

Keyano College hosts signing of agreement to create a new collaboration for northern education

Author: [Kiran Malik-Khan](#)/Tuesday, March 25, 2014

Keyano College hosted six other post-secondary educational (PSE) institutions today in the signing of an innovative Memorandum of Action (MOA) that is intended to improve access to post-secondary education delivered across Alberta.

The groundwork for the new collaborative initiative was created following discussions among northern institutional presidents about perceived access barriers and ways of enhancing overall PSE system efficiency. Strategic objectives related to seamless transfer, student mobility and access to quality education programming in remote areas led to the creation of the collaboration whose primary goal is to increase the range of quality post-secondary educational programs and services options for all Albertans, with particular recognition of the challenges facing those living in northern and remote regions.



Back row: L-R: Dr. Trent Keough, President & CEO, Portage College, Barry Walker, Board Chair, Athabasca University, Dr. Glenn Feltham, President & CEO, NAIT, Ann Everatt, President & CEO, Northern Lakes College, Dr. Frits Pannekoek, President & CEO, Athabasca University, Pete Merlo, Vice Chair, GPRC, Don Gnatiuk, President & CEO, GPRC. Front Row: Steve MacDonald, Deputy Minister of Innovation & Advanced Education, MLA Don Scott, Dr. Kevin Nagel, President & CEO, Keyano College, Kara Flynn, Board Chair, Keyano College, and Gord Johnston, Assistant Deputy Minister of Innovation & Advanced Education at the MOA signing. Photo by Sean McLennan, Keyano College

The signing ceremony was attended by the Hon. Don Scott, MLA, Associate Minister, Accountability, Transparency and Transformation who brought greetings from the Hon. Dave Hancock, who was sworn-in as interim Premier on Sunday. In a prepared statement, the interim Premier, said “this initiative is a true demonstration of the principles of Campus Alberta in action.”

“Collaboration, innovation and a vision to give Alberta’s students the opportunities they need is how you enhance our post-secondary system and how we continue to build Alberta together. I’m very proud of all of the partners who have worked to enhance access for students in northern Alberta,” Premier Hancock added.

The presidents from Athabasca University, NAIT, Grande Prairie College, Northern Lakes College, Portage College, and Keyano College were also in attendance as were senior Ministry officials Steve MacDonald, Deputy Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education and Gord Johnston, Assistant Deputy Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education. Although a full partner in the northern PSE collaboration, Lakeland College President and CEO Dr. Tracy Edwards and Board Chair Milt Wakefield were unable to attend the signing ceremony.

“This multi-stakeholder agreement is a true difference maker for generations of students in northern Alberta who want to realize their dreams of a post-secondary education,” said Don Scott, Associate Minister of Accountability, Transparency and Transformation and MLA for Fort McMurray-Conklin.

“More courses will now be offered throughout the region and give students the opportunities to learn in their communities via e-learning and program sharing among institutions,” MLA Scott noted.

“This MOA demonstrates the commitment our institutions have to Northern Alberta. This agreement will allow us to work together to provide quality post-secondary education to under-represented populations and our communities,” said Kara Flynn, Chair, Keyano College Board of Governors.

“Furthermore, I believe it is vital that we enable young people to remain in their home communities while advancing their educational and career goals,” Flynn explained.

Dr. Kevin Nagel, President and CEO, Keyano College said “the purpose of this MOA is to provide seamless credit transfer for students among and between the collaborating institutions which in turn, will enhance student mobility across the system.”

“The MOA sets out the work that needs to be completed by each of the institutions in order to achieve this objective and is a great opportunity to demonstrate the power of collaborative learning initiatives,” Dr. Nagel explained.

NAIT President and CEO, Dr. Glenn Feltham shares that “NAIT is committed to working with other institutions in Northern Alberta to increase and strengthen student pathways, and to build a stronger post-secondary system.”

“The MOA is a true expression of Campus Alberta. Not only do we intend to work together, we will work together in research and in service to our Northern communities,” explains Athabasca University President and CEO, Dr. Frits Pannekoek.

“Most important, however, is that we intend to provide seamless life-long learning opportunities for Northerners, and indeed for all Albertans,” Dr. Pannekoek continued.

The collaborative process featured input from each of the institutions, keeping all stakeholders and especially students in mind. The MOA will reduce traditional access barriers and enhance learner mobility by facilitating block transfer and creating flexible learning pathways. It will also provide an opportunity to share information, knowledge, programming and applied research ideas while improving system quality and achieving greater efficiency by working together. An opportunity also exists for the PSE institutions to provide new programs and services to under-represented groups. In order to achieve this goal in the most efficient and effective manner, a collaborative process will be initiated with the various groups and communities involved.

Grande Prairie Regional College President and CEO Don Gnatiuk added “the more our institutions collaborate, the better we are able to serve our students. We are delighted to be signatories to this huge step forward. For the learners of the GPRC stewardship region, access and transferability are of key importance. This MOA marks a significant moment for all of our students and institutions.”

Portage College President and CEO Dr. Trent Keough said “Portage is excited to participate in the MOA partnership, and looks forward to providing measurable outcomes as they relate to enhancing student access, mobility, and transfer.”

“This MOA underlines the values and principles that have guided Northern Lakes College: Community, Respect, Accessibility, Collaboration, Excellence and Lifelong Learning. We are delighted to participate in and support a collaborative initiative that focuses on the outcomes of student success and mobility,” said Ann Everatt, President & CEO, Northern Lakes College.

The collaboration will be operationalized through an administrative structure in the form of a collaboration chairperson, who will be elected from among the President and CEO group, for a non-renewable two-year term. The leadership will subsequently rotate among the collaborating institutions which have also agreed to provide updates on their respective collaborative efforts as they relate to the achievement of Campus Alberta system-wide outcomes.

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