# Report of the

# EXTERNAL AUDIT TEAM

## to the

# UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE CARIBOO

**February, 1995**

Advanced Education Council
of British Columbia

Vancouver, B.C.

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# INTRODUCTION

The University College of the Cariboo is a highly valued community resource, respected by its community and its students, and faced with the challenge of evolving into a unique institution without losing its sense of the past. The challenges are many. The need for clear thinking and reflection on many important issues is obvious. Internal stress and perplexity is to be expected in this time of change. Sensitive leadership will assist in this process of metamorphosis. Communicating with all stakeholders in the most inclusive manner is essential.

A new mission and goals statement, developed in a consultative manner, with an emphasis on clarity and ownership, is most necessary. A thorough analysis of procedures for internal communication is essential so that the vision that is developed is representative of the widest possible constituency and is felt to be owned by that constituency. The Institutional Review Committee's Self Study Report is a start. The External Audit Team offers its comments on the study in a spirit of constructive criticism and thanks the University College of the Cariboo for its hospitality during our visit.

The External Audit Team's role in the institutional evaluation process is to furnish an appraisal of the evaluation process used by the institution. It also provides external verification that the major institutional issues identified by the Self study are valid, appropriate, accurately stated and adequately examined, and that an action plan is being formulated to address the Study's findings and recommendations.

The Team met with approximately 194 students, staff, faculty, administrators, advisory committee representatives and community members in a number of sites during its three and one-half days at the University College of the Cariboo. Team members also reviewed a large number of relevant documents before and during their visit to the University College of the Cariboo. Responses to Team questions were well prepared and highly reflective.

Special thanks are conveyed from Team members to Alastair Watt and Liv Andrew for their timely logistical support.

# MEMBERS OF THE EXTERNAL AUDIT TEAM

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University College of the Fraser Valley

# THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

The process of institutional review at the University College of the Cariboo differed considerably from the traditional self-study process utilized in the B.C. post-secondary system. As the process was different, it was necessary for the External Audit Team to focus at length on methodology adopted to perform the review and its component parts. The External Team felt it was critical that the new process based on the Proposed Accountability Framework for the B.C. Public System be examined with respect to its viability as a tool in institutional evaluation.

A critical part of the external audit process in validating the recommendations captured in the University College of the Cariboo's Institutional Self Study Review was the review by the Team of the suitability of the Accountability Framework for institutional evaluation. This assessment centred around three questions. The Team spent considerable time on each of these questions, and answers to them were sought by Team members in each individual interview and, where appropriate, each group interview.

**Question Number 1:** *Are the seven questions outlined in the Accountability Framework appropriate and sufficiently comprehensive to meet the needs of UCC's self-study process?*

## FINDINGS

Based on the review by the Team, it was found that the seven questions would have formed an adequate foundation for the UCC institutional review with the addition of a question dealing with organizational climate and human relations. The seven questions allowed for both objective and subjective responses from the university college community. The Team focused on the balance between objective and subjective elements in the seven questions and the opportunity for both qualitative and quantitative responses.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team concurs with the findings of the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) paragraph 6, page 43, and recommends

> **that if UCC uses the <u>Accountability Framework</u> in the future, a question focusing on organizational climate and human relations be included.**

The Team found that the questions are oriented to objective/quantitative responses; and that the human dimension which is evident throughout the study and captured in Chapter 6 of the External Audit Team's Report, could have been more fully addressed. Therefore, the Team recommends

> **that there be further study on the issues identified in Chapter 6 including**
> - **staff/faculty/administration/student relationships**
> - **hiring practices**
> - **gender equity issues**
> - **professional ethics and conduct**
> - **governance**
> - **decision-making structures and processes**

*Question Number 2:*      *Did the method of selection and/or the individuals selected to sit on the UCC Institutional Review Committee affect the study outcomes; and, if so, how?*

## FINDINGS

In exploring this question with members of the UCC community, a very positive response was received for the inclusion of external members on the Review Committee. The Team spent considerable time exploring whether, with such a limited number of internal representatives, the goal of self-study could be achieved. The Team also examined the question of perceived relevance of the recommendations to the UCC community that emerged from the review.

The Team found:

(a)     that the selection process (particularly the appointment of all external members by the President and Board Chair) and the make-up of the Institutional Review Committee had an effect on the study outcomes. A number of people interviewed had serious concerns that the selection procedure and composition predetermined the outcomes of the review.

(b)     that the Accountability Framework's requirement (page 50) that the President "... provide, and be seen to provide, personal leadership and control of the process" exposed the President to a perception that the process and outcomes of the review could be unduly influenced.

This perception was apparent among interviewees, and the Team feels it may have to some extent undermined the validity of the IRC Report for some members of the College community. In the light of this, colleges intending to use the Framework for their own Self Study would be well advised to review closely whether they wish to follow the requirement for such Presidential involvement.

(c)     that the purpose and design of an institutional Self Study and an externally designed and directed institutional review differ.  It appeared to the Team that the Accountability Framework was perhaps not a "best fit" format for an internal self-study, as it appears to have been primarily designed to facilitate a review of the institution, guided and directed by the CEO, to be presented to the Board and other external bodies.

This model fits uneasily into the established understanding within the B.C. post-secondary system that an internal self-study is a highly involving process, developed and directed by all members and constituents of the institution and community, conducted in a spirit of self-examination in which all members of the College community feel ownership and identification with the results. The model could be adapted to the self-study process with further development (See recommendations below).

