
ACCESS TO ADVANCED EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL ACCESS COMMITTEE



Submitted to
The Hon. Stanley B. Hagen
Minister of Advanced Education
and Job Training
Victoria, British Columbia
September, 1988

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to many individuals and groups who contributed to the development of this Report. In particular, acknowledgement is made, with gratitude, for the distinctive contribution of the following:

1. The eight Regional Committees, and all those who contributed to the work of these committees, especially:
the Chairmen, who, as volunteers spent many hours (and logged many miles of travel in some regions) giving leadership to the committee work, all under severe pressure of time.
the Vice-Chairmen, who, in addition to carrying the full load of their institutional responsibilities, added the task of co-ordinating the work of the committees.
the Members, who, from a variety of backgrounds, pooled their knowledge and skills to develop regional perspectives on advanced education and job training.
2. All members of the Provincial Access Committee, whose patience and good humour, unbroken through long meetings, allowed for the free flow of good, constructive thought and sensible compromises.
3. All those who, individually or as representatives of organizations, made special submissions or presentations to the Provincial Committee.
4. Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training staff, who were ever ready to assist with information and technical help. Special thanks are due to Dawn McKay, who co-ordinated, with tact and skill, the work of the Provincial Committee; to Enid Foreland whose excellent secretarial assistance was invaluable; and to Valerie Owen who, through many revisions, typed the final copy of the Report.

To all of the above--a very warm thank-you.

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Summary of Recommendations

PRIORITY CONCERNS

1. Institutional Capacity and Program Quality

It is recommended that government, through multi-year commitment to operating and capital grants, provide predictable funds to allow institutions to maintain quality of programs and upgrade space and equipment.

It is recommended that institutions be encouraged to achieve optimum space and equipment utilization through flexible scheduling of instruction.

It is recommended that the advanced education and job training system give priority to the use of open learning systems to increase accessibility to educational opportunities.

2. Literacy and Adult Basic Education

It is recommended that colleges be provided, beginning in fiscal 1989, with supplementary funding to enable them to assume the direct educational costs (fees, books and required supplies) of students taking literacy and adult basic education courses.

It is recommended that, in preparation for the International Year of Literacy in 1990, a provincial advisory committee be established to advise government on, among other issues, means of informing illiterate adults of available educational opportunities.

3. University Degree Programs Outside the Lower Mainland

It is recommended that, through a combination of different methods of delivery, a core program of second year courses be provided in each college.

It is recommended that in sparsely populated college regions, university degree programs be expanded by means of the Open University or by co-operative arrangements between the college, universities and the Open Learning Agency.

It is recommended that in more densely populated college regions outside the Lower Mainland and south Vancouver Island (for example, Okanagan and Cariboo

College regions), university degree programs be expanded by means of the establishment of an upper-level "university college" component.

It is recommended that in the North, improved access to university degree programs be achieved through support for the evolution of current relationships between the colleges, the universities, and other agencies.

It is recommended that there be further exploration of the potential of a distinctive "University of the North".

4. Under-represented Groups

People in Small Remote Communities

It is recommended that the government strongly support the Open Learning Agency to carry out all aspects of the role given to it in legislation.

Native Indians

It is recommended that the provincial government take immediate steps, in consultation with Native Indian groups, universities and colleges, to develop and implement a detailed strategy to address the diverse advanced education and job training needs of Native Indians.

The Disabled

It is recommended that the Ministry, in collaboration with other Ministries and agencies, ensure appropriate support services for disabled students enrolled in advanced education and job training programs.

Prison Population

It is recommended that the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training consult with the Ministries of Education and the Solicitor General to review, in collaboration with universities, colleges, and institutes, the strategy for the funding and delivery of educational up-grading and job training in provincial jails.

5. Admissions, Transfer and Articulation

It is recommended that a Co-ordinating Council on Admissions, Transfer, and Articulation, with representatives chosen from names submitted from

within the system, be established to provide a mechanism for the resolution of difficulties which may arise from time to time with respect to admissions, course and program equivalency, degree requirements, and transfer of course credits.

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

1. Program Offerings in the Lower Mainland

It is recommended that the Henderson Report (see Appendix A), supporting degree granting status through the Open Learning Agency for the Emily Carr College of Art and Design, be endorsed in principle by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, and that the Ministry refer the proposal to the Open Learning Agency for evaluation and action.

2. Program Offerings in Smaller Communities

It is recommended that the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training provide the resources to permit colleges to establish more learning centres in smaller communities to facilitate the offering of a greater range of courses and programs, on a scheduled and predictable basis, (utilizing open learning communication technologies as well as face-to-face instruction).

It is recommended that there be cyclic offerings of vocational and technical programs and courses in smaller and more remote communities, on a planned three to five year basis.

It is recommended that short term refresher and upgrading courses for industry be offered in small communities, utilizing mobile training facilities as appropriate.

3. Financial Barriers

It is recommended that the British Columbia Student Assistance Program be given more publicity.

It is recommended that Regional Access Committee recommendations regarding student financial assistance be forwarded to the Standing Committee on Student Financial Assistance for review and action.

4. Informational Barriers

It is recommended that ongoing counselling services be more readily available, especially in interior colleges where students have less access to community information and counselling services than students in larger centres.

It is recommended that the existence of quality educational opportunities through open learning systems be more effectively conveyed to all residents of British Columbia.

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education continue its efforts to make available more course options in small secondary schools, particularly in academic subjects, and particularly through the use of distance learning technologies in situations where course registrations are low.

It is recommended that Discovery Training Network terminal access points (TAPS) be set up in all secondary schools.

5. Retention, Completion and Transition to Work

It is recommended that legislation be changed to allow colleges to grant associate degrees.

It is recommended that British Columbia's educational institutions place a higher emphasis on guidance and student services so that students are given more specific direction with respect to prerequisites, entrance requirements, program expectations and transition to work.

It is recommended that educational institutions place increased emphasis on quality of teaching and the development of teaching skills.

It is recommended that colleges and institutes make provision for more sports, cultural and extra-curricular activities.

It is recommended that specific career-technical and vocational certificate programs be expanded where there are high employment needs.

