Assignment 4:

Comparing Two Provinces: Postsecondary E-learning in Ontario and Alberta

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Introduction

This paper will compare the e-learning strategies and initiatives of two of Canada's most distinctive provinces, Alberta and Ontario. Among their most distinguishing characteristics are their politics and their economies and, because governance and funding of Canada's provincial education systems is directly influenced by the political philosophies and economic conditions of each respective province, that is where we will begin this paper's comparative analysis.

Though Ontario has been governed by a diversity of political parties, the Liberal Party has governed from 2003 to the present, the timeframe reviewed for this paper. Despite the continuity of government, and beginning in an economically brighter time, the government has provided lackluster leadership in the area of e-learning.

Alberta was dominated solely by the Progressive Conservative Party from 1971 until May 24, 2015 (more than 43 consecutive years). Currently Alberta is being governed by the NDP for the first time in that province's history (CBC News, 2015). These vastly dissimilar political histories are worthy of consideration because the educational and fiscal philosophies of each governing party would have direct impact on how the provinces seek to fund and influence e-learning initiatives at both K-12 and postsecondary levels. Furthermore, their respective economic standings have been major influencers over the years and the relevant sections of this paper will describe them in greater detail.

Ontario

Education in Ontario is governed by two ministries: The Ministry of Education (MEDU), which covers child care to elementary and secondary schools, and The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), that covers all postsecondary education (PSE). There are 45

publically funded colleges and universities, making Ontario's PSE sector the largest in Canada by number of institutions and by student enrolment. The context of the current climate of PSE is that, after almost a decade of investments including an 80% increase of tuition grants from 2002 to 2008 (Ontario, 2013), the economic downturn made it difficult for the government to sustain funding at levels previously established. From 2014 to 2017, a funding shortfall of six percent was anticipated. This decrease coupled with global competition and the significant costs of operating PSE institutions as they currently exist have posed significant challenges for the government in providing both guidance and support.

In November 2013, the MTCU published their "Differentiation Policy Framework", outlining their approach to guide future growth of the PSE. One cannot look at PSE institutions in Ontario, and therefore e-learning in those institutions, without looking at the effect of the the policy of differentiation along with its required Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMA).

The process of differentiation is essentially a combination of reducing duplication and increasing specialization of programs. The rationale includes allowing institutions to clarify priorities, focus on well-established strengths, increase highly-reputed programs nationally and internationally and therefore compete globally, utilize limited provincial and institutional resources more efficiently and strategically, and offer students a broad continuum of both excellent vocational and academic opportunities (Ontario, 2013). In the framework document, the repeated phrase "avoid unnecessary duplication" is emphasized.

The role of e-learning in this policy is outlined in the framework under the Teaching and Learning heading, as a way of maximizing program delivery to offer choice, flexibility, and twenty-first century learning experiences. It emphasizes that this is a collective offering - by the sector as a whole, as opposed to the purvey of each institution. In support of the policy, all

institutions were required to submit a three-year (April 1, 2014, to March 31, 2017) SMA that

articulated unique strengths and goals. Keeping in mind that institutions were given only five

months to submit, they provide a view of their aspirations, many of which included the adoption

or expansion of e-learning. It has also been noted that, "Some institutions perceived that this was

an exercise in securing incremental resources, and the content of their SMAs was shaped by what

they thought would optimize their success in such a competition." (HEQCO, 2013); nevertheless,

they provide a valuable look into these institutions.

In order to understand them, we reviewed documents released by organizations that

represent various stakeholders. While there were mixed reviews regarding differentiation,

particularly "government intrusion into academic decision-making" (OCUFA, 2013) and

"damaging funding consequences", the responses of even the more skeptical organizations

advised members to wait and see how the MCTU would respond to the SMAs.

Contact North, an organization originally mandated to provide course access to students

in northern communities (funded primarily by the Ontario Government), reports a very positive

outlook for online learning, "The picture that emerges is full of promise." (Contact North, 2015).

Thirty-nine of the institutions' SMAs feature prominent plans to increase online and or blended

learning activities. Plans to increase the offering of online courses range from 40 (Humber

College) to 120 (Ryerson University) per year, with many universities potentially re-designing

first and second year courses with online and mobile communications, and to Mohawk College

who is looking into all programs delivered through blended format.

Collaboration for online expansion was also a theme that emerged with institutions such

as Waterloo University wanting to take a leadership role. That said, considering the sheer

number of institutions and their various online activities and intentions, there emerges a picture

that is not only full of promise, but also one that is full of clutter. There lacks a systematic approach to planning and learning; perhaps this is why institutions are looking to create consortia in order to support one another, benefit from one another's resources, and achieve greater student success in the process.

