

Biology Articulation Committee

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL on ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFERS (BCCAT)

Thompson River University, Kamloops, BC

28-29 April, 2025

Present:

Member Institution	Representative	Email
Alexander College	Dr. Mitra Panahi	m.panahi@alexandercollege.ca
Camosun College	Ryan Suleman	suleman@camosun.ca
Capilano University	Dr. Thomas Flower	thomasflower@capilanou.ca
Coast Mountain College	Dr. Catharine White	cwhite@coastmountaincollege.ca
College of New Caledonia	Dr. Graeme Roch	Rochg1@cnc.bc.ca
College of the Rockies	Andrena Heigh	aheigh@cotr.bc.ca
Columbia College	Sarah Goomeshi Nobary	sgoomeshinobary@columbiacollege.ca
Coquitlam College	Dr. Raymond Wong	rwang@coquitlamcollege.com
Douglas College	Michael Silvergieter	silvergieterm@douglascollege.ca
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	Dr. Monica De Boer	monica.deboer@kpu.ca
Langara College	Dr. Melisa Hamilton	mhamilton@langara.ca
LaSalle College	Dr. Leili Ghazi Zadeh	LGHazi_Zadeh@lasallecollegevancouver.com
North Island College	Dr. Aisling Brady	aisling.brady@nic.bc.ca
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Selkirk College	Dr. Aubrey Demchuk	ademchuk@selkirk.ca
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University Canada West	Dr. Mitra Panahi	m.panahi@alexandercollege.ca
University of the Fraser Valley	Dr. Justin Lee	Justin.Lee@ufv.ca
University of Northern BC	Dr. Dezene Huber and Dr. Jenia Blair	huber@unbc.ca & jenia.blair@unbc.ca
University of Victoria	Dr. Barbara Ehting	behltin@uvic.ca
Vancouver Community College	Maria Morlin	mariacoho@telus.net
Vancouver Island University	Dr. Joslyn Affleck and Dr. Caroline Josefsson	Joslynn.Affleck@viu.ca Caroline.Josefsson@viu.ca
Yukon University	Dr. Tara Stehelin	tstehelin@yukonu.ca
Guests	Institution	Email
Dr. Rob Fleming	BCCAT	info@bccat.ca
Dr. Barbara Moon	Provincial BC Deans of Arts and Sciences	Barbara.Moon@alexandercollege.ca

Recorder: Sarah Goomeshi Nobary-Columbia College

Welcome from Dr. Ramroop.

1. Meeting Called to Order at 9:02 AM.
2. Introductions/welcome Regrets: Northern Lights College, FDU, Yorkville University, CMC rep was absent, and the report presented by Dr. Brady.
3. Approval of Agenda and Any Additional Items
Motion: to adopt the Agenda with additions Moved: Dr. Hamilton Seconded: Dr. Martin Carried unanimously
4. Approval of minutes of the Articulation Committee meeting of May 2024.
Motion: to accept the Minutes as presented. Moved: Goomeshi Nobary Seconded: Dr. Flower Carried unanimously
5. Presentation of Institutional Reports

Many institutions experience lower enrollment, but not in sciences yet unless otherwise specified. Despite this, most institutions now have hiring freezes and their retired staff are not replaced because of the overall lower enrollment in the institutions. This

was true for all institutions, except for TWU. In most institutions, although the permanent/regular/ongoing faculty members were not laid off, almost no temporary/contract/sessional instructors were given contracts for the summer 2025.

