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TO SHINE

DEC 20 2002

Our Ref. 43338

«Sal» «First» «Last»  
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Dear «Sal» «Last»:

As committed to in the meeting of the Minister with Board Chairs and Presidents on December 16, 2002, I am providing you with the working paper *An Accountability Framework for the Post-Secondary Education System*.

The paper and the framework it sets out have benefited from constructive advice from a small Advisory Group of Presidents, though of course the Ministry remains responsible for its contents. In addition, the current state of the performance measures owes much to the group of Institutional Research Directors who have reviewed this aspect of the framework.

The paper is being distributed to the Board Chairs and Presidents of all institutions, and your response to the paper is invited before January 31, 2003. At the same time, a shorter paper appropriate for broader public response has been placed on our Ministry website.

Sincerely,

Gerry Armstrong  
Deputy Minister

Enclosure

pc: Mr. Jim Soles, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Post-Secondary Education Division

Mr. Bo Hansen, A/Director  
Accountability Branch

**WORKING PAPER:**

**An Accountability Framework  
for the  
Post-Secondary Education System**

**Ministry of Advanced Education  
December 20, 2002**



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## I. Introduction

### Purpose

The purpose of the accountability framework is to benefit students: to ensure that students have quality education and that they have educational opportunities relevant to their needs and existing employment opportunities.

The framework is simply a tool to ensure that the post-secondary education system achieves the two current strategic goals for the system:

- Goal 1: A Top Notch Post-Secondary System: to provide students with an accessible, affordable, high quality and relevant post-secondary education
- Goal 2: Economic and Social Development: to provide students with the skills knowledge for the workforce and the economy, and to respond to critical shortages in the labour market.

The performance measures that are at the heart of this accountability framework are keyed to assessing whether students achieve the outcomes they are expecting, in line with the two strategic goals. There are performance measures related to the quality of education, measures to assess whether the education students received was relevant to the employment market, and whether the knowledge and skills they acquired are useful on the job. The unemployment rate of graduates is a measure to ensure students have access to programs that link to employment opportunities. In short, this is a student-centred accountability framework that will encourage a focus on whether student's interests are served.

As well as providing direct benefits to students, post secondary education is a recognized contributor to economic, social and cultural development. While such general long-term societal benefits may be methodologically difficult to document in quantitative performance measures, they nevertheless need to be recognized. In particular, the conduct of research, which is a significant element of the mandate of particular institutions within the post-secondary system, generates substantial benefits with respect to innovation and economic development. The level of research capacity and its economic and commercial impact are susceptible to being quantified and form two critically important performance measures in the framework.

The accountability framework shifts the management of the system to ensure that the two strategic goals are front and centre. Management of the system will be improved because it is based on clear strategic goals and objectives shared by the institutions, the Ministry, and government. Government's priorities and public expectations will be more effective in steering the system, while recognizing the autonomy of individual institutions. The approach underlying the development of the accountability framework has been and will continue to be collaborative, thereby ensuring the success of balancing potentially diverse needs and interests. Further, the framework enables both the Ministry and the institutions to demonstrate more clearly "value for money" to the taxpayers of the province.

All these are important benefits of the framework, but improved management is a means to an end. It is the benefit to students and the results with respect to economic, social and cultural development that are the key purposes.

## **The Need**

A top-notch post-secondary education system that supports economic and social development is a priority for government. This will entail a system that is more coherent and integrated, enhances student choice, and provides a high-quality education for British Columbians. To support economic and social development, it must be a relevant and responsive system that addresses shortages in strategic skills areas, expands training and skills development, and expands research capacity in the province. To be sustainable, it must balance the costs and benefits of post-secondary education, and be the best use of taxpayer funds.

A supply of skilled, knowledgeable post-secondary graduates is important to our growing knowledge-based economy. Trained, skilled industrial workers are also key. As the “baby boom” generation begins to retire and needs replacement, demand for skilled graduates will increase, as will the demand for student spaces in the post-secondary system.

In addition to providing educational programs that address labour market and student demands, some post-secondary institutions also have a substantial research mandate. The returns on these investments in research with respect to supporting economic, social and cultural development are substantial. Research benefits include partnerships with other post-secondary institutions and industry, inventions, patents, license agreements, and spin-off companies. Together, these translate into significant contributions to innovation and development in the provincial economy.

The majority of jobs in the future will require some post-secondary education. In order to participate fully in this new economy, more British Columbians will require access to a broad range of educational opportunities. A well-educated population is also one that tends to experience better health, fewer social problems, and lower crime rates, and ensures vital communities with better citizen engagement. These kinds of long-term societal benefits, while methodologically difficult to demonstrate in a small set of performance measures, should not be ignored.

British Columbia’s post-secondary institutions have a broad range of excellent educational programs. However, resting on past excellence will not be adequate to respond to the pressures of the new era. Nor will the present approach to managing the system be adequate for the task of organizing and managing a post-secondary system that meets society’s escalating needs in the new era. The intensifying demand for post-secondary education at a time when public resources are constrained presents a significant challenge. Government funding for post-secondary education is being maintained at “steady state” for the next three years, and increased budgets are not anticipated.

A key part of the strategy to address this challenge is to develop an accountability framework that allows post-secondary institutions to work as interdependent parts of an integrated system to achieve strategic goals and priorities in an accountable manner. Again, the collaborative manner in which this accountability framework has been developed will facilitate greater system integration.

## **The Challenge**

Within a climate of constrained resources, the post-secondary system must produce the graduates with the abilities required by society.

The Ministry of Advanced Education's Service Plan identifies a number of strategic shifts designed to ensure the system remains responsive to society's needs. The two shifts most relevant to the accountability framework are:

- More accountability to taxpayers – to focus on success by encouraging the acceptance of explicit results-oriented accountability by the post-secondary system and to emphasize open and transparent decision-making and reporting.
- A coherent and integrated public system – to reshape public post-secondary education into a more coherent, integrated system with differentiated institutions working together in a complementary manner.

While British Columbia has many excellent institutions and programs, the system's capacity to respond to the needs of the future will be enhanced to the extent that institutions cooperate as interdependent parts of an integrated system. The Ministry is committed to exploring with the institutions ways to enhance cooperation, collaboration, and integration among institutions.

The management challenge facing the Ministry and the system is developing the capacity to be directed by a set of strategic goals and objectives. Responding to society's needs requires effective system planning to establish overall goals and objectives. Furthermore, planning can only be effective if all organizations within the system are accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities and reporting on their performance. The proposed accountability framework initiates such a performance management approach for the system.

## **The Opportunity: A New Approach to Managing the Post-Secondary System**

In this working paper, the Ministry of Advanced Education proposes an accountability framework that provides a foundation for effective management of the post-secondary system to ensure it can respond to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The framework addresses government's commitment to openness, accountability, and demonstrating value to taxpayers.

The accountability framework will articulate what institutions are being held accountable for, how success will be measured, what reporting is required, and what implications follow from

performance. The operational details of the framework proposal are presented in Section III of the paper entitled “Accountability Framework Components”.

The framework shifts the focus of accountability towards results (outcomes) rather than inputs. Focusing on outcomes ensures that the system supports personal and intellectual development, serves society’s needs with respect to economic, labour market, social and community development, generates new knowledge and innovation, and provides a full range of accessible educational opportunities for students. It is generally considered that this approach will lead to more focused accountability for the institutions and the system as a whole.

The framework will encourage collaboration between system partners, support the enhancement of the quality of education, and demonstrate the open and accountable management of public resources and tax dollars. By providing a broad outline of strategic direction for the system, and by formalizing planning and reporting processes, the framework increases flexibility and recognizes autonomy in the institutions. Increased autonomy has been provided through such changes as block funding, deregulation of tuition, and elimination of ministerial approval of bylaws.

The main instrument of accountability in the framework is a set of performance measures to determine and report on successes in meeting goals and objectives. The *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* now requires all ministries to develop rolling three-year Service Plans, and to report annually on the performance measures used for assessing progress towards its goals and objectives. Institutions will develop their own service plans and reports as a way to outline their accountabilities, the means for meeting them, and their success in achieving the plan.

Focusing management of the post-secondary system on explicit strategic goals and reporting performance on achievements will contribute to:

- Enhanced collaboration between the Ministry, institutions, and system partners. Clarifying the accountability relationships and determining what is expected from each partner will lead to increased effectiveness in managing the system.
- An effective means for continuously improving the quality of post-secondary education. The framework can be used to improve access to and the relevance and responsiveness of the system.
- The ability to demonstrate that taxpayers’ money is being well spent.

How the framework will address these challenges is illustrated in the following way:

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Intermediate Benefits (Impact on Management of the System)</b>	<b>Long-Term Results (Benefits)</b>
While resources are constrained, the post-secondary system must produce the graduates with the abilities required by society	An accountability framework will create planning, assessing and reporting processes to guide the post-secondary system in the achievement of strategic goals and objectives	<p>A more effective post-secondary system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Stronger linkages to government's strategic goals and objectives</li> <li>➤ Focus on results, primarily related to student outcomes</li> <li>➤ Performance incentives for institutions</li> <li>➤ Effective use of budget resources</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote a more efficient and integrated post-secondary education system</li> <li>2. Enhance student choice</li> <li>3. Improve quality of education</li> <li>4. Balance the costs and benefits of post-secondary education</li> <li>5. Address shortages in strategic skills areas</li> <li>6. Expand training and skills development</li> <li>7. Expand research capabilities in the province</li> </ol>

## **II. The Accountability Framework Initiative**

This section of the paper traces the development of the framework to date and identifies its scope. It also sets out in detail the components of an accountability framework and what the Ministry of Advanced Education is proposing.

### **a) Development of the accountability framework**

The Ministry's 2002/03 - 2004/05 Service Plan commits the Ministry to establish an accountability framework for the post-secondary system in time to synchronize with government's planning, legislative, and budgetary cycles for the 2003/04 fiscal year.

During the past months, there have been a number of formal and informal discussions regarding the shape of an accountability framework. The Minister has broached this idea with governing Boards, and Ministry staff had discussions with a small group of Presidents, broadly representative of the different sectors in the system, and a number of informal discussions and briefings with a variety of groups within the post-secondary system.



The Ministry has also worked intensively with a group of Institutional Research Directors to review the proposed performance measures, discuss related methodological and data collection considerations, and make recommendations on an on-going basis with respect to the set of performance measures.

Accountability frameworks and the use of performance measures in post-secondary are current in an increasing number of jurisdictions, so there are many models to learn from. The Ministry has researched various jurisdictions to identify best practices, as well as any pitfalls to be avoided, and has investigated the approaches used to identify common design elements. Similarly, there is a pool of knowledge regarding performance management within our post-secondary system, which has been tapped for useful advice. No one external model is best: those features most applicable and workable in the British Columbia environment should be considered.

The Ministry is committed to ensuring ongoing participation and collaboration of system partners in the evolution of the framework. Provision is made for the framework to be reviewed and evaluated periodically, leading to continuous improvement.