The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO), consisting of expert panelists from public and private sectors, whose mandate is to research and provide policy recommendations to the government, describes itself as pro-differentiation, and states that, "In the absence of change, the quality of the Ontario student experience and its institutions will continue to diminish and lose competitiveness." (HEQCO, 2013) In answering to specific questions from the MTCU, they recommend the consistent and disciplined use of funding as a major lever in order to direct changes, and in particular to focus a $30 million Transformation Fund to support online learning. Their rationale: the future importance and inevitability of online learning, a majority of institutions aspiring to greater technology use, and the fact that strategic use of online learning can concurrently support other goals such as cost-reduction, enhanced mobility and access for students, and increased collaboration between institutions. This use of funding as a lever is consistent with MTCU's framework that states that funding could be used "to steer the system in ways that align with provincial priorities while responding to the autonomy and supporting the strengths of our institutions" (Ontario, 2013).

HEQCO's position is that, following this bottom-up SMA exercise that has only begun the conversation about the future of PSE, next, top-down leadership through funding is the most effective way to bring about change. Though mentioned in the original framework, no details were provided regarding how funding would be allocated. By specifically funding online or blended learning, the expert panel suggests that institutions across the province could share

things like common introductory courses for easily transferred credits, citing other provincial models that fund both the developing institution and the one in which the student is registered.

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), is concerned primarily with preserving academic integrity and quality and therefore is concerned primarily with online teaching and learning being subject to the same rigour for academic oversight consistent with existing courses. Their concerns stem from having not been sufficiently consulted (The Globe and Mail, 2014), and lack of clarity regarding funding implications from differentiation. Paul Genest, MTCU's Special Advisor on SMAs, stated to OCUFA that "the principles, components, and metrics outlined in the policy document will be used in future efforts to modify the funding formula"; However, the government "does not yet have a clear idea of what a modified funding formula would look like" (OCUFA, 2015).

Without specifics, there is understandable cynicism then, as to whether the SMAs are simply institutions' compliance with the Ministry's request or institutions claiming a stake through intentions for funding as preliminary competitive bids. Until there is government action in clarifying funding, one can only guess.

Colleges Ontario (CO), a non-profit organization representing publicly funded colleges, points to the already inherent differentiation that already exists in colleges, many of which offer programs that address local labour and skills training needs. Colleges are already a part of OntarioLearn, a consortium that is one of the largest providers of online courses in North America. Their collective response to the MTCU along with SMAs, is a detailed proposal including programs corresponding to proposed metrics. There seems to be a different tone - one of confidence and proactivity, and perhaps one more willing to advocate for and embrace change. This may be due to the progressive and practical nature of colleges, having less of a

traditional collegial culture than universities, as well as the confidence of having already made significant strides as leaders in online learning (Colleges Ontario, 2013).

Whether the MTCU's approach would be considered strong or more hands-off at this point would most likely depend on which stakeholder group you ask. The speed at which the SMAs were required and and the potential financial consequences may seem as encroaching and heavy-handed by a collegial culture that values autonomy (Blogs.ubc.ca, 2015). The government, on the other hand, may claim to be treading carefully, even crawling back the language after initial reaction to the framework when leaked months ahead of schedule (OCUFA, 2013). It states that the MTCU is looking for a "careful balancing act between government stewardship and institutional leadership, and a strengthening of transparency and accountability between the government, institutions, and the public" (Ontario, 2013), and though it also states explicitly that the institutions will retain autonomy with respect to its academic and internal resource and that they will not intervene *directly*, funding certain types of initiatives will undoubtedly be seen as governments intervening *indirectly*.

Any changes in the funding formula would be based on metrics, one of the strongest accountability and change tools that the government can employ. The metrics used to measure the ministry would review statistics such as "Number of online course registrants, programs, and courses at institution" (Ontario, 2013). Institutions were also invited to submit their own internal metrics. The University of Ottawa submitted their metric, called Scorecard (Ontario, 2014), which measures their progress against its own strategic goals in 29 key areas. The MTCU already receives annual reports called Multi-Year Accountability Agreements (MYA) introduced in 2006, that could be used in determining funding allocations.

The drawback of the MCTU's approach relates to timing: The short period in which SMAs were required; the long period of waiting to determine and provide funding details; the delays in implementation of publicly announced initiatives. In May 2015, the government announced the beginning of consultations on funding reform focused on supporting the differentiation process (news.ontario.ca, 2015), a year after SMAs were due, and a year into the three-year timeframe of the SMAs.