It is recommended that more resources be made available for cooperative education programs (including trades training) and work-study components of programs, to assist in maintaining the currency of programs and to ease the transition from education to work.

6. Research Capability for Policy Making

It is recommended that the Ministry and institutions of advanced education and job training develop a common data base and continue to identify, undertake and monitor research projects on issues relating to accessibility.

7. Other Concerns

It is recommended that consideration be given to providing more on-campus student residences.

It is recommended that improved and more flexible day care facilities be made available.

USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

It is recommended that the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training collaborate with the Ministry of Regional Development (Communications Programs) to ensure that Knowledge Network programs are available to all British Columbia communities with populations of 50 or more.

It is recommended that, in order to facilitate the implementation of a number of recommendations of this report, the Open Learning Agency prepare a proposal to enhance significantly our current use of telecommunications technology through the development and expansion of interactive networks.

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Report of the Provincial Access Committee

Since the Macdonald report of 1962, there have been significant developments in British Columbia's system of advanced education and job training. Now, after a period of consolidation, the time is right for the next major development.

I. BACKGROUND TO THIS REPORT

Concerns about Accessibility

Increasing accessibility to advanced education and job training has emerged as a major concern of citizens, educators, and government in British Columbia since 1986, consistent with similar concerns across Canada.

The first government initiative to address this concern was the establishment, late in 1986, of a Student Financial Assistance Advisory Committee. This committee, chaired by Dr. Les Bullen, brought forward, in March 1987, a series of recommendations which led to a major restructuring of the British Columbia Student Assistance program for the 1987-88 year. Expansion of this program took place in 1988. As a result of these steps, several financial barriers to advanced education and job training have been struck down or reduced.

The second government initiative was the undertaking of a review of the current state of participation in, and accessibility to, the various forms of advanced education and job training. This review resulted in the 1987 publication of a series of papers dealing not only with accessibility but also with retention of students within the educational system, transfer within this system, completion of programs and transition from education to work.

Early in 1988, the Minister of Advanced Education and Job Training, the Honourable Stanley B. Hagen, established a Regional Access Committee in each of the eight new development regions of the province as well as a Provincial Access Committee. These committees were charged with making recommendations for action with respect to all of the above issues. Each Regional Committee's task was to provide recommendations from the perspective of its own region. Public input was obtained in a variety of ways, including questionnaires, telephone surveys, at meetings with selected groups, and at open public meetings. The regional reports reveal that, although the issues of accessibility are common throughout the province, steps necessary to improve accessibility vary by region. Accordingly, the actions proposed by each Regional Access Committee merit careful consideration.

The Provincial Committee, composed of one representative from each of the Regional Committees, plus five others, was to provide recommendations from a provincial perspective, taking into consideration the recommendations from the regions. The Provincial Committee, in addition to receiving input from the regions through the regional representatives, received briefs, both oral and written, from a number of provincial organizations. A list of submissions is contained in Appendix B.

This report of the Provincial Access Committee brings into focus major issues and recommends broad initiatives to improve accessibility to, and student success within, the province's system of advanced education and job training. It also draws attention to proposals for action generated by the Regional Access Committees.

II. THE CONTEXT

The broad context in which this report's recommendations are made is the changing condition of advanced education and job training in British Columbia, in the rest of Canada, and in other countries.

The Current State of Accessibility in British Columbia

British Columbia has a diversified and well-developed structure for advanced education and job training, consisting of three public universities, fifteen regional colleges, four public institutes, an Open University and an Open College, one private university, several small private colleges, over four hundred private trade schools, adult education services in over twenty school districts, and a well-developed apprenticeship system. Together these institutions provide advanced education and job training opportunities for some 500,000 full-time and part-time students annually, in virtually all parts of the province, in programs ranging from basic literacy to post-doctoral studies. Opportunities for advanced education and job training are not equal, however, for all people in all parts of the province.

The New Need - Increased Accessibility

While great strides in advanced education and job training have been taken over the past 25 years, there is an urgent need to further expand accessibility. Evidence for this need comes from three main sources.

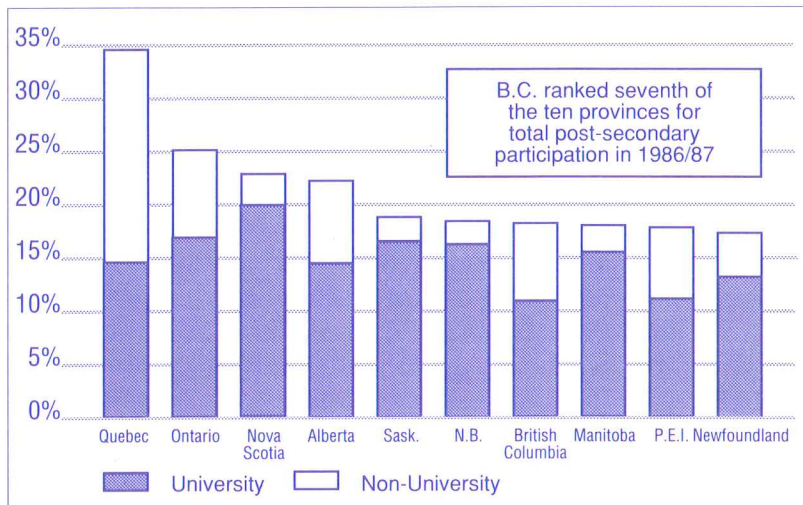
The first source is a mounting demand for better services to students living outside the Vancouver metropolitan and south Vancouver Island areas, and to students currently under-represented in advanced education and job training, notably Native Indians, the disabled, and those residing in remote areas. There is a clear need for greater equity of access to advanced education and job training.

The second source is statistical and analytical in nature, indicating that British Columbia, in comparison with other Canadian provinces, lags behind in participation in advanced education and job training. If our province is to continue to develop a healthy, civilized society in an increasingly complex and interdependent world, more

people must participate successfully in advanced education and job training. Current total participation, inclusive of part-time learners and learners of all ages, does not appear to be far off the national average (reliable statistics are not available), but British Columbia full-time participation as a percentage of 18-24 year olds is low in several sectors of advanced education and job training, including academic/technical studies and university degree programs, as evidenced by Statistics Canada data depicted below.

