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PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT  
on the  
OFFICE ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM



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**PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT**  
**on the**  
**OFFICE ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM**

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**BOX 3010, KAMLOOPS, B.C.**  
**V2C 5N3**

**March**

**1992**

**OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & PLANNING**



## SUMMARY

Over the past decade, the Office Administration Program has undergone radical changes in format, curriculum, and delivery methods. Such change, along with the exponential acceleration of advances in office technology, has placed a burden on OAD faculty, to the point where they simply cannot keep up, let alone integrate these changes into the OAD curriculum. The reality is that updating and change will continue to be necessary to achieve and maintain program currency. To address this critical situation, the OAD Evaluation Committee has recommended the institution of short-term leaves and scheduling alternatives to provide OAD faculty with more extended release time for technical/educational upgrading.

Two other problems need urgent attention: dropping enrolments and the sense of isolation reported by faculty and students at the Victoria Street Centre. To combat the former, the Committee has suggested a variety of measures ranging from the development of a strategic marketing plan to the operation of the core curriculum on a year-round basis. While the Committee realizes that the relocation of OAD to the main campus will not be feasible for some years, it urges reconstructive measures that will provide Victoria Street staff and students with a sense of pride in their facility and that will strengthen ties between that location and the main campus.

Other areas addressed by this report are the need for greater planning and commitment at divisional and departmental level; for consistency in the application of departmental policies; for the extension of practica to all five program options; and for some curricular reorganization, especially in the Legal Secretary option.

Finally, the Evaluation Committee views the Advisory Committees as crucial links between the OAD program and the business community and feels that their members can be of great assistance to OAD faculty as advisors on calendar and promotional copy, and as "master practitioners". These functions can be achieved only if OAD Advisory Committees meet on a regular basis.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Office Administration Program Review was initiated on September 9, 1991, with a "request for data" from Richard Olesen, Dean, Business/Computing/Mathematics. Issues of questionnaire design were discussed on September 26 with Shirley Smith, Chairperson, OAD, and OAD faculty at a departmental meeting.

Questionnaires were mailed to the following stakeholders on the following dates: OAD former students (1987-1990 intakes): October 22-25; Williams Lake former students (1987-1990 intakes): October 29; OAD Advisory Committee members: October 28; OAD faculty: October 30; and OAD employers: November 1. The current Office Administration students (1991 intake) were administered the survey on the following dates: Williams Lake: November 28; Merritt: December 5; and Kamloops: December 9.

Follow-up letters were sent out to former students between November 12-15; to employers on November 18; to faculty on November 22; and to Advisory Committee members on November 28. Telephonic contact with non-returnees was undertaken between December 10 and December 20. The cut-off date for all responses was January 10, 1992. The evaluation committee met to examine and analyze the summarized Kamloops and Merritt data on January 30, 31 and February 3, 1992. Rob Anderson and Alastair Watt analyzed the Williams Lake data on February 19, 1992.

## BACKGROUND

Office Administration programs have been offered at Cariboo College since the Fall of 1971. The program previous to OAD was offered through the Kamloops School District as the Kamloops Business School. In Fall, 1971, the Kamloops Business School program (located in the Canada Permanent building, downtown) relocated to the main campus when it became part of the Vocational Programs offered through the College. Programs were lecture-based and included Bookkeeping and Accounting (ten months) and Secretarial and Upgrading programs (five months). Students were enrolled monthly, space permitting. In 1974 Upgrading and Legal Stenographic Programs were also included in the commercial programs. Students were still enrolled monthly, space permitting; both programs were five months.

The Commercial Program became Business Office Training Programs in 1975. Monthly intake continued in all programs, which were all lecture-based and ten months in duration. The Clerk-Typist Program (4-6 months) was added in 1976. As Legal and Secretarial students were required to complete the Clerk-Typist Program prior to entering either specialty, total completion time for both programs was ten months.

In 1977 the department changed its name to the Business Career Program. In 1979 the Banking and Financial Program (six months) was offered. This was a fixed bi-annual intake program. The following programs were also offered:

- Bookkeeping Skills Certificate (4-5 months)
- Accounting Skills Certificate (4-5 months)
- Clerk Typist Skills Certificate (4-6 months)
- Secretarial Skills Certificate (4-10 months)
- Business Career Upgrading Certificate (4-5 months)
- Word-Processing Technician (Legal) (4.5 months with two annual intakes)

## BACKGROUND (cont.)

In 1982 the department responded to a Ministry directive that all commercial programs be called "Office Administration" and that all program offerings be based on mastery learning. Students would enroll and complete a "CORE" program of approximately four months, and would then choose from one of the following options:

- Bookkeeping Clerk (5 months)
- Accounting Clerk (5 months)
- Secretarial (8 months)
- Executive Secretarial (4 months)
- Legal Stenographer (6 months)
- Medical Stenographer (4 months)

Monthly registrations continued. Microcomputers were introduced into CORE in 1986.

In 1987 the department underwent a major re-organization and returned to lecture-based instruction. The Bookkeeping/Accounting options were melded into a new program, Bookkeeping with Computer Applications. Students were registered twice a year and the year was divided into five semesters.

In 1988 further changes were made when the department offered the Medical Office Assistant Certificate Program and the Word-Processing Secretary Certificate Program. In 1989 OAD offered the Financial Secretary Certificate Program and the instructional year was divided into three semesters. Direct entry was offered into the Legal Secretary Program in 1990.

In September, 1992, OAD may offer the Office Systems Specialist Diploma Program. The OSS Program will train a computer resource person whose responsibilities will include installing software, troubleshooting minor hardware problems, managing the LAN, introducing new hardware and software and providing in-house training. OAD will also offer direct-entry for the Medical Office Assistant Program, enabling the MOA's to have specialty instruction for the ten months of their training.



## ADMISSION DATA AND PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

### Certificate Programs:

Bookkeeping with Computer Applications  
Financial Secretary  
Legal Secretary  
Medical Office Assistant  
Word Processing Secretary

### Admission Requirements:

#### **1. Educational Requirements:**

Grade 11 (or equivalent) required, Grade 12 preferred

#### **2. English Requirements:**

a) The Legal Secretary Program and Medical Office Assistant Program require:

67% on the combined English 12 and Government Exam (within the last 5 years)

or

Level 3 on the composition section of the Language Proficiency Index (within the last 5 years)

or

B standing in English 050 or equivalent.

b) Bookkeeping with Computer Applications, Financial Secretary and Word Processing Secretary Programs require:

67% on the combined English 12 and Government Exam (within the last 5 years)

or

B standing in English 050 or equivalent

or

Stanine 6 on the Canadian Achievement Test, Version 19.

#### **3. General Requirements:**

a) A minimum keyboarding speed of 25 net words per minute on a five-minute timing. The Legal Secretary and Medical Office Assistant programs both require a minimum of 35 net words per minute.

b) The Legal Secretary Program requires:

1) OACP 110 Microcomputers and Word Processing 1 (or equivalent)

2) OACP 210 Microcomputers and Word Processing 2 (or equivalent)

Available through Computer Access Centre:

1) "DOS, an Operating System" and

2) "Word Processing on the Microcomputer"

### ADMISSION DATA AND PERFORMANCE STATISTICS (cont.)

c) The Medical Office Assistant Program requires:

- 1) OAAC 100 Introduction to Bookkeeping or equivalent, available through Distance Education, Regional Programs, UCC
- 2) Successful medical examination
- 3) Valid St. John Ambulance Standard First Aid Certificate or Red Cross Standard First Aid including CPR (before semester two)

d) Interview with the program co-ordinator or designate.

### Program Capacity/Program Demand Over Past Five Years:

The number of applications per annual intake over the past five years (Kamloops only) is as follows:

<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>
244	314	354	224	252

Actual enrolments (Kamloops only) were as follows:

<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>
138	136	124	98	92

Comparison of the number of applications with the number actually enrolled in OAD would suggest that UCC is losing a substantial number of prospective students between point of application and point of enrolment.

