam to pass the course. UBC policy varies according to the program discipline (some programs require students pass a final exam, others do not). The University of Victoria does not have an absolute rule that says students must pass the final exam to pass the course.

The following points emerged:

- Having students take a final exam where ID has to be presented would safeguard our integrity and reduce cheating.
- How would the community view Open Learning if we relax this rule? There may be a credibility issue.
- There may be an advertising issue: we cannot tell students an exam is worth, say, 40% if it really is not, and they are actually required to pass it. We need to be very clear with our learners, and let them know up front what the expectations are and how the grading system works.
- Open Learning is open education; open access; open entry – but not open exit. We do not guarantee success. We have not lowered our exit standards, and we are not trying to set the grading system so students find an easy way to obtain a credential.
- Requiring students to pass a final exam to pass the course is in keeping with our open philosophy.

**On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED that normally Thompson Rivers University Open Learning (TRU-OL) students must pass the final exam, when the TRU-OL course has a final exam, in order to receive a passing grade in the course.**

*S. Jackson/  
G. Tarzwell*

## **OPEN LEARNING PROGRAMS/COURSES**

G. Tarzwell presented the following report:

### **NEW OL PROGRAM:**

#### **Health Care Assistant Certificate**

Prerequisites: Recommended: Grade 11; satisfactory completion of English

Assessment as per TRU-OL guidelines; volunteer experience or experience working with the elderly recommended;

Strongly recommended: ability to use the computer and Internet at a basic skill level; program discussion with Health Care Assistant Coordinator;

Required: criminal records check – required to be conducted annually; Red Cross Emergency First Aid with CPR Level C ( or equivalent) or CPR-HCP, Health Status Self-Declaration (Medical); Up-to-date Immunizations; Food Safe Certificate; WHMIS Certificate.

**On motion duly made and adopted, it was RESOLVED to approve the prerequisites for the Health Care Assistant Certificate as stated. S. Jackson**

### **NEW OL COURSES (FOR INFORMATION ONLY):**

#### **GEOL 2391 Environmental Geology**

Prerequisites: OL GEOL 120 or TRU GEOL 111 is strongly recommended

#### **HLTH 1001 Health 2: Lifestyle and Choices (previously HLTH 1403)**

Prerequisites: None.

#### **HLTH 1011 Health and Healing: Concepts for Practice**

Prerequisites: HLTH 1051 and 1001 strongly recommended.

#### **HLTH 1051 Health 1: Interpersonal Communications (previously HLTH 1401)**

Prerequisites: None.

#### **HLTH 1101 Health Care Assistant: Introduction to Practice**

Prerequisites: HLTH 1051, 1001, 1011 strongly recommended.

#### **HLTH 1153: Personal Care and Assistance (Theory)**

Prerequisites: HLTH 1051, 1001, 1011, 1101, 1201, 1351 strongly recommended.

#### **HLTH 1155: Personal Care and Assistance (Skills Practicum)**

Prerequisites: HLTH 1051, 1001, 1011, 1101, 1201, 1351, 1153 strongly recommended.

#### **HLTH 1201 Healing 1: Caring for Individuals Experiencing Common Health Challenges**

Prerequisites: HLTH 1051, 1001, 1011, 1101 strongly recommended.

### **HLTH 1251 Practice Experience in Home Support and/or Assisted Living**

Prerequisites: HLTH 1051, 1001, 1011, 1101, 1201, 1351, 1153, 1155, 1301 strongly recommended.

### **HLTH 1301 Practice Experience in Home Support and/or Assisted Living**

Prerequisites: HLTH 1051, 1001, 1011, 1101, 1201, 1351, 1153, 1155 strongly recommended.

### **HLTH 1351 Healing 2: Caring for Individuals Experiencing Cognitive or Mental Challenges**

Prerequisites: HLTH 1051, 1001, 1011, 1101, 1201 strongly recommended.

#### **CANCELLED OL COURSES:**

**BBUS 2111** Strategic Information Technology (previously ADMN 211)

**HEAL 350** Understanding Research in Health Sciences

#### **ENROLMENTS**

G. Tarzwell, on behalf of the Chief Recruitment Officer, gave an Enrolment Report which covered the following points:

- An enrolment forecast was presented to the Board of Governors in October 2011. Open Learning enrolments are now slightly below that forecast, as we have received slightly fewer Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR) FTEs than we were expecting. We are still expecting the overall growth in Open Learning to be slightly over 3%.
- Overall, our enrolments are up by approximately 4%. We have fewer students but they are taking more courses.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **OPEN EDUCATION RESOURCE UNIVERSITY (OERu)**

Irwin DeVries, Director, Instructional Design gave an overview of the Open Education Resource University (OERu), which covered the following points:

- In 2001, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) put many of their courses on-line and made them available for use in various ways, and a number of universities followed shortly thereafter.
- OERu was established earlier this year, and is supported by UNESCO, the Commonwealth of Learning, and BC Campus.
- Open Education Resources are available through open license, which is key.
- The concept is to make learning opportunities more freely available at a lower cost.
- Learning materials are only one part of the educational process. The value that universities add include the assessment of learning, and granting credits and credentials, all of which goes well beyond just exposure to learning materials.
- What are the next steps? OERu is looking at how to bring this initiative more into the mainstream with the post-secondary sector. How can we get to the point

where we are properly assessed and accredited? How do we move beyond providing content, and how do we meet the need for educational growth?

- Institutional support, tutoring, peer to peer support and PLAR all allow for students to engage more fully. The OERu is also looking for coordination amongst the partner institutions so they can build diplomas and degrees. The end concept is a credible qualification.
- The business model is being built in a way that is sustainable, and uses more independent study skills of individual students. We would also see volunteers participate in mentoring and assisting students, as well as peer support.
- So far, there have been two meetings on this topic, with lots of input from around the world. One recent meeting took place in New Zealand.
- All the processes for this initiative have been placed on Wiki Educator.
- For TRU-OL, our contribution is to review courses and look at what we can contribute. We are in a good position due to our flexibility.
- D. Stanley asked how faculty would be involved; Irwin explained that they would not be involved at that stage, they are just looking at different models.
- M. Lamberson commented that balance is a challenge, and the PLAR piece is a big part of the business model. I. DeVries explained that PLAR services would be provided on a fee per service model.

I. DeVries was thanked for attending the meeting.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondence was received.

#### **CLOSING REMARKS**

The next meeting of the Planning Council for Open Learning is tentatively scheduled for 13 June, 2012

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 am.