The Team noted that despite efforts to communicate to the UCC community the nature and scope of this review process, interviewees generally reported a lack of awareness, appreciation and understanding of it.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team recommends that should UCC use the <u>Accountability Framework</u> in the future,

> **that a better balance be found between internal and external representatives on the Review Committee**

> **that a sub-committee structure be utilized to facilitate an increased sense of inclusiveness in the college community**

> **that preparatory communications to the college community are such that it is clear to everyone that this is a very different process from traditional self-studies**

> **that, to increase identification with the study outcomes, the rationale for using the different process be clearly identified and supported by the college community prior to beginning the process.**

> **that a major involvement in the process by the newly constituted (Bill 22) Education Council be considered.**

*Question Number 3:*    *Were the key factors identified to assist in answering the questions and the data derived from existing reports or new surveys appropriate?*

## FINDINGS

Team members closely reviewed in individual and group interviews the factors studied in each chapter of the Institutional Review Committee's Report. Responses to questions of completeness of the key factors are contained in the Team's review of the individual chapters. With the exception of the focus on organizational climate and human relations, most individuals reported that the factors identified were the appropriate ones to address the seven questions. Exceptions are noted in the review of the individual chapters by the External Audit Team in this Report.

## COMMENDATIONS

The External Audit Team applauds the commitments, energy, care, and diligence of the Institutional Review Committee. The efforts of the Review Committee to meet the demands of the process truly reflect the high regard for the University College of the Cariboo held by members of the community it serves.

# MISSION STATEMENT, PLAN, OBJECTIVES (Chapter One)

## INTRODUCTION

**Does the University College of the Cariboo have an adequate mission statement and a plan that clearly states its objectives, and are these clearly communicated to its community?**

In assessing the above question, the Institutional Review Committee referred to the Three Year Educational Plan (1991-94) & Update and the results of the three surveys commissioned by the committee. It was not apparent to the Team whether individual interviews with the stakeholders occurred.

## METHODOLOGY

The Team interviewed all levels of stakeholders, both internal and external, and analyzed the survey results. The interviewees were asked

> (1) Are you aware of the mission and values statements?
> (2) Are you familiar with the contents of these statements?
> (3) Do they fairly represent the objectives of UCC?
> (4) Are you aware of the recommendations of the Institutional Review Committee and do you concur?

## FINDINGS

The Institutional Review Committee Report states (page 1) that: "... a large number of Internal Survey respondents claimed to have never heard of or seen either mission statement or plan."

The Team finds this not supported by the survey data. From the Team's examination of the data, it appears that the Committee interpreted the response category "no opinion or can't answer" to mean "know nothing about". The relevant survey items ask the respondents' opinion of the clarity and adequacy of the mission statement, goals and plans. The survey data indicate that most respondents (roughly 70% of faculty, 85% of administrators and 45% of support staff) are aware of the mission and values, and rate their adequacy and clarity between "fair" and "good".

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The Team finds this represents a remarkable level of awareness for any institution, especially one which has been in a period of rapid growth.

The Team also finds that, upon interview, most respondents were aware of the mission and goals and knew where to find them, though they were not able to recite them.

The Team finds that, although most respondents thought the mission and values were adequate to date, they did agree that a re-development as per the Recommendations 1.i, 1.ii and 1.iii would be of value for setting future direction for UCC.

## COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team commends the Board for its timely response to the re-development of the mission and values statements. This process is currently underway and this process is widely acknowledged.

The Team also commends the Board for its efforts to include the external communities and students in the process, communities that were not involved last time.

However, the Team recognizes that a timely response may be at the expense of including all the identified communities. It is recognized that ensuring the involvement of **everyone** in the process is time consuming and exhaustive. However, if a mission and values statement is to be a directing influence in the operations of the institution, all those affected by it should be involved in its development. The exclusion of any group, either by design or default, will negatively affect the process and the acceptance of the outcomes, and could create the perception that this is being led by the Board.

The Team recommends

> **that the re-development of the mission and values statement be conducted by a process that ensures the inclusion of all internal and external communities. Regional meetings should be a part of the process, and process should be viewed as equally valuable as the outcomes.**

# SERVING THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY (Chapter Two)

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter addressed the question **"Does the University College of the Cariboo offer programs and other services that best meet the needs of its community?"** The Institutional Review Committee broke this question into three discrete components: community, programs and services.

## METHODOLOGY

Two Team members travelled to Merritt and to Williams Lake. Perspectives on the "programs and services" part of the chapter came from interviews with students, faculty, staff, administration, members of the College Board, Community and Program Advisory Committees and the Institutional Review Committee. Individual Team members read supporting documentation available to them, including program reviews, questionnaires, the Calendar, UCC Fact Book, etc.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A.    Linkages for Identifying Community Needs

The Team heard from several members of community and program advisory committees, as well as from UCC faculty and administrators who work with these committees. We found much evidence to support the statement on page 3 in the IRC Report that "the advisory committee structure is generally a very useful mechanism for community liaison" and that "some program advisory committees should become more active." Although we heard few specific comments on recommendations 2.a.i to 2.a.vii, what we did hear was supportive in nature, especially regarding 2.a.vii which deals with avoiding duplication of service to communities with the establishment of Community Skills Advisory Committees.