The following example is telling of the chaotic and delayed status of e-learning in Ontario universities. Originally announced in 2010, delayed in 2012 (Star, 2015), the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) re-announced (April 2013) that seven core institutions focusing on online learning would be developed under the name Ontario Universities Online (OCUFA, 2013). In 2014, the government confirmed funding for launch in 2015 and the COU website presently indicates that it will be launched in 2015 (Council of Ontario Universities, 2015). At the time of this paper, Ontario Online has yet to have materialized. Meanwhile, the leadership of seven other institutions have created The University Credit Transfer Consortium with neither the ministry's support nor even awareness (Star, 2015). The Minister at the time was unaware of the partnerships and though he urged those universities to return to negotiations with other institutions, the government did not provide the leadership to execute on the province-wide university consortium. Considering the stated intentions, and missed opportunities, this is a shame. Tony Bates writes on his blog, "If the new Institute can take a more student and system wide focus, and provide mechanisms (through program funding, creation of open resources, block credit transfer arrangements, and partnerships with Ontario hi-tech companies such as RIM and Desire2Learn, for instance), Ontario can be not just a Canadian but truly an international

leader in online learning. The question is: can government deliver on this promise before the next election?"(Bates, 2011). We hope that for Ontario's sake, it can.

With the vast number of institutions and sheer number of students and resources in Ontario, the province has the opportunity to become a leaders in Canada and in the world; however, the lack of focused execution and leadership from the government within recent years seems to indicate missed opportunities rather than seized ones. In an increasingly digital, interconnected, and competitive environment, the Ontario government would be well-advised to show leadership by executing their initiatives.

Alberta

Similar to the Ontario's legislative structure, the Province of Alberta has two separate ministries for governing education. Alberta Education supports students, parents, teachers and administrators from Early Childhood Services (ECS) through Grade 12 (Alberta, 2006) and the Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education (MIAE) is responsible for Post-Secondary Education (PSE), Apprenticeship and Trades, Adult Learning, and Student Funding for post-secondary students. The latter ministry also supports Economic Development and provides funding and leadership for Alberta's Research and Innovation system (Alberta, 2007). Although there are a number of noteworthy K-12 e-learning initiatives underway in Alberta (mainly in the form of the Alberta Distance Learning Centre and seven local branches of the [Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia](#)), the scope of this paper, in the interest of brevity, must be limited.

Therefore, our analysis of Alberta's approach to e-learning will focus on the PSE sector. To begin this analysis, it will be useful to sketch a brief overview of the government's approach to e-learning. In 2002, a policy framework called *Campus Alberta* was released and one of its

key mandates was to promote the widespread availability of "lifelong learning" opportunities for Albertans of all ages - not just the "traditional" ages (4-25 years) - and to give credit to the informal learning that occurs among people outside the traditional classroom:

> Crediting individuals for the skills they have acquired (in the workplace, for example) would encourage participation in learning and would eliminate some of the boundaries between the formal education system and learning that occurs outside of the system. It would also enable easier movement between work and school (and vice versa), allowing learners to choose their own paths to knowledge. (Alberta & Alberta Learning, 2002, p. 1)

As this carefully crafted statement illustrates, by giving credit for informal learning and eliminating unnecessary boundaries, the province was already beginning to take important first steps in recognizing the reality that emerging new markets and needs in education would need some innovative planning. Furthermore, it was acknowledgement that the province must play a key role in developing a framework that would allow higher learning institutions to develop and implement those plans to ensure that future skill gaps would be minimized. To provide clear guidelines that would help institutions with their planning and implementation processes, the *Campus Alberta* framework listed five key principles that are quoted verbatim (below) to emphasize the impressive amount of forethought that went into the framework and provide a glimpse of the underlying conservative ideology that was an important aspect of Alberta's evolving e-learning approach:

Table 1

Campus Alberta Principles

Learner-centred	Activities of the learning system support learners' participation in learning and the achievement of learning outcomes.
Collaborative	Alberta learning system stakeholders work together to achieve common goals at the system-wide and local levels.
Accessible	Albertans have equitable access to quality learning opportunities.
Innovative	New practices in teaching, learning and collaboration are explored and assessed to meet learners' needs.
Responsive	The learning system anticipates and meets learners' needs for what learning opportunities are offered, how they are delivered and how learning is supported.

Note. Adapted from Alberta, & Alberta Learning. (2002). *Campus Alberta: a policy framework.* Edmonton: Alberta Learning.

In addition to these basic principles, one of the framework's three main goals includes ensuring that "learning opportunities are available when and where they are needed and can be accessed through a variety of means" (2002, p. 5). Without question, the *Campus Alberta* framework that developed way back in 2002 was insightful and crucial to laying a solid foundation for future e-learning initiatives in Alberta.