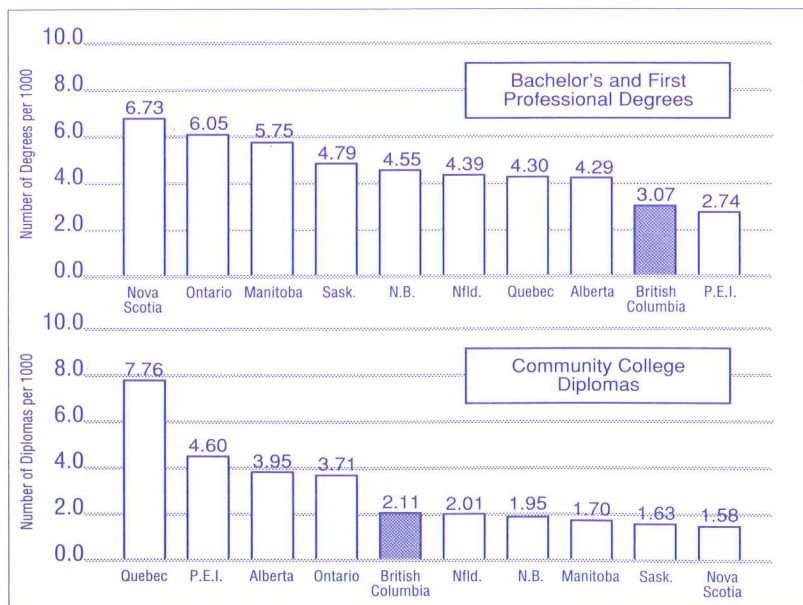
Full-time post-secondary enrollment as a percentage of the 18 – 24 age group. 1986/87

Statistics Canada



Post-secondary credentials awarded per 1000 adult population 1985/86

Statistics Canada



The third source of evidence for the need to further expand accessibility comes from international trends. Indications abound that participation in advanced education is expected to increase in all advanced technological societies. As the 21st century approaches, the trend for increasing levels of education for all citizens continues apace. This trend began with the industrial revolution, was accelerated by the requirements implicit in democratic forms of government, and is now again accelerated by post-industrial advances in the electronic-information age in which our shrinking world now finds itself. If British Columbia is to share in the benefits of the emerging economic and social era, and contribute to the solution of provincial, national and international problems that will inevitably accompany that era, our advanced education and job training efforts must not only allow us to catch up with other parts of Canada but also to keep pace with increases in participation and successful completion rates currently being pursued in other parts of the world.

The need our province faces, therefore, is not just to improve equity of access for all our citizens, but also to improve the overall rate of transition of students from high school into advanced education and job training institutions of all kinds. In addition, there is a need to improve retention and completion rates, and to encourage periodic up-grading and retraining for professionals and non-professionals alike. Opportunities for our young people need to be expanded so that they can compete with highly trained and educated people coming from elsewhere.

It is crucial to recognize that additional opportunities should not focus on any one form of advanced education or job training, or on any particular type of learner, or on any specific learning mode; increased opportunities are needed in all forms, for all learners, and in all learning modes. There is a need to decrease adult illiteracy, to provide learning support for people whose first language is not English, to increase occupational training in its several forms, and to expand access to university studies and research at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Part-time as well as full-time opportunities should increasingly characterize advanced education and job training in the years ahead.

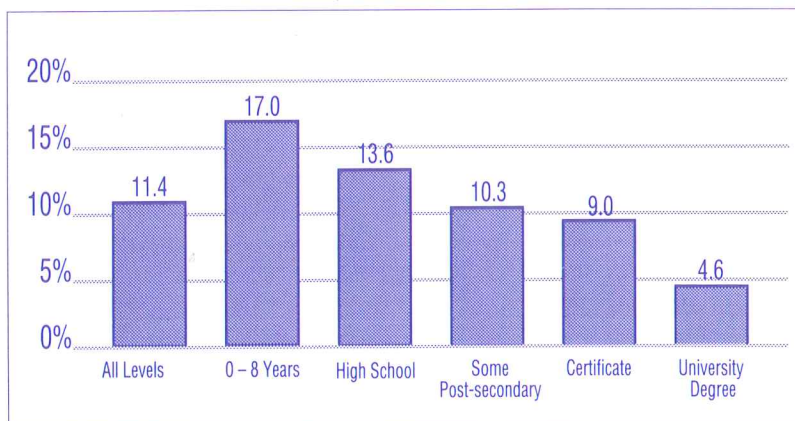
Open learning systems as well as more traditional modes of learning can provide increasing and better opportunities throughout our province to respond to the demand and need for more advanced education and job training.

Cost Implications

This study has made no attempt to provide a sophisticated cost-benefit analysis of improving accessibility and participation in advanced education and job training. Such an analysis would require very extensive professional resources. Previous analyses, however, done in Canada and elsewhere, suggest that additional investment in advanced education and job training will have high pay-off value in terms of future economic, social and cultural benefits. Conversely, low investment will result in increasing social costs, both financial and human, resulting from increased unemployment, social assistance and lost economic opportunity. The relationship between levels of education and unemployment, as depicted below, is particularly telling.