Therefore, the Team **concurs with Recommendations 2.a.i to 2.a.vii** and <u>commends</u> UCC for the number of its advisory committees, and the amount of activity in those committees. We felt this process was directly related to the high esteem in which UCC is held by community members.

## B.    Linkages with "Special" Communities

The Institutional Review Committee identified linkages with three "special" communities: Williams Lake, First Nations, and School Districts.  The Team saw evidence that these linkages were particularly important to the University College of the Cariboo, and **concurs with Recommendations 2.b.iv - 2.b.viii** regarding the nature of those linkages with school districts and First Nations peoples.

### B.1.    Williams Lake and other Regional Sites

However, we wondered whether the singling out of Williams Lake as a "special" community missed the larger issue, brought to our attention in many interviews, of UCC's linkages to all of its regional operations.

UCC's Mission Statement and Values Statement (Educational Plan 1991-94) are clear regarding its mandate to serve the communities in its region.  The Team found that UCC has a presence in many of its communities, ranging from a campus in Williams Lake to a small campus/learning centre in Merritt, to store-front operations, to offices in a co-ordinator's basement.  UCC has community advisory committees in a number of locations, as well as Board members who are selected from different parts of the College Region.

UCC, then, has numerous linkages with the communities in the geographical region it serves.  Nonetheless, the Team heard considerable frustration expressed by community members and UCC employees about the <u>nature</u> of those linkages.  Several themes emerged, some of which have been identified by the Institutional Review Report, and others of which have not:

-    community members outside Kamloops do not appear to have a strong sense of entitlement to service from UCC. They recognize that their communities are smaller than Kamloops, and that numbers appear to be important for course delivery.  They also feel they should not have unrealistic expectations, given the size of their communities.  Especially in the small centres, they are grateful for the UCC presence and feel consulted.

-    the Team also heard numerous expressions of satisfaction, in Williams Lake particularly, at the growth of service to communities over the last few years. We were made aware of some of the difficulties faced historically by UCC in implementing its regional mandate. The President was singled out for praise for his concern for regional programming.

-       on the other hand, frustrations centred around the geographically centralized decision-making structure of UCC, and the understanding that the locus of all decision-making was Kamloops.

-       people we talked to in Kamloops did not express high awareness of the existence of other campuses or sites, unless they were directly involved - e.g. through Extension Services.

-       as identified in the Institutional Review Report, the approval, authorization, communication and decision-making web faced by people in the regional sites is complex and slow. Most frustrating is the perception that Kamloops priorities often result in a 'no' answer to regional requests and proposals from the regional centres.

-       extensions of Kamloops credit programs are offered on regional sites. Proposals for unique, context-driven programs from the regional campuses are difficult to forward.

-       both at the Kamloops campus and at other centres, people expressed the fear that in a shrinking fiscal period services to regional sites would be negatively affected or cut.

-       fear was expressed in Kamloops that increased autonomy for regional sites would result in diverging programs with lower academic standards, due to loss of control by program administrators. Regional personnel felt that control of program standards was still manageable in a geographically decentralized administrative system; they valued their close connections to the Kamloops program areas and would like to see more site visits by program administrators.

The Team agrees that Recommendations 2.b.i to 2.b.iii regarding the linkage with Williams Lake are entirely appropriate. Given the feedback we received, we have the following suggestions to further the implementation of this recommendation and to extend it to be inclusive of other important linkages of UCC with its regional communities. The Team recommends

**that UCC extend Recommendations 2.b.i and 2.b.ii to include the development of, in partnership with the community of Williams Lake and the Williams Lake Campus, an action plan to address these recommendations. As a first step, there needs to be joint agreement as to what the terms "empowerment", "autonomy" and "flexibility" mean.**

that a similar process be followed for Merritt and other regional sites.

that UCC examine whether its commitment to regional programming, clearly outlined in the mission statement, is frustrated by its administrative and decision-making structure.

that UCC examine some ways in which it can enhance the sense of all UCC employees, on and off the Kamloops campus, of being part of a regional whole.

## COMMENDATIONS

The Team found very positive attitudes to UCC's growth and direction as an institution in the region, and a sense of pride in the Kamloops campus. We also heard many positive comments on and support for the availability of business-orientated programming, such as computer courses and supervision skills, through extension, and the perceived move away from "recreational" courses.

Given the scale of growth at the Kamloops campus, the sheer size of the need for services in that centre, it is not surprising that UCC has had to pay most attention to that campus. The fact that UCC continues to offer services to so many of its smaller communities is a testament to its commitment to its regional mandate.

### B.2.  First Nations

The Team found support for Recommendations 2.b.iv and 2.b.vi regarding UCC's linkages with First Nations Communities, and therefore **concurs with these recommendations**.

Not mentioned in the Report, but also brought to our attention, was the cooperative relationship which exists between UCC and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in Merritt.  In the light of this, and in the light of the provision, with cooperation of UCC, of post-secondary coursework in Williams Lake by UNBC, and in the light of recommendation 2.b.iv regarding responsiveness rather than pro-activity, we were a little puzzled by recommendation 2.b.vii.

Therefore, the Team recommends

**that before UCC implements Recommendation 2.b.vii, it examines all the implications of this recommendation.**

### B.3.   School Districts

The Team heard support expressed for Recommendation 2.b.viii, especially given the duplication of services that exist in several UCC communities.  The Team saw much evidence of the efforts UCC makes to have positive and on-going dialogues with high schools, and heard about various laddering and articulating projects.  We commend UCC for its leadership in this area of post-secondary education.