## **b) Scope**

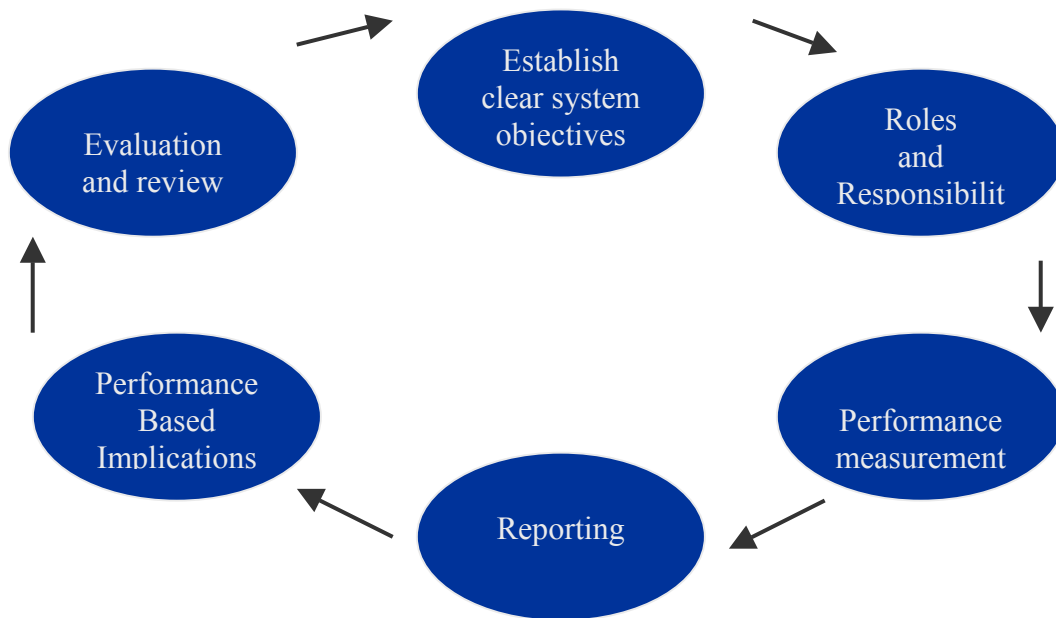
Accountability is a function of delegated responsibility and governance. Accountability relationships and determining which bodies are accountable for what and to whom mirror the structure of authority within government and the flow of public funds.

Hence, the scope of the initial accountability framework is proposed to encompass all public post-secondary institutions and the Ministry. Internal Ministry accountabilities and internal management priorities and processes, such as human resources and financial administration, will not be included. Post-secondary agencies and those private post-secondary institutions whose students access public student financial assistance may be included in future phases of the framework.

While private institutions will not be included in the initial framework, they will be subject to other appropriate accountability mechanisms. The government has announced replacing the Private Post-Secondary Education Commission with a cost-recovery, self-regulating industry board for the private training sector. The *Degree Authorization Act*, expected to come into force in early 2003, establishes a mechanism for private institutions and public institutions from other jurisdictions to confer degrees in British Columbia once the degree program proposal has undergone a quality assessment process and secured Ministerial consent. An administrative process for scrutinizing the performance of private institutions is currently under discussion.

### III. Accountability Framework Components

An accountability framework is a structure under which the key elements of service planning, performance measurement, and reporting are drawn together and integrated. It includes the accountability mechanisms relevant to managing the post-secondary system and encouraging performance. A well-designed accountability framework will also increase the integration, coordination, and synchronization of the existing data-collection and analysis activities, thereby improving efficiencies in these activities.



In essence, the accountability framework focuses on strategic goals and core business for the post-secondary system, and assesses the effectiveness of the system in achieving those goals through performance measurement and reporting. It focuses on post-secondary education as a coherent, integrated system, while recognizing the respective mandates of different institutions within the system.

The accountability framework is comprised of six components, constituting an accountability cycle. It begins with the setting of clear strategic goals and objectives and the allocation of responsibilities for achieving the goals and objectives to various organizations and bodies in the system. Performance measures are established and data collected in order to assess the success of the system and institutions in achieving the goals. Processes are established for regular reporting on those performance measures. In order to be effective, this performance information is used in decision-making and has an impact.

Finally, the framework itself is subject to periodic review and assessment as to whether it is providing useful and relevant performance information, and contributing to the improvement and enhancement of the quality of post-secondary education.

Aligning management systems is part of operationalizing the framework and will be considered in the implementation plan. The extent to which the framework facilitates this alignment will be part of the evaluation and review process.

## **a) Strategic Direction and System-Level Accountability**

Accountability is the reporting on responsibilities conferred. Hence the first question that arises is what are the goals and objectives for which the system as a whole and the individual institutions within it will be held accountable? Secondly, what are the processes that identify those goals and transmit them to various institutions in the system?

The government is moving to improve the integration and coordination between its overall strategic planning and that done within each Ministry and system partners. Strategic direction is expected to cascade from government's strategic plan to the Ministry Service Plan and then to the institutions.

### **Specifying System-Level Accountability**

Jurisdictions have typically chosen between two approaches to provide strategic direction to the post-secondary system and ensure system-level accountability. Either the Ministry provides direction within its own business plan, or a plan is developed specifically for the system.

Given the timeframe, and the emphasis on integrating planning and accountability around government's priorities, providing direction to the system through the Ministry Service Plan is proposed, at least for the first phase of the framework. Using the current Service Plan for strategic direction also involves using current goals and objectives, as well as the performance measures as reproduced in pages 15-23 of the paper.

Adopting this approach is evolutionary, as the Ministry is already required to develop an annual three-year Service Plan that identifies strategic direction for the system and reflects current government priorities. While the Ministry is taking the leadership role that system partners expect, consultation with system partners in future service plan development will enhance the strategic direction. Institutional input and the knowledge and expertise in the system will provide guidance for future evolution of the framework.

### **Vision**

The Ministry's strategic goals and objectives flow from the vision articulated for the provincial post-secondary education system: "A province where all British Columbians have affordable access to the best possible, technologically advanced, integrated and accountable post-secondary education system."

## Ministry Goals and Objectives

### *Goal 1 A Top-Notch Post-Secondary Education System*

*To provide students with an accessible, affordable, high quality and relevant post-secondary education.*

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Promote a more efficient and integrated post-secondary education system
2. Enhance student choice
3. Improve quality of education
4. Balance the costs and benefits of post-secondary education

### *Goal 2 Economic and Social Development*

*To provide students with the skills and knowledge for the workforce and the economy, and to respond to critical shortages in the labour market.*

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

5. Address shortages in strategic skills areas
6. Expand training and skills development
7. Expand research capabilities in the province

## **b) Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Specifying Ministry Accountability**

The Minister's accountability is identified in a service letter from the Premier. The Ministry is required to produce an annual Service Plan that articulates Ministry responsibilities, sets goals and objectives, and identifies performance measures to assess success in meeting those goals and objectives. It is also required to report annually in an Annual Service Plan Report, which in symmetrical fashion, is based upon the goals, objectives and performance measures set out in the previous Service Plan. The plans and reports are tabled in the Legislature and must be made public.

### **Specifying Institution-Level Accountability**

Incorporating the strategic direction from government is the initial step in the accountability cycle. The previous section addressed system-level accountabilities and how the Ministry's Service Plan and Service Plan Report will be utilized as the instruments to identify strategic

goals and report on them. Accountabilities also devolve to the institutional level, and how they are addressed is the subject of this section.

Accountabilities must complement the roles and responsibilities of partners in the system. In specifying these accountabilities, government's expectation that the system operate as an integrated, coherent system is an underlying principle. However, this more integrated system is also expected to remain a heterogeneous one. Institutions are differentiated in terms of their mandates, strategic goals and objectives, mix of programs, community demographics and needs, and other circumstances, and the framework contains the flexibility for institutions to develop goals and objectives appropriate to this variety. By identifying institutional goals and objectives which also complement system level goals, institutions will be fulfilling the expectation that they act as interdependent, but differentiated, parts of a coherent system that serves student needs.

The accountability framework, together with other initiatives of government, is part of a new approach to managing the system. These initiatives balance autonomy and accountability through shifting the focus of accountability away from inputs, activities, and processes, and towards results. The focus on results is consistent with, and indeed encourages, institutional autonomy. Tuition has been deregulated, block funding instituted, the non-degree program approval process will be eliminated, and the degree approval process made less cumbersome. The accountability framework complements these changes, and recognizes the capacity for institutions to operate autonomously.

A second significant aspect of autonomy is the recognition of institutional differences, and the different local and regional contexts and labour market realities in which the institutions operate. As a general principle, institutional differentiation leads to a wider range of choices and opportunities for students. Institutions have the opportunity to develop strategic directions and goals relevant to their unique circumstances, and reflecting regional and community needs and priorities, while remaining within their mandate. Institutions also have the autonomy to concentrate on those things for which they have demonstrated excellence, and those things that are of particular relevance to the needs of their communities or the needs of particular groups of students.

Within the framework will be the means for the Ministry to articulate accountabilities to the institutions, and for the institutions and Ministry to articulate accountabilities to the public. In both cases, there must be clear linkages with the strategic direction of government, and transparency and openness to the public.

### **Budget and accountability letters will be used by the Ministry to articulate institutional accountabilities**

Currently, institutional accountabilities are articulated in a budget letter, and for most institutions, they are also reflected in their strategic planning documents. The framework will enhance the linkage of institutional plans with overall system accountabilities.

The expanded budget and accountability letter will be provided annually from the Ministry to each institution, and sets out Ministry priorities and expectations regarding system goals, specific

institutional goals, and performance and funding levels for the coming year. Budget and accountability letters will be informed by the strategic direction expressed by the goals and objectives of the Ministry's Service Plan and will also be linked to each institution's service plan. There will be provision for institutional input into finalizing the letter.

It is anticipated that the budget letters will consist of two parts: common elements, deliverables and performance measures that would apply to all institutions; and, specific elements unique to each institution. This latter part ensures institutional priorities and mandates are included, and provides opportunities for the context and circumstances of individual institutions to be acknowledged and accommodated.

In practice, the letter might include:

- The traditional aspects of the budget letter
- Performance measures and targets
- Reporting requirements for a service plan and service report
- Implications

The budget and accountability letters will be finalized in consultation with institutions and will include a discussion around the resources available to achieve the deliverables. Institutions would want to ensure that their unique missions and mandates are appropriately reflected. Budget letters will be made available and accessible to the public through posting on both the Ministry and institution web sites.

### **Institutional service plans will articulate institutional accountabilities to the public**

All institutions will develop annual three-year service plans or strategic plans as the means by which they articulate their accountabilities, and how they will deliver on those responsibilities, to the Ministry and the public. The term service plan, chosen to reflect governmental practice, refers to a strategic plan which also includes some level of operational planning detail with respect to programs and levels of service the institutions intends to deliver.

These plans should align with and complement government's strategic direction. However, institutions will have the flexibility to develop their service plans and include additional material to meet institutional needs and expectations. For example, institutions might use their plan to complement government's strategic direction by developing goals and objectives that may be unique to the institution, and reflect that institution's program mix, areas of excellence, or its particular mandate and community.