Program capacity is currently 160 FTE; the regional distribution is:

Kamloops:	120
Williams Lake:	40
	160

(Merritt: 15\*)

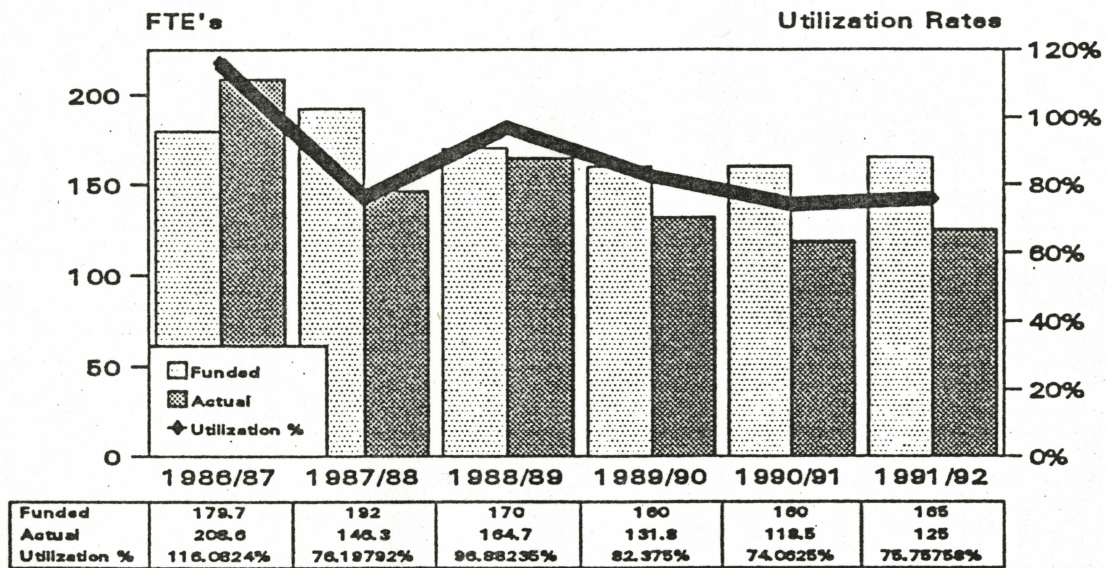
\*The Merritt OAD Program is operated on a cost-recovery basis; the 15 FTEs there are not part of the OAD program profile.



### Program Utilization Rates:

The following chart illustrates the relationship between funded and actual FTEs over the six year period, 1986-1991. Of some concern is the steady downward trend in FTE utilization, from a high of 116% in 1986/87 to 75% in 1991/92.

**FTE Utilization Rates: Office Admin. Programs  
(All campuses) 1986/87 - 1990/91**



Data source: MAETT Annual FTE Report, 1991

### Gender Ratio:

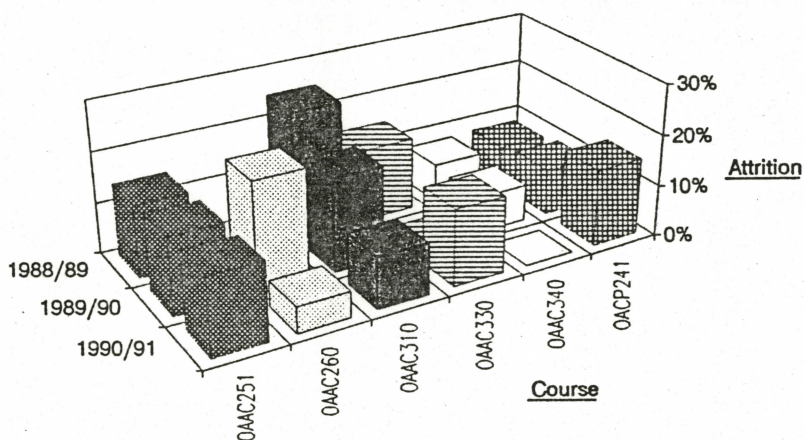
Of 314 OAD former students surveyed (1987-91), 312 were women and 2 were men for a ratio of 156:1. The two males were Bookkeeping students. No other males enrolled in any of the other options over the period.

### Completion & Attrition Rates:

Selected course completion rates for modules of the Office Administration Certificate program are illustrated in the tables and graphs that follow:

Course Attrition Rates				Grades Distributions- 3 yr. aggregated				COM
1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	A	B	C NCG/DNC			
F/W								
<u>Bookkeeping</u>								
OAAC251	14%	15%	15%	25	21	10	10	
OAAC260		21%	5%	11	14	4	5	
OAAC310	25%	18%	10%	23	7	1	10	18
OAAC330	14%	0%	15%				7	52
OAAC340	8%	7%	0%	43	10	4	3	
OACP241	8%	9%	15%	35	10	5	6	

**Bookkeeping Course Attrition Rates**





# Financial Secretary Certificate

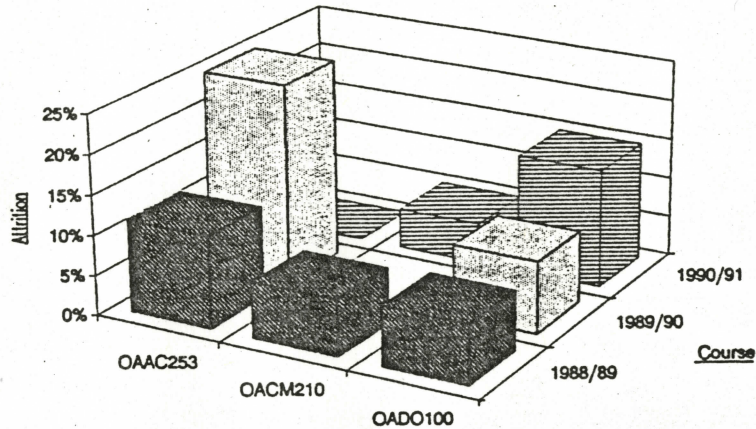
## Course Attrition Rates

	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91
OAAC253	12%	25%	0%
OACM210	7%		5%
OADO100	7%	9%	15%

## Grades Distributions- 3 yr. aggregated

A / A+	B/B+/B-	C	F/W	D NCG/DN	COM
38	26	8	5	10	
39	72	27		10	
151	27	26		23	

**Selected OAD Course Attrition Rates**



## Course Attrition Rates

	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91
--	---------	---------	---------

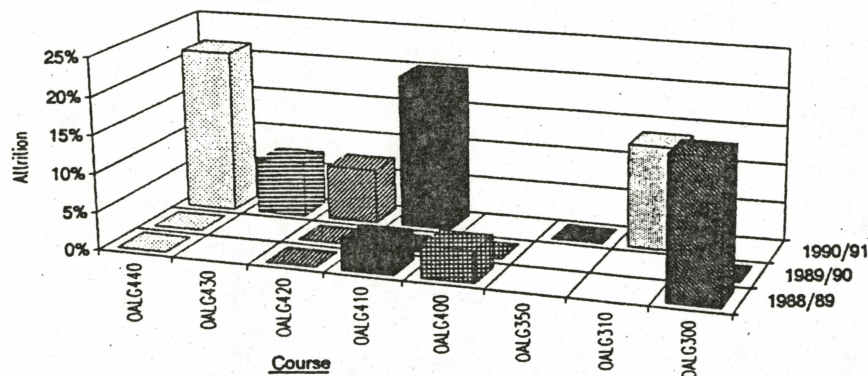
### Legal Secretary

OALG300	18%	0%	
OALG310			13%
OALG350			0%
OALG400	4%	0%	
OALG410	4%	0%	20%
OALG420	0%	0%	7%
OALG430			7%
OALG440	0%	0%	21%