Today, *Campus Alberta* is a partnership of 26 publicly funded postsecondary institutions that collaborate, share resources, and promote best practices to provide learners with increased flexibility and opportunities at the postsecondary level (Alberta Innovation and Advanced

Education, n.d.). Since 2008, Board Chairs and Institution Presidents from these institutions have

been meeting several times a year with the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education to:

- develop strategic direction,

- discuss opportunities in support of Campus Alberta, and

- enhance collaboration between post-secondary institutions ((n.d.).

Perhaps the single most significant e-learning initiative of *Campus Alberta's* emphasis on

lifelong learning and innovation has been the development of the eCampusAlberta consortium.

According to Sharon Carry, Board Chair, eCampusAlberta has enjoyed ten straight years of

growing enrollment, with a total of 22,186 course registrations, which is a 6.4% increase over the

2012/13 year (eCampusAlberta:, 2014, p. 3). Executive Director Tricia Donovan reports that

other milestones achieved in just one year "include the launch of Quality Standards 2.0;

development of our eLearning Rubric, working with nine institutions to create eTutor Alberta; an

online writing support service; and expansion of participating member institutions to include all

26 publicly-funded post-secondary institutions" (2014, p. 4).

Along with developing eCampusAlberta to expand lifelong learning options for all

Albertans, the provincial government was also working various stakeholders--including PSE

institutions--to develop a 20 year strategic framework for creating a knowledge based province.

In 2005/06, the Advanced Education ministry initiated a multi-stage dialogue with thousands of

Albertans and, after months of roundtable discussions and consultations, the final report, *A

Learning Alberta* (Alberta Advanced Education & Steering Committee, 2006), was published

and its recommendations were implemented.

One of the key recommendations was to develop a *Roles and Mandates Policy Framework*

(RMPF) that would ensure that "the system is appropriately aligned--and that alignment is

reflected in the planning and funding processes" (Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education, 2007b, p. 1). This was a short-term initiative that required all publicly funded PSE institutions to work with the MIAE and develop more clearly defined roles and mandates in the advanced education system. Among the expected outcomes for the RMPF were the leveraging of technology to support learning and research; enhancing access to information support systems; allocating resources more effectively; and fostering world class research and innovation. The document lists several motivating factors for implementing the RMPF and they include the need to advance towards becoming a knowledge economy; the ability to compete globally, provincially, and locally; and the necessity to attain academic excellence by combining differentiated institutional roles with a high degree of collaboration. In other words, the RMPF was a plan to minimize expensive and confusing redundancies and overlaps in the PSE sector, not unlike Ontario's Differentiation and SMA policies.

The Post-secondary Learning Act (PSLA), which enshrines the principles of the RMPF, mandates that each of the 26 higher education institutions in Alberta be categorized according to one of six PSE institution types: Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions; Baccalaureate and Applied Studies Institutions; Polytechnical Institutions; Comprehensive Community Institutions; Independent Academic Institutions; and Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions (Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education, 2007b, pp. 9–10). According to the policy framework, institutional differentiation is largely based on credentials offered, type and intensity of research activity, as well as geographic focus. (For detailed descriptions of each of these six sectors, please see Appendix A in the PDF version of this paper.)

In addition to being categorized according to one of the six sectors, all but the five Independent Academic Institutions are required to submit institutional mandates that were

required to "define the publicly funded post-secondary system's purpose and range of

programming and activities" (Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education, 2007a). If one were

to make specific comparisons between, for example, the University of Alberta's institutional

mandate and the University of Toronto's SMA, it quickly becomes obvious that the requirements

for Alberta's institutional mandates were not nearly as detailed or focused as Ontario's Strategic

Mandate Agreements which needed to specifically address all six components of the

Differentiation Policy Framework: Jobs, Innovation, and Economic Development; Teaching and

Learning; Student Population; Research and Graduate Education; Program Offerings; and

Institutional Collaboration to Support Student Mobility (Ontario & Ministry of Training, 2014,

pp. 13–16). It is also interesting to note that, while there are major differences in written mandate

requirements, Alberta's *Roles and Mandates Policy Framework* (2007) and Ontario's

Differentiation Policy Framework (2013) both serve the same general purpose--differentiation.

As suggested in this paper's introduction, changes in a province's economic outlook can,

under a government with an ideology that values corporate interests over education, often have a

profound impact on education. This is what occurred in early 2013, when the PC government

cited sinking oil prices and a pipeline bottleneck as their justification for reneging on previous

funding commitments and slashing $147 million (6.8 percent) from that year's operational grants

for Alberta colleges and universities (CBC News, 2013a; Mark, 2013). To institutional leaders

like University of Calgary president Elizabeth Cannon, this was a complete surprise, as the

university had been planning on the basis of an expected two per cent increase in funding for

each of the next three years, as had been announced by the Premier in 2012 (CBC News, 2013a).