The guidelines for institutional service plans might identify such components as:

- Environmental scan, identifying external trends impacting the institution
- Internal scan, including findings from program and institutional evaluation activities
- Statement of goals and objectives
- Linkages of institutional goals and objectives to Ministry strategic goals and objectives
- Performance measures and targets

- Reflect an outcomes orientation as much as possible
- The service plan should be accessible to the public.

### **c) Performance Measures**

Traditionally, the focus of accountability in the public sector has been on compliance with statutory authority and financial accountability through appropriate financial management and accounting procedures. Through the accountability framework, government is adding accountability for results as a way of assessing whether shared goals and objectives are being achieved, whether public expenditures are effective and providing “value for money”, and whether public sector organizations are performing well.

A system of performance measures is central to this approach. Within an accountability framework, performance is assessed by performance measures that track progress achieved toward identified goals and objectives. The Ministry has a legislated requirement to identify and report on performance measures in its annual Service Plan and Report, and the accountability framework extends this same requirement to the post-secondary institutions.

The logic of performance measurement aligns goals and objectives to outcomes, through the measurement of Areas of Performance Interest. Performance measures can focus on inputs (measures of resources), processes or activities, outputs (measures of goods and services provided) or outcomes (measures of results). As there are accountabilities that are most constructively considered at the system level, others that are more appropriate to a particular sector, and still others at the institutional level, a variety of performance measures need to be developed with the appropriate breadth of scope.

### **Developing Performance Measures**

The starting point for the performance measures for the first phase of the framework is the relevant performance measures contained in the Ministry Service Plan and institutional budget letters. Performance measures from the Ministry Service Plan that specifically relate to areas outside the scope of the framework were excluded. Specific initiatives undertaken by post-secondary institutions in accordance with Ministry guidance or policy, which were included in the institution budget letter, were included in the framework.

Through consultation, Ministry and system representatives refined these Service Plan and budget letter measures, and included additional measures that were considered to be priorities relevant to the stated goals and objectives. This working group applied recognized criteria for good performance measures, including measurement validity and reliability and clear data definitions. In all, the proposed performance measures for the first phase of the framework include: 10 measures from the Service Plan, three measures from the institution budget letters, and nine measures developed through consultation to date.

## Consistency with Key Education Principles

Accountability in post-secondary education can be categorized by the following key education principles:

<b>1. Capacity</b>	The post-secondary system is of sufficient size to meet the demands of the province.
<b>2. Quality</b>	The post-secondary system is of sufficient quality to meet the requirements of students, employers, and citizens.
<b>3. Comprehensiveness</b>	The post-secondary system is relevant and responsive to the needs of the province by providing the appropriate scope and breadth of education programs.
<b>4. Efficiency</b>	The post-secondary education system is able to deliver education programs to students in a timely and efficient manner.
<b>5. Accessibility</b>	All citizens have equitable and affordable access to post-secondary education.

All performance measures used in post-secondary accountability frameworks are linked to one or more of these key principles. The following table shows how the proposed measures for the accountability framework are distributed among the key education principles in comparison to other jurisdictions.

### *Performance Measures by Principles and Selected Jurisdictions*

KEY EDUCATION PRINCIPLE	B.C.	Alberta	Ontario	Quebec	Oregon
<b>CAPACITY</b>					
System Capacity (Funded Student Spaces)	X				X
Space Utilization	X				
<b>QUALITY</b>					
Learner Outcomes (Quality Enhanced)	X	X	X	X	X
Employability (Quality Enhancement)	X	X	X	X	X
Research (Research Capacity)	X			X	X
<b>COMPREHENSIVENESS</b>					
Responsiveness (Address Skill Shortages, Trades and Apprenticeship Training)	X		X	X	X
Flexibility				X	
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>					



KEY EDUCATION PRINCIPLE	B.C.	Alberta	Ontario	Quebec	Oregon
Graduation (Graduation Rates)	X	X	X		X
Integration (Transferability)	X			X	X
<b>ACCESSIBILITY</b>					
Access	X		X	X	
Affordability (Equitable cost sharing)	X	X	X	X	

## Comparability of Performance Measures Across Jurisdictions

While performance measurement is the core of most systems of accountability, the number of measures used and the specific definition of each measure is dependant upon the role and purpose of the measure within the context of educational delivery in each jurisdiction. The number of measures can range from as few as seven to as many as 37. The number of measures that are appropriate for a framework depends upon the level of accountability required.

Some common themes among different jurisdictions include:

- Most jurisdictions use between 10 and 15 core measures;
- Most measures are results or outcomes based; and,
- Most jurisdictions recognize differences among post-secondary education sectors (i.e. university and college) by identifying some different measures for each sector.

Alberta Learning Business Plan for 2002-2005 used 11 core measures by which to determine institutions' performance in relation to ministry and government's strategic goals. In addition, the Alberta government collects data from institutions on 22 Key Performance Indications. In its most recent business plan (2001-2002), Ontario identified 15 performance measures for its post-secondary system.

Some of the issues associated with comparing the data outcomes of performance measures between jurisdictions include:

- Differences in the scope of the measure. For example, some jurisdictions include private and public institutions in their measure, while others restrict measurement to one or the other.
- Differences in how a measure is defined. Education programs differ between jurisdictions. What is considered a diploma credential for a program in one jurisdiction may not be so in another; consequently, comparing the numbers of diplomas between the two jurisdictions would be misleading.
- Differences stemming from data collection and storage. For example, client satisfaction measures require data that can only be obtained through surveys. How the survey is

conducted, who is contacted, and what questions they are asked will all impact the validity and reliability of the resulting information. While all jurisdictions collect data on student satisfaction, there is no consistency between surveys with regard to how the surveys are conducted (telephone/in-class survey), who is contacted (graduates/former students), and when they are surveyed (six months/two years/five years after the program). While a general, superficial comparison among surveys is possible, the data are not technically comparable.

The following sets out the goals, objectives, Areas of Performance Interest and proposed performance measures for the accountability framework. The table shows the linkages among strategic direction, key education principles, and the measures that have been selected on that basis. Included are preliminary targets (at the system level). The last two columns indicate the source of the measure and whether the measure is comparable with other jurisdictions in Canada, particularly Alberta and Ontario.

## Goal 1: Top-Notch Post-Secondary Education System

*To provide students with an accessible, affordable, high quality and relevant post-secondary education*

Objective	Area of Performance Interest	Key Education Principle	Performance Measures	Rationale	Target	Source for Performance Measure	Compare with other jurisdictions (see legend at end of table)
Promote a more efficient and integrated post-secondary education system	Improve Graduation Rates	Efficiency	Number of degrees, diplomas, certificates awarded	Successful achievement of credentials by students reflects the capacity of the system to meet the demand of students for quality education and the demand of the economy for qualified graduates. Credentials awarded in relation to resources available demonstrate efficiency in education delivery.	Baseline: 2001/02 Increase	AVED Service Plan	✓
			BC public post-secondary system graduate rate	A measure of the net benefit of an expected increase in credentials awarded.	Baseline: 2001/02 Increase	Consultation with Institutional Research Directors	✓
	Encourage System Integration	Efficiency	Number of block & course transfer agreements	Indicates the opportunity available to students to transfer earned credit between public institutions in BC.	Baseline: 2001/02 Increase	AVED Service Plan	✓
			Student satisfaction with transfer	Provides a learner centred evaluation of system efficiency and effectiveness in facilitating transferability of credit between institutions.	Baseline: 2002/03 Maintain	Consultation with Institutional Research Directors	✗

Objective	Area of Performance Interest	Key Education Principle	Performance Measures	Rationale	Target	Source for Performance Measure	Compare with other jurisdictions (see legend at end of table)
Promote a more efficient and integrated post-secondary education system	Access to Developmental Programs	Access-ibility	Number of student spaces in ABE/ESL/ ASE	Indicates the commitment by institutions to provide developmental education programs to students in accordance with Ministry policy.	Baseline: 2001/02 Maintain	Institution Budget Letters	✕
	Participation in Post-Secondary Education by Aboriginal Students	Access-ibility	Total number and percent of student population that is aboriginal	Participation in further education by aboriginal students is a key strategic priority for government and post-secondary institutions in BC.	Baseline: 2002/03 Maintain or increase	Consultation with Institutional Research Directors	✕
	System Capacity	Capacity	Total student spaces	Indicates actual system capacity and allows comparison to intended system capacity	Baseline: 2001/02  Increase by targeted amounts	Institution Budget Letters	✓

Objective	Area of Performance Interest	Key Education Principle	Performance Measures	Rationale	Target	Source for Performance Measure	Compare with other jurisdictions
Promote a more efficient and integrated post-secondary education system	Space Utilization	Capacity	Facility utilization for education activity	Maximizing utilization of institution facilities for education activity is a government strategic priority.	Baseline 2000/01  Increase delivery between May & August	Institution Budget Letters	✓/x
Enhance student choice	Expanded Access for Students to On-Line and e-merge/ BCcampus Initiatives	Access-ibility	Number of student spaces in on-line learning	On-line learning programs provide increased access, flexibility and choice for students pursuing post-secondary education.	Baseline: 2001/02 Increase by targeted amounts	AVED Service Plan	x
Improve quality of education	Quality Enhancement	Quality	Student outcomes – skills gained	Student's assessment of the degree by which their program allowed them to gain identifiable and tangible skills is a recognized proxy measure of the level of quality in education programs in BC.	Baseline: 2002/03 Maintain/ Increase	AVED Service Plan/IR Directors	x

Objective	Area of Performance Interest	Key Education Principle	Performance Measures	Rationale	Target	Source for Performance Measure	Compare with other jurisdictions
Improve quality of education	Quality Enhancement	Quality	Student satisfaction with education	Quality is in part reflected by the value students place on their overall education experience.	Baseline: 2002/03 Maintain/Increase	Consultation with Institutional Research Directors	✓/x
			Student satisfaction with quality of instruction	Learner centred assessment of how education programs are instructed is a measure of the quality of program delivery in BC.	Baseline: 2002/03 Maintain/Increase	Consultation with Institutional Research Directors	x
	Ensure relevance through enhancing student employability	Quality	Student assessment of usefulness of knowledge & skills in performing job	This measure reflects the student's assessment of the knowledge and skills they gained in relation to the demands of their subsequent employment.	Baseline: 2002/03 Maintain/Increase	AVED Service Plan/IR Directors	x
		Quality	Student outcomes – unemployment rate	One expected outcome of post-secondary education by students and society is the successful transition to the labour force.	Baseline: 2003/04 Maintain/Decrease	Consultation with Institutional Research Directors	✓/x

Objective	Area of Performance Interest	Key Education Principle	Performance Measures	Rationale	Target	Source for Performance Measure	Compare with other jurisdictions
Balance the costs and benefits of post-secondary education	Ensure Education Costs are Shared Equitably	Access-ibility	Percent of graduates with debt & ratio of average debt to average income after graduation	This measure reflects the cost impact and net financial benefit of post-secondary education for students.	Baseline: 2002/03	Consultation with Institutional Research Directors	✓/x