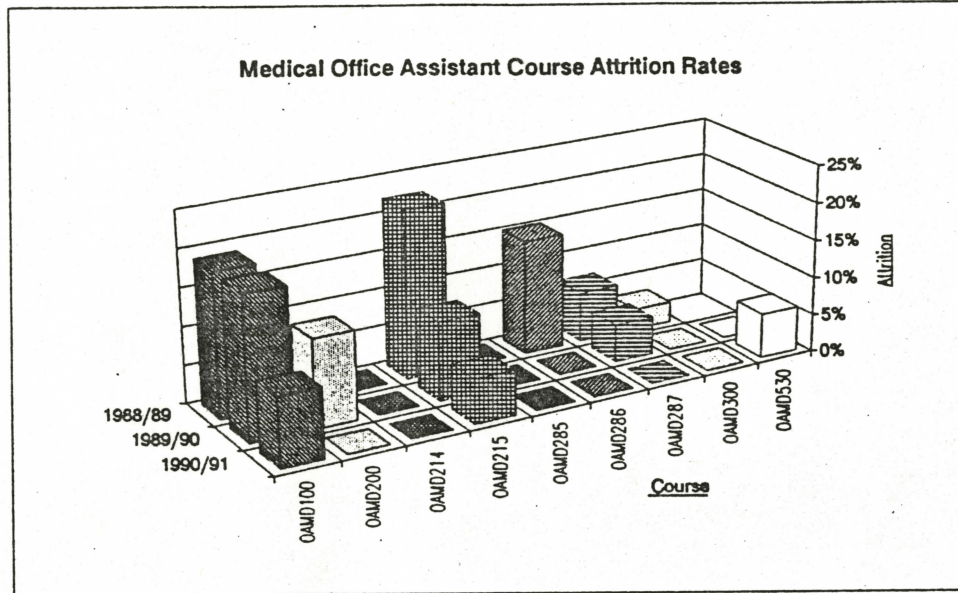
## Grades Distributions- 3 yr. aggregated

A	B	C	NCG/DNC	F/W	COM
8	13	5		2	
3	7	3		2	
3	8	4			
10	24	6		1	
21	20	12		4	
21	25	9		1	
3	5	5		1	
14	29	9		3	

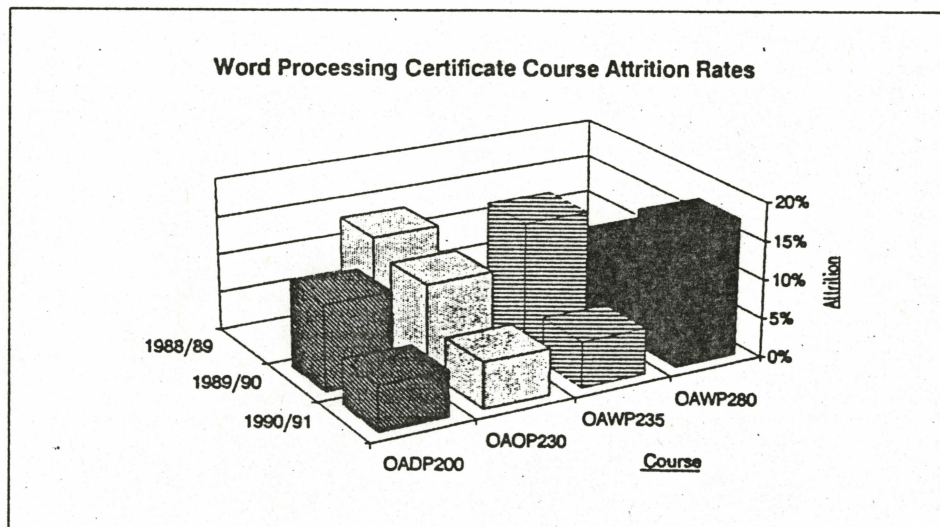
**Legal Secretary Certificate Course Attrition Rates**



Course Attrition Rates				Grades Distributions- 3 yr. aggregated				COM
1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	A / A+	B	C NCG/DNC F/W			
<u>Medical Office Assistant</u>								
OAMD100	19%	19%	9%	100	49	15	32	
OAMD200	6%	12%	0%	72	43	16	10	
OAMD214	0%	0%	0%	28	32	9		
OAMD215	22%	10%	6%	9	41	20	12	
OAMD285	0%	0%	0%	50	14	4		
OAMD286	15%	0%	0%	18	30	15	5	
OAMD287	7%	5%	0%	19	30	13	3	
OAMD300	3%	0%	0%	48	20	3	1	
OAMD530		0%	6%				2	
								61

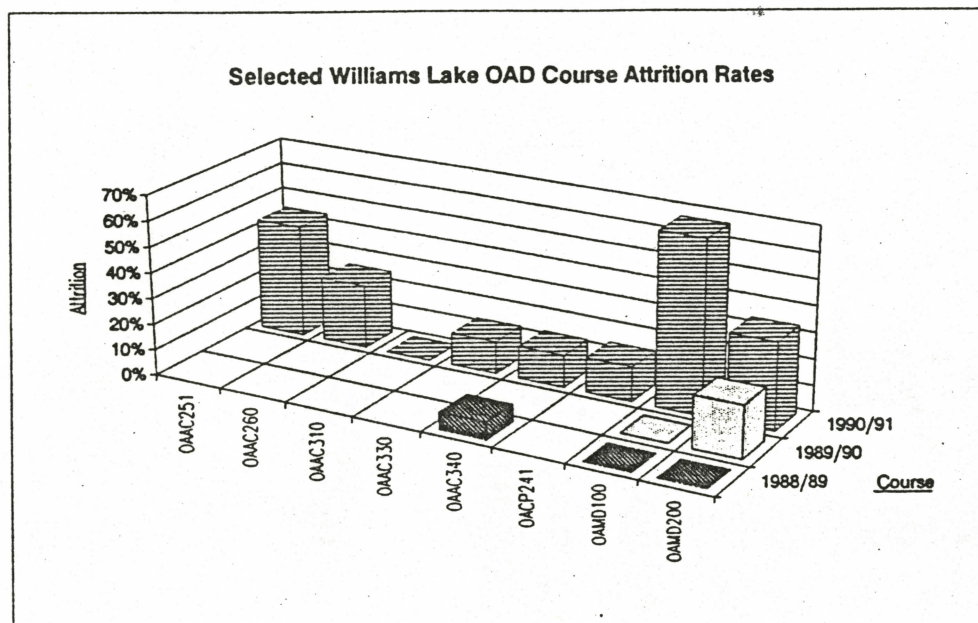


Course Attrition Rates				Grades Distributions- 3 yr. aggregated				COM
	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	A / A+	B	C NCG/DNC F/W		
<u>Word Processing</u>								
OADP200		11%	6%	20	8	4	3	
OAOP230	13%	11%	6%	3	25	24	6	
OAWP235		17%	6%	8	15	8	4	
OAWP280	0%	11%	18%	14	21	14	5	

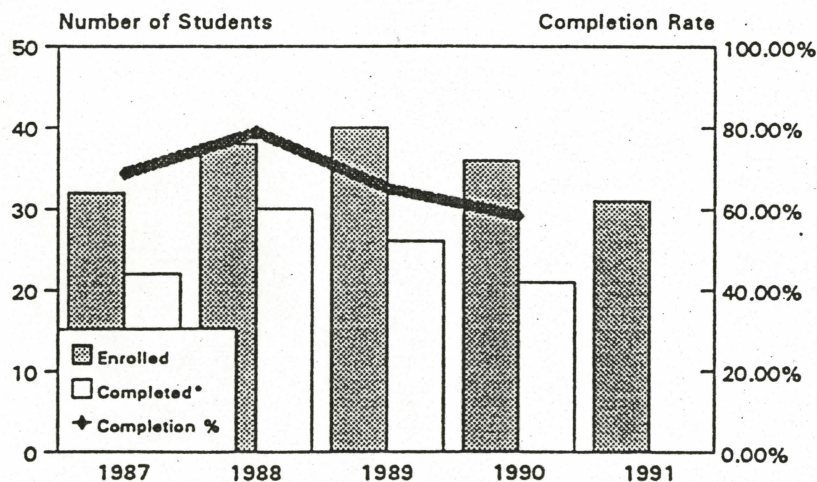




Course Attrition Rates				Grades Distributions- 3 yr. aggregated				COM
	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	A / A+	B	C NCG/DNC		
<u>Williams Lake</u>	Bookkeeping			F/W				
OAAC251			44%	3	4	2	7	
OAAC260			25%	5	3	4	4	
OAAC310			0%	10	2	3		
OAAC330			13%	4	6	4	2	
OAAC340	7%		13%				1	
OACP241			13%	11		2	2	
	MEDA/MOA							
OAMD100	0%	0%	67%	21	6	4	2	
OAMD200	0%	20%	33%	18	11	1	4	



**Office Administration Program (Williams Lake Campus)  
Trend of Student Enrolment/Completion (Sept. 1987 - Sept. 1991)**



Note: \* Include only those who achieved certificates.  
Enrolment figures are all initial enrolments.  
1991 figures of completion not available.