Ron Sutherland, President of the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations, described the

massive cut as "devastating" and added, "The research universities stand to lose the upcoming

generation of researchers to other jurisdictions, and the quality and range of the education we can offer our students is bound to suffer" (Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2013).

Just over two weeks after announcing the $147 million cutback, Advanced Education Minister Thomas Lukaszuk sent draft copies of *letters of expectation* (see Appendix B in the PDF version of this paper) to top university officials across the province, saying that they were part of a "non-negotiable" overhaul of the PSE system. He described the draft letters as blueprints for moving toward reducing program duplication, easing transfers between institutions and centralizing administration. "You don't want to have five mediocre engineering schools," he said. "You're better off having two really good engineering schools. There's no doubt about it" (Weismiller, 2013).

As might be expected, this heavy handed approach was not well received by the collegially cultured academic community. Within a few days, The University of Alberta's board of governors released on open letter (see Appendix C) that stated, among other things, that The University "will be set back many years by the cuts that will have to be made to absorb the decrease in our provincial funding. Being just another "average" university is not something that is part of our vision, nor is it something that we can accept" (CBC News, 2013b).

Within less than eight months, the PC government progressed from heavy handed bullying tactics to utter chaos when, in early November, Minister Lukaszuk trumpeted the fact that his Ministry was now restoring $50 million to the PSE sector (Gerein, 2013). University of Alberta president Indira Samarasekera was quoted as saying that the restored funding shows that the government "felt the pressure from all the commentary around the postsecondary cuts" (Globe and Mail, 2013). She also posted an announcement on the University of Alberta blog, describing the reinvestment as "good news" (2013).

Undoubtedly, this chaotic management approach on the part of the PC government had a detrimental effect on the province's e-learning initiatives—everything from eCampusAlberta to the Alberta Distance Learning Centre, not to mention all the individual institutional programs and consortia endeavors. Fortunately, a new government was sworn in on May 24 (CBC News, 2015) and, on June 18, 2015, it announced that it was reversing the "reckless cuts" that were made to essential services by the previous PC government (Alberta Government, 2015) and adding additional funding for growth, with a total reinvestment of over $680 million. $103 million was allocated for Education, effective from July until November this year (Alberta Public Affairs Bureau, 2015; Parrish, 2015), which will enable PSE institutions and K-12 schools to accommodate thousands of new students and maintain their key initiatives in e-learning.

Ontario and Alberta: Comparison

Ontario and Alberta are both provinces that have enjoyed strong reputations in education in both Canada and internationally. This review of their e-learning policies, strategies and histories reveal some similarities, some differences, and some interesting questions as to the future of e-learning in both provinces.

Worthy of note is the timeline and pacing of e-learning implementation province-wide in Alberta. Formally, the province led initiatives from as early as 2002, in order to categorize and differentiate their institutions, and lead its PSE institutions into the Campus Alberta partnership in order to maximize resources, and present a clear picture of its offerings to its students. However, by 2013, the same PC government chose to stifle education and e-learning initiatives with unexpected and massive cuts, followed by partial reinvestment. This created a climate of chaos in the province's entire education system.

In Ontario, their PSE institutions individually moved forward in e-learning initiatives, investing in infrastructure and programs, the government has been playing "catch up" in its leadership role, now attempting to corral some very large, unwieldy, and collegial university cultures into a more cohesive unit - a formidable task, given the unfortunate timing of a weak economy and late start.

There remain big question marks about the future of PSE in both provinces. Moving forward in e-learning is inevitable; however, it remains to be seen how Alberta's NDP government will change the landscape of education and whether Ontario's governing Liberals will decide to display a stronger hand in moving its institutions forward in its strategy, or whether they allow the institutions to forge their own destinies and create their own alliances.