## Goal 2: Economic and Social Development

*To provide students with the skills and knowledge for the workforce and the economy, and to respond to critical shortages in the labour market*

Objective	Area of Performance Interest	Key Education Principle	Performance Measures	Rationale	Target	Source for Performance Measure	Compare with other jurisdictions
Reduce shortages in strategic skill areas	Increase Graduates From Programs Addressing Identifiable Skill Shortages	Comprehensive-ness	Number of computer science, electrical and computer engineering student spaces	The Ministry works with institutions to address identified skill shortages in high technology areas.	Baseline: 2001/02 Increase by targeted amounts	AVED Service Plan	✕
			Number of social/child protection work student spaces	The Ministry works with institutions to address identified skill shortages in social work and child protection areas.	Baseline: 2001/02 Increase by targeted amounts	AVED Service Plan	✕
			Number of RN's, LPN's and RCA and other Allied Health student spaces	The Ministry works with institutions to address identified skill shortages in health care.	Baseline: 2001/02 Increase by targeted amounts	AVED Service Plan	✕



Objective	Area of Performance Interest	Key Education Principle	Performance Measures	Rationale	Target	Source for Performance Measure	Compare with other jurisdictions
			Number of medical school student spaces	The Ministry works with institutions to address identified skill shortages in health care.	Baseline: 2001/02 Increase by targeted amounts	AVED Service Plan	✗
Expand training and skill development	Increase General Trades Training and Apprenticeship	Comprehensiveness	Number of entry level trades training (ELTT) spaces in institutions	The Ministry works with institutions to increase general trades training and apprenticeships. The number of training spaces indicates the capacity of the industry training system to meet the demand for skilled workers.	Baseline: 2001/02 Increase by targeted amounts	AVED Service Plan	✗
Expand research capabilities in the province	Strengthen the Provincial Research Capacity	Quality	Federal/Provincial funding support for research	The Ministry supports post-secondary institutions mandate to conduct original research in all areas of knowledge. This is a measure of public institutions success in attracting sponsored research funding.	Baseline: 2002/03 Maintain/Increase	Consultation with Institutional Research Directors	✓

Objective	Area of Performance Interest	Key Education Principle	Performance Measures	Rationale	Target	Source for Performance Measure	Compare with other jurisdictions
		Quality	Number of licenses, patents, spin-off companies (under development)	This is a measure of public institutions success in attracting and converting sponsored research funding into economic and social tangible benefit.	Baseline: 2002/03 Maintain/ Increase	Consultation with Institutional Research Directors	✓/x

#### Legend Key for Comparability Symbols

- ✓ = A direct comparison is available as data is derived from common or compatible data sources.
- × = Comparison is not possible as there is either no data or no equivalent data from other jurisdictions.
- ✓/× = Comparison is possible but not recommended. Comparable data may be limited by technical and methodological concerns (e.g. differing data sources and collection processes). A cross jurisdiction comparison of this data may not be reliable or valid.

## Setting Targets

Targets will be developed once the performance measures are adopted and the data elements precisely defined. All performance measures included in the first framework should have three-year targets.

Targets may be either quantitative or qualitative depending upon the nature of the data for the performance measure. If quantitative, the target may be directional (increase, decrease, maintain) or a specific numerical value, percentage, or ratio. The value identified in the target may be either norm-referenced (compared to other institutions or a system average) or criterion-referenced (compared to a standard of acceptable performance). Finally, targets may vary in breadth of applicability: whether a given target applies to individual institutions, the institutions within a sector, all institutions, or the system as a whole.

It is important to distinguish between a target and the method used to measure against that target. For example, measures that are based on administrative data (i.e. counts of credentials, enrolment, FTEs) are less likely to be subject to statistical variability than measures based on survey results (student outcomes, satisfaction measures). As a result, it is simpler to measure whether a target has been successfully achieved for administrative measures, and the result is more intuitively obvious. Alternatively, the data outcomes for measures based on survey results are often stated in terms of a possible range (i.e. 75% +/- 3%). This can often result in instances where the stated measure appears to be less than the target but is in fact considered a successful achievement of the target based on statistical validity. Methods used to determine successful achievement are contingent upon how the measure has been defined and how data is collected for that measure.

It is proposed that at least for the first year, the targets be based on:

- Budget letter targets, if identified; and,
- Maintain or increase (or decrease in the case of unemployment rates) from baseline.

Methods of determining success will be developed through consultation with system partners. It is during these and other formal and informal discussions that the institutions can provide a context for their past results and for the likelihood of their success in meeting subsequent targets.

## Data Collection

Reporting on performance measures within the accountability framework is dependent upon two factors: data collection that is efficient and effective; and, an integrated and coordinated system of data management.

Evidence-based accountability through performance measures heightens the need for the Ministry and institutions to work together towards coordinating data management and rationalizing data-collection processes. A process will be established to report data at the institutional level for institution-level reporting, and to compile the data to produce system-wide figures. The Data Warehouse is intended to streamline the production of institutionally verified

reports for the college, university college, and institute sector on behalf of the institutions and Ministry.

## **d) Reporting**

Reports, and their data and analysis, indicate the progress being made by the system as a whole or by individual institutions on the goals and objectives set out in the planning process. They provide information to decision-makers in government, Ministry and institutions and they inform the public on how well government's priorities are being met and what kind of value for money is achieved.

### **i) System-Level Reporting**

Given that a system-level strategic plan is proposed for the accountability framework, a system-level report is a necessary companion piece. System-level reports provide an overview of the achievements of the system on a variety of initiatives and measures. Achievement is assessed in terms of progress towards meeting targets or benchmarks for each performance measure. Analysis is provided to explain progress and to place it in context.

For the first phase of the framework, the Ministry's Annual Service Plan Report, which is already a legislated requirement, will also serve as the system-level report. Collaboration and consultation with system partners will be built into the process of developing future service plans and reports, including future consideration of moving to a system-wide plan.

### **ii) Institution-Level Reporting**

Institutions will report annually on their accomplishments and on the progress they have made towards meeting their service plan goals and objectives. These annual reports will be submitted to the Select Standing Committee on Education, as well as to the Ministry, and will be publicly accessible.

For most institutions that already provide annual reports for their constituents, this approach formalizes this activity. While government will specify some guidelines for these reports, institutions would have the opportunity to broaden the report to meet their needs and to describe publicly their accomplishments in achieving their priorities and targets.

## **e) Performance-Based Implications**

Integral to an accountability framework are mechanisms to ensure that performance information links to decision-making and can bring about improvement. There are a variety of options to ensure that performance information has an impact.

## **i. Public Reporting**

Public reporting in itself can be a motivator to improve performance. Service Plans and Annual Reports, for both the system and for each institution, will give the government, the Ministry, and the public an understanding of the achievements in the post-secondary system and the successes attained by each institution.

It is anticipated that the public nature of reporting would motivate the Ministry and institutions to seek improvements and resolve any outstanding issues. On the other hand, merely requiring performance to be measured, reported and evaluated may not be sufficient to ensure that institutional and system performance is geared toward achieving specific goals, objectives, and targets.

Reporting is consistent with the phased-in approach currently proposed; reporting could be considered the first step in developing further implications, if they are considered necessary. It is proposed that reporting (subject to existing reallocation abilities identified below in “ii Incentive Funding”) be used in the first framework.

Moving beyond public reporting, there are a variety of ways in which performance information can be linked to financial mechanisms. Incentive funding and performance budgeting both link performance information to funding, but are clearly distinct. Incentive funding (more commonly called performance funding) provides an increment to the institutions’ funding, typically based upon a formula using performance on identified performance measures, but does not impact core funding. Performance budgeting, in contrast, uses performance information as one consideration amongst several in determining the institutions’ core budget. Typically it is not formulaic, but it does impact a significant portion of the institutions’ core funding. For example, in Quebec about 21% of core budgets are expected to be allocated on the basis of performance.

## **ii. Reallocation**

The Ministry has always reserved the ability to reallocate resources through the annual budget process. This consequence is a feature of current budget letters and is expected to continue.

The current proposal includes consideration of an incentive fund as an option. While retaining the Ministry’s historical role in readjusting budgets, the proposed framework does not include moving to a full performance budgeting model.

## **iii. Incentive Funding**

The goal of incentive funding is to encourage performance for post-secondary institutions through a financial incentive that is incremental, direct, automatic, and formula-based. What is currently proposed is to develop such an incentive with input from system partners and to defer until later any decision to implement. If or when an incentive fund is implemented, it would be phased in by “shadowing” for the first year to allow for review and refinement

Incentive funding would provide institutions with additional funds based on their performance against certain indicators or targets, which would be a subset of the performance measures used for reporting purposes. An incentive fund would be tied directly to key performance measures; success in achieving deliverables and meeting targets would translate into funds. In addition to public recognition, this approach ensures that there is a tangible incentive for making institutional improvements.

The implementation of incentive funding is also subject to the availability of incremental funds. The amount of funding would be expected to be equivalent to a small percentage of operating grants. Further, the development of an incentive fund would have to link with the planned funding mechanism review.

The following are the key assumptions underlying the development of an incentive funding mechanism in B.C. and are accepted “best practices”:

- The incentive fund would be based on the accountability framework, which reflects government priorities and goals.
- The incentive fund would supplement core government funding for post-secondary institutions and is not intended to replace it.
- The incentive fund would provide an amount equivalent to a small proportion of core funding, in order to minimize unintended effects and undesirable consequences and to preserve each institution’s autonomy and priorities.
- As part of the incentive funding model, a formula would be developed to adjust the amount of the award for the size of each institution in order to keep the award small in proportion to the institution’s budget. However, there may need to be a minimum threshold amount so that it still provides an adequate incentive to the smaller institutions.
- The incentive funding model would be formulaic, straightforward, and transparent in order to be clearly understood and to keep administrative costs low for both the government and institutions.
- Performance measures used in the model would be limited to a few selected carefully from those identified for reporting in the accountability framework.
- The primary focus of the performance measures would be on student outcomes and quality to avoid a broad focus with potential conflicts and to be more manageable.
- All types of public post-secondary institutions would be included together in a single incentive funding model.
- The incentive funding model would be developed to encourage continuing cooperation and coordination among institutions and to avoid stimulating too much competition.

## **f) Evaluation and Review**

The accountability framework will be periodically reviewed to determine whether it is effective in its purpose of benefiting students and furthering the goals of post secondary education. Evaluations and reviews of the framework will specifically gauge the utility and relevance of

performance information and its contribution to the improvement and enhancement of the quality of students' education.

The review entails potential work at a number of levels:

- Focused on selected key areas of performance interest, the framework assesses the performance of the post-secondary system. Periodic review should determine to what extent the framework is effective in this task, including evaluating the appropriateness of the set of performance measures.
- Assessment of the framework itself will also consider issues such as efficiency, effectiveness, and the appropriate design and implementation of components. This level of evaluation is concerned more with the framework itself and its components.
- A third area of focus is the linkage of the framework to other evaluation activities, including institutional evaluation and program evaluation, and their place within an integrated accountability system. The effectiveness of the performance measures in fostering improvement will also be considered. There should be a cooperative effort to ensure that there is appropriate coordination and follow-up to all the performance information that is collected and reported. Institutions will be encouraged to share "best practices" in terms of using assessment activities to bringing about improvement.