### C.    Adequacy of Programs

The Team **concurs with Recommendations 2.c.i and 2.c.iv**.  Having had the opportunity to view the scope and extent of program review at UCC, we commend UCC on this area of its activities.

We were struck by the statement (page 6) that "the Committee....was unable to say whether the program range was appropriate to the region served, or any better or worse than that at other institutions".  The question posed by this section of the report is "Does UCC offer programs and other services that best meet the needs of its community?"  This is a difficult question to answer owing to the number of variables outside the control of UCC (eg. priorities of the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour). However utilization rates and participation rates and institutional drawing power suggest the program mix is adequate to meet the needs of the community.  Given the complexity of the question, the Team recommends

**that UCC look for more comprehensive information to address this question directly.**

The Team did not record any disagreement with the content of section 2.c of the IRC Report.  The program review process is being conducted in a planned manner incorporating the process appropriate for program review. Improved communication of review outcomes with advisory committees would be desirable.  The Team **concurs with Recommendations 2.c.i through 2.c.iv.**

## D. Non-Instructional Services

### D.1. Surveys on Non-instructional Services

The Team commends UCC on the number and variety of survey instruments it has developed to examine its non-instructional services. There was a strong sense that survey results should be seriously considered and that actions should result from recommendations. The Team found evidence to support, and therefore it **concurs with, Recommendations 2.d.i and 2.d.ii.**

### D.2. Library Holdings

The Team found that most interviewees strongly concurred with Recommendation 2.d.iii "that UCC give top priority to enlarging its library holdings." We also heard praise for the quality of library service, and for the fundraising initiatives underway.

Missing from the Institutional Review were the strong opinions we heard expressed about the process by which holdings are enlarged, the need to tie new program proposals to the acquisitions process, and the need for increased staffing to support increased service. People also drew our attention to the relevance for the library of the statements in the Institutional Review Report (6.c.ii) regarding the need to spend operating, not capital, dollars on college operations.

### D.3. Facilities, Parking and Safety Concerns

The Team did not find concurrence among the interviewees with the statement in the preamble to Recommendation 2.d.iv of the Institutional Review Report that "the recommendations of the Task Force Report on Women's Safety at the University College... have in large part been implemented".  Many respondents indicated on-going concerns with the quality of lighting in the parking lots, for example, and with general campus security. While the Team found evidence that some improvements had already been made with regard to facilities, parking and safety-related issues, the Team recommends

> **that the Director, Facilities, and Manager, Occupational Health and Safety, revisit the recommendations of the Task Force and assess to what extent they still need to be met.**

## D.4.   Registration and Student Services

The Team was able to confirm that considerable evidence existed to validate Recommendations 2.d.v - 2.d.xii.  In particular we appreciate, in the light of the comments made to us, the Institutional Review Committee's recognition that, although improvements are needed within this area, they have to be balanced by a recognition of the difficulties and stresses that exist for people in Student Services. We also heard and saw evidence of the cramped quarters and equipment deficiencies identified in the IRC's Report.

Significant concern was expressed to us regarding suggestions made in the Report about the shifting and downloading of certain student support functions to other areas of the institution (eg. to the Student Society, instructional departments, Public Relations) for several reasons: the potential for such moves to further factionalize information sharing; the expertise required to provide advising, counselling, health and other student services; and the already existing workload in these areas.

The Team heard serious concern about the variety, complexity and severity of student needs and the ability of the university college to meet these needs.  There was evidence that suggested a link between student attrition rates and UCC's ability to provide timely student services. This evidence was gleaned from interviews with frontline staff who reported many student complaints which had a negative impact on the perception of the institution.  An example was timeliness and accuracy of information provided by instructional areas to student services.

It was also suggested to us that the Student Services and Registration areas may need some outside help or advice on how to "foster and develop a strong customer focussed attitude," if the awareness of that process did not already exist within these departments.

The Team recommends

> that Recommendations 2.d.v. through 2.d.xii. be given a high priority, a high priorty ranking and that an action plan be developed to address the concerns expressed about services, management and delivery in this area in consultation with all stakeholders.

## E. Evaluation of Non-Instructional Services

The Team found strong support among interviewees for Recommendations 2.e.i to 2.e.iii of the IRC Report regarding evaluation of non-instructional services. Given the number of recommendations for improvements in Section 2.d, we agree that non-instructional services at UCC be regularly reviewed; therefore the Team **concurs with Recommendations 2.e.i through 2.e.iii.**

# ATTRACTING AND RETAINING APPROPRIATE STUDENT NUMBERS AND MIX (Chapter Three)

## INTRODUCTION

The UCC Institutional Review Committee approached the analysis of marketing, retention, and student mix by dividing the review into two halves: "attract" and "keep", and then employing various criteria to respond to the general question:

> **"Does UCC attract and keep an appropriate number and mix of students?"**

The External Audit Team reviewed this section of the Institutional Review Committee's Report by following the same approach of breaking the question into two parts and then auditing the process and discoveries through interview and document assessment.

The Team notes that the information gathered through extensive interviews with faculty and students raised several questions about data, process, and analysis. Many interviewees thought that FTE data was overemphasized and that describing 111% utilization as a "good thing" was ambiguous as to point of view; that is, for whom was it a "good" thing? Some students felt that the questionnaires were not structured to address campus life in terms of relationships, respect, and values -- items they feel very strongly about but which are difficult to measure with survey instruments. Some students expressed concern that the process was never one that invited them to participate as valued members of the institution.