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Appendix A

Institutional Arrangement under the Six Sector Model

Sector	Institution	Primary Geographic Service Area	Primary Credential Offerings	Research Activity	Primary Clients	Program / Delivery / Research Focus
Comprehensive Academic and Research Institution	Athabasca University	Alberta & external	Comprehensive baccalaureate & graduate programs.	Comprehensive research function	Learners interested in open, flexible learning opportunities	Primary focus on distance delivery & related technologies
	Universities of Alberta, Calgary, & Lethbridge	Alberta & external	Comprehensive baccalaureate & graduate programs.	Comprehensive research function	Learners interested in a comprehensive, research intensive environment	Broad focus, various centres of excellence
Baccalaureate and Applied Studies Institution	Grant MacEwan University	Northern Alberta	Baccalaureate degrees in specified areas, certificate, diploma, and applied degrees.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in career & academic programming.	Areas of instructional excellence.
	Mount Royal University	Southern Alberta	Baccalaureate degrees in specified areas, certificate, diploma, and applied degrees.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in career & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence
Polytechnical Institution	NAIT	Northern Alberta	Apprenticeship, certificate, & diploma programs for technical vocations, some applied & baccalaureate degrees in specified areas.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in career & technical programming	Areas of instructional excellence & specialization
	SAIT	Southern Alberta	Apprenticeship, certificate, & diploma programs for technical vocations, some applied & baccalaureate degrees in specified areas.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in career & technical programming	Areas of instructional excellence & specialization

Comprehensive Community Institution	Bow Valley College	Calgary & region	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion.	Applied research	Learners interested in preparatory & career programming	Areas of instructional excellence in foundational learning
	Grande Prairie Regional College	Northwestern Alberta	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion, apprenticeship, primarily collaborative baccalaureate programming.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in preparatory, career, & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence
	Keyano College	Northeastern Alberta	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion, apprenticeship, primarily collaborative baccalaureate programming.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in preparatory, career, & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence
	Lakeland College	Eastcentral Alberta	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion, apprenticeship, applied degrees, primarily collaborative baccalaureate programming.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in preparatory, career, & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence
	Lethbridge College	Southwestern Alberta	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion, apprenticeship, applied degrees, primarily collaborative baccalaureate programming.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in preparatory, career, & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence
	Medicine Hat College	Southeastern Alberta	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion, apprenticeship, applied degrees, primarily collaborative baccalaureate programming.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in preparatory, career, & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence
	NorQuest College	Edmonton & region	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion.	Applied research	Learners interested in preparatory & career programming	Areas of instructional excellence in foundational learning
	Northern Lakes College	North Central Alberta	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion, apprenticeship.	Applied research	Learners interested in preparatory, career, & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence in foundational learning
	Olds College	West Central Alberta/Alberta	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion, apprenticeship, applied degrees, primarily collaborative baccalaureate programming.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in preparatory, career, & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence (e.g agricultural, horticultural, & environmental)
	Portage College	East Central Alberta	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion, apprenticeship.	Applied research	Learners interested in preparatory, career, & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence & specialization in foundational learning
	Red Deer College	Central Alberta	Certificates & diplomas, adult high school completion, apprenticeship, applied degrees, primarily collaborative baccalaureate programming.	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in preparatory, career, & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence & specialization

Independent Academic Institution	Ambrose & St. Mary's University Colleges	Calgary & region	Limited baccalaureate programs, may offer limited graduate programming in niche areas	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in a faith based environment	Liberal arts, science & education programs
	Canadian University College	Central Alberta	Limited baccalaureate programs, may offer limited graduate programming in niche areas	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in a faith based environment	Liberal arts, science & education programs
	Concordia & The King's University Colleges	Edmonton & region	Limited baccalaureate programs, may offer limited graduate programming in niche areas	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in a faith based environment	Liberal arts, science & education programs
Specialized Arts and Culture Institution	Alberta College of Art & Design	Alberta & external	Certificate, diploma, applied / baccalaureate, and graduate degrees in specified areas	Applied research and scholarly activity	Learners interested in career & academic programming	Areas of instructional excellence in visual culture & design
	The Banff Centre	Alberta & external	Non-parchment programs	Applied research	Learners with prior academic & professional experience	Focus on professional development and unique programming in arts and creativity

Appendix B

LETTER OF EXPECTATION

BETWEEN

THE MINISTER OF ALBERTA ENTERPRISE AND ADVANCED EDUCATION
(AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA)

AND

THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
(AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA)

Alberta Government

FUNDING

Subject to final budget approval, the University of Alberta (U of A) 2013/2014 Campus Alberta Grant is $548,994,000. Other funding is allocated in the following manner:

- $756,000 Support for Learners with Disabilities
- $3,866,000 Health Workforce Action Plan
- $3,375,000 Priority Research
- $87,000 Lights-on
- $11,283,000 ACA Health
- $17,404,894 Infrastructure Maintenance Grant

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA RESPONSIBILITIES

This Letter of Expectation is an agreement regarding high level strategic directions and performance expectations between the Board of Governors of the U of A and the Minister.

As a publicly funded post-secondary institution accountable to the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education under the *Post-secondary Learning Act*, the U of A agrees to work with the Minister to support and promote Campus Alberta, and its goals of an accessible, affordable, quality, and sustainable post-secondary system in Alberta that fosters innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration. In doing so, the U of A will operate within its approved mandate, as set out in its approved Mandate Statement and Mandate and Roles Document (to be reviewed on an annual basis and amended as required in collaboration with the Minister), as well as in accordance with any additional direction provided by the Minister.

