

BC AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE ARTICULATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL on ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFERS (BCCAT)

Meeting on Zoom

Friday May 26, 2023 9:00am-11:00am

Present:

| Member Institution | Representative | Email |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| BCCAT | Elle Ting | eting@bccat.ca |
| Burnaby Community and Continuing Ed | Peter Isaacson | peter.isaacson@burnabyschools.ca |
| Camosun College | Lisa Greig | greigl@camosun.ca |
| HortEducation BC | Bill Hardy | bhardy@horteducationbc.com |
| HortEducation BC | Lindsay Lindholm | lindsay@horteducation.ca |
| Pacific Horticulture College | Laura Biggs | college@hcp.ca |
| SkilledTradesBC | Vern Weber | vweber@skilledtradesbc.ca |
| SkilledTradesBC | Doug Podetz | dpodetz@itabc.ca |
| Thompson Rivers University | Elise Menard Jonker | emenard@tru.ca |
| UBC Botanical Garden | Allison Luke | allison.luke@ubc.ca |

Recorder: Laura Biggs, Pacific Horticulture College

Welcome and acknowledgement of traditional unceded WSANEC and Lekwungen territory from Laura Biggs, Pacific Horticulture College (Acting Chair).

1. Meeting Called to Order at 9:03am.
2. Introductions (Roundtable) – Name, Land Acknowledgement, Institution, Current Favourite Plant
3. Approval of Agenda and Any Additional Items
Motion: To adopt the Agenda with no additions
Moved: Lisa Greig Seconded: Elise Menard Jonker Carried Unanimously
4. Approval of minutes of the Articulation Committee meeting of May 2022

The correct minutes were not circulated following the May 2022 meeting and could not be obtained when requested from the Past Chair. Therefore, a vote to approve these minutes did not occur.

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

None was determined as the minutes are unavailable and informal notes indicated that the meeting was more information-based and did not result in any significant future business or action items.

6. Election of Committee Chair

Jessica Gemella (VIU, Past Chair) is on temporary assignment until at least Fall 2025, and a new Chair is needed to move the committee forward. Responsibilities of the Chair include coordinating logistics and documentation for the committee meetings, maintaining an updated contact list for the committee, communicating with BCCAT, and attending the annual BCCAT JAM in early November.

No one present at the meeting volunteered to be Chair, so this position continues to be vacant. Interested parties are welcome to review the responsibilities and volunteer for the position at any time. Note that the Systems Liaison Person (SLP) can be asked to fill in as Chair if needed.

7. BCCAT Update (Elle Ting)

[Slides sent with minutes as separate attachment]

Technology updates: Alert system now built into reciprocity tool to flag and signal institutions involved in a bilateral agreement. Dashboard has been updated to better track articulation requests, including alerts about stale requests. The widget allows institutions to create transfer guide links on their own websites, producing a guide that shows institution-specific agreements (or selected courses) and is updated in real time, like a mini tailored transfer guide. Three institutions are now using this on their websites. TCS suite is always growing as well. Pathways tool is an upcoming project to develop program pathways that clearly link to the system, expanded from course-to-course agreements. Improving integration of search results. New BCCAT website has been delayed until June.

Research updates: Interesting report about COVID response from 39 institutions, including lessons learned and good practices. Stranded credit report (credits held hostage by institution over unpaid fees) found this is not as common as Canada, but 5-10% of students are affected and institutions generally support them. Report on student data in race, ethnicity, and ancestry looked at how widely disaggregated data is collected and how it gets used for EDI initiatives. The 2019 mobile students survey serves as a baseline to compare against future studies. Impact of COVID-19 student survey is an inventory of all the surveys that happened across institutions to create an organized dashboard tool and source of data. Call for proposals to indigenize BCCAT's approach to research and processes – deadline is May 29 but there may be some flexibility there.

JAM 2022 recap: First in-person BCCAT event since 2019. Held early November 2022 in a hybrid format, first day online and second day optional online/in person. Same format will be used for 2023 meeting. Over 300 participants, about half online and half in person. All JAM sessions are on BCCAT YouTube channel back to 2020. 2023 event is November 2 and 3, in person location TBA. Check for updates and an invitation closer to the date.

People are encouraged to play around with the Dashboard, lots of search functions.

8. SkilledTradesBC Update (Vern Weber)

[Document sent with minutes as separate attachment]

General note: Bring questions or concerns about SkilledTradesBC to this Committee Chair and they can be brought to Vern or Colleen, or reach out directly.

SkilledTrades Certification update: Mandatory trade initiative happening right now and first 10 trades have been launched. New process by BC government to add more trades to the list of designated mandatory trades. An organization can make an application to get a particular trade in the queue for upcoming designation. SkilledTradesBC has been greatly expanding because of this effort, including entire departments built around it now.