**Graduation Numbers (five year period):**

Aggregate numbers of OAD grads per year (Kamloops only) for the past four years are listed below:

<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>
118	122	115	91	June/92

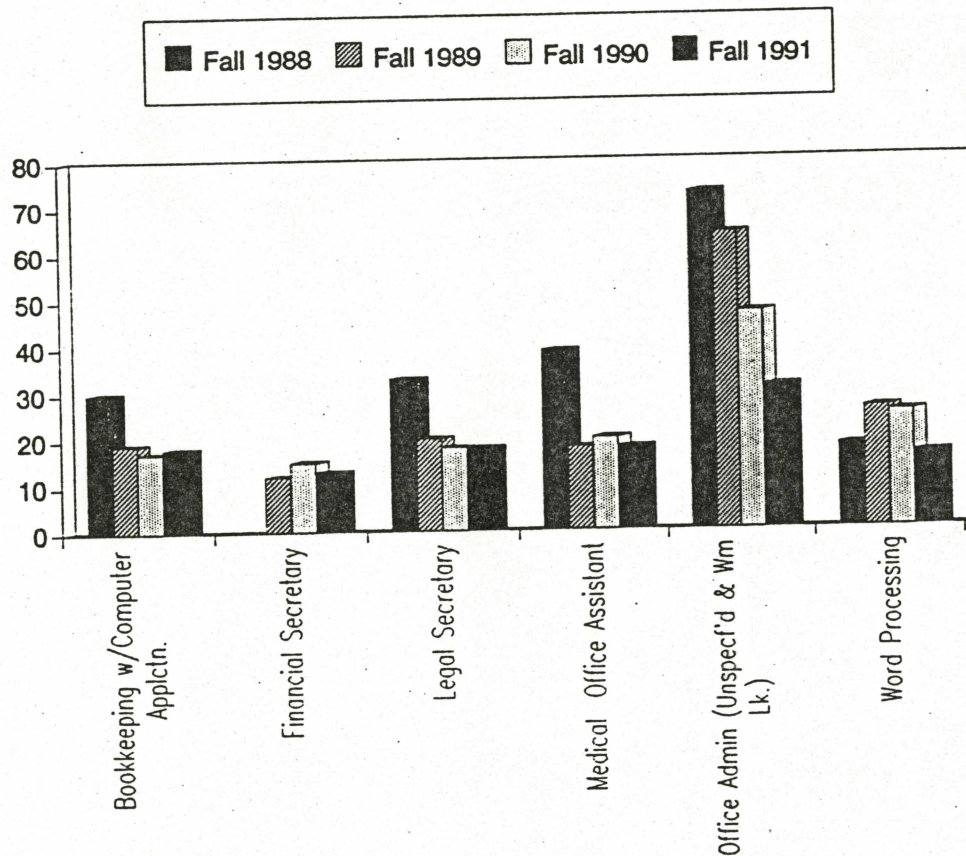
Enrolments:

<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>
138	136	124	98	92

Percentage completion:

<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>
118/138	122/136	115/124	91/98	?/92
86%	90%	93%	93%	?

**Head Count Enrolment: Office Administration**





## DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

### Advisory Committee Survey:

Of 36 Advisory Committee members surveyed, 22 responded for a return rate of 61%. The average response rate for Advisory Committee members among other programs reviewed is 90-100%. However, in OAD's case, four Advisory Committee members declined to respond because they had never attended an OAD Advisory Committee meeting, and several persons listed as Advisory Committee members were unlocatable.

### Employer Survey:

Of 103 employers surveyed, 50 responded for a return rate of 49%. This is an impressive response rate and shows considerable interest in the program on the part of the business community.

### Faculty Survey:

Twenty-one OAD faculty, full-time and part-time instructors and laboratory demonstrators at Kamloops Victoria Street Campus, Williams Lake and Merritt, were surveyed. Fifteen responded for a return rate of 71%. One faculty member declined to respond because she was on leave, and several part-time instructors and lab demos felt that their involvement in the program was too marginal for them to contribute to the review.

### Current Student Survey:

Current OAD students (1991 intake) at three campus centres (Victoria St., Williams Lake and Merritt) were surveyed in the following numbers:

Victoria St.:	67
Merritt:	12
Williams Lake:	<u>25</u>
Total	104

Survey results were tabulated separately, by campus.

### Former Student Survey:

Of 314 former OAD students (1988-1991) surveyed, 105 responded for a return rate of 33%. The response by specialty is indicated in the Table on page 12.

# TABULAR SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

The categories and quantities of responses are tabled below:

Recipient	# Sent	# Completed and Returned	% Return
<hr/> Advisory Committee:			
BK	7	3	43%
FS & WPS	12	8	67%
LEGAL	8	4	50%
MOA	9	7	78%
Employers	103	50	49%
Faculty	21	15	71%
Students:			
Current:			
Kamloops	92	67*	73%
Merritt:	12	12	100%
Williams Lake:	25	25	100%
Former:			
BK	63	22	35%
FS	24	7	29%
LS	65	19	29%
MOA	75	27	36%
WPS	70	23	33%
Williams Lake:	17	7	41%
<hr/>			
TOTAL	603	296	49%
<hr/>			

Former Students

Returned by Post Office (all years): 70

Former Students Non-Respondents: 139

As at Jan. 13, 1992

\* Four out of five classes were surveyed.



## SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

### **1. Advisory Committees**

The Advisory Committees for the various OAD programs felt satisfied with the quality of instruction. They felt that the students were well prepared for the workforce. They rated interpersonal and writing skills and professional conduct as the most valuable graduate characteristics. They felt satisfied with the role and function of the Advisory Committees (except for the irregularity of the meetings).

The Advisory Committees felt they performed a vital function in keeping classroom theory abreast with current practice.

The areas of concern include:

- a need for regular and more frequent meetings;
- a lack of practicum experience in the Bookkeeping, Financial Secretary and Word Processing options (the Medical Office Assistant and Legal Secretary options already incorporate a work experience component);
- a need for greater emphasis on communication skills and teamwork.

### **2. Employers**

Generally, the employers were satisfied with OAD graduates' technical skills, although they requested more input on job specifications. Windows of opportunity for more contact and perhaps contract work may exist with Royal Inland Hospital, Workers' Compensation Board, and the University College of the Cariboo. Forty-two percent (42%) of respondents were favourable to the proposed Office Systems Co-ordinator program; 42% could not see their firm employing such a graduate, and 16% had no opinion.

The Employers called for:

- better communication and interpersonal skills;
- practical experience in all programs;
- improvements in spelling and grammar.

### **3. Faculty**

Faculty were positive about the input and role of the Advisory Committees. There were, however, several areas of concern:

- lack of professional development time to keep abreast of technological changes;
- some equipment in need of updating;
- tardiness in equipment repair;
- instability in staffing;
- lack of short, middle and long range departmental planning.

## SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA (cont.)

### **4. Current Students**

#### **A. Kamloops**

A high percentage (35.8%) of the students in OAD programs are 19 years of age or under. The majority of these students have at least a grade 12 education. The students appear to be satisfied with the program content, procedures and course descriptions. They are positive about the programs effectiveness, except for a perceived lack of faculty advising.

The students focussed on some areas of dissatisfaction:

- registration procedures and the attitude of individuals in the Admissions area were felt to be unacceptable;
- departmental inconsistency in application of rules, e.g. absences, late assignments, typing speeds, etc.;
- unavailability of counselling services;
- unavailability of instructors after 3:00 p.m.;
- lack of student lounge at the Victoria Street Campus.

#### **B. Merritt**

Merritt students accorded "Introduction to Bookkeeping" (OAAC 100), "Business Communications 1" (OACM 110) and "Business Math & Calculators" (OAMA 100) particularly low ratings for adherence to course objectives, variety of learning activities, quality of texts and appropriateness of A/V materials.

They also commented on the inaccessibility of counselling and tutorial services and on the lack of general purpose facilities.

#### **C. Williams Lake**

Williams Lake current students expressed some reservations about the College Calendar and program registration package. They were also critical about the Williams Lake Library and Bookstore facilities and the crampedness of lounge space. On the other hand, students were relatively happy with the level of instruction provided by current Williams Lake personnel. Only two courses--"Introduction to Microcomputers" (OACP 110) and "Office Procedures" (OAPR 110)--received ratings below 3.50, and these were only marginally below the mark.

