

Business Plan 2016–2019 Campus Alberta Central



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Campus Alberta Central (CAC) is a joint venture between Olds College and Red Deer College that provides stewardship to meet the learning needs of the communities of central Alberta. During the past six years, CAC has evolved in its role as a steward of post-secondary education in the central Alberta region. In the next three years, we will continue to work strategically to identify the needs of regional learners so we can deliver the programming they want.

Connecting with all potential learners in the region will be a priority. Because even recent high school graduates and students living geographically close to a main campus may experience barriers to participation, our distance delivery programs can improve accessibility for these groups. Renewed marketing and communications plans will be undertaken to increase awareness about local and on-line options.

Working with partner organizations, governments, and industries will help CAC fully understand the needs of regional learners. We will consult with Aboriginal and Metis learners in the region to determine the best ways to serve their communities. CAC will continue to emphasise the importance of working with our learning sites because this allows us to provide local, community-based student support services.

As technology evolves, on-line instruction has become one of the best ways to reach out to regional students. In the next three-year period, the 2015-2016 investment in new on-line program development will yield increased capacity.

Greater cost effectiveness will continue to be a priority. Partnering and co-operating with other education providers will enable CAC to maximize program offerings. Working within a stable programming budget will allow us to develop targets that will increase positive outcomes year after year.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

CAC has been in existence since the initial joint venture agreement was signed in 2010, creating a new organization to manage regional programming as part of Olds College's and Red Deer College's commitment to regional stewardship. During the initial phases, CAC sought to define itself in terms of innovation and community engagement. Partnering with our 21 communities across the region, CAC has established itself as a provincial leader by working with community partners to achieve our mission.

The changes in technology and access during the last five years have allowed us to make significant progress towards achieving our end goals. Moving from the use of costly video conference equipment to integrated, online delivery has increased efficiency and provided a rich learning environment.

Mission, Vision, Values, and Ends

Vision

Campus Alberta Central will be a national leader contributing to vibrant communities through learning.

Mission

Campus Alberta Central will provide stewardship to meet the learning needs of the communities of central Alberta.

Values

The fundamental values of CAC are: Inclusiveness, Accessibility, Collaboration, Integrity, Responsiveness, and Accountability.

Ends

- Learners will have access to personalized, technology-based learning, training, and support services as defined by local communities
- Learners will be successful in accomplishing their goals
- Communities will have vibrant, self-sustaining, community-based centres of learning
- Relationships among stakeholders and learning providers will be enhanced, and effective partnerships will be built across multiple community sectors



Plan Development

CAC is directed by a Governance Team that establishes the end goals of the organization and regularly reviews CAC's work. This team has identified priorities that are the basis of the strategic directions for the upcoming period. CAC develops plans with the operational support of an appointed management committee. A strategic enrolment plan, developed from local input and research on community needs, provides guidance on program selection, support, and delivery. All financial planning is based on an annual budget developed in consultation with the Governance Team.



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

CAC's region encompasses the geographic area between Alberta's two major cities, Edmonton and Calgary, and from the east border to the west border. The area contains several centres of population along the Highway 2 corridor, including two cities, Red Deer and Lacombe. Communities to the east and west are more sparsely populated with economies that focus primarily on resource-based industries.

Economic Indicators

The past ten years have seen Alberta's oil sector in rapid expansion. With the exception of a slowing of the economy in 2009, the growth in this industry has fuelled continuous development. After the rapid drop in oil prices in late 2015, Alberta's major economic engines began to cool and the rebound effect is currently impacting all sectors. Recovery is expected to be gradual with some new initiatives developing out of plans to diversify and increase environmental awareness in the resource sector.

Employment has dropped significantly with the unemployment rate in early 2016 near 7%, which is the highest since October 2010, and is up 2.6% over last year. (Government of Alberta, Monthly Labour Force Statistics, work.alberta.ca). The decrease in employment has put pressures on the tax base and consumer spending.

Social Impact

With a downturn in the Alberta economy resulting from lower oil prices, it is anticipated that there will be a need for retraining as individuals move to new sectors. As entry level positions in the oil and gas sector decline, secondary students across the region will be more likely to continue their education as opposed to finding immediate employment. At the same time, families in the region may find that their ability to support the costs of relocation to programs away from their home community is diminished. Cost is a major consideration for most families, which has the potential to delay entrance to post-secondary programming unless government supports are made available. This barrier to participation would decrease enrolment numbers that might otherwise be expected. Interest in participation in on-line opportunities is expected to grow as it offers new graduates lower costs and greater flexibility.



CAC Strengths, Opportunities, and Challenges

Organizational Strengths

CAC has built capacity in previous years by developing new on-line programs that will be ready to launch in the 2016–2017 academic year. This positions the organization to take advantage of the anticipated trends in demand for distance programs. Increased acceptance of this mode of delivery will support on-line learning over the coming period.

CAC has increased its presence in regional communities using site grants to bolster awareness and promote programs. In the coming year, CAC will be able to reap the benefits of this project. A low-cost technology update using Google systems was included in the grants. This system is now up and running at many of the learning sites and will be available to augment student supports.