## **IV. Implementing the Framework**

### **Typical Accountability Cycle**

In summary, what would a typical annual accountability cycle look like when implemented? Most readers will recognize that many of these activities are currently being done. What the framework does is to streamline and integrate them within an annual cycle that is clear for everyone.

#### **Ministry Service Plan** (begun in September, tabled in Legislature in February)

The Ministry will:

- Review and revise environmental scanning information
- Identify implications of government's strategic plan, and any shifts in plan
- Discuss emerging system priorities
- Revisit strategic goals and objectives
- Establish linkages to institutional service planning

## **Budget and accountability letters**

The Ministry will:

- Research data, factors, application, assemble environmental scanning information
- Consult informally with institutions as they develop their service plans and obtain information on institutional plans, goals
- Identify components, requirements, targets
- Draft letters, making sure government's strategic direction is reflected; discussion with each institution to fine-tune these letters
- Meet with each institution (January/February)
- Revise budget and accountability letters and send to institutions by end of February

## **Institutional Service Plans**

- Each institution will produce a Service Plan, including budget and accountability letter measures, plus additional goals, objectives, and measures the institution wants to highlight
- Identifies strategic goals and objectives, and how the institution proposes to go about accomplishing these goals
- Provided to Ministry, available to the public
- Timeline parallels that of the Ministry Service Plan; finalized after institution receives its budget and accountability letter

## **Reporting**

- Public reporting will be done by both the Ministry and institutions
- By legislation, the annual Ministry Report covering the past fiscal year must be tabled in the Legislature by August 31

## **Performance Implications**

- Data reported annually by institutions to Ministry and public; data feed into the Ministry's Annual Report and budget
- Impacts of performance information on system and institutional decision-making

## **System Participation in ongoing management**

Steering Committee

- Executive-level committee
- Might meet twice a year: once to review the previous cycle of the framework, once to "kick off" the next round
- Provide input into the model, process; monitor progress on implementation and deal with problems and issues.

Data and Performance Measure working group



- Review and refine performance measures; research target information

#### Evaluation Committee

- Identify best practices; link with institutional research evaluation activities

### ***Next Steps***

This working paper outlines the plan of the Ministry of Advanced Education to initiate an accountability framework for the post-secondary education system. The Ministry welcomes feedback from institutions, groups and individuals within the post-secondary system on how this framework might be improved.

A brief discussion paper for broader public interest is available on the Ministry website and electronic response is invited at [www.aved.gov.bc.ca](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca)

Responses to this working paper may be submitted by January 31, 2003, in a variety of ways:

- E-mailed to: [AVED.Accountability@gems3.gov.bc.ca](mailto:AVED.Accountability@gems3.gov.bc.ca)
- Mailed to: Attention: Bo Hansen  
Accountability Branch  
Ministry of Advanced Education  
PO BOX 9888 STN PROV GOVT  
VICTORIA BC V8W 9T6
- Faxed to: (250) 387-0878

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							Nanaimo	V9R 5S5

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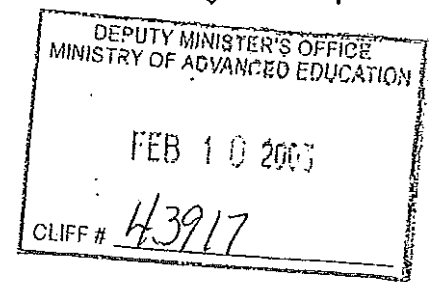
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THE University  
Presidents' Council  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



→ Jacqui

A Gerry

February 7, 2003

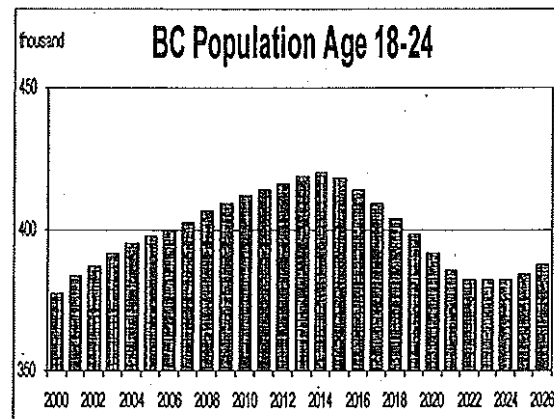
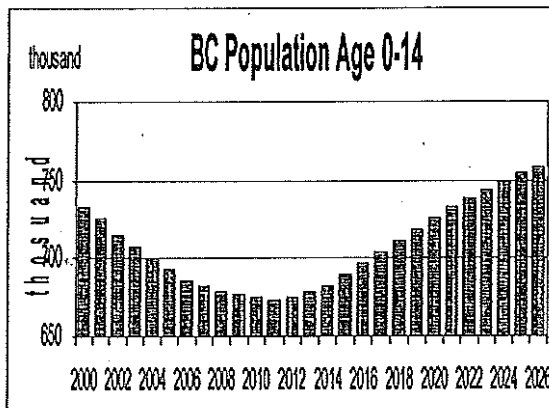
Mr. Gerry Armstrong  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Advanced Education  
PO Box 9884, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9T6

Dear Gerry Armstrong:

On December 20, 2002, you wrote to British Columbia's public universities to invite comment on the Ministry of Advanced Education working paper entitled "An Accountability Framework for the Post Secondary System." I have been asked to reply on behalf of The University Presidents' Council of British Columbia.

Having had the opportunity to review the document in some detail, I must report it is disappointing on several levels. I believe it will require a considerable amount of work if the objective is to develop a meaningful accountability framework which can help advance the public interest in British Columbia.

The Ministry document correctly indicates that it is reasonable to expect an "intensifying demand for post-secondary education." Regrettably, it fails to adequately address either the nature, or the scope, of the demand levels which are, for the most part, entirely predictable. Responding effectively to these pressures will indeed be challenging. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the following two graphs which illustrate declines in B.C.'s K-12 student population and the rather dramatic increase that has already commenced within the Province's post secondary system.



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Universities and other institutions have been creatively responding to these escalating pressures for quite some time. Efficiency levels have increased significantly over the past decade and our institutions have made substantial use of their technological capacity to limit capital spending pressures and to broaden the array of choice available to our students.

We know to an absolute degree of certainty the number of eligible students emerging from B.C.'s K-12 system expecting to pursue studies at our universities has been growing and this trend will accelerate over the next several years. In fact, B.C. will be second only to Ontario in experiencing a massive increase in the number of eligible students. Unfortunately, we are well behind Ontario in adequately planning for funding growth to respond to these demands (information on Ontario attached). For British Columbia's Accountability Framework to be successful, it is essential that government show leadership in solving the capacity problem by identifying and providing a plan for the challenges that are ahead.

If the Provincial Government does not intend to appropriately fund student growth and expects the institutions to accommodate ever-increasing numbers of unfunded students in facilities that are already overcrowded, then it is inevitable that quality and student satisfaction will decline. Where should the accountability for this outcome reside?

Part III of the document correctly notes that an effective accountability framework depends upon the establishment of clear system objectives. The problem is neither the proposed Accountability Framework nor the Ministry Service Plan actually does that. Unless the document sets out clear and measurable targets in a number of key areas, and unless government can indicate they also have a role in helping to achieve those targets, then the likelihood of success will remain low.

The Universities were greatly comforted by the promise of a collaborative approach to developing an Accountability Framework as proposed in the six page accountability paper on the Ministry's website, but take great issue with the underlying tone of the Working Paper that seems to say that post secondary institutions in the Province are not currently accountable, that they "rest on past excellence" and are not effectively managing the system. Student surveys, our success in peer reviewed research competitions and other measures provide considerable evidence to the contrary.

Please understand that the universities in British Columbia remain committed to the development of an effective and collaborative accountability framework for British Columbia's post secondary system which can help to create the conditions necessary for system and institutional improvement. As you know, all universities currently have strategic and financial plans which are responsive to the various communities they serve (copies attached). Furthermore, each institution, and the university system as a whole, annually reports the outcomes and results of the many different activities that form the core of their mandates and utilize this information to ensure continuous improvement. Our student outcomes reports (a copy of the latest report is enclosed for ease of reference) are widely read by prospective students and the results of our research and development activities are known worldwide.

The universities strongly support an Accountability Framework where Government's roles and responsibilities are clearly laid out together with institutional roles, responsibilities and measures. It is also critically important that the Accountability Framework respect that there are multiple stakeholders in public post-secondary education in British Columbia, not just the Provincial Government. In the case of universities, we have a broad stakeholder community with which we interact and report, including students, employees, employers, alumni, the federal government, the general public, our local communities, and the national and international academic community. Our existing strategic plans and various publications reflect our responsibility to be accountable to all our stakeholders.

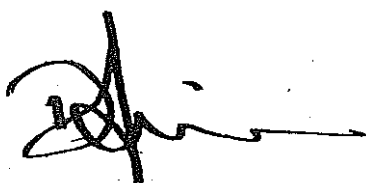
The Universities are supportive of a framework that recognizes and encourages a differentiated B.C. Post Secondary system. We believe it will be an error to develop and implement an accountability system that drives all institutions to be the same. In this regard, it is important that the Accountability Framework respect the strategic plans and the autonomy of the individual institutions and gets right the mix of accountability measures that reflect the mission of each institution.

It is our intention to provide the Ministry's Accountability Branch with our comments on each of the specific performance measures provided in the working paper. However, in general, we believe performance measures must be clear and consistent with the strategic goals and objectives of the government, post-secondary system and each institution. They must be measurable over time, across institutions and, because universities are provincial, national and international institutions, performance measures must be comparable across jurisdictions to provide an appropriate context for assessment. The Framework must go beyond measuring just teaching and learning, and should reflect the complete mandates of the post secondary institutions. In the case of the research-intensive universities, a broader range of research performance measures must be included as must be comparative measures for graduate education.

We have chosen not to address every problematic section in the Working Paper, rather we consider the Accountability Framework to be a work in progress that to be successful requires a great deal more work, consultation and discussion between the Ministry and the institutions. Accordingly, we believe it would be useful for the Ministry to convene a meeting of representatives of the various sectors of the post secondary system to guide further developments of the Framework.

I look forward to discussing this with you in more detail.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Don Avison', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Don Avison  
President

Enclosures (original only)

cc: University Presidents  
Vice Presidents Academic  
Directors of Institutional Research  
Jim Soles, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Advanced Education  
Jacqui Stewart, A/Director, Accountability Branch

**An Accountability Framework  
for  
British Columbia's  
Public Post-Secondary  
Education System**

*Ministry of Advanced Education  
August 13, 2003*



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

Ministry of Advanced Education

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## INTRODUCTION

The accountability framework is a set of planning and reporting processes for British Columbia's public post-secondary system. Under the accountability framework, a number of existing planning and reporting activities conducted by the Ministry of Advanced Education and the province's public post-secondary institutions will be streamlined and harmonized within an annual cycle.