### **5. Former Students**

#### **A. Kamloops**

The majority of former students (about 60%) who responded to the questionnaire have been able to find work. They indicated that the following skills were used in the workplace:

Bookkeeping:

- Bookkeeping
- Math/calculation
- General office procedures
- Payroll



## SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA (cont.)

### **5. Former Students (Kamloops)**

#### Financial Secretary:

- Communications
- General office procedures
- Bookkeeping
- Math/calculation

#### Legal Secretary:

- Communications
- General office procedures
- Word processing
- Math/calculation
- Bookkeeping

#### Medical Office Assistant:

- Communications
- Medical terminology
- General office procedures

#### Word Processing Secretary:

- Communications
- General office procedures
- Human relations
- Word processing

Former students gave good to excellent ratings for most courses. The exceptions were:

- OADO 100 (Machine Transcription 1)
- OALG 310 (Law & Law Office)
- OALG 430 (Family Law)
- OALG 440 (Wills & Estates)
- OALG 450 (Company Law)
- OAMD 530 (Medical Billing Procedures)
- OAOP 230 (Records Management)
- OAHR 310 (Business & Human Relations)

They were satisfied with the program's effectiveness with one exception: the extent of career advising by faculty.

Other comments by former students made reference to the time spent on resume writing, the apparent lack of faculty professionalism, and the need for practical work experience.

### **B. Williams Lake**

The Williams Lake former Bookkeeping student sample was extremely small and the responses so few as to make meaningful inferences impossible. However, those courses in which there appear to have been problems in the past are "Business & Human Relations" (OAHR 310) and "Office Procedures" (OAPR 110). Only two former Word-processing students responded--an insufficient number for any meaningful analysis.

## EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

### Types of Employment:

The Office Administration Program is intended to prepare students for employment in a variety of positions:

Legal Secretaries will find employment as secretaries or receptionists in law firms, land title offices, the Court Registry and real estate offices.

Medical Office Assistants will find work as medical assistants or receptionists in medical offices or in a hospital as admitting clerks, ward clerks or transcriptionists.

Word-Processing Secretaries will find positions in government office insurance firms such as I.C.B.C. or any office requiring secretaries or receptionists with computer skills.

Financial Secretaries will acquire jobs requiring an accounting background in accounting firms, law firms, government offices, etc.

Bookkeeping with Computer Applications graduates will be hired as bookkeeping/accounting clerks and bookkeeper assistants to the accountant in accounting firms, car dealerships, etc.

### Future Employment Trends:

According to Statistics Canada's Job Futures British Columbia, An Occupational Outlook to 1995 (1989), the introduction of automated office equipment is redefining secretaries' roles into those of information workers. Word processors and software are changing the structure of secretarial work by creating positions such as training specialist, supervisor and director. Since word-processors result in higher productivity (one word-processor employee can replace 1.8 typewriter employees), this technology will likely slow the rate of growth of secretarial employment. While this reorganization will likely decrease demand for clerical workers, representatives of the business community on the Program Evaluation Committee emphasized that well-trained and ambitious graduates will always find jobs. Employment in this predominantly female occupation is steady year-round, with about one job in five being part-time in nature.

### **B.C. Employment Trends & Projections**

	<b>1981</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>1995</b>
Number Employed	33,450	39,330	45,190

**Annual Growth 1987-1995:** 1.8%

#### **Main Industries of Employment 1986 Census**

Business Services	21%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	13%
Education	11%

#### **Estimated Job Openings in B.C. 1987-95**

Growth (Net)	Attrition	Total
5,860	8,980	14,840

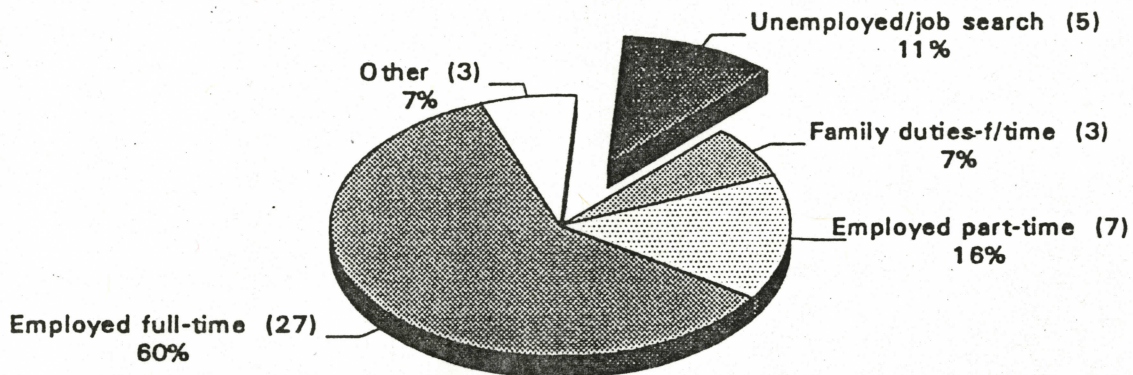


### Employment Rates of Former Students:

The 1990 Graduate Follow-up survey identified 60% of former OAD students in full-time employment, 16% in part-time employment, 7% engaged in family duties, and 11% unemployed and looking for work.

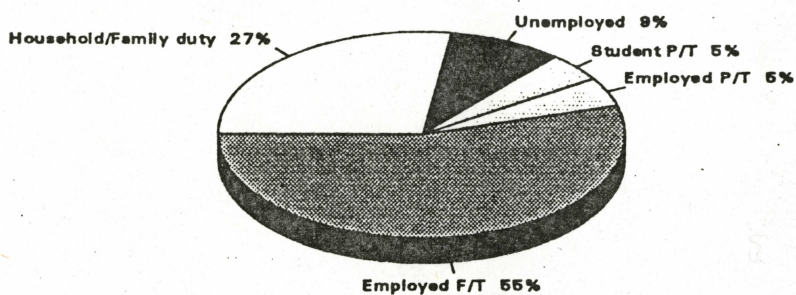
### **1990 OAD GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP OUTCOMES**

#### **Current Main Activity of Former Students**



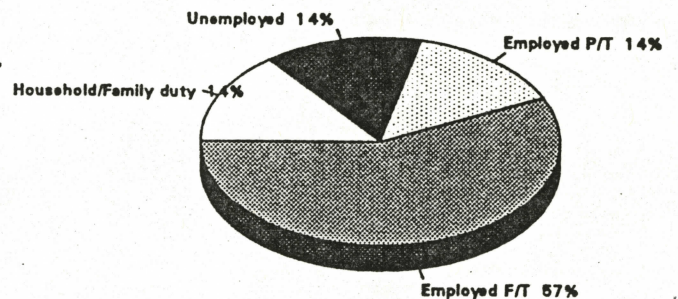
Former students responding to the 1991/92 program review of OAD reported their present main activity as follows:

#### **Present Main Activities of Former Students Bookkeeping with Computer Applications Certificate**



(N = 22)

#### **Present Main Activities of Former Students Financial Secretary Certificate**

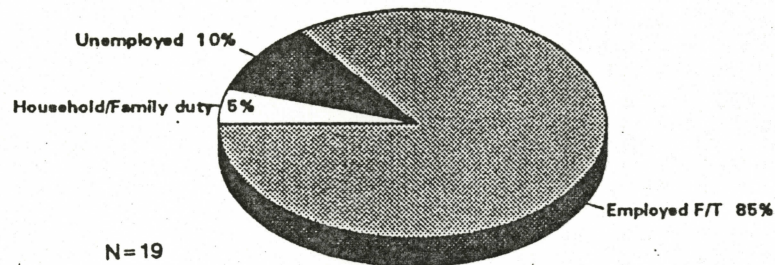


(N = 7)

