

## **What Mount Royal is Asking: Establishing the Criteria for Success of the Baccalaureate Institution**

Mount Royal is actively working to fulfill its role in the success of Campus Alberta. This will require the conditions necessary to successfully implement the newly formed Baccalaureate and Applied Institution category of institution. The success of the baccalaureate institution depends upon a strong partnership between the government and the institution.

The common goal between institution and government is to deliver undergraduate degrees that are not only recognized by employers and other institutions, but are preferred. The challenge is to adopt those artifacts of the traditional university environment necessary to ensure credential recognition, while retaining some desired characteristics from the traditional college environment. That is, pick those conditions that will enhance the credential recognition and credibility, without diminishing the student experience.

### **The Conditions of Success for the Baccalaureate Institution**

The success of any public institution is dependent upon a partnership between the institution and the government, with the government providing the “conditions” for such success and the institution then implementing programs and procedures within those conditions.

### **The Government’s Role: The Conditions of Success**

There are a number of things that the government could do to ensure that the conditions are in place to ensure that the new category of institution of the baccalaureate institution is successful. These conditions could be grouped under three areas.

#### **(a) Attitude:**

It is critical that the government approach the establishment of the baccalaureate institution in a positive manner. Specifically, this category should be defined, not by what institutions cannot do, but what they can. For example, defining the category with a series of statements about what the institution is limited to rather than what it can do suggests that establishing this category is a way of controlling institutions rather than empowering or encouraging them. In addition, the defining of the category by using the traditional university as the reference point consequently describes this new category as “less than” a traditional university; less programming, less research, etc. In actual fact, the new institutions could be “more than” the traditional university in many ways. We do not want to see embedded in this approach the notion that baccalaureate institutions see the category as simply a stepping stone to the comprehensive, research university category. Institutions like Mount Royal aspire to neither the reputation nor the organizational conditions of the research university. We aspire to be the best undergraduate, instructionally focused institution they can be and every support asked from the government is to achieve that vision, not an aspiration to become a comprehensive, research university.

#### **(b) The “artifacts” of recognition:**

Despite the fact that the baccalaureate institutions and the government might both agree that these institutions should not be confused with the comprehensive, research university, neither should they be confused with the Comprehensive Community

Colleges. In order to establish the category in its own right, that is, as neither an embellished “college” nor a diminished “university,” it will be necessary for the category to visibly adopt recognizable “artifacts” of both the existing college and university systems. Places like Mount Royal are already largely identified with the college sector, and Mount Royal has stated that it wants to retain the instructional, community and employer focus usually associated with the college model. In addition, the institution willingly accepts the program and research focus suggested by the government for this category. However, it will also be especially important to identify the “artifacts” of the university sector that it would add to its already successful college characteristics. Some of these university “artifacts” like governance are required for various types of accreditation and have already been accomplished. And, most of the operational issues (e.g. faculty workload) are within the institution’s responsibility. However, three items traditionally associated with the university sector can help identify the uniqueness of the baccalaureate institution. All of these items have no cost associated with them, but assist in credential and institutional recognition and promote the notion of the baccalaureate institution as an amalgam of traditional college and university characteristics.

*Chancellor:* Almost all university-level institutions in Canada have a Chancellor as part of their governance structure. Allowing the baccalaureate institution to appoint a Chancellor to its governing process would both help identify the institution as being university level and confirm the institution’s link to the community.

*Honorary Degrees:* At the current time, universities in Alberta (and elsewhere, even undergraduate universities) can grant any and all honorary degrees at any level. Colleges can only grant an honorary credential in credentials that they offer. Baccalaureate institutions should have the authority to grant degrees at any level (e.g. Honorary Doctorate in Arts) for any degree that they offer.

*Name:* Clearly the most important university “artifact” in establishing institutional recognition is name. In Canada, if an institution does not have “university” in its name, then it is not seen as delivering university-level credentials. At the current time there are only two public institutions in Canada, other than some special-mission institutions, that deliver university degrees without the label “university” in their name: Mount Royal and Grant MacEwan. The baccalaureate institution should have a label that reflects its enrolment. When the majority of students are enrolled in university degrees, the institution should have the option of requesting a name change to a university. (See attached “20 Questions on the Label University for Mount Royal”)

(c) Resources:

Both facility and operational resources will be required from the government for baccalaureate institutions to successfully implement the category mandate. However, the support provided in these cases is not as controversial as some of the no cost items such as label, since both the facilities and operational requirements to deliver degrees are provided by the reviews and guidelines of the Campus Alberta Quality Council. For example, in the operating area, the Council guidelines indicate the level of scholarship appropriate for faculty offering CAQC-approved degrees, and consequently, define the level of funding needed to offer these degrees. Similarly, CAQC institutional and degree reviews provide recommendations on the facilities required to deliver degrees. For example, the CAQC institutional review for Mount

Royal indicated that the current library was “inadequate” for the delivery of university degrees.

### **The Institution’s Role: Implementation for Success**

While the government has the responsibility to provide the conditions of success of the baccalaureate institution, the institution has the responsibility and obligation to implement these conditions consistent with the shared vision for the role and mandate of the baccalaureate institution.

In Mount Royal’s case, the institution has been working for over five years to identify and plan for the implementation of institutional obligations in providing the appropriate environment for university-level degrees. Over a dozen task forces, from library to faculty roles and responsibilities to governance, have provided the plan for Mount Royal’s internal transition. Many of the details of this planning can be found at [http://www.mtroyal.ca/in\\_motion/](http://www.mtroyal.ca/in_motion/). In addition to the various task force activities, Mount Royal has also established a new academic plan and is also in the process of an institutional branding and positioning exercise. The Mount Royal Foundation is also preparing for the launch of a large fundraising initiative to support the transition of Mount Royal to a full degree-granting institution.

The complete Mount Royal community is working within the conditions provided by the government to implement the baccalaureate and applied institution category in such a manner to provide maximum benefit and recognition to the students. As we go forward, we will further increase our collaborative efforts with other institutions within Campus Alberta.

### **Describing the Result**

If both the government and the institutions do their part, then the result will be a student and instructionally focused, yet scholarly informed, university that provides degrees that are recognized and accepted, even perhaps preferred, throughout Canada and the world. Not all of the criteria needed to achieve this goal are comfortable issues for either the government or the institutions. For example, while faculty will have to accept such things as some sort of reward structure that includes scholarship as well as instruction, government will have to recognize the importance of both funding and the “university” label for Canadian institutions offering Canadian university degrees.

Whatever the issue, it is becoming increasingly evident that despite the fact that some parts of the equation for success are uncomfortable for either the government or the institution, all parts of this equation must be filled for the baccalaureate model to be successful. There is no satisfactory half way for our students for this initiative.

### **Summary of Mount Royal’s Requests of Government for the Implementation of the Baccalaureate and Applied Institution Category**

- 1. Provide operating funding adequate to meet the degree implementation guidelines of the Campus Alberta Quality Council.*
- 2. Provide capital support for the construction of a new library and the lab expansion, both as identified by CAQC.*

3. *Describe all aspects of the new baccalaureate institution in positive, enabling and unique terms rather than limiting, negative and in comparison to the comprehensive and research intensive university.*
4. *Allow the Baccalaureate and Applied Institutions to appoint a Chancellor to their governing process.*
5. *Allow Baccalaureate and Applied Institutions to give Honorary degrees at any level in any degree that they offer.*
6. *Establish a naming policy for the Baccalaureate and Applied Institution that reflects the student composition. Institutions offering university degrees should have "university" in their label.*