Apprenticeship numbers: "Reporting" refers to apprentices who have had some communication in the last 18 months, whereas "non-reporting" refers to apprentices who have not had any communication in at least 18 months. Unknown if the latter have left the trade, makes data analysis challenging. The "TT" in the columns indicate the level of technical training completed by the apprentice, e.g. OTT means they have registered with a sponsor but have not finished Level 1 yet. Also note that this does not include Foundation students as they are not registered as apprentices. Apprentice numbers by region table is set up in the same format. Most are in the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, and Interior.

Harmonization update: Issue with students who have not yet transitioned into the harmonized stream. Two gap programs were offered in Victoria. There will still be people coming through the system who started training on the "old" system. Completions Department did contact every person on the list about gap training options but most did not sign up. Unsure if another gap program will be launched or if numbers would be too small to make it viable. The biggest gap is the "old" Level 2 to the harmonized Level 3. Moving forward, people in this position will need to do sponsor sign-off or challenge exams. Those individuals will be connected with apprenticeship advisors to determine best path.

Exams update: Harmonized Level 3 exam has finally launched for classes beginning on or after April 3 of this year. Exam was developed near end of COVID lockdown but release was caught in backlog. Exam stats of less than 100 make it harder to gauge quality of exam because small numbers skew the results. Harmonized Foundation exam was not offered in 2020 and 2021. Softscape and hardscape were generally the lowest areas of competence. BC is always high in the IP exam pass rate compared to the national average.

Bill noted that so much of Softscape and Hardscape has been moved from Level 3/4 to Level 1/2 and people don't have enough experience or class time to master these areas. Still an issue with sequencing of topics.

Bill also noted that people contact HEBC occasionally about the gap issue and generally recommends that they challenge if they have enough experience. He will clean up their apprentice list and remove sponsorship for inactive apprentices after 18 months, to help "non-reporting" number to be more realistic.

9. HortEducation Learner Resources Update (Lindsay Lindholm)

Digital version of learner resources was announced at last year's meeting. This option has been really well-received as students have quick access, links can be added, instructor suggestions can be included. Please send Lindsay any resources that would be helpful to add in. This also helps HEBC get versions out quicker.

Now working on Level 4. Last year it was hard to find SMEs, but this year is going better. Ken and Gerry from Pacific Horticulture College have been helping out.

Laura asked about timeline for Level 4 being available. Digital version will be available in summertime for Pacific Horticulture College's August program, and will get feedback from students before print version is released.

Lisa commended Lindsay and Bill on the detail, images, and overall quality of the manuals. Thank you for the hard work!

Lindsay noted that the hard copies will continue to be available as people often take them forward in their careers and appreciate the flexibility of the binder format.

10. Institutional Updates

a. Lisa Greig, Camosun College:

Had a great year, great group of students. Began with 18 and finished with 16 (2 withdrew for medical reasons). Budget has not been an issue. Program is taught in walled garden at Royal Roads University since 1998. The 560 acres of land is given back to Indigenous Peoples over the next 18 months. Royal Roads will still be operating and holding the use of 40 acres of cultivated grounds but what this looks like is uncertain. Also, The Farm at Royal Roads was created last year and encompasses 5.2 acres within the walled garden. Unsure what will happen with Camosun students working in that area going forward. Small section they are not using anymore but will keep moving forward.

Enrolment is low, only 12 of 18 students committed for a July 4 start (normally full by Christmas). Last year there was a long waitlist but several committed students ended up joining the workforce instead, and ended up going through whole waitlist. Lots of well-paying work out there. Program will still run with 12 students.

Staffing remains the same – 1.5 full-time positions to deliver program. Trying to get tech position as full-time but no luck yet.

Will be working on resource-sharing to help students prepare for level exams (action item from recent CNLA meeting). Soils unit expanded from 60 to 90 hours.

Team at National Skills Competition right now – two students from Foundation program. The feedback is that they were one of the best teams on record!

Bill asked whether Foundation students receive correspondence from SkilledTradesBC to encourage them to take Levels 3 and 4. An apprenticeship advisor may visit their class but the letter of completion is the only letter sent. Bill asked whether it would be advantageous for Foundation students to register as apprentices before completing the program. Doug said they would need to be sponsored and would already have an ID number as part of their initial registration. Bill noted that there is no incentive for employers to support apprentices and that the uptake on the federal grant has been low, so there needs to be a hook to keep Foundation students going with the apprenticeship. This would also help SkilledTradesBC because the apprenticeship numbers would be higher (since Foundation students are not included with Level 1/2 numbers). Lindsay noted that the HEBC classroom visits were effective in this area.