- a. **ALEX:** College is planning on BSc and looking into domestic student recruitment. New courses in CompSci, business, marketing.
- b. **CAM:** The biology department is currently undergoing significant restructuring, with a planned merger to form a new faculty of STEM. Many faculty have expressed overall apathy or lack of engagement from students. The new ET program is helping to contribute to more biology courses.
- c. **CAPU:** BIOL has lost some AD students but BSc is picking up. New BES (Bachelor of Environment and Society) in environmental Studies (Arts) and Env. Sciences. The BSc students are quite successful in their research. CapU has acquired the Squamish campus. Accommodation is there. First two years of the BES programs. Intensive Field Studies (2 weeks) is a successful program. Pre-nursing certificate: 30 credits transferable to most other institutions. Field schools: Keen to look at options when the discussions come up.
- d. **CNC:** New second year ecology, updated course outlines.
- e. **COTR:** New president. Increased lab hours (BIOL200, microbiology) from 3 to 4 hours because of shortage of equipment. BIOL251: stats, new course. Needed by UBC and Lethbridge. Pathology is removed from BIOL and taught by nursing, other institutions seem to have them as part of biology still.
- f. **CMC:** (rep not present, report presented by Dr. Brady). Renewing the outlines and re-articulating courses.
- g. **Columbia College:** Questions about percentage regularization in COLU. Lower enrollment, projected further shrinkage in the next two years. Looking into developing new certificates, diplomas, and 4-year degrees.
- h. **COQC:** One instructor only. Developing AD in Science.
- i. **DOUG:** Costa Rica field school happened: Only opportunity for first year international students. Funding for field school: federal grants and internal funding sources.
- j. **LaSalle:** BIOL100 for AD in Arts, no lab at the moment, but there will be labs in the new building. Also courses in Nutrition, Environmental biology and sustainability. Numbers are ok so far, but projecting a decline. Moving to a different building
- k. **LANG:** Had a program review, positive experience. Will be reviewing programs to distinguish the diploma from AD, make it more applied. Also review the breadth and depth of all the courses in response to the demographic of students who arrive. Restructuring: In progress, first heard in Fall. Initially projected to be done by January, and then March, but nothing has happened yet. There are still questions about how it would impact our day-to-day functions. Admin is encouraging streamlining of credentials to help counter students' "decision fatigue".
- l. **NIC:** A New hire, promoting more research with BIOC and PHARM backgrounds in students. Emphasis on trades is proposed. Lost the Uclulet center. Housing in Campbell River was requested, not approved. Housing in Comox is open but do not know if it will fill. New HSCI diploma which could transfer into various HSCI degrees. It has received good numbers of applications from international students and is PGWP eligible. Received funding from the island pre-health program. Recruitment is challenging. Lab renovation.
- m. **OC:** Business and Arts reductions and layoffs. During COVID, a student inquiry-based lab model was developed. Considering changing the textbook because Campbell is now online only and students prefer physical copies. A conversation about lab fees ensued. Other institutions have lab fees and for some this includes lab coats. Some institutions require students to buy their own lab coat, unless the lab has a safety level concern where the lab coats cannot leave the labs.
- n. Conversation ensued about textbooks. TRU said that adapted textbooks (OER) are more focused and geared towards the specific course. There is a mix perspective on physical vs digital textbooks among students.
- o. **SEL:** Highest per capita med school acceptance because of their strong pre-med program. A microbiology course that is for environmental studies program has good lab registration but their science Micro does not have. They aim to have 10 labs for the Science major microbiology course. Pre-med: 90 credits and 6 English credits.
- p. **SFU:** More Science-breadth courses for Arts students. In the process of reviewing textbooks and resources for courses. EEC was re-certified. Recently separated the fungal and algal course and they are now two separated courses. Fungal festival: Different ways that fungi affect our lives.
- q. **TRU:** Removal of labs from cell biology in TRU. The labs have been replaced by tutorials/seminars. Started STAMP (science trajectory ambassador mentorship program): Higher level students act as mentors for lower level students and it has been quite successful. The start of the first honours college, first in Canada: a certificate open to all undergrads. Elements of indigenization, experiential learning.
- r. **TWU:** Stable registration, no lay-offs or hiring freezes. But because of changes in grad programs, they are foreseeing a slight decrease. Biotech program has become a stream of biology instead of being its own program. Because it was only run by one person. Marine mammals course is being recognized in other institutions. It is offered only every two years and there is going to be a field component to it in the future.

- s. **KPU:** Decrease the declaration requirement for the biology students going into biology major. The field trip was cancelled mid term
- t. **UBC-O:** New department head (Dr. Perry Howard): he is showing initiatives in DEI and indigenization. Establishing department PLOs and aligning them with course learning objectives. Lost budget for undergrad TAs, and sessionals. Mentorship program to help students with transfer etc.
- 6. **Discussion:** It is important for the students to get practical skills and that is why labs are important. For transfers sometimes there is no consensus, especially for second-year courses. Is there a requirement to get 50% in the lab to pass the course? Some institutions enforce passing the lab to pass the course and some are giving a maximum of D or C- if they fail the lab. Some institutions have exemptions if they pass the lab but fail the lecture. Some institutions have de-coupled. A document will be circulated. **Biology articulation committee recommends, when considering transferability, that all courses require in person, proctored examination.**
- 7. **SLP Report from Deans' meeting:** BC Campus sessions coming up, check them. Also, a project has started that offers textbooks without internet. BC Colleges: making students skill-ready for work. Deans' meeting: it is projected that by 2033, 70% of the jobs will require university training. PAL system not efficient, the government will be revisited at the end of the year. Declaration that all Ads will be under the same CIP code. AI challenges were discussed, but there is a link in the report to what ITS Canada is doing. Increased interest in asynchronous courses has been seen. Mental health issues and late accommodations were discussed as a recent challenge. New course in UBC Science (SCI113). Will be discussed in the UBC-V report.
- 8. **JAM report:** Presented by Dr. Brady. Sessions on TCS, letters of permission, equivalency. Also sessions on impacts on registration, profiling patterns of success in BC students, AI (building a guide for it), etc. Question: How efficient are transfers between ACAT and BCCAT? No one from ACAT this year at JAM but things seem to be moving well between BCCAT and ACAT. A discussion on ABE was ensued. Various approaches in different institutions.