Several faculty and students remarked that they felt little "ownership" of the self-study because it was never made clear that their participation was a central and necessary component of the study. The "number crunching" feel of the study made it difficult for many to fully participate because it seemed alien to them as they do not think of themselves as FTE's, but as individual human beings with passion and intelligence.

# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## I. Attracting Students

This portion of the study concentrates on a number of components: marketing strategies, participation rates, drawing power, admissions policies, capacity to demand ratios and utilization rates.

## A.    UCC Marketing Strategies

Various materials were reviewed including brochures, videotapes, posters, newspaper columns, radio spots, and the UCC calendar.

Through their interviews, discussions, and review of the many materials presented for assessment, members of the Team were able to generally confirm the findings and conclusions of the Institutional Review Committee.  In particular the Team commends the Public Relations and Publications Department for its wide ranging marketing devices.

The Team **concurs with the IRC Recommendation 3.a.i**

> **that the Public Relations and Publications Department take steps to enhance faculty and staff awareness of their marketing strategy and activities.**

## B.    Participation Rates

The Institutional Review Committee concludes that UCC has a high regional participation rate when compared with other colleges in the system.  "Participation rates are measured by the number of full-time equivalent students attending an institution per thousand of that institution's region's population".

The Team reviewed the data presented and finds that such a process for comparison is a valid and valuable measure of market penetration suggestive of success in marketing the institution's programs and highlighting the institution within the community.

## C. Institutional Drawing Power

A review of data from the Point of Entry Survey confirms the IRC's findings which reflect that students' main reasons for attending UCC over other institutions include program range, instructional reputation, programs, opportunity for employment in several areas after completion, as well as the ability to remain at home while completing post-secondary education. Interviews with high school counsellors confirms that UCC is highly thought of by graduating students. Since the institution has become a university-college, some 42% of the students from Kamloops High are proceeding to post-secondary programs at UCC (source: high school study of students leaving in 1993). UCC is seen as "ours" by most high school students. The institution is also drawing students in many programs from right across the province.

## D. Admission Policies

Although there is a debate underway, initiated by the College Education Council, which focuses on admissions policies, the general impressions gained from the interviewees is that the previous "open door" policy seems to be in jeopardy. Interview information indicates that there is a range of opinion among faculty and students as to what sort of admission policy should be instituted. Some argue strongly for a continuation, wherever possible, of an open door policy, while others are interested in improving outcomes by imposing strict and enforceable entrance requirements.

The recent change of policy, which allows for mail-in applications has made the admissions procedure much more attractive to high school students.

The Team concurs with Recommendations 3.d.i and 3.d.ii

that UCC reassess its admissions policies at institutional rather than divisional/departmental level, and that in its deliberations UCC be sensitive to and consult the communities it serves.

The positive working relationship between high school counsellors and UCC's advisors is seen as a powerful recruiting tool for the UCC. The pre-registration sessions, the career days, the counsellors' conference - all of these are pointed to by high school personnel as useful and positive services received by them and their students.

The Team has no comment on **3.E. Applications and Turnaways** and **3.F. FTE Utilization Rates.**

## II.   Keeping Students

### G.     Retention Rates and Strategies

A large number of retention strategies were reviewed by the Team and confirmed to be collectively useful in retaining students.   Interviews with faculty and staff indicated that some other considerations might also be considered.  Pre-requisite checks were pointed to by several interviewees as a necessary first step to insuring that students were properly placed in academic courses.  Mandatory advising was also seen as a way of helping to insure that students were indeed in the classes they were prepared for and that were appropriate for their course of studies.

The Team concurs with Recommendation 3.g.i

> **that UCC press the Ministry of Labour, Skills, and Training for the establishment of system wide reporting on attrition and retention rates to provide for better management and analysis.**

Without such data it is impossible to make comparisons among institutions or to say what counts as a statistical norm.

The Team notes that excellence in teaching is also a strong motivating factor in retention of students, and although such excellence is difficult to measure in an objective fashion, it did emerge in interviews with students as a major factor in their decisions to complete their studies at UCC. This also is apparent in the student follow-up data.

The Team has no comment on **3.I Financial Support and Incentives for Students and 3.J Responsiveness to Student Mix.**

The Team notes the difficult task of determining proper mix of programs within a post-secondary institution. (See C., page 13)  To the extent that programs are a result of assessing and responding to community demands there is some possibility of measuring success by looking at FTE's and program retention numbers.  But since programs are driven also by social and political concerns which are manifest in funding allotments, it is a difficult responsibility to comment objectively on a complex concept such as "proper program mix."

# STUDENT OUTCOMES (Chapter Four)

## INTRODUCTION

The Institutional Review Committee approached the question, **"Do students achieve appropriate outcomes?"**, by reporting on both qualitative measures and quantitative measures as determined in a review of a host of performance indicators:

- graduation rates
- employment rates
- student satisfaction ratings
- transfer rates
- transfer articulation arrangements
- skill and knowledge acquisition ratings and,
- employer satisfaction ratings.