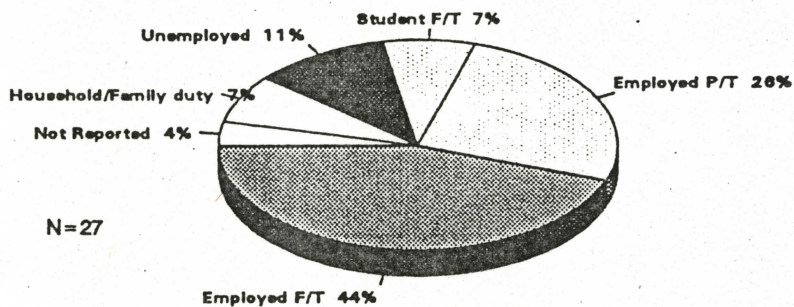


## Main Activities of Former Students:

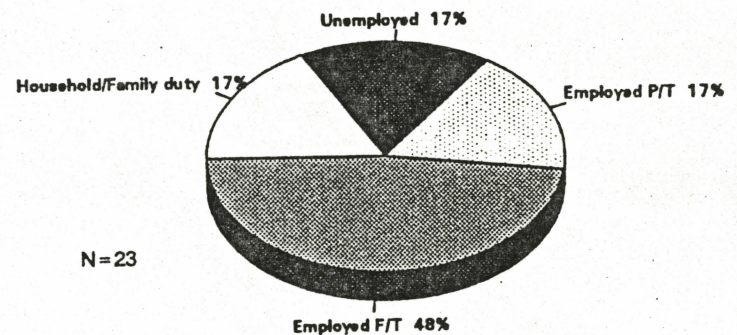
**Present Main Activities of Former Students  
Legal Secretary Certificate**



**Present Main Activities of Former Students  
Medical Office Assistant Certificate**



**Present Main Activities of Former Students  
Word Processing Secretary Certificate**

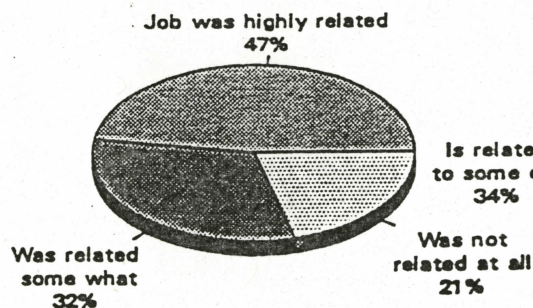


## Relationship of Training to Employment:

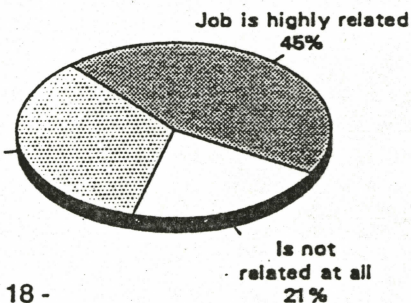
The 1990 Graduate Follow-up Survey determined the following relationships between training and employment:

### **1990 OAD GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP OUTCOMES**

**Past Job Related to Education**



**Current Job Related to Education**

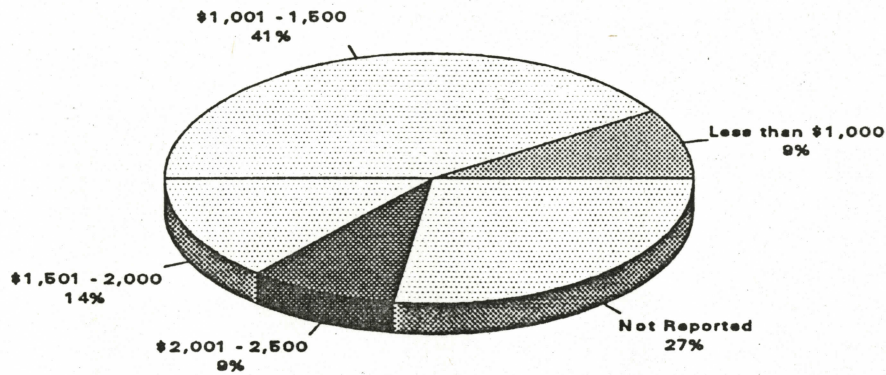




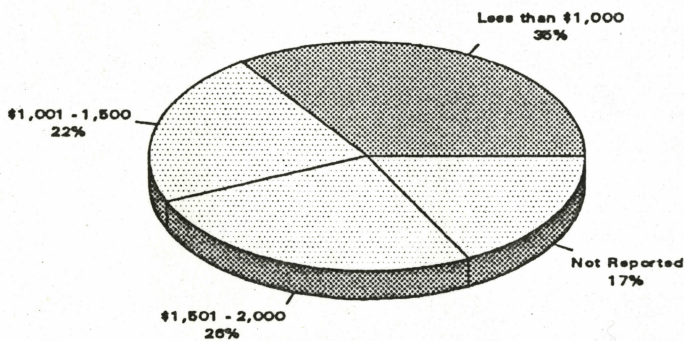
## Current Salaries:

Former student respondents reported the following distribution of salaries:

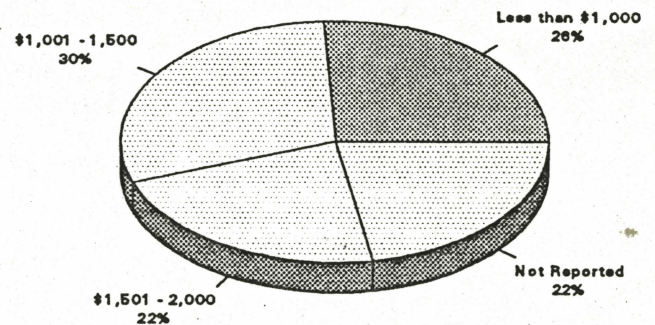
**Present Monthly Salary before Deductions  
Former Bookkeeping with Computer Applications Students (N= 22)**



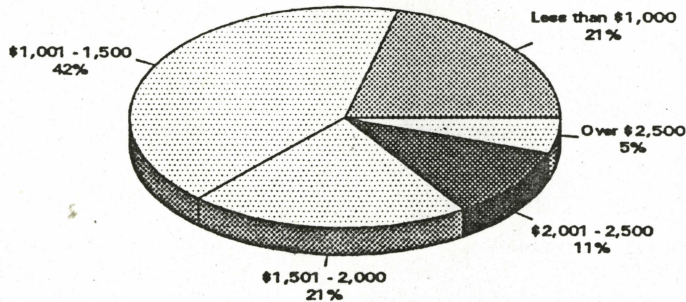
**Present Monthly Salary before Deductions  
Former Word Processing Secretary Students (N = 23)**



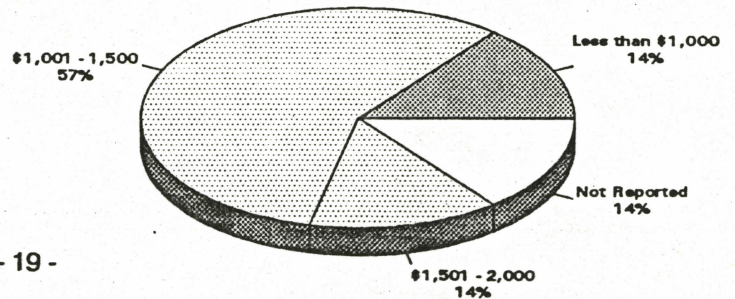
**Present Monthly Salary before Deductions  
Former Medical Office Assistant Students (N = 27)**



**Present Monthly Salary before Deductions  
Former Legal Secretary Certificate Students (N = 19)**



**Present Monthly Salary before Deductions  
Former Financial Secretary Certificate Students (N= 7)**



**Further Education Opportunities:**

Although no formal programs or courses exist as progressions from the OAD Program, generally recognized paths of career advancement are open to graduates from the following areas:

Bookkeeping graduates may proceed to the Accounting Technician Certificate and Diploma at Cariboo College and other institutions; the C.G.A. qualification is also within their scope.

Financial Secretaries may proceed to become Certified Professional Secretaries, and may also become C.G.A.'s.

Legal Secretaries may proceed to become Legal Assistants and Para-legals.

Word Processing Secretaries may proceed to become Certified Professional Secretaries.



## STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM

The following strengths may be identified in the Office Administration Program:

1. **Program diversity:** by offering five separate lines of secretarial and office training, the OAD Program serves the various needs of the business community and caters to a diversity of students in terms of age and educational background.
2. **Graduate satisfaction:** former students in the main indicated a high level of satisfaction with the program. Generally, the rating of courses across all specialties was high, with the exception of some courses in the Legal Secretary, Bookkeeping and Word-processing options.
3. **Practica:** the practicum component in the MOA and Legal Secretary programs is seen as a definite strength which should be incorporated into the other three options.
4. **Direct entry:** direct-entry into the MOA and Legal Secretary specialty training bypasses the core curriculum and increases the time spent on work-specific training.
5. **Course outlines:** the Program Evaluation Committee commends the Office Administration Department on the uniformity, clarity and explicit detail of its course outlines.
6. **Role of Advisory Committees and employers:** the OAD Department sees its Advisory Committees and employers as valuable mechanisms for keeping classroom theory and practice abreast with current office trends.
7. **Faculty:** The OAD faculty has demonstrated a flexibility and willingness to make radical structural changes to program format, curriculum, and delivery methods over the last decade. The main challenge for the future will be to seek more effective ways of managing change to ensure that OAD programs are at the leading edge of advanced automated office training.