Continuing Institutional Reports

- t. **UBC-V:** Dr. Chowrira has stepped down from her role as chair. New dean from a science background. 2% budget cut across the board, despite science not being affected directly. Grad TA requests will be limited. SCI113 developed for science-specific communication. It is a course that requires co-teaching and large number of lecturers were hired. Transferability will not be affected yet for students coming into UBC-V, but future is unknown. This replaces a three-credit course from ENGL. In Langara there is a science literacy course and the question came up if transferability is affected. But there is no clarity on how this will transpire. Outline will be sent to the group. Review of BIOL (first year) being done and comparisons made across north America. Labs have been de-coupled. Reduction in enrollment is not due to the government policies, but due to two new majors (CPS and Neuroscience).
- u. **UCW:** second largest private uni. MBA program is popular. Indigenous Action Committee was formed. New programs being added. India, South America, and Nepal are the main countries where students are coming from.
- v. **UFV:** New student housing for the Fall. New cafeteria etc. Sub-committees to revise some labs to make them more inquiry based. Program review been done. Removal of some of the MATH and CHEM to increase the breadth was suggested. Another suggestion was to allow students to take some courses in various orders, because of various preparedness levels of students entering. Moving the evolution course to second year. Planning on MSc on biotech and sustainability (2027). A factsheet will be circulated for review.

A suggestion was made by the committee to have a list of labs from various institutions.

Also, check out the Associate For Biology Lab Educators (ABLE) meeting in Manitoba.

- w. **UNBC:** Finishing the BIOL review. Searching for a new department chair.
- x. **UVic:** Recent retirements and senior lab instructors are also leaving. Teaching faculty as chair now. New health faculty. Trying to move to a new budget model. Enrollment up 5% compared to last year. A challenge: faculty are overworked and lack of resources. Accessibility services are reduced. TA hours are reduced.
- y. **VCC:** Developing environmental science associate degree with assured entry to SFU. Building in progress of Centre for Clean Energy. Renovations occurring for organic chem lab.
- z. **VIU:** Streamlined the minors. Transfer agreements with OC and YU and trying one with NIC. No lay-offs, but some faculty left and retired. Fewer sections in courses. Issues around student preparedness and engagement. President stepped down because of vote of non-confidence.
- aa. **YU:** New research activities: soil sampling in the Yukon. BioSci diploma is now developed. In negotiation with Red Deer Polytech for transfer programs. Joined Northern pre-med for to support students to go to med school. Challenges with contract negotiations have caused some members to leave. YU has become a member of Universities Canada. Field school to Peru: Installing solar panels in the mountains. Funded by GSO but this funding is no longer available. There used to be no international students in YU, but there was an increase, which caused challenges for student support and housing. That number has now decreased. New Science building is being built.

Discussion: Improving open-source textbooks and having one that all the institutions are happy with. There are a number of institutions who are interested in contributing. Michael Silvergieter will organize for now. Funding for images? One rep said there are free sources available. One rep mentioned use of AI for image generation.

Challenges in student preparedness after transfer. This has been addressed by making the transfer agreements and articulations more stringent.

BCCAT Report (Dr. Fleming): Many unknowns and stress resulting from the new situation. There are budget cuts, so, allowing hybrid sessions helps with planning. JAM next year Nov 6 and 7, same way as last year. All the sessions are available online. Reviewing the membership policy to create space for indigenous institutions. Transfer awards: recommend members. Funding opportunities: Innovation in transfer. Last year's project was about English requirements. Because of the strength of our transfer system, Ontario has approached us to implement a similar system. Opportunity to provide feedback: reach out to Rob. Another project is supporting microcredential assessment with TCS. TCS pathways being reviewed: How does a credit transfer program relate to others? Uses the transfer courses catalog to apply against the requirements to get a better idea of how they work towards student needs and goals. Result will be published after. Research: profile and performance report, every 5-6 years. Mostly with research universities. The report also looks at tracking students from private institutions. Grants: Accessible and equitable admissions, transition from Adult Education programs, impact of regulations of BC transfer in programs. Letters of permission are being looked into. Articulation requests from out of province: what are the challenges and approaches from different institutions. Looking into research across Canada for more inclusive education. Question: Would the letters of permission be a way to allow students to do field schools? Yes, but there should be a mechanism to transfer the credit to the institution the student is from. Question: funding for OER for BIOL? It will go back to BCCAT and Dr. Fleming will update. Possible research opportunity: Core curricular requirements for BIOL. We will be put in touch with Elle Ting.

Field Course Project: Maria gave a brief overview of Ontario model (presently not suitable to B.C.). Students currently need to enrol in the institution running the field course and acquire a letter of permission. A new plan is needed for B.C., including perhaps a central website for field courses to be listed. Tom Flowers sending document, Michael Silvergieter to send information re: Costa Rica field school.

Letter to the ministry regarding the high school graduate preparedness: Sent on June 17 of last year, but there was no response. Dr. Brady will resend.

Articulation requests: For pending requests, sometimes contacting the receiving institution in advance will help. Or contacting them to see why the articulation is stalled. The stale date is 10 years.

Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Dr. Ramroop recommended the committee members to join.

Elections:

Mail list coordinator: Dr. Brady

Motion: to approve Sarah Goomeshi Nobary for Chair.

Nominated by Heigh Seconded by: Dr. Martin - Unanimously carried.

Motion: to approve Ryan Suleman for Associate Chair

Nominated by Dr. Brady and seconded by Heigh - Unanimously carried.

Next meeting:

Location: UFV – Abbotsford

Date: April 30th – May 1st

Meeting adjourned at 2:09 PM