

FRIENDS OF BCCAT

* FINOLA FINLAY *



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Meet Finola Finlay

Finola served as BCCAT's Associate Director, Transfer & Articulation from 1996-2010. Since retiring, she and her husband, Robert, have moved to Roaringwater Bay in West Cork, Ireland where they share adventures and a deep enthusiasm for archaeology, history, architecture, and more.

Finola's experiences of the BC Transfer System began in the 1970's, as an Instructor (and later as a Campus Principal) at Northern Lights College. As part of the BCCAT team, she was a dedicated advocate for communication and understanding as vital for building an effective articulation community. She led on key projects and developed a number of well-used BCCAT resources (such as the How to Articulate Handbook).

Finola's Story

I grew up in Ireland, where the education system at that time followed a conveyor belt-model; if you stayed with it you got carried along through secondary school and on to, and through, post-secondary. Unfortunately, however, if you stepped off the belt at any point along the way, it was difficult-to-impossible to get back on again.

The BC Transfer System was a revelation to me when I first engaged with it as an instructor at Northern Lights College in the 1970s. NLC is located at the far corner of the province; a considerable distance from what were then the only three public universities (and hence degree-granting institutions). Despite this, my students could take the credits they earned in my class and count them towards a degree at one of those universities. I understood immediately that it was my responsibility to ensure that the work they did in my class was equivalent in standard to what they would accomplish in the parallel course at one of those universities, and that dialogue between instructors was an essential part of building that trust--what John Dennison always called Parity of Esteem--upon which the articulation of courses and the transfer of credit depended.

Fast forward many years and as BCCAT's Associate Director, Transfer & Articulation, I saw my job as providing the essential tools that instructors and professors, counsellors and advisors, registration and admission specialists--indeed anyone whose job it was to work inside the transfer system--needed to facilitate the smooth transition of students from one institution to another without needless loss of credit. The *How to Articulate* handbook, the *Articulation Committee Companion* and later *Transfer Tips* (a student resource, written with Jean Karlinski) were all outgrowths of that commitment.

Later I was involved in the development of Block Transfer guidelines, and resources for private institutions as they sought entrance to the BC Transfer System, as well as numerous research projects aimed at assessing the effectiveness of that system. All these initiatives were part of BCCAT's response to the dynamic, ever-changing nature of the BC post-secondary system, which in turn was responding to the needs of students and, in some cases, to the advent of for-profit models of advanced education. Never a dull moment in the fourteen years I spent at the Council!

Throughout that time, BCCAT was a wonderful workplace, with exceptionally professional colleagues, all of us animated by the same basic desire - to provide the students of BC with the flexibility they needed to complete their education. Our committees, drawn from the system, provided us with outstanding advice and kept us on track.

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