The Team <u>commends</u> the IRC for collecting and evaluating a vast amount of information. Verification of the data was attained by reviewing 1994 student follow-up survey data for thirty Career and Vocational programs and responses to the 1994 Academic Former Student Follow-up Survey. The 1993 Arts and Science and Occupational Student Outcomes Surveys were also studied. These instruments provided verification for the findings of the Institutional Review Committee.

Data from the 1993 Arts and Sciences Former Student Survey suggest that there is a lack of interesting things to do on campus, but the information was gathered before the Campus Activity Centre was opened. Financial aid seems to be an oft-reported limiting factor for students.

The IRC findings indicate that student satisfaction ratings suggest that there are some areas of the institution which need to be addressed. These include parking, safety on campus, Student Services, course variety, and library holdings. The Team verified as much as possible through interviews with students, staff, and faculty that indeed these are the sources of dissatisfaction which came up as a repeating theme. The library is seen as needing additional materials. The Student Services area is seen as needing an overhaul. Additional resources are needed in advising.

Data indicates that students are satisfied with the instruction they are receiving and are reporting that there are a large number of activities for them on campus including a rich array of lectures, special events, and theatre performances. Most of the students' dissatisfaction seems to arise from the Student Services as evidenced in many interviews. The recommendation in Chapter Two of this report for a review of those services is reiterated here.

The data reviewed by the Institutional Review Committee in the areas of Graduation Rates, Transfer Rates, Articulation, Employer Satisfaction, and other follow-up studies was deemed adequate, relevant and sufficient, and the conclusions reached appear to be supported.

There is a rich array of information indicating that students are getting what they come for at UCC. The Program Advisory Committees are contributing to the success of many programs and the employment of many of the graduating students in Career/Vocational programs.


## COMMENDATION

The Team commends the program advisory and program evaluation efforts of UCC and believes that they contribute in a major way to the satisfaction expressed by students with the education they receive at the institution.

# EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION OF RESOURCES (Chapter Five)

## INTRODUCTION

Question Five of the Accountability Framework for the BC Public System, as used by the University College of the Cariboo, asked the following:

> **Does the University College of the Cariboo obtain, organize, and administer resources so that student outcomes are achieved at a reasonable cost?**

It became apparent to the External Audit Team that a considerable amount of information pertaining to productivity measures were analyzed and reviewed by the Institutional Review Committee. The External Audit Team would like to <u>commend</u> the UCC and the Review Committee for the exhaustive work in sorting through this massive amount of data.

## METHODOLOGY

The Institutional Review highlighted several concerns with respect to the ability of UCC to effectively measure its productivity due to the lack of sector wide benchmarks.

In any accountability framework, the need to address how efficiently and effectively a service or product is delivered to the client is of paramount importance. The absence of benchmarks within the post-secondary educational system is a significant deficiency. The Team in its review of this question validated the position of the Review Committee and supports the recommendation for implementing a standardized accounting and reporting system throughout the post-secondary system with a view to facilitating inter-institutional comparisons. In the interim the Team felt some additional work could be done in the area of benchmarking, notwithstanding some of the obvious problems surrounding data definition issues.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the recommendation of the Team

>    **that UCC work to develop some inter-institutional comparisons
>    or benchmarks**

and that the process of explaining the differences between the institutions being compared can in and of itself provide meaningful information.  This would serve as an interim measure and impetus for future system-wide comparability.

The Team is of the opinion, however, that further work can be done in developing efficiency and effectiveness measures within the institution.  While system-wide benchmarks provide a vehicle for monitoring how well the institution is playing the game with others, a review of historical data for the Institution may shed further information on its efficient administration of resources.

Based on the Team's examination of the submissions to the Institutional Review Committee, minutes of Committee meetings and interviews with  Committee members and the Budget Officer, it appears that not enough  internal historical and longitudinal reviews were conducted to provide useful information.

While on the surface commending UCC for its increased efficiency from 1990-1993, and for its system-topping 111.7% overall utilization in 1992-93, appears appropriate, this commendation may also suggest insufficient analysis. Utilization must be looked at in the context of class sizes, **attrition,** and major costs of inputs. To examine only one side of the equation may lead to erroneous interpretations. The quality of instruction, which is the other side of the equation, is reported to be consistently high at UCC.  The Team did not conclude that a negative relationship existed.

The Team agrees with the IRC's comments re: **5.C. Student/Faculty Ratios**; **5.D. Class sizes**; and **5.E. Percentage Budget Allocations to Instruction and Administration**.

The Team recommends

>    **that in the absence of system-wide benchmarks, UCC insure that
>    an agreed upon set of Key Performance Indicators be developed
>    which can be used by The Board of Governors and Executive to
>    monitor the cost of institutional outputs over time.**

The list of measures on page 27 of the IRC Report represents a good beginning of this development process. The Team supports the **Institutional Review Committee's Recommendations 5.e.i, ii, 5.f.i and 5.g.i.**

## INTRODUCTION

The Institutional Review Committee's Report divided the question **"Is UCC building and maintaining its intellectual and physical resources, including the quality of its employees, curriculum and physical plant?"** into three discrete parts: physical resources, curriculum, and employees. In its audit of the Report the Team discovered a great deal of interest, particularly in the employee portion of this chapter.

Members of the University College of the Cariboo internal community at each campus were aware of the recommendations in Chapter 6 and offered a variety of comment and opinion. Employees are vitally interested in the environment in which they work, the program and equipment resources with which they work, and their own development and enrichment as employees of the University-College. They are proud of UCC's achievements and they want to foster its continued growth and development.