New operational strategies that have recently been implemented should result in a smoother planning process, improving program promotions and coordination with college departments.

Opportunities and Growth Areas

CAC is now working strategically to determine areas of growth and sustainability. Reaching more of the market will mean expanding from the focus on mature and rural students to the full range of regional learners, including those in larger centres and students who have recently graduated. With renewed government support and services through the Community Learning Council system, Aboriginal learners will be more connected to CAC programming and will play a role in determining how their community's learning needs will be met. Partnering with other institutions to provide requested programs will decrease program costs and increase participation across the region.

Organizational Challenges

Recently established on-line programs will face a period of testing from a competitive market. It is important that this investment realizes its potential and demonstrates it can be independent of financial support. With increases in costs and a resulting decrease in available funds for CAC programming, program dollars must be allocated where they will have the greatest impact.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The following summarizes the Strategic Directions for the 2016-2019 period:

Strategic Priority: Excellent Learner Experience and Satisfaction

Increased Access and Learner Pathways

ACTIONS

- Create a Strategic Enrolment Plan that considers the programs and services that potential students are seeking
- Employ a revised Marketing Plan that will identify strategies to connect with potential students in the region and beyond

OUTCOMES

- Increase in the diversity of programs supported by CAC
- Increase in student registrations in programs supported by CAC

Exemplary services for students

ACTIONS

- Promote student support services offered at regional learning sites

OUTCOMES

- Increased student contacts at regional sites

Strategic Priority: Operational Excellence

Cost Effective Program Models

ACTIONS

- Create recommendations for increasing the outcomes on all CAC program investment

OUTCOMES

- Increased outcomes for funds expended

Strategic Priority: Leading Innovation in Stewardship

Leadership in Regional Programs

ACTIONS

- Create new and innovative partnerships to facilitate the delivery of regional programming
- Use program models that maximize the potential for delivery using the most up-to-date instructional methods

OUTCOMES

- Increased number and type of partnership agreements and organizational affiliations
- A range of models are used in regional program delivery

Learner Centred Education

ACTIONS

- Create a process to identify regional learners' needs in order to respond to their goals more effectively
- Increase participation in regional, municipal, and industry committees and events

OUTCOMES

- Learners express satisfaction with the programs available through CAC support
- New programs developed that address community needs

Practice Innovation in Regional Stewardship

ACTIONS

- Review and evaluate the current model of regional stewardship

OUTCOMES

- Efficacy in delivery of programs and services

STRATEGIC ENROLMENT PLAN

Program registrations are expected to increase over the next period. Renewed recruiting efforts will focus on student areas not previously prioritized; regional high school graduates, residents of higher density communities, and engagement of Aboriginal learners. Improved coordination of registration information will encourage follow-through by creating a better learner experience.

The focus on providing content through on-line delivery will serve to offer communities programs that are in demand. It will also enable students to access programming at a lowered cost. Where blended delivery requires community-based instruction, combining dual credit students with adult students will be used to increase cohort sizes. Some of these programs will be shortened to reduce attrition.

CAC will continue working with Adult Learning Councils to provide preparatory programming. We will also assist with regional communication regarding the joint venture colleges' continuing education and on-campus programs. Where appropriate, CAC will strive to increase outcomes in the region by partnering with other colleges to respond to identified needs.

A key program area in the 2016-2019 period will be service industry training, including health care and tourism. Trades training will continue with an emphasis on sectors that are anticipated to grow or remain stable.

FINANCIAL PLAN

Revenues

At the time of writing, there are no indications that grant revenues will be cut. However, investment income has been reduced from previous years due to the expenditure of surplus funds on capacity building projects.

Expenses

In this period, rising costs have resulted in a modest decrease in expenditures on program initiatives. To support technology at learning sites, a replacement plan has been included in the ongoing operational budgets.

Use of Reserve Funds

Having recently dealt with accumulated reserve funds, CAC has made a commitment to expend all revenues in the current year. Additional projects will be approved to bring the remaining reserve to the minimum recommended amounts. As part of this process, the current budget was prepared in a deficit position.

Campus Alberta Central Operating Budget 2016 - 2017

Revenue	
Provincial Grant	1,488,900
Investment Income	45,000
Other Revenue	2,400
Amortization - Externally Funded	90,000
Total Revenue	1,626,300
Expenses	
Salaries and Benefits	320,000
Contracted Services	146,000
Software Maintenance (Drum, Stet, RMH)	25,000
Repairs and Maintenance	8,800
Facility Lease (Drumheller)	56,000
Admin/Financial Services (Olds College)	110,000
Fees - Other	4,500
Material and Supplies	20,000
Communications/Internet	25,000
Postage/Freight	2,500
Travel and Meeting Expenses	22,000
Utilities (Drumheller)	24,000
Marketing and Promotions (RDC)	60,000
Brand Marketing	10,000
Program Costs	705,000
Technology Replacement	32,500
Amortization	90,000
Total Expenses	1,661,300
Anticipated Net Surplus (Deficit)	(35,000)



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In Partnership