**AREAS WHICH CAN BE IMPROVED**  
**(WITH RECOMMENDATIONS)**

This section highlights areas of the Office Administration Program which the data suggest can be improved. Recommendations are prioritized, with dropping utilization rates and isolation from main campus being the main areas which the Program Evaluation Committee identifies for improvement.

**1. Dropping Enrolment and Utilization Rates:**

The OAD Evaluation Committee noted with consternation that between 1988 and 1991, program utilization rates have dropped from 97% to 75% for the combined Kamloops--Williams Lake operations. With productivity and maximum FTE utilization high on the MAETT's and UCC's agenda in the next few years, these falling enrolments must be urgently addressed. The Committee therefore recommends that:

- a.     **The Office Administration Department consider devoting one line exclusively to its core program, which would run two or three cycles per year (September, January and May) if feasible.**

This would increase program access and improve utilization rates. It would also entail more flexible employment of regular faculty, and utilization of part-time faculty to instruct the winter and spring offerings.

Other recruitment measures may be categorized as "promotional" and "administrative". Among the former, the Committee recommends that:

- b.     **The Office Administration Department, in conjunction with the Public Relations Office, develop a strategic marketing plan in order to ensure that all OAD lines are filled.**
- c.     **The Public Relations Office develop separate brochures for each of the five (perhaps six) OAD options.**
- d.     **The Office Administration Department and the Public Relations Office saturate high schools within and adjacent to the College region with brochures publicizing OAD offerings.**
- e.     **The Chairperson and the OAD faculty actively stimulate recruitment by attending Career Days at high schools within the College region.**
- f.     **The Chairperson and OAD faculty invite high school business instructors in the College region to tour the Victoria Street, Merritt and Williams Lake centres during Open House and on other occasions.**
- g.     **The Chairperson, OAD, undertake regular liaison with the business community, local employers, UCC counsellors and academic advisors to keep them abreast of program pre-requisites and content.**



**1. Dropping Enrolment and Utilization Rates (cont.):**

- h. The Dean, Business/Computing/Mathematics, investigate the possibility of having a temporary employment service, e.g. Hunter-Dunn Business Services, Arrowstone Management & Consulting Services, Kelly, Accountemps, etc., locate in the Lottery Building and utilize the services of OAD graduates.**

If there is a market for such a service, this strategy would address job placement at no cost to the University College of the Cariboo and would exemplify "town-and-gown" synergy at its best.

Under the "administrative" category, the Committee recommends that:

- i. The Chairperson, OAD, schedule typing speed tests and admission interviews for all Kamloops OAD applicants at the Victoria Street centre to ensure consistency in standards and information provided.**
- j. The Admissions Department provide the Chairperson of OAD with a bi-monthly, updated list of applicants and their status.**
- k. The Admissions Department distribute information packages by specialty to applicants (e.g. MOA applicants receive MOA packages) in contrast to the current practice of sending one general OAD package regardless of the applicant's declared option.**

**2. Facilities and Services:**

Both faculty and students feel alienated at the Victoria Street Centre. Their concerns are about facilities, air quality, equipment, access to College services (Counselling), but most of all there is a pervasive desire for relocation on the main Kamloops campus. While this may not be possible until the relocation of the Applied Industrial Technology Division and the consequent freeing up of the vocational wing (tentatively 1995/96), the Committee nevertheless feels that it should urge the expeditious return of OAD to the main campus. In the meantime, the following recommendations are intended to ameliorate the sense of isolation experienced at the Victoria Street Centre:

- a. The College Administration and OAD faculty should accent and promote the positive features of the Victoria Street site, such as its proximity to the downtown business area, and the collaborative and co-operative possibilities thereby afforded.**
- b. The OAD faculty inform OAD students of cultural events on the main campus and encourage student attendance by example.**
- c. The Assistant Director, Facilities Services, explore the possibility of constructing an additional large classroom with a capacity of 50-60 students in order to eliminate the current duplication of identical courses in several sections.**



**2. Facilities and Services (cont.):**

- d. The Assistant Director, Facilities Services, explore the possibility of constructing a student lounge/lunchroom at the Victoria Street Centre.**
- e. The Assistant Director, Facilities Services, approach the owner of the Victoria Street Centre to correct the facility's ventilation problems (e.g. stuffy rooms).**
- f. The College administration provide Victoria Street Centre students with a photocopier to be operated at rates identical to those of the College Library photocopier.**
- g. The Chairperson, OAD, request that the Counselling Department reserve a two-hour block every second week for Victoria Street Centre students. This time could be used by other students if VSC students do not book appointments at least one week in advance.**

**3. Faculty Currency and Professional Development:**

A pressing problem in OAD is the stress level induced in faculty members by the vocational workload and the resultant lack of meaningful professional development time. With a 10 month work year and eight weeks' vacation, professional development is effectively crammed into a three week period in June, when faculty are exhausted by the year's instruction. The Committee shares the concern of the External Representatives that faculty must keep abreast with the changing configurations of office technology, and recommends that:

- a. The Dean, Business/Computing/Mathematics, in conjunction with the Vice President, Instruction, set up a rotation of short term leaves (1 to 2 months) to enable OAD faculty to return to the workplace for familiarization with new software and technology, to engage in curriculum development, or to attend courses for technical/educational updating; OAD faculty should be strongly encouraged to avail themselves of such leaves.**

Within the work week, other measures may be taken to facilitate blocks of professional development time for upgrading and skill acquisition. Currently, OAD instructors are time-tabled for five one-hour classes per day, with one hour as a "spare". This arrangement does not allow for any extended professional development, let alone grading time. The Committee recommends that:

- b. The Chairperson, OAD, explore the possibility of vectoring courses in two-hour blocks and introducing lab components for skill development to allow instructors extended periods of non-instructional time.**
- c. The Chairperson, OAD, assign the lab demo at the Victoria Street Centre to conduct typing tests, supervise computer laboratories, and undertake other routine work so as to free up regular faculty for instruction. (This will entail the Dean's reinstatement of the Victoria Street lab demo position.)**



**3. Faculty Currency and Professional Development (cont.):**

- d. The Chairperson, OAD, reduce instructional duplication by scheduling multiple parallel sections in the large classroom when it becomes available (See 2.b. above).**

Although, effective September 1, 1993, the non-trades vocational instructor workload will be reduced from 22.5 to 20 hours per week, the Committee suggests that:

- e. Invoking the precedent established by the Human Service Worker Program, (see Human Service Worker Program Review Report, August, 1991), the Dean, Business/Computing/Mathematics, determine the feasibility of changing the Program from Vocational to Career/Technical format.**

**4. Planning and Continuity:**

A persistent complaint from faculty was not only the lack of time for curriculum development, but the uncertainty about course assignments, not just from year to year, but from semester to semester. To redress this situation, the Committee recommends that:

- a. The Dean, Business/Computing/Mathematics, commit annually to regular staffing and budgetary levels consistent with the delivery of a coherent and stable program, and attempt to reduce the high percentage of part-time faculty (50%) instructing in the program.**
- b. Given this commitment by the Dean, the Chairperson, OAD, allocate instructors course assignments for all three semesters at a time, as opposed to the current piecemeal practice.**
- c. In order to ensure curricular continuity and improvement, the Chairperson, OAD, whenever possible, assign instructors the same courses for two or three year periods.**
- d. The Chairperson, OAD, appoint "lead instructors" to those OAD options that are currently leaderless, e.g. Word-Processing Secretary, and that these instructors routinely standardize course outlines and co-ordinate curriculum in those courses for which they are assigned responsibility.**
- e. The Chairperson and OAD faculty prioritize areas in need of curriculum development and establish a schedule so that human and budgetary resources are not spread thin but concentrated on particular specialties in sequence. This activity should be co-ordinated with the short-term leave rotation (see 3.a. above).**



**5. Departmental Policies:**

Former and current students expressed some concern about the perceived inconsistency of Departmental policies and rules. Discrepancies also became apparent on examination of various course outlines. Furthermore, instructors did not always seem to be available to students outside of scheduled class hours. The Committee recommends that:

- a. The OAD faculty review its policies to ensure they are realistic and acceptable to all members of the Department.
- b. The OAD faculty ensure that these policies are clearly and consistently defined, where appropriate, in all course outlines throughout the region, and included in a handbook to be provided to all students.
- c. The Chairperson, OAD, ensure that these policies are applied fairly to all students.
- d. The Chairperson, OAD, ensure that all regular faculty post their office hours, two hours per week of which should be outside the students' instructional day, e.g. at lunch hour or after 15:00 hours.
- e. In as much as the OAD program aims at preparing students for professional secretarial employment, the OAD Department formulate general guidelines for a dress code among its students and encourage adherence to this code.