## METHODOLOGY

The primary source of information was received via interviews conducted by the Team. Almost everyone who was interviewed supplied commentary on these resources questions. In addition, the Team reviewed the UCC calendar, Fact Book, and the Internal Community Survey.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.    **Physical Resources**

      1.A.    Campus Facilities Plan

      1.B.    Preventative Maintenance

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The Team agrees with the comments in this section and **concurs with Recommendation 6.b.i**

> **that UCC make the implementation of a comprehensive, co-ordinated preventative maintenance program a priority for 1994-95**.

We could find no evidence to suggest any significant gaps between the Report and the issues raised by employees. The Team noted comments regarding physical plant staff shortages and general levels of maintenance service.

The Team commends UCC on the Campus Activity Centre, which appears to be very well received by all members of the campus community. The Centre illustrates a somewhat unique arrangement whereby UCC has floated a mortgage to build, and has entered into an agreement with the Student Society for its contribution of a facility fee (collected from all students) to the debt reduction. All other users of the facility either pay rent or contribute a portion of their profits to the building. Indications are that the Centre is on target with the debt reduction.

The Team noted concerns expressed by students about the availability of suitable space on campus to meet student needs. Student access to the Grand Hall in the Campus Activity Centre is in competition with community rentals. Other space concerns noted were the lack of sufficient quiet study areas on campus and general lounge or seating areas where students could gather in small discussion groups.

### 1.C. Appropriate Equipment Base

The lack of access to computers for student use was confirmed; however, the Team encourages UCC to study alternative solutions before implementing Recommendation 6.c.i. Further information, including student input, should be sought on this recommendation.

**The Team concurs with Recommendation 6.c.ii.**

## 2. Curriculum

The Team reviewed the UCC calendar, a number of particular courses and programs, and interviewed several coordinators, chairs, and faculty members, as well as some 20 program advisors. The curriculum is broadly based and comprehensive; it appears to provide a rich array of programs, courses, opportunities for upgrading, and special short offerings for its community.

2.D.   Currency of Curricula

Program reviews work well to monitor content, instruction, standards, and new advances in a wide variety of programs. The Team noted that an important by-product of the program review process is the broader understanding that such a review procedure brings about because of the necessary sharing of information among the external examiners and those directly involved in the program or course. The interest and commitment of the citizens who serve on the Program Advisory Committees is certainly to be commended. This participation produces a positive linkage between the UCC and the community and ensures that the career/technical programs are current and match the needs of the community.

The Team found that the currency of UCC's curricula is constantly under review by faculty, program advisors and external bodies in the case of accreditation for degree programs.

2.E.   Resources for Curriculum Development

The Team concurs with the Institutional Review Report's comments.

2.F.   Monitoring Curriculum

The Team concurs with the Institutional Review Report's comments and commends UCC for its curriculum monitoring processes. The Team noted concern expressed about UCC's plan to grant degrees independently. Caution was advised; this action should not be undertaken without careful consideration as well as thorough consultation.

The Team recommends

> that UCC examine the implications of independent degree-granting status thoroughly before implementing such an initiative.

3.   **Employees**

3.G.   Recruitment and Performance Appraisal Procedures

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The Team found evidence to support ongoing and regular performance appraisal of employees and **concurs with Recommendations 6.g.i and 6.g.ii.**

The Team understands that UCC plans to implement a performance appraisal program for support staff in 1995. The Team <u>commends</u> this initiative for its planned objective setting and training components. The Team noted expressed concerns regarding the time that managers, who already feel over-burdened with work, will have to spend on performance appraisal.

The Team noted that the process for implementing staff performance appraisal system is not addressed by the recommendations. Some managers were not aware a policy was coming into effect, and others were not aware of how to implement it.

The Team also noted general student interest in participation in the faculty evaluation process at all levels of instruction.

Finally the Team noted that the effectiveness of employee recruitment procedures is not addressed by the Institutional Review.

### 3.H. Educational Preparation

The Team recommends caution in the interpretation of comparative data cited; program mix, geography, and other variables should perhaps also be considered.

### 3.I. Staff/Faculty Development Resources

The Team notes that professional and career development is a concern for all employee groups. Staff who were interviewed had the perception that their development was a low priority in the institution. Repeatedly the Team was reminded that there is no mention of gender equity with respect to development and career opportunities. The Team notes the gender imbalance at all administrative levels of UCC.

The Team **concurs with Recommendation 6.i.i**. In addition the Team recommends

> **that further analysis of the survey data on the question of professional development for faculty and support staff be done**

and notes the absence of an explanation of the evidence cited.

The Team also notes that development funds may have become difficult to administer due to the number of "pots" from which funds can be requested and the resulting need for multiple applications to different committees.

## COMMENDATION

The Team commends UCC for establishing a Research and Industrial Office to provide research services to faculty and link them to funding sources - granting councils, foundations, NRC, Science Council of B.C. This office has also created a Science and Technology Database for the Central Interior Science Council. A laddered program is being developed to provide industry with workers heretofore available only in Europe. While UCC faculty members are aware of the challenges to academic freedom that may arise from industry liaison (i.e. potential corporate control of academic course and program content) they are also eager to embrace innovative approaches to promote scholarly activity at UCC.