Lisa asked how institutions could best encourage the employers to take this on. Doug noted that sponsors need to have a Red Seal on staff or obtain sign-off authority, but a lot of horticulture companies don't have certified people. Lindsay held an employer meeting at VIU to explain how apprenticeship works and the benefits. Doug noted that in some trades the instructor signs off on the final RFC rather than relying on an employer.

b. Elise Menard Jonker, Thompson Rivers University:

Nine-month program provides students with Foundation education as well as a certificate, and then can apply for Horticulture Management Diploma Program (5 students currently).

Lots of challenges for students this year, 22 students successfully completed certificate. Dedicated counsellor for School of Trades and Technology has been helpful with increasing student mental health needs.

Students returned to field trips this year – Vancouver, Okanagan (twice), Surrey (GroWest). Also trying to visit students from prior years. Increasing involvement with tree committee on campus. Helped build orchard and food production space, based on feedback from students. Also working on bees in the orchard.

16-18 enrolled for August intake. Expecting a surge leading up to start date. Seats for 28 people, plus 4 international spots. Have consistently filled for past 5 years. Two full-time instructors plus an English instructor.

Students find barriers in taking Level 3 and 4, as they must travel to Lower Mainland and pay for housing. Instead, they tend to accumulate hours and challenge exams. Not a huge demand for Red Seal in interior, but they continue to promote it. They have an apprenticeship advisor visit at the beginning of each program to register students and explain the process.

c. Allison Luke, UBC Botanical Garden:

Found it difficult to meet the budget this year with increasing cost of supplies. Will need to push for a budget increase next year.

In addition to Allison, there are instructors for Plant ID, Propagation, Botany, and Business. Have an amazing staff with diverse backgrounds to match students with for weekly practicums. The Director for garden is leaving in June and are now choosing between 3 candidates.

Started with 16 students and ended up with 15. Very close-knit group, myriad of mental health and behavioural problems. Currently accepted 16 people for next program, waiting to hear back from 9, 6 people on the wait list. May not have a full cohort this year but the program will still run.

Now changing activities from remote learning back to hands-on activities, re-working curriculum to meet learning objectives and increase hands-on. Otherwise no big changes. More focus on propagation this year, worked on a blueberry planting, worked with outdoor artist-in-residence at art gallery, supported AppleFest event at garden, and other projects on the go. Great to have field trips back.

Exam results were lower this year than previous. Interested in collaborating with Foundation programs to share resources and help better prepare students for these exams.

Grad and alumni event (10th year anniversary) recently happened, good celebration and networking, guest speakers, door prizes. About 50 students attended.

d. Peter Isaacson, Burnaby Community & Continuing Education:

Continue to offer Level 1 (Jan-Feb) and Level 2 (Nov-Dec) once each per year. Operate out of South Burnaby.

Redeveloped hardscape area, plan to create a teaching garden. Some challenges with how the maintenance will be carried out. Trying to get more plants on site for Plant ID.

2022 – had 15 for Level 1 and 9 for Level 2. 2023 – had 8 for Level 1 and 7 finished, leaving fewer students to continue into Level 2. Would like to run with at least 5 or 6 students.

Five part-time instructors. Using Canvas system through SFU to take advantage of resources put on there during COVID. Expanded other course offerings, e.g. planting and pruning courses. The residential landscape technician program (2 semesters, part-time, diploma) is very popular.

e. Laura Biggs, Pacific Horticulture College:

Enrolment has been strong in past year, most programs are full or close to full with 18-20 students. Some programs coming up in near future are already full, e.g. Level 4 in January, Level 3 in the fall. Concerned about enrolment in Foundation program for next year – normally would have 10 applications by now and only have 1. Might see a shift in popularity to apprenticeship programs as they may be more financially manageable for people.

Student mental health is a growing concern. All College staff have taken Mental Health First Aid training and would strongly recommend others take it as well.

Always looking for more instructors, most are spread pretty thin or are near retirement.

Bought some new electric equipment this year, e.g. line trimmers and hedge trimmers. Meadow makers project on site as well as a new container display garden.

Working on getting a new software program to track student progress. Currently using many Excel spreadsheets. The software should save us some time.

Lots of staffing changes. Diana is part-time College Assistant, Racheal is College Administrator. Jessica has resigned as of June 1 after six years of working closely with Laura. Laura's College Director position has been posted. Laura will still be assisting the College in more of a supportive role, but isn't able to dedicate enough time to the College Director role while juggling other work.

11. Other Business

Bill asked if PHC is still doing part distance and part in person training, Laura confirmed that is still the case. This format can help with housing expenses for those attending from out of town.

12. Next meeting:

After a brief discussion, annual meetings continue to be sufficient frequency for the committee. Also, online meetings are the preference going forward. Next meeting: **May 2024 via Zoom.**

Meeting adjourned at 11:03am.