**6. Program Objectives & Curriculum:**

A preliminary observation of the Evaluation Committee was the vagueness and scantiness of OAD Program objectives as they appear in the Calendar. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that:

- a. A priority of the OAD Department be to revisit its program objectives with a view to specifying the particular skills that the program seeks to instill in its students. A detailed description need not appear in the Calendar, but should be available in the Department as a tool for guiding curriculum changes.

The Committee noted with concern the proliferation of course acronyms and numbers and wondered how trained faculty members, counsellors and administrative staff, let alone prospective students, could pick their way through this labyrinth. Accordingly, it recommends that:

- b. The OAD Department collapse, where possible, separate courses which are generically related, with a view to reducing, within a suitable time-frame, the number of discrete but parallel courses offered.
- c. The OAD Department, in conjunction with the Registrar's Office, rationalize the acronyms and digital identifiers of all OAD courses.



**6. Program Objectives & Curriculum (cont.):**

As the communications and human relations courses (OAHR 310, OACM 310 & OAHR 350) were not highly rated by former students, the Committee recommends that :

- d. These courses be reviewed and revised to increase emphasis on role-playing, case studies, public speaking, and problem-solving; students should be introduced to performance appraisal and salary review, and the amount of time spent on resume writing should be reviewed.**

A clear and consistent message from the employers, Advisory Committee members and former students was the desirability of incorporating or increasing a practical component in all OAD options. The Medical Office Assistant and Legal Secretary options already have work experience components; the other three options--Bookkeeping, Financial Secretary and Word-Processing Secretary--do not. Other suggestions included consolidation and integration of the OALG course group, and adjustments to OATS 300, OACP 110 and OAPR 100. The Committee accordingly recommends that:

**Medical Office Assistant Specialty:**

- e. In addition to the existing practicum, the lead MOA instructor explore the feasibility of increasing the MOA work experience by several half-days (perhaps equivalent to one full week) in the first semester. The first practicum will be spent "shadowing" professional MOAs in a medical office environment, in order to become familiar with routines and procedures; the second practicum (usually two weeks in April or May) should entail greater involvement in the office operation.**

**Legal Secretary Specialty:**

- f. The lead Legal Secretary instructor extend the work experience component of the program with local law firms, the Court House, the Land Title Office, etc. to a two week minimum.**
- g. The lead Legal Secretary instructor combine, within a suitable time-frame, half-semester legal courses into full semester offerings. These changes might include:**

**merging "Introduction to Law and the Law Office" (OALG 310) with "Real Estate Practice 1" (OALG 350) and "Real Estate Practice 2" (OALG 360) into a six hour per week "Real Estate Practice" course scheduled Monday, Wednesday, Friday in semester 1;**

**moving "Company Law" (OALG 450) to semester 1;**

**merging "Contract and Tort Law" (OALG 380) with "Litigation 1" (OALG 410) and "Litigation 2" (OALG 420) into a Litigation course scheduled six hours per week on Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays in semester 2;**

**6. Program Objectives & Curriculum (cont.):**

merging "Criminal Law" (OALG 390) with "Family Law" (OALG 430) and "Wills and Estates" (OALG 440) to form a Procedures course scheduled four hours per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays in semester 2;

or, if the above changes are not feasible, that other suitable combinations and time-frames be explored that would best cover the required materials.

**Bookkeeping, Financial Secretary & Word-Processing Options:**

- h. The Chairperson, OAD, and the lead Bookkeeping, Financial Secretary and Word-Processing instructors implement a practicum component in those three programs by academic year 1993/4.**
- i. "Keyboarding Speed and Accuracy Development" (OATS 300) be reformatted as a self-study course with minimal instruction; the five minute tests can be supervised by the lab demo.**
- j. "Microcomputers and Word Processing 1" (OACP 110) be split into two courses, one to introduce microcomputers, the other to teach DOS and WordPerfect.**
- k. "Office Procedures" (OAPR 100) continue to emphasize practical training, and, if feasible, incorporate office simulation settings to enable students to acquire practical skills.**

**7. Teaching Resources:**

External Representatives on the Legal Secretary and MOA sub-committees made the following recommendations:

- a. That the lead Legal Secretary instructor ensure that B.C., as opposed to Ontario, law texts and reference materials are used in the Legal Secretary Program.**
- b. That the lead Legal Secretary instructor be encouraged to establish a Legal Secretaries' Association in Kamloops to provide, among other things, promotion and support for the Legal Secretary Program.**
- c. That the lead Legal Secretary instructor acquire teaching aids such as videos and printed materials from the Continuing Legal Education Society of B.C., and approach local law offices to contribute authentic, job-related transcription tapes.**
- d. That the lead MOA instructor approach local doctors to contribute transcription tapes for the Medical Office Assistant Program.**



7. Teaching Resources (cont.):

- e. That the lab demo be assigned the responsibility of monitoring and reporting on the condition of the existing MOA transcription tapes.

8. Advisory Committees:

The Evaluation Committee noted with some concern that the OAD program relocation to Victoria Street in 1990 and the absence of one lead instructor on educational leave had disrupted the regularity of Advisory Committee meetings. For example, Bookkeeping has not met since Spring, 1990, and Legal Secretary met only once in the last four years. As well as seeing the Advisory Committees as crucial links between the OAD program and the business community, the Evaluation Committee believes that Advisory Committees can perform other functions. It accordingly recommends that:

- a. As they are composed exclusively of local representation, OAD Advisory Committees meet on a regular basis twice a year.
- b. As the OAD copy in the College calendar is somewhat confusing to the outsider, each OAD program lead instructor check the calendar copy with Advisory Committee members every October for suggestions on clarification and improvement.
- c. Lead instructors draw upon Advisory Committee members as "master practitioners"--ancillary instructional staff who may be invited to deliver guest lectures, or even (with permission of their employers) offer instructional modules.
- d. The Chairperson, OAD, ensure that minutes of Provincial Articulation Committee meetings be circulated to all Advisory Committee members to keep them informed of provincial initiatives.

9. Graduate follow-up:

The Evaluation Committee noted that in spite of the numerous program changes in the last decade, very little follow-up evaluation had been done on these changes. It acknowledges the difficulty experienced by OAD, or for that matter any program, in tracking former students due to the transient nature of the workforce. However, it recommends that:

- a. The Chairperson, OAD, and the OAD faculty, survey graduates within two years (ie. by June, 1994) on the effectiveness of the changes to the program recommended by this review.

## APPENDIX A

### METHODOLOGY

The data were collected in the following ways:

- 1) Standard questionnaires were administered to Office Administration former students, Advisory Committee members, employers, faculty, and current students. All data were processed with an SPSSX software program to achieve mean, median, and standard deviation responses. Verbal comments for each group were recorded separately and anonymously.
- 2) "Descriptive Data" on the Office Administration Program's history, description, objectives, budget, etc., were solicited from the Chairperson, Shirley Smith, via the standard "Data Required from Dean/Chairperson/Program Co-ordinator" form, along with course outlines.
- 3) Statistical data on annual headcounts, attrition rates, graduation rates, and grade distribution were provided by the Office of Institutional Research.
- 4) Several discussions were conducted with Shirley Smith, Chairperson, OAD; and Richard Olesen, Director Business/Computing/Mathematics. Input into questionnaire design was solicited from the OAD faculty at an informational meeting on September 26, 1991.



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