

The fixed link from Holland College to UPEI

By: Todd MacLean

Recently, a decision was made that considers credits from Holland College and credits from UPEI to be one in the same.

At a Senate meeting on October 10th, a motion was passed stating that UPEI will now accept transfer credits from colleges, thus finally commencing the destruction of the stone wall that once separated community colleges from universities.

"It was done mainly out of common sense," said John Crossely, VP Academic, and one who is very much in favour of the issue. "The previous policy only allowed the transferring of credits from university to university. But when we realized the benefits that could come about from the [transferring college credits] policy, and the fact that we were out of sync with other provinces on this issue, we decided to bring it in."

The policy also originated because it was brought to the attention of administrators that several accounting courses from Holland College and UPEI had almost identical course curriculums, and therefore it only seemed logical that they should equal each other in terms of academic credit.

"If a student takes a college course with the same credentials as the university course, then they should obviously be able to transfer the credits--it shouldn't matter what institution it comes from," said Wendy Venema, member of Senate. "But not every course will be accepted. It must meet with university [levels], and be approved by the registrar's office before given credit."

Another benefit, besides the new opportunities that college students now have, is the economic result of the new policy.

"If we could bring in at least 20 students per year through this program, then that would mean upwards of tens

of thousands of dollars to the university," predicted Crossely.

However, despite these convincing statements in favour of the college transfer credits issue, these same points are also being used to argue against the issue; specifically the freedom of college level students to enter university, and the economic, rather than academic benefits of the program.

"I just question whether [college] students will be qualified to study courses at a university level," said Janice Broderick, student council president, and one who is in strong opposition to this newly formed policy. "I feel that they might even be short changing present UPEI students because of this."

Crossely does in fact recognize this difficulty in adjusting that incoming college students might have as being one of the more fundamental problems of allowing them to transfer directly into university.

"Many students from the college programs are probably not going to be 'hitting the ground and running,'" said Crossely. "Colleges do not emphasize a self directed or antonymous type of work. Here, it's a very self-motivated type of atmosphere. Because of their presence we may have to integrate such things as skills training into the courses, whereas we haven't before."

Crossely also continued to say that people invest in a college for a different type of reason: to train a labour force for a short period of time. Hence, universities and colleges essentially teach for fundamentally different types of purposes.

"What threatens the integrity of the university is short term labour market preparation," explained Crossely. "This is not what university courses are origi-

nally designed to do."

Another problem of the future that Broderick mentioned was the abstract possibility of a unification of the two institutions in the future.

"It's not just the fact that we now accept mere credits from colleges, but that we may amalgamate in the future," stated Broderick. "This could definitely be the first step towards something like that."

In response to this, Crossely replied, "I can't imagine what things will look like

in 25 to 30 years here. But I also can't imagine why anyone would want to bring two fundamentally different types of institutions together."

However, Crossely also went on to explain about certain "articulated programs" that may come into effect sometime soon, which would feature a path through education that could be easier than the full 4 year university degree. This would mean, for example, getting a 4 year business degree by taking 2 years

of courses at both Holland College and UPEI. But this also means, strangely enough, and obvious step towards educational union between the two institutions.

In essence, the allowance of transfer credits between community colleges and UPEI will mean more students, and greater financial benefit. However, this financial gain may not be adequate compensation for ultimate academic deterioration.



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