The purpose of the accountability framework is twofold: to benefit students by ensuring they receive quality education and educational opportunities relevant to their needs and the needs of the labour market, and to benefit all residents of the province by ensuring the public post-secondary system's ongoing contribution to social and economic development.

The accountability framework will achieve its purpose by enhancing system-level management of the public post-secondary system. This will involve:

- Promoting a stronger system context so post-secondary partners are encouraged to view institutions as interdependent parts of a coherent system;
- Improving coordination of planning to better align the goals and objectives of individual institutions with those of the system;
- Developing performance measures and targets to assess the effectiveness of plans and strategies in achieving goals and objectives; and,
- Ensuring that system partners understand the outcomes each is expected to achieve.

While the accountability framework will produce greater coherence and integration within the public post-secondary system, it will not produce institutional homogeneity. A system of differentiated mandates is consistent with system integration. Under the accountability framework, institutions will have the flexibility and autonomy to offer the programs and services their communities need while simultaneously working toward the broader strategic goals that government identifies for the system.

As outlined in the Ministry's current service plan, government has identified two strategic goals for the public post-secondary education system:

1. *A Top-Notch Education System*: to provide students with an accessible, affordable, high-quality and relevant post-secondary education.
2. *Economic And Social Development*: to provide students with the skills and knowledge for the workforce and the economy, and to respond to critical shortages in the labour market.

The accountability framework was developed following a commitment made by the Ministry in its 2002/03 – 2004/05 Service Plan. Throughout 2002, the Ministry consulted

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with a wide range of groups within the system on how to best meet this commitment. In December 2002, a discussion paper based on these initial consultations was circulated among public institutions. A summary version of the paper was also posted on the Ministry's web site with an invitation for public comment. The feedback received on the discussion paper has informed the current structure of the framework. In the future, the accountability framework will continue to evolve through ongoing evaluation and review.

The next section of this document describes the main elements of the accountability framework. Three key features of the accountability framework should be pointed out from the start.

The first of these features is the accountability framework's use of performance measures to gauge progress toward achieving goals. Several performance measures assess whether students receive high-quality education that is relevant to their needs and to the needs of the labour market.

It is clear, however, that the post-secondary system provides benefits beyond those exclusively enjoyed by students and employers. For example, some institutions have mandates to conduct research, which benefits society in general through discovery, innovation and the creation of knowledge. While these contributions may be difficult to measure, they must nevertheless be recognized. Among the aspects of post-secondary research that do lend themselves to measurement are those with commercial and economic implications. These aspects form the basis of two of the initial performance measures. As the accountability framework evolves, additional measures concerning the benefits of research may be developed.

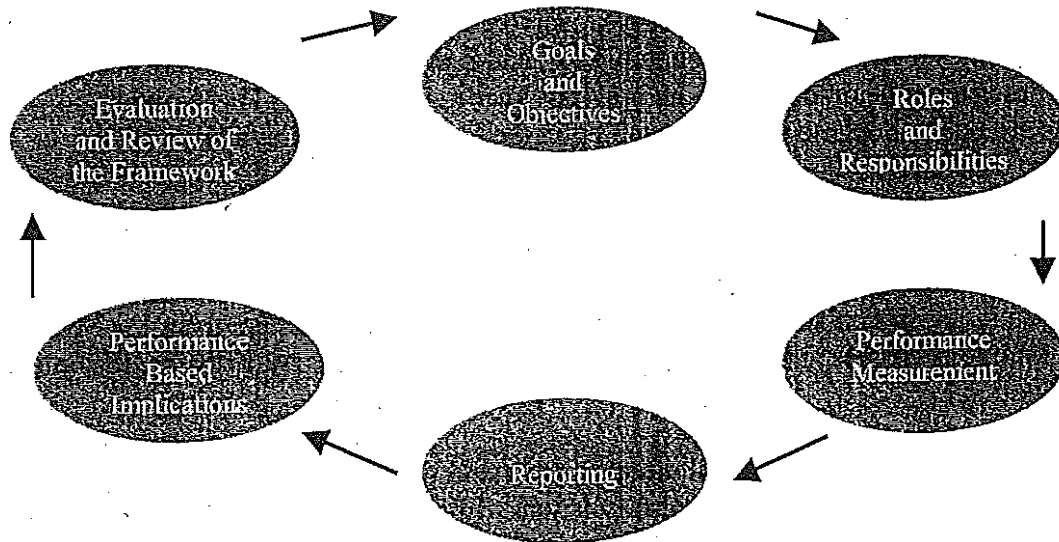
A second key feature of the accountability framework is a consistent, harmonized system of reporting. This will include publicly available annual reports describing the strategies undertaken to achieve goals and objectives, and the results of these activities. The Ministry will report on system-level activities and results, while each institution will report on its individual activities and results. These reports will inform students, system partners, and the public on achievements throughout the post-secondary education system.

A final key feature of the accountability framework is the emphasis it places on outcomes. Traditionally, accountability in the public sector has focused on compliance with statutory authority and adherence to appropriate financial management and accounting procedures. The accountability framework expands this focus by placing substantial emphasis on tracking outcomes to assess whether shared goals and objectives are achieved, whether public expenditures are effective and provide value, and whether publicly-funded organizations are performing well.

... /3

## THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

The accountability framework consists of six inter-related components that together constitute an accountability cycle. The following diagram illustrates how the components are related.



### Goals and Objectives

Goals indicate a strategic direction by describing desired outcomes. Objectives are the incremental, measurable results to be achieved as a means to accomplish goals.

Within the accountability framework, system-level goals and objectives will be established by the Ministry, with input from system partners. The goals and objectives established for the system will have clear linkages to both institutional goals and objectives, and government priorities.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The Ministry and institutions have distinct roles and responsibilities for which they are held accountable within the public post-secondary system.



### ***Ministry Roles and Responsibilities***

The Ministry provides leadership and policy direction and ensures accountability of the system. It has a lead role of working in partnership with institutions to foster the overall development of the post-secondary system.

The Ministry's roles and responsibilities are described in legislation and informed by government priorities. Under the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, the Ministry must prepare an annual three-year service plan that describes the roles and responsibilities it will be held accountable for, and it must produce an annual service plan report describing the outcomes of the previous year's service plan. These plans and reports are public documents that are tabled in the Legislature and available on the Ministry web site.

### ***Institution Roles and Responsibilities***

Institutional roles and responsibilities, which vary from institution to institution, are identified in legislation and in annual budget and accountability letters from the Ministry. As autonomous entities, institutions are also accountable to their students, boards, and communities.

The accountability framework will affect institutional roles and responsibilities in two respects. First, budget and accountability letters will include targets for performance measures in addition to those currently identified for student enrolment. As has been the practice in the past, the letters will be informed by the Ministry's strategic direction with provision for institutional input in refining targets.

Second, the Ministry will work with institutions to ensure appropriate harmonization of government and institutional planning and reporting practices. Guidelines for preparing institutional service plans and reports will identify the essential elements to be included in plans and reports, such as an environmental scan, goals and objectives with appropriate linkages to system goals and objectives, and performance measures and targets. Beyond including the essential elements identified in the guidelines, institutions will be able to customize their plans and reports.

### **Performance Measurement**

Performance measurement is the main focus of accountability within the accountability framework. Performance measures are developed through aligning goals and objectives with expected outcomes, identifying areas of performance interest, and finally formulating measures and targets. Performance targets typically involve achievement relative to a baseline.

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Most of the framework's performance measures will emphasize outcomes to assess the effectiveness of strategies, to indicate whether public expenditures provide value, and to determine whether individual institutions and the system achieve identified goals and objectives. While the accountability framework will be increasingly outcomes-focussed, it will also include other types of measures to provide a more comprehensive picture.

The first iteration of the accountability framework reflects the relevant performance measures identified in the Ministry's 2003/04 – 2005/06 Service Plan. These measures were developed and refined through consultation between the Ministry and system partners. Future adjustments will be developed in a similarly consultative manner.

For 2003/04, institutions will contribute toward reaching the system-level targets identified in the Ministry's Service Plan. Other than targets for student enrolment established in the 2003/04 budget and accountability letters, the first iteration of the accountability framework has not established targets for individual institutions. A process will be established, taking into account advice from the system, to identify institutional targets for 2004/05.

Effective performance measurement depends on efficient data collection and a coordinated, integrated system of data management. These methodological considerations, along with the technical definitions and details concerning performance data, are covered in the *Standards Manual for Accountability Framework Performance Measures*, which is a companion piece to the accountability framework.

It is recognized that while performance measurement can reveal a wide range of valuable information, it cannot be conducted using a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Interpretation of performance will require careful analysis and judgement of the different roles, mandates, strengths and challenges of each institution.

## Reporting

Under the accountability framework, service plans will mark the beginning of an annual cycle, and service plan reports will mark the end. In this respect, plans and reports will serve as "bookends" of the process.

The Ministry's annual service plan report will serve as the system-level report, and each institution will prepare its own annual service plan report. Institution service plan reports will be submitted to both the Ministry and the Select Standing Committee on Education.

Reports at both levels will outline activities undertaken during the previous fiscal year toward achieving goals, and will describe any developments that may have emerged.

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They will provide information for decision-makers both in the Ministry and institutions, and will be made available to the public. The reports will also provide information on how well government priorities are being met and of the value being obtained from public expenditures.

### **Performance-Based Implications**

An integral part of the rationale for measuring performance is to provide decision-makers with information about areas where performance might be improved. The following are a few of the ways that performance information can be linked to decision-making to bring about improvement.

#### **Public Reporting**

Annual service plans and reports, for both the system and for each institution, will give students, stakeholders and the public an understanding of achievements in the public post-secondary system and the level of success attained by each institution. By providing stakeholders with more information on institutional activities, institutions and the Ministry can engage in informed discussions with interested parties about the direction of the public post-secondary system.

#### **Reallocation**

Resource allocation involves apportioning resources according to need as well as effectiveness. Performance reporting may help to reveal areas that are under resourced. The information gathered through annual reporting could assist the Ministry and institutions in reallocating scarce resources to areas of highest need.

#### **Incentive Funding**

The goal of incentive funding is to encourage improvements through a financial inducement. To be fair and effective, incentive funding should be incremental, direct, automatic, and formula-based. If or when such an approach is implemented within the accountability framework, it is expected that it would be phased in by "shadowing" for the first year to allow for review and refinement, and would likely be equivalent to a small percentage of operating grants depending on the availability of funds.

### **Evaluation and Review of the Framework**

System partners will evaluate and review the accountability framework annually to assess its effectiveness. Evaluations and reviews will specifically gauge the utility and relevance of performance information and its contribution to the improvement and enhancement of the quality of students' education. The advisory committee will lead this review and will provide advice and recommendations on developing the framework.

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Evaluation and review of the framework will potentially entail work at a number of levels, including:

- Determining the effectiveness of the framework in bringing about improvement in the public post-secondary system, including evaluating the appropriateness of the set of performance measures;
- Assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the framework's components, processes and implementation; and,
- Reviewing linkages between the framework and other evaluation activities including institutional evaluation and program evaluation.

## MANAGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The accountability framework will be informed by an executive-level advisory committee composed of Ministry and institution representatives. The advisory committee will provide input on implementation, address issues that may arise, and conduct the annual evaluation and review. Institutional membership will be structured to represent the sectors of the system: college, institute, university college, and university.

A working group focused on data and performance measures will aid the advisory committee. The key document concerning this group's activities will be the *Standards Manual for Accountability Framework Performance Measures*. This group will review and refine the performance measures, conduct research on target information, link with institutional research activities, and identify best practices.

The following is a summary of the key documents and activities within a typical accountability cycle.

### Ministry Service Plan

Activity will commence on preparing the Ministry's service plan in the fall. The service plan must be finalized in time to be tabled in the Legislature along with the provincial budget on the third Tuesday in February. The service plan will also be posted on the Ministry's web site. To prepare its service plan, the Ministry will:

- Review and revise environmental scanning information;
- Identify implications of government's strategic plan and work within government priorities;
- Discuss emerging system priorities; and
- Revisit strategic goals and objectives.

### Budget and Accountability Letters

Budget and accountability letters will be prepared by the Ministry and sent to institutions shortly after the budget is tabled. Letters will also be posted on the Ministry's web site.

To prepare the letters, the Ministry will:

- Assemble environmental scanning information;
- Identify components, requirements and targets with consideration of institutions' multi-year education plans;
- Draft letters, making sure government's strategic direction is reflected;
- Seek input from institutions and fine-tune letters;
- Meet with each institution (late fall); and
- Finalize letters (February/March).

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### **Institutional Service Plans**

Each institution would build on its existing planning activities and would need to finalize the document by early spring once its budget and accountability letter has been received. Upon completion, each institution will submit its service plan to the Ministry and to the Select Standing Committee on Education, and make the information available publicly.

### ***Ministry and Institutional Service Plan Reports***

The Ministry and each institution will prepare annual service plan reports that provide an account of activities, developments and accomplishments of the previous fiscal year. The preparation of service plan reports will require the Ministry and institutions to collect, analyze, and interpret data on performance measures. Work on the Ministry service plan report commences in time to be completed by the end of June. It is assumed that institutions would likely follow a similar timeline.

### ***Evaluation and review***

At the end of each annual accountability framework cycle, the advisory committee will evaluate and review the operation of the framework.



**An Accountability Framework  
for  
British Columbia's  
Public Post-Secondary  
Education System**

*Ministry of Advanced Education  
November 6, 2003*



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**

Ministry of Advanced Education



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The first of these features is the accountability framework's use of performance measures to gauge progress toward achieving goals. Several performance measures assess whether students receive high-quality education that is relevant to their needs and to the needs of the labour market.

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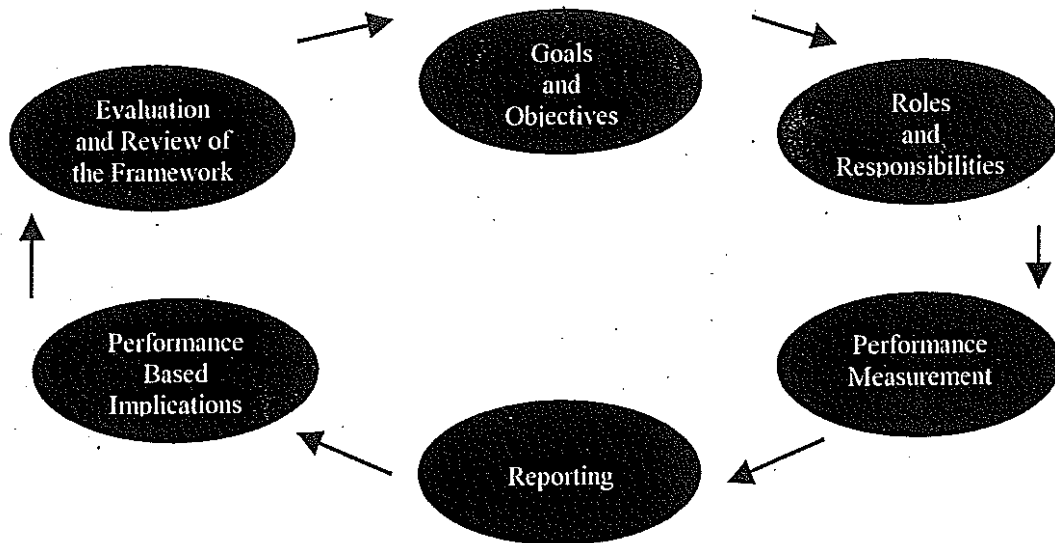
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### **Evaluation and Review of the Framework**

System partners will evaluate and review the accountability framework annually to assess its effectiveness. Evaluations and reviews will specifically gauge the utility and relevance of performance information and its contribution to the improvement and enhancement of the quality of students' education. The Advisory Committee will lead this review and will provide advice and recommendations on developing the framework.

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Evaluation and review of the framework will potentially entail work at a number of levels, including:

- Determining the effectiveness of the framework in bringing about improvement in the public post-secondary system, including evaluating the appropriateness of the set of performance measures;
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- Reviewing linkages between the framework and other evaluation activities including institutional evaluation and program evaluation.



## MANAGING THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The accountability framework will be informed by an executive-level Advisory Committee composed of Ministry and institution representatives. The Advisory Committee will provide input on implementation, address issues that may arise, and conduct the annual evaluation and review. Institutional membership will be structured to represent the sectors of the system: college, institute, university college, and university.

The Accountability Framework Performance Measures Working Group will provide advice on data and performance measures. The key document concerning the Working Group's activities will be the *Standards Manual for Accountability Framework Performance Measures*. The Working Group will review and refine the performance measures, conduct research on target information, link with institutional research activities, and identify best practices.

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- Discuss emerging system priorities; and
- Revisit strategic goals and objectives.

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At the end of each annual accountability framework cycle, the Advisory Committee will evaluate and review the operation of the framework.



NOV 10 2003

Our Ref. 47234

«Sal» «First» «Last»  
«Title»  
«Org»  
«Address\_1»  
«Address\_2»  
«City» BC «Postal»

*see distribution list attached.*

Dear «Sal» «Last»:

As we move into the budget development period, I want to provide an update on the development of the Accountability Framework.

As you know, following the provincial budget day, the ministry sends each institution a Budget and Accountability Letter which specifies the budget allocation for the following fiscal year and, for planning purposes, provides projections for the subsequent two years. As in previous years, the 2004/05 letters will also contain student FTE targets and other related expectations. In addition, it will specify institution-level targets for non-FTE performance measures identified in the Accountability Framework, and the expectation for production of institutional service plans and service plan reports.

Attached is an update on the status of the Accountability Framework and detail on the related activities for institutions and/or the processes that are anticipated to implement them in a reasonable fashion. Meetings are being scheduled shortly with each institution and ministry staff to discuss budget and accountability initiatives. The attached information will provide more background to the Accountability Framework agenda item. If you have any questions, please feel free to raise them at the meeting, or contact Ms. Janice Nakamura at (250) 952-6567 or myself at (250) 356-5173.

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- 2 -

I appreciate the feedback provided on the Accountability Framework and the participation of institutions in the ongoing development and implementation of the Framework.

Sincerely,

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY**

Philip Steenkamp  
Deputy Minister

Attachments

pc: Mr. Don Avison, President  
The University Presidents' Council of British Columbia

Mr. Robert Buchan, President  
University College Consortium of British Columbia

Mr. Jim Reed, President  
British Columbia College Presidents

Text Attachment: Log ID 47234

Response Nov 17, 2003 09:57

2003/11/10 KWALTER (NACB-Accountability)

Our Ref. 47234

"Sal" "First" "Last"  
"Title"  
"Org"  
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"City" BC "Postal"

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I appreciate the feedback provided on the Accountability Framework and the participation of institutions in the ongoing development and implementation of the Framework.

Sincerely,

Philip Steenkamp  
Deputy Minister

Attachments

pc: Mr. Don Avison, President  
The University Presidents' Council of British Columbia

<http://cliff-aved.gov.bc.ca/notes/print.htm>

Mr. Robert Buchan, President  
University College Consortium of British Columbia

Mr. Jim Reed, President  
British Columbia College Presidents

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## Appendix 1

### Status of the Accountability Framework

The Working Paper on the Accountability Framework was distributed December 20, 2002, to the Presidents and Board Chairs of all public post-secondary institutions. Responses were received by February 2003. The feedback has been reviewed and the vast majority of the recommendations are reflected in the new draft of the paper and/or are addressed in implementation activities.

The responses indicated continued support for accountability within the post-secondary system. Many responses noted the evolutionary nature of the Accountability Framework, and the importance of ongoing system participation in the continued development.

#### Accountability Framework Document

The new draft of the Accountability Framework is a briefer policy statement of the basic components of the Framework, in contrast to the Working Paper, which was intended as a basis for discussion and consultation. A copy of the new draft is enclosed (Appendix 3), and we anticipate that it will be available on the Ministry website shortly. This document and the associated performance measures comprise the core of the Accountability Framework.

#### Ongoing System Participation

Two very important groups provided valuable support in the development of the Framework. Both groups have provided a strong system-perspective, while taking into account issues and implications from sector and institutional perspectives. We are keenly appreciative of their contributions. We value the expertise of these groups to guide the ongoing development and implementation of the Framework.

#### Accountability Framework Advisory Committee:

During the development of the Accountability Framework, we received very useful executive-level advice from a small group of presidents, chosen to be representative of the various sectors in the system. This group will continue to provide advice regarding the key aspects of development and implementation, including (but not limited to) evaluation of the Framework.

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#### Accountability Framework Performance Measures Working Group:

Advice on more technical issues related to performance measures and data needed to fulfill these measures came from a similarly structured group of institutional research directors. This group will be asked to continue to refine and define performance measures, data requirements, and will be asked to advise the Ministry regarding the setting of institutional targets for non-FTE performance measures.

#### Standards Manual for Accountability Framework Performance Measures, 2003/04

Ministry staff worked intensively with the Accountability Framework Performance Measures Working Group to review and revise the proposed performance measures and to discuss related methodological and data collection considerations. The Standards Manual for Accountability Framework Performance Measures, 2003/04 represents the culmination of consultation on performance measures up to July 2003. The Standards Manual provides definitions and specifications of the performance measures contained in the Accountability Framework, in sufficient detail to enable public post-secondary institutions and the Ministry to fully understand their roles and responsibilities for data collection and reporting.

The Standards Manual also includes a set of recommended key criteria or "areas of performance interest" for selection and design of performance measures for public post-secondary education. These key criteria have been developed through consultation with the Accountability Framework Performance Measures Working Group. The conceptualization of performance measures in accordance with these key criteria helps to 'tell the story' of public post-secondary education in British Columbia and will enable comparison with public post-secondary systems in other jurisdictions.

The Ministry intends to update the Standards Manual annually, to reflect subsequent iterations of the Accountability Framework, as performance measures are added or deleted and the definitions or specifications of existing performance measures are refined. The Ministry is committed to consultation and the ongoing participation of system partners in the evolution of the Accountability Framework and the Standards Manual.