### 3.J.  Organizational Morale and Communication

This section of the Institutional Review Report engendered by far the most interest and attention. The Team received comment from virtually everyone interviewed who is employed by UCC, and many of the external community members as well. It is fair to say that "communication" is the single most frequently used word that the Team heard throughout its visit. Communication implies a range of concepts, including information sharing, consultation, decision-making, listening, discussion, advising, reporting.

The Team found evidence to support the issues raised and factors affecting morale and communication identified in the Institutional Review Report (pages 32-33):

- rapid growth
- university-college status
- reactive planning & policy development
- technological change
- charged faculty contract negotiations
- outstanding grievances
- votes of non-confidence
- uninformed employees
- organizational structure
- disparate groups of employees

The Team concurs with the statement in Appendix B (Methodology) of the Institutional Review Report (page 43) that Question Six was perhaps the weakest one within the framework as it does not address general organizational climate or the treatment of employees by the organization.

As noted above, the Team found evidence to suggest that an additional section on organizational climate and human relations would have been useful and appropriate. (See recommendations page 4 of this Report)

The **Team concurs with Recommendation 6.j.i** and notes in addition that the method of data aggregation and interpretation for such surveys should also be distributed widely.

The **Team supports Recommendation 6.j.ii**; however, it notes that developing an improved information flow may require attention and responsibility at other levels of the organization as well.

The **Team concurs with Recommendation 6.j.iii** and notes in addition that an examination of the communication strategy may include an examination of the reporting structure, the committee structure, and the decision-making structure of the organization.

The Team found evidence of additional elements of the communication issue at the University College of the Cariboo:

- perceptions of powerlessness;
- perceptions of not being heard;
- lack of opportunity to present issues;
- lack of consultation;
- lack of trust within the organization;
- tension between those charged with responsibility to manage academic instruction and those providing it;
- lack of clarity in & about the decision-making process;
- focus on external, rather than internal communication;
- clash of cultures within the organization;
- informational rather than consultative meetings;
- rights and responsibilities of managers not well defined or understood;
- lack of collegiality;
- multiple levels of bureaucracy;
- centralized locus of decision-making.

The Team found evidence to support the commendations reported in the Self Study regarding streamlining to a two vice-president model and reactivating the Administrative Council. However, many people interviewed considered the possible negative ramifications of an increased workload for the executive members.

Concern is also noted with regard to the purpose of the Administrative Council meetings as being restricted to reporting of information rather than discussion of issues.

In general the Team agrees that the entire morale and communication matter should be further examined at UCC. The Team recommends

**that a review of this issue take into account the organizational and decision-making structure of the institution.**

The Team found evidence to support all the Institutional Review Committee's identified institutional priorities on page 33: improved library holdings, more laddered programs, more cooperative education/work experience for students, more partnerships with business/industry, better internal communication, and improved computer services. There is strong evidence that the library holdings and internal communication issues are perceived to be at the top of this list of priorities.

## INTRODUCTION

Question seven of the <u>Accountability Framework</u> used by the University College of the Cariboo asked the following:

> **Does the University College of the Cariboo have systems that produce information that enables management to answer these preceding questions?**

To be accountable requires the ability of the organization to capture, monitor and control key elements of data which will assist in the monitoring of institutional outputs. Without the appropriate key data elements and subsequent processes to generate this data the organization soon begins to rely on folklore and assumptions in the management of its resources. Clearly without the support of an effective data generating machine, institutions will not be able to report on accountability.

## METHODOLOGY

To fulfil its task of reviewing whether or not the criteria and issues identified effectively provided the framework for answering the question, the Team assigned members to assume responsibility for reviewing in detail the key factors and necessary data elements identified by the Institutional Review Committee. The Team reviewed samples of monthly expenditure reports, financial reports to the Board of Governors, and detailed specifications for the new Integrated Information system among other items. In addition the process of developing the institutional budget and resource allocation methods were reviewed in advance of arriving at UCC. On-site interviews were also conducted with several members of the College Financial and Student Services areas, as principal generators of institutional data.

## FINDINGS

The Team supports the findings of the Institutional Review Committee in its recommendations to streamline, simplify and target the collection of data. In the course of its review the Team discovered what it believes to be a major concern to the institution. At the time of the Team's visit to the University College (November 1994), its operational managers had not received any financial revenue and/or expenditure reports for seven months.

Budget managers reported to the Team that they were operating without the requisite information and effectively committing financial resources of the institution without any assurances that they are functioning within budget. While there may have been a centralized institutional budget monitoring process in place, those managers interviewed with line budget responsibilities were not aware of them. In addition examples were discovered where suppliers to UCC were without payment of invoices for periods as long as 90 days.

This lack of information stems from the installation of a new integrated administrative system. The installation has not gone as planned and as a result has placed the organization in an untenable position. In hindsight it would have been appropriate to run the administrative systems in parallel until such time as UCC was equipped and ready to make the change.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

While the Team commends UCC for being one of the first institutions within the province to acquire and implement a fully integrated administrative system, it is imperative that measures be in place to report on the state of financial affairs within the institution.

The Team **concurs with Recommendation 7.c.i** and encourages UCC to use its influence on the appropriate policy makers at the provincial level.

## COMMENDATIONS

Although not mentioned in the study, UCC is to be commended for proceeding in a timely fashion with the implementation of a fully integrated, state of the art management information system. One of the major benefits to UCC from this system will be its ability to generate both standing and ad hoc reports to meet the data needs of the organization.