



AURORA COLLEGE TRANSFORMATION ACADEMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

June 2019

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Purpose

As part of the *Government Response to the Findings and Recommendations of the Aurora College Foundational Review (2018)*, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) committed to transforming Aurora College into a polytechnic university.

Establishing a polytechnic university that is based in the Northwest Territories (NWT) is anticipated to increase opportunities for the expansion of post-secondary education and research in the north. Such opportunities include the potential for increased collaboration with post-secondary institutions from across Canada.

As part of Aurora College's transformation to a polytechnic university, academic programming, research supports and human resources at Aurora College will be adapted to fit the new institutional model. As such, the transformation process is anticipated to require changes that will present new and wide-ranging challenges.

To respond effectively to opportunities and challenges that will emerge throughout the transformation, a further commitment was made by the GNWT to establish an Aurora College Transformation Academic Advisory Council (ACT-AAC) that will draw on the experience of institutions across Canada to advise the Associate Deputy Minister of Post-Secondary Education (Associate DM) during the transformation to a polytechnic university.

Functions and Roles

The Associate DM will Chair the ACT-AAC.

The ACT-AAC will:

- 1) Make recommendations regarding the institutional design of the polytechnic university;
- 2) Make recommendations regarding academic programming and academic support services of the polytechnic university;
- 3) Provide insight into how to remain responsive to labour market needs that will ultimately translate into program needs of the polytechnic university (including the creation, improvement or elimination of programs);
- 4) Provide guidance on the establishment and growth of research-informed academic programming under a polytechnic university model;
- 5) Advise on the transferability of academic programming and the mobility of students between the polytechnic university and other post-secondary institutions; and
- 6) Identify opportunities for increased collaboration between the polytechnic university and other post-secondary education institutions.

Institutional Membership

Institutional Membership on the ACT-AAC shall be approved by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

Membership on the ACT-AAC is an institutional relationship and will be initiated by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Aurora College and each Member Institution. Each MoU will recognize the strategic support provided by the Member Institution and may be amended to facilitate different types of institutional engagements over the course of the College's transformation to a polytechnic university.

ACT-AAC Member Institutions will be sought based on their:

- Reputation as a leading academic institution;
- Understanding of vocational and degree programming under a college, university or polytechnic model;
- Experience in the transformation from a college to degree-granting institution; and/or
- Experience administering educational and research programs in the North.

Each Member Institution's representative on the ACT-AAC shall be the Vice President, Academic or a position with a similar rank and scope of responsibility. Depending on the topic being discussed, additional senior faculty and staff with the relevant expertise may join the Vice President, Academic at a meeting of the ACT-AAC.

Aurora College's Vice President, Education and Training; Vice President, Rural and Extension Studies; Vice President, Student Services; Vice President Research and the GNWT's Executive Director, Aurora College Transformation shall be Ex-Officio Members of the ACT-AAC.

Term

The ACT-AAC will remain in place throughout the transformation period, the conclusion of which will be determined during preliminary planning for the transformation.

Membership on the ACT-AAC is voluntary and a Member Institution may choose to withdraw from the MoU at any time. However, the expectation is that the Vice President, Academic for each Member Institution will participate on the ACT-AAC for a period of 3 years with the possibility of renewal.

Meetings

As Chair, the Associate DM will schedule ACT-AAC meetings and Aurora College staff will provide administrative support to the ACT-AAC.

Meeting minutes will be recorded and shared in confidence with Member Institutions to ensure accuracy. However, meeting minutes will not be made public.

The ACT-AAC will have meetings via teleconference three times per year and meetings will be 3-4 hours in duration. The need for additional teleconference meetings will be determined by the ACT-AAC.

It is anticipated that ACT-AAC will hold additional in-person forums in the Northwest Territories twice over the course of the transformation.

Quorum

Representation from five Member Institutions will constitute quorum.

Decision-Making Process

The ACT-AAC will seek the appropriate level of consensus when developing recommendations. Recommendations will move forward when the Chair determines that the ACT-AAC has reached consensus level 3 or higher as outlined below.

Level 5: Aligned – emotionally and intellectually (knows the decision is the right thing to do and likes the decision).

Level 4: Aligned – intellectually (knows the decision is the right thing to do, but may not like it; actively supports the group moving forward).

Level 3: Aligned – complying (knows the decision is supported by most of the group, is in the best interest of the group, supports most aspects of the decision, and will actively support the decision as the group moves forward).

Level 2: Not aligned – concerned (has concerns of many aspects of the decision and cannot support the group moving forward).

Level 1: Not aligned – resigned (totally against the decision).

In the event that a reasonable level of consensus cannot be reached the Chair may propose that two or more recommended options be put forward.

Public Communications

Member Institutions may, at their own discretion, communicate to the public that they are a member of the ACT-ACC including the ATC-AAC's purpose. All other public communications regarding the transformation of Aurora College, including the contributions of the ATC-AAC, must be approved by the Associate DM.

Aurora College will create a list and descriptions of Member Institutions that will be shared in public communications. However, Aurora College will work with each Member Institution to ensure such communications comply with their own visual identity and communication guidelines.

Final recommendations made by ACT-AAC may be made public at the discretion of the Associate DM.

Aurora College will produce regular updates on the transformation and contributions of the ATC-AAC that may be shared publicly by Member Institutions.