Unemployment rates by level of education, January 1988

Statistics Canada

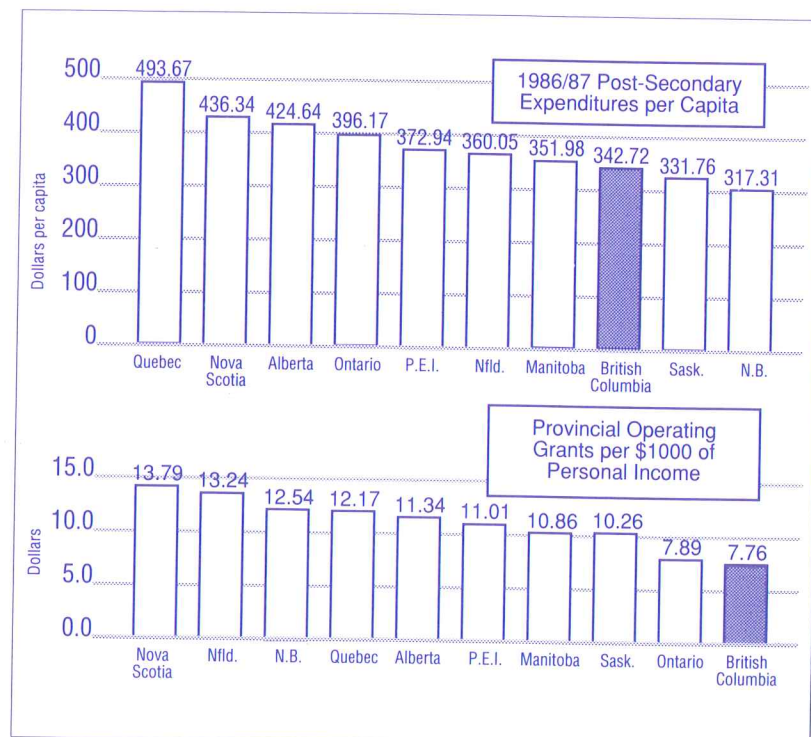


While it would be unrealistic to expect that raising levels of education for all citizens would eradicate unemployment, it seems clear that countries with a well-educated labour force will have a competitive edge in the emerging world economy, resulting in lower levels of unemployment than in countries with a poorly educated labour force. That is not to say, of course, that lowering levels of unemployment is the only, or even the most important, objective in raising levels of education.

As a substitute for, and in some ways an improvement upon, a sophisticated but inevitably hazardous statistical and scholarly analysis of cost-benefit, it is suggested that a comparison of expenditures on advanced education and job training across Canada would tap into a measure of collective wisdom in these matters. Accordingly, the following graphs are provided for the sake of contextual perspective.

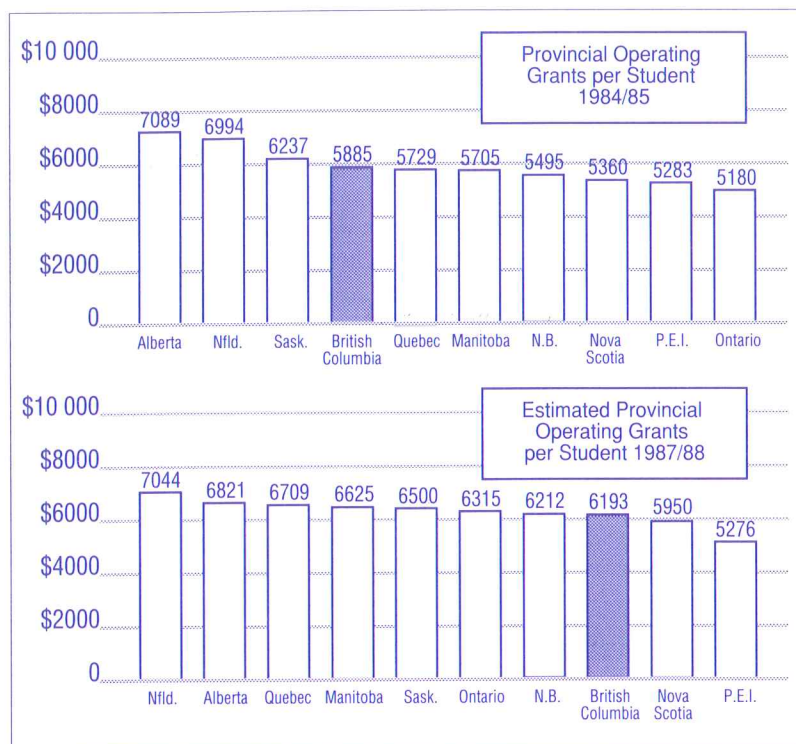
Comparison of expenditures

Statistics Canada, Tripartite Committee on inter-provincial comparisons



Inter-provincial comparisons of university financing, 1984/85 and 1987/88

Tripartite Committee on inter-
provincial comparisons, Council of
Ontario universities



It should be noted, when interpreting the above graphs, that advanced education right across Canada has suffered in recent years from stringent financial restraint. A recent publication of the Science Council of Canada, for example, (April, 1988) states:

"In Canada, as in many other countries, enrolments have grown much faster than funding for higher education. Between 1970 and 1983, enrollment rose 62.2 percent while real public expenditures increased only 3.9 percent. The consequences are readily apparent in dilapidated buildings, obsolete equipment, and overcrowded lecture rooms. The spirit of scholarship may be alive but quality and excellence are in peril."

In British Columbia, larger classes, increased teaching and administrative workloads, decreased student services, reduced facility maintenance and other effects of reduced capital and operating expenditures over several years have taken a real, if difficult-to-measure, toll which has put the quality of our advanced education and job training system at risk.

III. A BRIEF DEMOGRAPHIC NOTE

British Columbia is larger in area than the three western states of the U.S.A. and half of Idaho, with 60 percent of its population of 3 million concentrated in the Lower Mainland and south Vancouver Island areas, and the remaining 40 percent distributed unevenly throughout the rest of the province. Total population is projected to grow slowly, with the Lower Fraser Valley projected to grow more rapidly than any other area. Grade 12 population will decline for three or four years before beginning a gradual climb in 1992 or 1993, with interior cities projecting very little growth to the year 1997. However, projections of population over age 24--many of whom will need access to advanced education and job training-- show significant increases in the years ahead.

IV. THE CHALLENGE

There is a strong demand and genuine need for increased accessibility to advanced education and job training throughout British Columbia to maintain and enhance the social, cultural, and economic well-being of our province. There is a need to ensure that this demand is met in such a way that there will be greater equity of access for all citizens wherever they may live. There is a need to enhance the quality of advanced education and job training in all its forms and modes of delivery.

The committee recognizes and applauds the efforts of the past to develop the excellent system of advanced education we presently have. The foundations of that system have been soundly laid and built upon for several decades. With the resources available to it, the system is performing well. Financial difficulties over the last few years, however, have brought a pause in development, while behind the walls of restraint pressures have been mounting. The time appears right to begin to release these pressures in constructive ways for the next major development of the system.