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The Standards Manual for Accountability Framework Performance Measures, 2003/04 will be available shortly at <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/accountability/framework.htm> on the Ministry website. All 2003/04 performance measures are based on data currently available. The 2004/05 Manual, the basis for Institutional Service Plans, will be available in January 2004. The vast majority of the content will be unchanged from 2003/04. Please ensure that appropriate staff at your institution are aware of the Standards Manual.

#### Institutional Service Plans and Reports

The Framework identified the need for Institutional Service Plans and Reports. The key feedback received regarding these documents was to ensure they do not entail a large administrative burden on institutions, and ensure the guidelines are not restrictive.

The Ministry has informally reviewed planning documents institutions currently have available. It is recognized that much of the information which might be expected in a service plan is already available, albeit in a variety of documents. We would like to build on the existing foundation to minimize additional work for institutions while still engaging in a meaningful reporting process.

Annual three-year Institutional Service Plans are to be implemented beginning with the 2004/05 fiscal year. You are asked to submit your Institutional Service Plans by April 15, 2004. You are also asked to make Institutional Service Plans public and available on your institution's website by the same date.

The Ministry requests that Institutional Service Plans contain the components identified in Appendix 3, and that they link to the Accountability Framework through the "Areas of Performance Interest" (key criteria). Institutional Service Plans that expand on the minimum components to provide a more fulsome reflection of their institution are welcome. The format of the document is flexible, though we ask that the categories be clearly identified.

The first Institutional Service Plan Reports will reflect the 2004/05 fiscal year. Thus, institutions will submit those reports in June 2005. Guidelines for Institutional Service Plan Reports will be provided at a later date.

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#### Institutional targets for non-FTE performance measures

The 2004/05 Budget and Accountability Letters will include three-year institutional targets for non-FTE measures (as well as the student FTE targets). Current system targets for non-FTE measures have been set based on historical trends, and an estimation of what is reasonable for the future. While it is clearly desirable to meet the system targets, it is also important to reflect the high quality of the system.



In setting institutional targets for non-FTE performance measures, we will work with the Accountability Framework Performance Measures Working Group to develop a method that is fair and reasonable. As such, it will need to take into account the various factors relevant to the different institutions, sectors, and geographic areas. On the basis of those discussions, the Ministry intends to identify specific targets by early January 2004.

While three-year targets will be set, the targets will be reviewed annually. Where there is valid justification, targets may be adjusted for subsequent years.

## Appendix 2

### Annual 3-Year Institutional Service Plans

#### Proposed Content

#### Service Plan Element Description

**Letter from the Board Chair and President** The Board Chair and President should provide a letter to the Minister affirming that they accept accountability for the Institutional Service Plan

**Planning Context** This section describes the institution and the situation in which the institution operates. It will typically include an environmental scan, an internal scan and a discussion of issues, factors, risks or opportunities that may affect the institution's operations.

**Strategic Direction** This section includes the institution's vision, mission and values.

**Goals** Institutional goals describe the high-level results to be achieved over the three years. For those institutions that opt to use the two goals identified in the Accountability Framework, they are encouraged to also include any additional goals pertinent to their institution.

**Objectives** Objectives, flowing from the goals, are the incremental, measurable results to be accomplished along the way to achieving the goals. Again, for those institutions that opt to use the objectives identified for the Accountability Framework, additional objectives that are pertinent to your institution may be included.

**Areas of Performance Interest (APIs) or Key Criteria** The Institutional Service Plans will link to the Accountability Framework (AF) through the areas of performance interest. Regardless of the Goals and Objectives identified in the Institutional Service Plan, the following APIs will be linked to the objectives. The Performance Measures in the AF all link with specific APIs (as identified by the Accountability Framework Performance Measures Working Group.) They are: Capacity; Accessibility; Comprehensiveness; Efficiency; Quality; and Research.

**Performance Measures Based on the Standards Manual for Accountability Framework Performance Measures, 2004/05** institutions are asked to report the performance measures, linked to the appropriate API. The Manual specifies the application of performance measures to specific sectors, and other relevant information.

**Performance Targets** For each performance measure (FTE and non-FTE), institutions will indicate the target established in the Budget and Accountability Letters for each of three years.

**Summary Financial Outlook** This section describes high-level financial projections for revenue and expenditures. Also provide a brief description of any anticipated capital projects that exceed \$50 million.

THE University  
Presidents' Council  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

February 10, 2003

Ministry of Advanced Education

FEB 12 2003

Accountability

Ms. Jacqui Stewart  
A/Director  
Accountability Branch  
Ministry of Advanced Education  
PO Box 9882, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9T6

Dear Jacqui Stewart:

Further to Don Avison's letter to Gerry Armstrong on February 7, 2003, I have attached our comments on the specific performance measures provided in the working paper entitled "An Accountability Framework for the Post-Secondary System." As you are aware, the universities in British Columbia strongly support an Accountability Framework where government's roles and responsibilities are clearly laid out together with institutional roles, responsibilities and measures. We believe, to be successful, an Accountability Framework must be developed using real consultation and collaboration.

To put Attachment #1 in context, we have only made comment on the problematic performance measures provided in the working paper and our concerns with each of them. We have provided no comment as to their reasonableness in the overall context of the Accountability Framework since we believe the working premise of the proposed Framework is flawed. We firmly believe, to achieve a truly worthwhile Accountability Framework, the Ministry, together with its system partners, must go back to the Ministry's model in Section III of the working paper and determine what the system objectives are, going beyond the very broad Ministry goals of a top notch post secondary education system that supports economic and social development. You will note in the many strategic plans or accountability documents published by the universities, the goals and objectives are very specific and based on the strategic vision of the institution. Equally specific are the responsibility centers and performance measures.

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We encourage the Ministry to quickly bring together representatives of the various parts of the post secondary system to further develop the Accountability Framework into a meaningful and useful document for system improvement. Any help that the University Presidents' Council of British Columbia can do to facilitate such a meeting is available.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blair Littler', written over the printed name.

Blair Littler  
Vice President

Enclosure

cc: University Institutional Research Directors

**Attachment "A"**  
**Comment on Ministry Performance Indicators**

**Number of degrees, diplomas, certificates awarded (Target: Increase)**

This measure is primarily a function of the total fee enrolment of the university, and therefore also a function of funded fee levels. As universities have been producing fees well over funded levels for some time, targets must reflect historical funded and actual levels of enrolment. In short, universities should not be penalized for over-production of fees. Further refinements to these measures will be necessary when we come to the discussion on targets.

**Graduation rate (Target: Increase)**

We strongly support this system-wide measure of the per capita graduation rate as an essential component for the measurement of the Provincial policy and university performance to increase the opportunity for British Columbians to obtain a post-secondary degree.

**Number of block and course transfer agreements (Target: Maintain)**

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**Student satisfaction with transfer (Target: Maintain)**

The universities have long supported successful transfer within the system, and the successful performance of the system is most cogently illustrated by the BCCAT studies on transfer. The number of transfer courses per se is not a clear measure for the performance of the transfer system, and the satisfaction of students who do transfer is not a comprehensive indicator for the functioning of the system. We recommend that more work and discussion is required to clarify both the accountability and performance issues surrounding transfer.

**Total number and percent of student population that is aboriginal (Target: Maintain or increase)**

There are serious issues with the accuracy of data collection and measurement for this indicator that require further investigation and discussion. Work is underway on a system for the collection of appropriate data on aboriginal status.

**Total student spaces (Target: Increase by targeted amounts)**

Achieving or exceeding targeted enrolment is a straightforward measure of university performance with respect to funded enrolment. We welcome further discussion on targets and funding levels as we move toward meeting the unmet demand in post-secondary education in B.C. and the Provincial Governments position in this regard.

**Student Outcomes (skills gained, satisfaction, satisfaction with quality of instruction, assessment of skills, unemployment rate) (Targets: Maintain or increase - decrease in the case of the unemployment rate)**

The universities initiated, and have published these statistical indicators annually since 1996. Levels of performance on these indicators are high by any standard, and must be maintained. We caution that these are truly statistical indicators, and variations must be considered in the context of appropriate statistical methods. Work is still required on the exact nature of the targets and assessment of performance based on these indicators.

**Percent of graduates with debt and ratio of average debt to average income after graduation. (Target: Baseline 2002/03)**

Together, these are somewhat innovative measures of affordability. We recommend that affordability be measured using a variety of indicators, including the above, but that the complexities need to be investigated before we adopt targets. For example, our data are based on varying years after graduation, some students continue on to further education, etc. We also believe that measures of affordability should include measures of access to, and adequacy of, financial aid.

**Federal/Provincial funding support for research (Target: Maintain or increase)**

The universities welcome the attention given in this document to the funding of research, and we encourage the adoption of measures that recognize the complex but important relationship between provincial support and the ability to attract federal research funding. More work is required to develop specific indicators for both the provincial government and the universities.

**Number of licenses, patents, spin-off companies (under development) (Target: Maintain or increase)**

Measures of university research performance are still under development, but we support the principle that relates measures of accountability to economic development.

THE University  
Presidents' Council  
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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+ FILE des

September 8, 2003

Ministry of Advanced Education

SEP 09 2003

Accountability

Mr. Gerry Armstrong  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Advanced Education  
PO Box 9884, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9T6

Dear Gerry Armstrong:

Thank you for providing me with a copy of the draft An Accountability Framework for British Columbia's Public Post-Secondary System. Overall, we find the Framework to be much improved over previous versions, and reflective of much of the input provided over the past year by Institutions. I was particularly pleased to see explicit recognition by the Ministry that a coherent and integrated public post-secondary system does not mean a homogeneous system. The universities completely agree that a system with differentiated mandates is critical to meet the needs of students, the economy and of the public.

I appreciate the general recognition that the Accountability Framework is a work in progress and the "system partners will evaluate and review the framework annually to assess its effectiveness." However, more important than an annual review is that the Framework and its various sub-components be developed jointly by the Ministry and Institutions, with each informing the other. If all activities flow strictly from a central plan that has not at least considered the realities of institutions and the system as a whole, the accountability framework becomes purely a data reporting exercise, doing little for system improvement.

I appreciate that a key factor of the Accountability Framework is a focus on outcomes. This is an important shift from the past and is where the focus should be. However, a plan that focuses on outputs without consideration for the inputs is incomplete and does not reflect a full approach to accountability and whether shared goals and objectives are achieved. #

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Finally, I think it is important for the document to better address research and knowledge development and its role in the post-secondary system. As noted before, it is a significant gap in the Ministry's current Service Plan. It is also clear from the Framework that the Ministry is struggling with appropriate measures of success in research and knowledge development, particularly outside those research activities that have commercial or economic implications. As you are well aware, this is a very important area for universities and we will continue to work with the Accountability Branch to find appropriate measures.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Don Avison', with a stylized, flowing script.

Don Avison  
President

cc: Jacqui Stewart, A/Director, Accountability Branch  
Ministry of Advanced Education