For the 2013/2014 funding year, the U of A will focus on the following key items as part of its Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP):

- Focus on sustainability in response to Budget 2013 and address efficiency and sustainability issues at your institution, including plans for a balanced budget going forward.
- In partnership with Enterprise and Advanced Education, address all the Auditor General's recommendations in a timely manner through demonstrated progress.
- Ensure that institutional resources are allocated in ways that best achieve the following desired outcomes:
  - Albertans are engaged in lifelong learning;
  - Alberta's workforce is skilled and productive;
  - Alberta demonstrates excellence in research, innovation, and commercialization; and,
  - Alberta's economy is competitive and sustainable.
- Continue to identify strategies for engaging and consulting with students in the development of institutional strategic plans.

CONSIDERATIONS

In working to fulfill the expectations set out in this letter, the U of A agrees to focus its resources on the following areas:

Programs

- Review the range of programs offered with the aim to ensure that programs offered:
    - Build on the strengths of your institution and advance the Campus Alberta system,
    - Are in demand by employers and students, and
    - Are designed to develop the full potential of learners for our economy and society (engaged critical thinkers, ethical citizens, entrepreneurial spirit).
- The institution is expected to achieve enrolment in approved programs of between XXXX and XXXX Full Load Equivalent (to be negotiated).

Learners

- Work with learners, Enterprise and Advanced Education, and system partners, such as eCampusAlberta, to identify opportunities for distance learning, and leverage technologies to enhance educational programs and services for the benefit of learners.
- Develop and use open educational resources to support reduced costs for learners.
- Provide high quality programs and services in an affordable manner in the context of Campus Alberta.
- Demonstrate a 10 per cent increase in the development of seamless learner pathways, including transfer agreements, block transfers, dual credit, PLAR activity, and/or innovative and collaborative relationships to support student mobility and success.

Collaboration

- Actively engage in and promote the Campus Alberta brand, including the use of the Campus Alberta logo on all institutional correspondence. The logo and guidelines for their use will be provided in the near future.
- Continue to work with Campus Alberta partners to increase access and better serve learners, achieve efficiencies, leverage expertise, and maximize available resources through initiatives such as:
    - Reductions in program duplication across Campus Alberta institutions through transfer agreements, collaborative delivery arrangements, and delivery through eCampusAlberta; and,
    - Reductions in administrative costs (e.g. shared and contracted services) through institutional and Campus Alberta targets.
- Continue to collaborate with school boards, high schools, and other partners to identify additional opportunities such as dual credit offerings, to increase participation rates in post-secondary education and training programs, particularly related to Aboriginal learners and other underrepresented groups.

- Enhance your work with business and industry to maximize the responsiveness to community and regional economic and social needs.
- Align and coordinate your institution's international efforts with Campus Alberta partners, Alberta Innovates, and business and industry in support of the objectives and outcomes identified in Alberta's International Strategy.
- Board Chairs regularly participate in Campus Alberta Strategic Directions Committee meetings chaired by the Minister, and Presidents regularly participate in Council of Presidents meetings chaired by the Deputy Minister.
- Continue to partner with government and other institutions on establishing the strategic technology directions for Campus Alberta as well as implementing collaborative initiatives, including sharing data centres and cloud service initiatives.

Governance

- Demonstrate effective governance practices that comply with the Public Agencies Governance Framework, the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act* (APAGA) (once the Act is proclaimed), and the approved Mandate and Roles Document, with a focus on ongoing professional development and training of board members.
- Continue to comply with government expense disclosure policies.
- Review your Mandate and Roles Document to ensure it is aligned with this letter.

Research

- Enhance alignment of Campus Alberta research priorities and capacity with the key outcomes and themes articulated in the Alberta Research and Innovation Plan.
- Demonstrate increased research and innovation system engagement and collaboration among Campus Alberta faculty and students, the Government of Alberta and industry to advance the knowledge-driven economy and create societal benefits.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND OUTCOMES

The Government of Alberta and institutions are expected to achieve focused economic and social outcomes that are of most value to Albertans. To demonstrate that achievement, and in response to results-based budgeting, institutions are expected to:

- Collaborate with Enterprise and Advanced Education and affected stakeholders, between now and the end of 2013, to:
  - o Develop system-level, sector-level, and institution-level outcomes that define what we are striving to achieve with the adult learning and research investment. Among the most important of the outcomes will be program outcomes and the results they produce for learners and the Campus Alberta system.