Meeting the needs of advanced education and job training over the next decade will require substantial additional public investment, but failure to so invest will result in high

social cost and lost economic opportunity. The Committee recognizes that public resources must be shepherded carefully, and that other strong demands on the public purse are compelling. Increased accessibility to advanced education and job training is, however, a social imperative. It is in this spirit that the recommendations for action which follow are presented.

V. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The recommendations which follow are rooted in the context presented in the previous section of this report, but are also influenced by the following principles developed and advocated by the Provincial Access Committee. These principles are designed as a cohesive set of guides to action for greater equity of access and increased levels of participation within a quality system of advanced education and job training.

Principle No. 1

Advanced education programs and services, from literacy education and non-formal personal enrichment courses through diploma and degree programs to post-graduate study, should be accessible within a reasonable time of making application, in some reasonable form, and at reasonable cost, for all who demonstrate the necessary competence, motivation and maturity to benefit from further education.

Principle No. 2

Measures to overcome geographic barriers to access should be planned to achieve greater equity of access for people of all regions of the province.

Principle No. 3

With respect to program accessibility, the advanced education and job training system should constantly strive, fully utilizing information programs, to achieve a balance between satisfying student aspirations and meeting anticipated economic, social and cultural needs.

Principle No. 4

Similar courses and programs throughout the advanced education and job training system, while necessarily varying to some degree from region to region, should be designed to facilitate credit transfer from one institution to another.

Principle No. 5

Insofar as some groups are under-represented in the whole of, or in certain sectors of, advanced education and job training, deliberate strategies aimed at increasing the participation of such groups, at all levels of education, should be implemented.

Principle No. 6

Effective entry and placement assessment, and comprehensive student support services, should be an integral part of the advanced education and job training system.

VI. PRIORITY CONCERNS

The Regional Access Committees and the Provincial Access Committee have identified many concerns relating to access, transition rates from secondary school into advanced education and job training institutions, retention and completion rates, and transition from education to work. There is agreement, however, that the following five broad areas of concern are the most important:

- 1. Institutional capacity and program quality;**
- 2. Literacy and Adult Basic Education;**
- 3. University degree programs outside the Lower Mainland and south Vancouver Island areas;**
- 4. Under-represented groups;**
- 5. Admissions, Transfer, and Articulation.**

1. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND PROGRAM QUALITY

Although British Columbia's post-secondary educational institutions are striving to provide a quality delivery system, there is growing concern that the system is overloaded. In some programs, in some institutions (notably in the Lower Mainland) there are two and three year waiting lists. Universities are capping enrollments and quotas are being placed on the number of transfer students accepted from colleges. This overloading of the current system has resulted in less emphasis being placed on serving adult groups who are under-represented in British Columbia's post-secondary system.

Enrollment pressures have resulted in increased workloads for teachers, counsellors and administrators, with apparent reduction in quality of instruction and support services. Maintenance of facilities and equipment has gradually declined over the past few years.

Although there will continue to be a general decline in the Grade 12 population to 1992 or 1993, following this year's temporary increase, that decline will not be experienced in all areas. In the lower Fraser Valley, for example, with the continued burgeoning of the general population, an increase is expected. Furthermore, transition rates from secondary school are rising, and will rise even more as measures to increase participation are implemented. In addition, older learners will continue to return in significant numbers for further education. The pressure for 'seats', or 'places', in programs of many kinds will continue to grow.

The Regional Committees recommend, and the Provincial Committee endorses the view, that maintaining and improving the quality of program offerings in all our institutions must remain a high priority as measures to improve accessibility and participation are implemented.

Recommendations

It is recommended that government, through multi-year commitment to operating and capital grants, provide predictable funds to allow institutions to maintain quality of programs and upgrade space and equipment.

It is recommended that institutions be encouraged to achieve optimum space and equipment utilization through flexible scheduling of instruction.

It is recommended that the advanced education and job training system give priority to the use of open learning systems¹ to increase accessibility to educational opportunities.

¹The term "open learning" is used to imply a system-based approach to the provision of educational opportunities in which learners can:

- study at the time, place and pace of their choosing using a variety of instructional methods ranging from face-to face to learning on their own through independent study;

- progress through levels of education by building on the skills and knowledge already acquired;

- access instructional resources from the various "providers" of education in the system to achieve particular educational ends;

- readily access information and advice regarding options and opportunities relevant to their educational goals.

Thus the term "open learning" implies much more than just a "distance education" delivery model which uses carefully designed instructional materials to facilitate independent study - even though "distance education" delivery methods are essential to the achievement of an "open learning" system.

2. LITERACY AND ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

A common concern of all regions is the high rate of adult illiteracy. Approximately one in five adults in our province is functionally illiterate, (more exactly, 17% of the adult population, excluding Native Indians and the prison population, according to the latest statistics). Although statistics for other provinces show an even higher rate, there is no cause for complacency in our province, rapidly moving as it is away from a labour-intensive and towards an information-intensive society. In January of this year, a Labour Force Survey by Statistics Canada showed a 17 percent unemployment rate for functional illiterates (i.e., those adults with less than a Grade 9 education).

The Provincial Access Committee is appreciative of a recent Ministry of Education decision to extend free education at public schools, to the Grade 12 level, to citizens over 19 years of age. Nevertheless, from input provided by regional access committees and by other sources, the Provincial Committee is aware that regional colleges provide, for adults, much more suitable environments than schools for a return to study.

The Provincial Access Committee supports the principle that adults as well as students of school age should not have to bear the cost of fees, books, and required supplies up to the completion of Grade 12.

Recommendations

It is recommended that colleges be provided, beginning in fiscal 1989, with supplementary funding to enable them to assume the direct educational costs (fees, books and required supplies) of students taking literacy and adult basic education courses.

It is recommended that, in preparation for the International Year of Literacy in 1990, a provincial advisory committee be established to advise government on, among other issues, means of informing illiterate adults of available educational opportunities.

3. UNIVERSITY DEGREE PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE LOWER MAINLAND AND SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND

There is a clear and growing demand from areas outside the Lower Mainland and south Vancouver Island, especially from the interior of the province, for better access to university degree programs. There is a demand from all college regions for strengthened and predictable first and second year academic programs transferable for credit to one of the three coastal universities or for credit banking with the Open Learning Agency. Too often in the past students planning a two-year transfer program have been disappointed when anticipated second year courses have been dropped because of low enrollment.

Recommendation

It is recommended that, through a combination of different methods of delivery, a core program of second year courses be provided in each college.

Beyond the call for strengthened first and second year university courses in all colleges is the demand for upper level courses and programs leading to baccalaureate degrees. Suggested ways of meeting this demand, however, vary from region to region.

In sparsely populated regions, the demand is for both extended open learning opportunities (so that older students who have job and family responsibilities can learn at home) and for improved student financial assistance (so that younger students can attend institutions away from home).

The demand from Region 3 (Thompson/Okanagan) is for locally-available degree programs. There are two aspects to this demand: on the one hand, it is demand for better and less expensive access for that region's young people; on the other hand, it is demand for programs to meet the on-going educational needs of adults, including health, business and other professionals who are permanent residents in the area. This region has the highest population density in the province outside the Lower Mainland/south Vancouver Island area and the highest number of high school graduates in the province outside the Greater Vancouver/Greater Victoria school districts.

In contrast to the demand from Region 3 is the demand from the north, from Prince George and its extensive environs. There the demand springs as much from broad economic, social, and cultural considerations as it does from consideration of lower cost educational opportunities and convenience for its young adults. People from the northern part of British Columbia's interior perceive a need for an institution of higher learning peculiarly suited to the economic, social, and cultural conditions of that region. These conditions include a severe winter climate, a high turnover rate of professionals and paraprofessionals, and remoteness from universities on the lower coast. An institution of higher learning, carefully tailored to meet northern development needs and conditions of life, is envisaged by many in the north as an essential component for further growth, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The northern demand for university degree programs is, therefore, fundamentally different from the demand of other regions.

Recommendations

It is recommended that in sparsely populated college regions, university degree programs be expanded by means of the Open University or by co-operative arrangements between the college, universities and the Open Learning Agency.

In these regions, the colleges would act as educational brokers, arranging available instructional resources to best meet identified needs for upper level university courses and specific degree programs.

It is recommended that in more densely populated college regions outside the Lower Mainland and south Vancouver Island (for example, Okanagan and Cariboo College regions), university degree programs be expanded by means of the establishment of an upper-level "university college"² component.

² Readers who may be familiar with university colleges in other jurisdictions should beware of confusing those institutions with what is proposed and recommended here. Quotation marks have been put around the term "university college" to alert readers to the danger of such confusion.

This component would be an organizational entity within each college, providing arrangements for upper level university courses involving one or more of the three public universities and the Open Learning Agency. The component would have a geographical definition within the college setting--for administration, student services, and a student organization. Degrees would be granted by the university responsible for most of the instruction, or by the Open Learning Agency.

The component would be a co-operative venture involving the college and the universities, and would not be an outpost of a single university. The appropriate university would set admission and graduation requirements, set and grade examinations, determine resources required, and select or approve participating faculty, for the programs for which it grants degrees. The college would take the lead in administrative functions, including assessing community need and interest, providing facilities, and developing, in conjunction with participating universities, a long-term plan and budget.

For such a "university college" component as outlined above to succeed, sufficient funding, assured over several years, would need to be made available.

A "university college" component of a regional college, once established, could continue and expand as a "university college"; or it could develop into an autonomous university; or it could lead to a comprehensive degree-granting regional college.

Both Okanagan and Cariboo Colleges have already begun planning co-operative ventures with universities to offer degrees in their respective regions. They should now be encouraged to develop detailed plans and budgets with a view to establishing "university college" components as described above.

It is recommended that in the North, improved access to university degree programs be achieved through support for the evolution of current relationships between the colleges, the universities, and other agencies.

It is recommended that there be further exploration of the potential of a distinctive "University of the North".

With respect to this latter recommendation, the Provincial Access Committee has not been in a position to respond fully to the proposal for a unique "University of the North" being generated by the Interior University Society. The Committee has heard of the proposal only in the most general terms. The economic and social dimensions of the proposal indicate that it is beyond the mandate of the Committee to pass judgment on it. The Committee can say, however, that it has not been presented with justification for the establishment of a "University of the North" simply to meet the demand for upper level university courses. It is fully aware, however, that justification for a "University of the North" may rest on much broader grounds than the provision of upper level courses of degree programs.

4. UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

Significant groups currently under-represented in advanced education and job training include people in small remote communities in all parts of the province, Native Indians, and the disabled.

Services to these groups have improved considerably in recent years. Although much is being done now that was unheard of twenty years ago, reports from the regional committees and from other sources indicate that the needs are still far from being fully met. The Provincial Access Committee accepts the view that, in the conditions of modern society, it is unacceptable that significant groups should remain under-represented for long in higher learning activities, unless by free choice rather than by lack of opportunity.

(a) People in Small, Remote Communities

Reference has been made in previous sections of this report to new opportunities for people in remote areas through

open learning. The Committee fully recognizes that open learning entails much more than distance education, and that the services of some colleges (notably North Island College) and the Open Learning Agency bring benefits to all parts of the province, both rural and urban. Nevertheless, the Committee sees that the Agency, in conjunction with its partners in open learning, has a special potential for extending advanced education and job training opportunities to people in rural and remote areas, and that this potential is almost unlimited. Distance education technology and techniques are rapidly being improved; it remains to take full advantage of them.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the government strongly support the Open Learning Agency to carry out all aspects of the role given to it in legislation.

Further recommendations bearing on the needs of people in remote areas are listed in a later section of this report and in the regional reports.

(b) Native Indians

Meeting the advanced education and job training needs of Native Indian people is not an easy issue. There are many different opinions, not only amongst non-Indian people, but amongst Indian people themselves. Furthermore, the needs themselves vary from one part of the province to another.