- o Develop institutional, sector, system and/or societal key performance indicators to measure success in achieving those outcomes.
- Develop and maintain internal processes to monitor and report on the agreed-upon set of outcomes and key performance indicators.

The Government of Alberta and the U of A are committed to transparency and accountability to the public. The U of A agrees to provide the following information in accordance with deadlines as prescribed by Enterprise and Advanced Education:
- Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP)
- Annual Report
- Audited Financial Statements
- Financial, Enrolment, Application, and Key Performance Indicator Data
- Any other information as prescribed by the Minister

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education is ultimately responsible for the public advanced education system in the province. The government is responsible for approving institutional mandates, as well as the legislative, regulatory, and policy frameworks under which the institution must operate. In order to support the achievement of the expectations outlined in this letter, government will:
- Provide the institution with annual operating and capital funding allocations.
- Provide broad policy direction and outline accountability frameworks to the institution.
- Consult with and advise the institution of the government's strategic priorities, key outcomes, and performance indicators that may impact the institution.
- Ensure Board appointments are filled in a timely way and support the Board's ability to fulfill its obligations.
- Work with Campus Alberta institutions to anticipate and respond to labour market demands for graduates and appropriate education and training.
- Conduct a review of this letter and monitor the implementation of the direction noted above.

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

In order to effectively implement this letter, both parties commit to ensuring open communication, transparency of process, and developing positive working relationships. As required by either party, the government and the institution will discuss any issues and may agree to amend this letter as required.

_____   _____

Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education   Chair, Board of Governors

_____   _____

Date Signed   Date Signed

This letter will be reviewed, and updated annually, in consultation with the Chair and builds upon the collegial working relationships between the government and the institution.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2G7
Tel: 780.492.4951
www.governance.ualberta.ca

March 25, 2013

A LETTER TO PREMIER REDFORD AND OUR FELLOW CITIZENS OF ALBERTA

Dear fellow Albertans,

We are the "public" members of the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta. We are all unpaid volunteers, appointed by the provincial government and unconnected with the U of A, except through our membership on the board.

While we are diverse in background, we share a passion for the U of A and a deep-seated belief that the U of A – already a leading university in Canada – is well on its way to being a top global public university. Achieving that goal is our common vision – not only for the university, but also for our province, which also seeks to be more globally connected. Our commitment to the university comes in part from our knowledge that the U of A makes a huge contribution to the quality of life we have in this province as well as to our economic prosperity.

Consider this: Each day, the U of A has a positive impact on communities throughout this province. Eighty per cent of our 250,000 alumni are right here in Alberta, and every day they are providing us with health services, teaching our children, running our businesses; they are leaders in government, in industry, in the legal system. They are entrepreneurs and innovative thinkers who are charting our economic, social, and cultural futures. Our researchers developed the Edmonton Protocol treatment for diabetes; they are solving the challenges of the oilsands. In short, this U of A community of some 50,000 students and staff members is connected to the communities we serve in ways that are making a difference.

For these and other reasons, we must go on the record as being deeply concerned that the recent budget decision of the provincial government to cut the university's funding by more than seven per cent will have a dramatic effect on the progress that the U of A has made in reaching its potential, both as a research and a teaching institution.

It is difficult to imagine the detrimental effect that cutting more than $43 million from our annual budget this year alone will have on our students, who are the critical next generation in this province. The same is true of our faculty, who lead the teaching and research initiatives that can help position this province as a global leader on the issues of greatest concern in the 21st century. Staff members at our university who support our students and faculty also will be deeply affected.

We are aware of the comments made about inefficiencies at the U of A and elsewhere in the post-secondary sector. As governors, we can assure you that we hold our institution accountable for efficient, effective practices. Certainly there is always room for improvement, but part of our job as

governors is to monitor and approve the university's budget and we are satisfied that the U of A is run efficiently.

We are concerned that this great institution to which we willingly give our time and resources will be set back many years by the cuts that will have to be made to absorb the decrease in our provincial funding. Being just another "average" university is not something that is part of our vision, nor is it something that we can accept.

We agree wholeheartedly with the provincial government's goal of making Alberta's post-secondary system as effective as possible. We are committed to working with the government to find ways to do that, recognizing that this may mean the University of Alberta looks quite different in the future. As long as our university and other post-secondary institutions in the province are serving the needs of Albertans – now and in the future – and as long as all of us emerge stronger, we can move forward together.

Douglas Goss, Chair
Don Fleming
Jim Hole
Agnes Hoveland
Shenaz Jeraj
Don Matthew
Ove Minsos
Jerry Naqvi
Bernd Reuscher
Robert Teskey
Dick Wilson
Ralph Young