Two general principles, however, appear to be fundamental. The first is that, more and more, Native Indian people must have the power themselves to make decisions affecting their education. This principle is well exemplified in a statement in the Indian Education Brokerage and Affiliation Report of March, 1988, prepared by the Fort Nelson Indian Band:

"Any attempt to provide education and training to Native individuals and communities should only be made with their active participation. It should also exhibit a sensitivity to and respect for culture and life-style, and to the greatest degree possible, be community-based and controlled."

The second general principle is that, for many Native Indian people, the life long need is to have the ability, and the choice, to move as they desire between their own culture and

the culture of what is presently seen as mainstream Canada. This principle bears very significantly on curriculum, curriculum materials, learning environments and teaching styles.

Rather than making a series of specific recommendations, the Provincial Access Committee feels it would be more advantageous at this time to make one general recommendation, and to make it strongly.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the provincial government take immediate steps, in consultation with Native Indian groups, universities and colleges, to develop and implement a detailed strategy to address the diverse advanced education and job training needs of Native Indians.

Some specific recommendations for meeting the educational needs of Native Indians are included in regional committee reports.

(c) The Disabled

The Committee commends the government for recent initiatives to support increased access to advanced education and job training for adults with disabilities of various kinds. At the same time it wishes to draw attention to the significantly greater costs to institutions to ensure equity of access for the disabled, and urges that these additional costs be acknowledged by government in its funding allocations. Specialized transportation and counselling services for disabled students were two specific areas of concern identified by access committees.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Ministry, in collaboration with other Ministries and agencies, ensure appropriate support services for disabled students enrolled in advanced education and job training programs.

(d) An additional note, regarding the prison population

Reference was made in the report of the access committee for Region 5 (Cariboo and Central Interior) to the apparent lack of a province-wide approach to providing access to advanced education and job training opportunities for prisoners in our provincial jails. Research indicates that inmates who further their education are less likely to return to jail. The Committee believes that the education of inmates in jails should be viewed as an important responsibility of government.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training consult with the Ministries of Education and the Solicitor General to review, in collaboration with universities, colleges, and institutes, the strategy for the funding and delivery of educational up-grading and job training in provincial jails.

5. ADMISSIONS, TRANSFER, AND ARTICULATION

One of the most important keys to the further growth in both quantity and quality of our system is co-operation between autonomous institutions. Bilateral and multilateral agreements between universities, colleges, institutes, the Open Learning Agency, Native Training institutes, school districts, industries and other private organizations are universally seen as the way to improve opportunities in the most efficient, cost-effective manner. Fortunately, the province has a history of such co-operation which, although not perfect, is nevertheless encouraging for the future. With respect to the transfer of course credit, the present system of articulation committees appears to be working reasonably well. The development of a credit bank at the Open Learning Agency will further assist in enabling course credit to be transferred from one institution to another. However, it is the Committee's view that some difficulties remain in some program areas, and that other difficulties may arise as the roles of institutions become more differentiated, as enrollment "caps" in some programs may become more prevalent, as associate degrees are introduced, and as other initiatives may be taken, such as the establishment of "university colleges" within some existing colleges.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a Co-ordinating Council on Admissions, Transfer, and Articulation, with representatives chosen from names submitted from within the system, be established to provide a mechanism for the resolution of difficulties which may arise from time to time with respect to admissions, course and program equivalency, degree requirements, and transfer of course credits.

VII. ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

Although the Provincial and Regional Access Committees identified major areas of concern, as recorded in Section VI of this report, the following recommendations are made relating to additional important areas of concern.

1. Program Offerings in the Lower Mainland

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Henderson Report (see Appendix A for an executive summary), supporting degree granting status through the Open Learning Agency for the Emily Carr College of Art and Design, be endorsed in principle by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, and that the Ministry refer the proposal to the Open Learning Agency for evaluation and action.

2. Program Offerings in Smaller Communities

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training provide the resources to permit colleges to establish more learning centres in smaller communities to facilitate the offering of a greater range of courses and programs, on a scheduled and predictable basis (utilizing open learning communication technologies as well as face-to-face instruction).

It is recommended that there be cyclic offerings of vocational and technical programs and courses in smaller and more remote communities, on a planned three to five year basis.

It is recommended that short term refresher and upgrading courses for industry be offered in small communities, utilizing mobile training facilities as appropriate.

3. Financial Barriers

Recommendations

It is recommended that the British Columbia Student Assistance Program be given more publicity.

It is recommended that Regional Access Committee recommendations regarding student financial assistance be forwarded to the Standing Committee on Student Financial Assistance for review and action.

4. Informational Barriers

Recommendations

It is recommended that ongoing counselling services be more readily available, especially in interior colleges where students have less access to community information and counselling services than students in larger centres.

It is recommended that the existence of quality educational opportunities through open learning systems be more effectively conveyed to all residents of British Columbia.

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education continue its efforts to make available more course options in small secondary schools, particularly in academic subjects, and particularly through the use of distance learning technologies in situations where course registrations are low.

It is recommended that Discovery Training Network terminal access points (TAPS) be set up in all secondary schools.

5. Retention, Completion and Transition to Work

Recommendations

It is recommended that legislation be changed to allow colleges to grant associate degrees.

It is recommended that British Columbia's educational institutions place a higher emphasis on guidance and student services so that students are given more specific direction with respect to prerequisites, entrance requirements, program expectations and transition to work.

It is recommended that educational institutions place increased emphasis on quality of teaching and the development of teaching skills.

It is recommended that colleges and institutes make provision for more sports, cultural and extra-curricular activities.

It is recommended that specific career-technical and vocational certificate programs be expanded where there are high employment needs.

It is recommended that more resources be made available for cooperative education programs (including trades training) and work-study components of programs, to assist in maintaining the currency of programs and to ease the transition from education to work.

6. Research Capability for Policy Making

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Ministry and institutions of advanced education and job training develop a common data base and continue to identify, undertake and monitor research projects on issues relating to accessibility.

7. Other Concerns

Recommendations

It is recommended that consideration be given to providing more on-campus student residences.

It is recommended that improved and more flexible day care facilities be made available.

VIII. USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

The Committee believes that the ability to enhance access to educational opportunities, as outlined in this report, will depend to a large extent on the use of telecommunication networks and other technologies. British Columbia has distinguished itself in pioneering the application of these technologies. However, interactive networks for student instruction, materials distribution, access to data bases and on-site job training, now commonly used in other jurisdictions, have only been demonstrated on a pilot basis here in British Columbia through the Knowledge Network and its system partners.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training collaborate with the Ministry of Regional Development (Communications Programs) to ensure that Knowledge Network programs are available to all British Columbia communities with populations of 50 or more.

It is recommended that, in order to facilitate the implementation of a number of recommendations of this report, the Open Learning Agency prepare a proposal to enhance significantly our current use of telecommunications technology through the development and expansion of interactive networks.

IX. CONCLUSION

British Columbia has a good system of advanced education and job training. Remarkable progress has been made over the past quarter century to build and develop a variety of institutions to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of our citizens. However, inequities remain, the system is overloaded, and needs are increasing. We cannot stand still, as, in a sense, we have stood still under restraint for the past few years. With renewed energy, we must get moving again; boldly, we must take the next step--toward greater accessibility.

The world continues to change rapidly around us. Scientific discoveries and technological changes are quickly reflected in changing patterns of industry, trade and commerce. Old problems are replaced by new problems, and the never-ending search for wisdom, for meaning, and for human fulfillment continues. The challenge to educational institutions is greater than ever before.

The Provincial Access Committee urges the government, therefore, to provide the resources to enable our system of advanced education and job training to continue to develop on the firm foundations laid for it in times past by far-sighted leaders. It is that system, better-funded, better coordinated and fairer for all, together with a revitalized K-12 school system, that will enable our province to prosper in the years ahead, and with a larger vision, to contribute to the development of a more peaceful world.

Appendix A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF AN ASSESSMENT OF A PROPOSAL BY THE EMILY CARR COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN TO GRANT DEGREES

Summarizes a Report Submitted to

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training
by Robert A. Henderson, Consultant, April 29, 1988

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review into an application by the Emily Carr College of Art and Design (ECCAD) to grant Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Design degrees investigated the economic implications of the proposal, its pedagogical validity and options for implementation.

The study compared similar art colleges and programs in North America and their requirements for degrees, and it considered Emily Carr's position in art education in British Columbia. Opinion and information was sought from informants in the universities and colleges and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training.

It was concluded that Emily Carr is a college with international standing, and that within the province the unique aspects of ECCAD's program include its emphasis on studio-based instruction, its distance education initiatives and its computer art and design program. With an appropriate addition of university classes the College would have a program that is different from, but comparable to, fine art degree programs within the province's universities and elsewhere.

It was further concluded that art degrees have economic significance in that they are prerequisites for a number of artistic professions, and that the educational requirements for a degree broaden the artist's understanding and ability to communicate. In particular, the province needs the capacity to graduate degree-level artists in the design fields.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the province support a proposal of the College to implement a degree program which would add a year of university study to the present diploma program.

The option of delivering an expanded arts and sciences program within the College itself is rejected for financial and pedagogic reasons. The practical alternative is to have degree candidates acquire necessary credits by attending university or through access to university extension programs.

Although no informants suggested that ECCAD should attempt to deliver general arts and science classes, there was some concern that studio-based and academic instruction should occur concurrently.

However, in reviewing degree programs in this province and elsewhere, it was concluded that fine art degree programs typically begin with a year of general studies and emphasize studio-based instruction in subsequent years. Senior classes are almost invariably in art history, which is what ECCAD proposes.

It is also recommended that the ECCAD art history program be strengthened through hiring of another full-time instructor and by augmenting the holdings of the College library.

The hiring of an instructor in art history and the hiring of a half-time student counselor for off-campus students are the only staffing decisions that the College is requesting to implement a degree program. They believe that their present staff has appropriate qualifications for a degree program and the implementation of their proposal would not result in staff dislocation.

The per annum costs of the extra staff positions would be \$75,000. The College's estimate for augmenting library resources would be a one-time grant of \$100,000.

The major cost implication of this proposal would be the extra year of university study required of degree applicants. Because significant but unknown numbers of ECCAD students already engage in university study, and the number of students who would exercise a degree option are

unknown, it is not possible to estimate accurately the costs of these extra studies.

The issue of giving ECCAD and other colleges in the province the autonomous authority to grant degrees is problematic.

Pending the development of an institutional mechanism that has the authority to accredit institutions and degree programs, resolve inter-institutional articulation issues and prioritize program needs, it is recommended that the ECCAD degree be issued through the Open University.

This implementation option also precludes the necessity to change and introduce new legislation and avoids a number of unresolved policy issues.

It is believed that, while the Open University is generally seen as primarily facilitating distance education, a role of facilitating the delivery of degrees through small or limited program institutions may be its greatest potential contribution.

ECCAD already has a beneficial relationship with the Open University with its extension programs.

It is also recommended that ECCAD pursue affiliate agreements with the universities to ensure that its degree stream students have access to university programs. Because the College and the universities each have programs that the other needs, it may be possible to have quid pro quo agreements to guarantee mutual access.

Appendix B

SUBMISSIONS TO THE PROVINCIAL ACCESS COMMITTEE

1. Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia.
2. British Columbia Association of Colleges.
3. Canadian Federation of Students, Pacific Region.
4. British Columbians for Mentally Handicapped People.
5. Society of Vocational Instructors of British Columbia.
6. Canadian Paraplegic Association, British Columbia Division.
7. British Columbia and Yukon Hotel's Association.
8. School District No. 89 (Shuswap).
9. The Association of Learning Disabled Adults.
10. Association of British Columbia Drama Educators.
11. Dr. W.A.S. Smith, Consultant, Paper relating to "University College" concept.
12. Mr. Robert A. Henderson, Consultant, Report on Emily Carr College of Art and Design.
13. Dr. Lou Dryden, Director, Student Services, Camosun College, Victoria, B.C. Presentation on "Systems for Success".
14. Mr. J. David T. Price, Editor, North Island College News and Views.viii